

NOTICE OF AN ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Ōpōtiki District Council Chambers, 108 St John Street, Ōpōtiki
Tuesday, 4 August 2026
Commencing at 10.00am

This meeting will be livestreamed – the link will be available on Council’s website and Facebook page on the morning of the meeting.

ORDER PAPER

OPENING KARAKIA / PRAYER / INSPIRATIONAL READING – COUNCILLOR PETERSEN

APOLOGIES

DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS IN RELATION TO OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

PUBLIC FORUM

	Page
ITEM 01 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 9 JUNE 2026	4
ITEM 02 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 29 JUNE 2026	14
ITEM 03 MINUTES – RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 9 MARCH 2026	23
ITEM 04 DRAFT MINUTES – COAST COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING 30 JUNE 2026	32
ITEM 05 MINUTES – PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING 20 MAY 2026	39
ITEM 06 MINUTES – BAY OF PLENTY MAYORAL FORUM MEETING 11 JUNE 2026	44
ITEM 07 MINUTES – REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING 26 JUNE 2026	57
ITEM 08 MINUTES – BAY OF PLENTY CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING 3 JULY 2026	68
ITEM 09 MAYORAL REPORT 30 MAY 2026-24 JULY 2026	81
ITEM 10 CORRECTION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR IN THE 2026/27 RATES RESOLUTION	87
ITEM 11 SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEAD START PATHWAY PROPOSAL	96
ITEM 12 PREPARING FOR THE BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL SPATIAL PLAN	204
ITEM 13 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S UPDATE	234
ITEM 14 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC	241

(Continued over page)

PUBLIC EXCLUDED BUSINESS

- ITEM 15 CONFIRMATION OF IN-COMMITTEE MINUTES – ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 9 JUNE 2026**
- ITEM 16 IN-COMMITTEE MINUTES – RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 9 MARCH 2026**
- ITEM 17 NOTES FROM COUNCIL WORKSHOPS**
- ITEM 18 RESOLUTION TO RESTATE RESOLUTIONS AND READMIT THE PUBLIC**

Chair: His Worship the Mayor – David Moore

Members: Cr Maude Maxwell (Deputy Mayor)

Cr Shona Browne

Cr Barry Howe

Cr Curley Keno

Cr Steve Nelson

Cr Dean Petersen

Cr Pāpā Wharewera

Committee Secretary: Gae Finlay

Quorum: 4

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS' INTERESTS) ACT 1968

Councillors are reminded that if you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda, then you must declare this interest and refrain from discussing or voting on this item, and are advised to withdraw from the Council chamber.

Stace Lewer

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING DATED, TUESDAY, 9 JUNE 2026 IN THE ŌPŌTIKI
DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 108 ST JOHN STREET, ŌPŌTIKI AT 10.00AM**

PRESENT:

Mayor David Moore (Chairperson)
Deputy Mayor Maude Maxwell (Deputy Chairperson)
Councillors:
Shona Browne
Barry Howe
Curley Keno
Steve Nelson
Dean Petersen
Pāpā Wharewera

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stace Lower (Chief Executive Officer)
Nathan Hughes (Group Manager Service Delivery)
Antoinette Campbell (Group Manager Strategy and Development)
Rachael Burgess (Group Manager Business Support)
Billy Kingi (Finance Manager)
Michael Fryer (Strategy and Policy Manager)
Peter Edwards (Building and Planning Manager)
Carol Mio (Manager People and Culture)
Sage Roia (People and Culture Administrator)
Scott James (Strategic Policy Analyst)
Maheesha Silva (Governance Support Officer)
Gae Finlay (Executive Assistant and Governance Lead)

The meeting commenced with a karakia from His Worship the Mayor, David Moore.

Councillor Nelson then opened the meeting with an inspirational verse.

APOLOGIES

Nil.

DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS IN RELATION TO OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Nil.

PUBLIC FORUM

Nil.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 28 APRIL 2026 p4

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 28 April 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record.**

Maxwell/Moore

Carried

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 12 MAY 2026 p12

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 12 May 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record.**

HWTM/Wharewera

Carried

3. DRAFT MINUTES – COAST COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING 19 MAY 2026 p14

RESOLVED

- (1) That the draft minutes of the Coast Community Board meeting held on 19 May 2026 and any recommendations therein, be received.**

Wharewera/HWTM

Carried

4. MINUTES – PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE MEETING 14 APRIL 2026 p19

- (1) That the minutes of the Performance and Delivery Committee meeting held on 14 April 2026, and any recommendations therein, be received.**

Petersen/Nelson

Carried

5. DRAFT MINUTES – CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 27 MAY 2026 p24

RESOLVED

- (1) That the draft minutes of the Chief Executive’s Performance Committee meeting held on 27 May, and any recommendations therein, be received.**

HWTM/Nelson

Carried

6. MINUTES – BAY OF PLENTY CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING 16 APRIL 2026 p28

- (1) That the minutes of the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee meeting held on 16 April 2026 be received.**

HWTM/Maxwell

Carried

7. MAYORAL REPORT 18 APRIL 2026 – 29 MAY 2026 p40

His Worship the Mayor gave special mention to the following from the report:

- Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi Graduation; appreciated seeing Robert Edwards receive an honorary doctorate.
- Pōhiri Welcome for new Ōpōtiki College principal, Glenn Phipps.
- Malcolm Campbell’s farewell; which was a very sad occasion.

Councillor Keno acknowledged the passing of Malcolm Campbell, noting the presence of Ōpōtiki District Councillors at the funeral.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the port titled “Mayoral Report 18 April 2026-29 May 2026” be received.**

HWTM/Maxwell

Carried

8. LGFA GUARANTOR CONSIDERATION p45

The Finance Manager spoke to the report. He advised that this item was presented to the Risk and Assurance Committee which endorsed the recommendations.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled “LGFA Guarantor Consideration” be received.**
- (2) That Council approves Ōpōtiki District Council becoming a guarantor of the New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA).**
- (3) That Council authorises the Chief Executive to execute all documentation required to give effect to Council becoming an LGFA guarantor.**
- (4) That Council notes becoming an LGFA guarantor will remove the current borrowing limitations applicable to non-guarantor members and support the delivery of Council’s approved Long Term Plan and Annual Plan capital investment programmes.**
- (5) That Council notes the financial risks associated with becoming an LGFA guarantor are considered low and are mitigated by LGFA’s governance framework, security arrangements, liquidity facilities, and AAA credit rating.**

HWTM/Keno

Carried

9. UPDATE ON REGIONAL SPATIAL PLAN PROGRAMME – PRE-ENACTMENT PHASE p51

The Group Manager Strategy and Development advised that since the report was written a response had been received from the Minister (ref. page 57 of the agenda). Although the response was brief, it noted the importance of spatial plans being prepared under the new legislation and national instruments, as the scope and goals of the new system will differ from those under the Resource Management Act.

Referring to the timeline on page 53 of the agenda, the Chief Executive Officer asked Councillors to be mindful of:

- The wider reform agenda which is in front of Council and the sector
- The challenge going forward for staff to manage BAU as well as the reforms work
- Need to ensure there is not too much pressure on staff, while still engaging in the work

Updates will be provided to Councillors and they will be advised of any risks that arise.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled “Update on Regional Spatial Plan Programme – Pre-Enactment Phase” be received.**

HWTM/Wharewera

Carried

10. ADOPTION OF CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

p63

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Adoption of Climate Strategy and Action Plan" be received.**
- (2) That Council adopts the Climate Strategy and Action Plan.**

HWTM/Petersen

Carried

The Building and Planning Manager left the meeting at 10.30am.

11. DOG CONTROL POLICY

p75

Acknowledgement of the Animal Control staff:

- Councillor Petersen commended the team for their quick responses to two incidents in his local area recently, resulting in the offending dogs being removed
- Councillor Browne noted the pleasant manner of the staff member who called reminding her of the upcoming dog registration renewal.

In response to a query from His Worship the Mayor, the Strategic Policy Analyst advised that the policy is in alignment with Whakatāne and Kawerau District Councils' policies.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Dog Control Policy" be received.**
- (2) That Council approves the Statement of Proposal and draft Dog Control Policy (attached to the report as Appendix 1).**
- (3) That Council notes the community consultation will be undertaken from 18 June 2026 to 23 July 2026.**

HWTM/Maxwell

Carried

12. GAMBLING AND TAB VENUES POLICY

p97

Following questions from Councillors and a discussion around ATM machines being located within gambling venues and being able to be seen from venues, the Strategic Policy Analyst advised this is something he could come back to Councillors on.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Gambling and TAB Venues Policy" be received.**

- (2) That Council adopts the Statement of Proposal and draft Gambling and TAB Venues Policy (attached to the report as Appendix 1).
- (3) That Council notes the community consultation will be undertaken from 18 June 2026 to 23 July 2026.

HWTM/Browne

Carried

The Strategy and Policy Manager and the Strategic Policy Analyst left the meeting at 10.51am.

13. LGNZ CONFERENCE 2026

p115

Councillor Browne advised she is unable to attend the conference. Deputy Mayor Maxwell is next in rotation and is available to attend.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "LGNZ Conference 2026" be received.
- (2) That His Worship the Mayor together with Councillors Howe and Keno and Deputy Mayor Maxwell are authorised to attend the LGNZ Conference 2026 in Rotorua.
- (3) That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to attend the LGNZ Conference 2026.

Wharewera/Nelson

Carried

14. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UPDATE

p120

The Chief Executive Officer noted the following from the report:

- Pōhiri for new Ōpōtiki College principal, Glenn Phipps
- Malcolm Campbell's funeral – this highlighted the important role that leadership and influence plays in small communities.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Chief Executive Officer's Update" be received.

HWTM/Maxwell

Carried

The Manager People and Culture and the People and Culture Administrator left the meeting at 10.55am.

15. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

p126

SECTION 48 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION & MEETINGS ACT 1987

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

16. Confirmation of In-Committee Minutes – Ordinary Council Meeting 28 April 2026.

17. **Draft In-Committee Minutes – Performance and Delivery Committee Meeting 14 April 2026.**
18. **Notes From Chief Executive’s Performance Committee Informal Meeting 16 February 2026.**
19. **Draft In-Committee Minutes – Chief Executive’s Performance Committee Meeting 27 May 2026.**
20. **Chief Executive’s Performance Committee Report:**
 - **Chief Executive’s KPIs 2026-2027**
 - **Appointment of Additional Committee Member.**
21. **Notes from a Council Workshop.**

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

Item No	General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
16.	Confirmation of In-Committee Minutes – Ordinary Council Meeting 28 April 2026.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists.	Section 48(1)(a)
17.	Draft In-Committee Minutes – Performance and Delivery Committee Meeting 14 April 2026.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)
18.	Notes From Chief Executive’s Performance Committee Informal Meeting 16 February 2026.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)
19.	Draft In-Committee Minutes – Chief Executive’s Performance Committee Meeting 27 May 2026.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)
20.	Chief Executive’s Performance Committee Report: • Chief Executive’s KPIs 2026-2027. • Appointment of Additional Committee Member.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)

21.	Notes from a Council Workshop.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)
-----	---------------------------------------	--	------------------

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act or section 6 or section 7 or section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may require, which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

16.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Protect information Protection from improper pressure or harassment Prevent disclosure or use of official information Carry out negotiations Maintain legal professional privilege Carry out commercial activities	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(b)(i) & (ii); (d) & (e) and Section 7(2)(c)(i) & (ii) Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Section 7(2)(j) Section 7(2)(i) Section 7(2)(g) Section 7(2)(h)
17.	Protect information (commercial sensitivity)	Section 7(2)(b)(ii)
18.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Prevent disclosure or use of official information	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(j)
19.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Prevent disclosure or use of official information	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(j)
20.	Protect the privacy of natural persons	Section 7(2)(a)
21.	Protection from improper pressure or harassment Prevent disclosure or use of official information	Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Section 7(2)(j)

HWTM/Nelson

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 10.56am and reconvened in-committee at 11.08am.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the resolutions made while the public was excluded, be confirmed in open meeting.**
- (2) That the public be readmitted to the meeting.**

Wharewera/Petersen

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the in-committee minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 28 April 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record.**

HWTM/Browne

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the draft in-committee minutes of the Performance and Delivery Committee meeting held on 14 April 2026 be received.**

Petersen/Maxwell

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the notes from the Chief Executive's Performance Committee informal meeting held on 16 February 2026 be received.**

HWTM/Nelson

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report draft In-Committee minutes of the Chief Executive's Performance Committee meeting held on 27 May 2026 be received.**

HWTM/Maxwell

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Chief Executive's Performance Committee Report: Chief Executive's KPIs 2026-2027; Appointment of Additional Committee Member" be received.**
- (2) That Council adopts the Chief Executive's KPIs for 2026-2027, attached to the report as Appendix 1.**
- (3) That Councillor Browne be appointed as a member of the Chief Executive's Performance Committee.**

HWTM/Maxwell

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Notes From a Council Workshop" be received.**
- (2) That the Council agrees to publicly release the notes related to the 21 May 2026 workshop except Ohiwa Holiday Park Update.**

HWTM/Wharewera

Carried

His Worship the Mayor closed the meeting with a karakia.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.21AM.

**THE FOREGOING MINUTES ARE CERTIFIED AS BEING A
TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD AT A SUBSEQUENT
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2026**

**D G T MOORE
HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR**



**MINUTES OF AN EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING DATED, MONDAY, 29 JUNE 2026 IN THE
ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 108 ST JOHN STREET, ŌPŌTIKI AT 9.00AM.**

PRESENT:

Mayor David Moore (Chairperson)
Deputy Mayor Maude Maxwell (Deputy Chairperson), via Teams
Councillors:
Shona Browne
Barry Howe
Curley Keno, via Teams
Dean Petersen
Pāpā Wharewera

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stace Lewer (Chief Executive Officer)
Rachael Burgess (Group Manager Business Support)
Antoinette Campbell (Group Manager Strategy and Development)
Nathan Hughes (Group Manager Service Delivery)
Billy Kingi (Finance Manager)
Carol Mio (Manager People and Culture)
Michael Fryer (Strategic Policy Manager)
Joel Hingston (Principal Policy Advisor)
Raelyn Rika (Asset Lead)
Melissa Gebert (Asset Officer)
Ranjini Manoharan (Executive Support Officer)
Maheesha Silva (Governance Support Officer)
Gae Finlay (Executive Assistant and Governance Lead)

MEDIA:

Diane McCarthy (Local Democracy Reporter, The Beacon), via Teams

GUESTS:

Philip Jones (Independent Chair Risk and Assurance Committee)
Leon Pieterse (Audit New Zealand)

APOLOGIES

Nil.

DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS IN RELATION TO OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Nil.

The Asset Lead entered the meeting at 9.02am.

1. ANNUAL PLAN 2026/27

p3

The Principal Policy Advisor presented the report noting:

- The proposed rates increase of 8.7% which is lower than the figure indicated in the Information Document.
- The reduction was largely due to the commitment from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to support the harbour dredging for three years.
- No feedback was received on the Information Document.

The impact of rate increases on residents was discussed and it was noted that property valuations are outside Council's control. Additional water-related work and associated costs were acknowledged. Council agreed it was important to address current needs rather than defer costs to future generations.

RESOLVED

(1) That the report titled "Annual Plan 2026/27" be received.

(2) That Council adopts Annual Plan 2026/27.

Browne/ Nelson

Carried

2. FEES AND CHARGES SCHEDULE 2026/27 AMENDMENTS

p114

The Principal Policy Advisor advised that some errors were identified during a review of the Fees and Charges Schedule., as noted in the report.

Solid Waste

Councillor Nelson asked if the charges shown in the table on page 142 of the agenda for Passenger and 4x4 vehicle tyres should be \$8.00 for tyre only and \$12.00 including rims. The Principal Policy Advisor will check the figures.

It was agreed that minor amendments could be made under delegated authority, including any amendment resulting from Councillor Nelson's query.

RESOLVED

(1) That the report titled "Fees and Charges Schedule 2026/27 Amendments" be received.

(2) That Council adopts the amended 2026/27 Fees and Charges Schedule.

- (3) That the Council delegates to the Group Manager Strategy and Development to approve any further minor amendments or corrections to the 2026/27 Fees and Charges Schedule.

Wharewera/ Browne

Carried

Diane McCarthy joined the meeting online at 9.12am.

3. SETTING OF 2026/27 RATES, DUE DATES FOR PAYMENT AND THE PENALTIES REGIME **p145**

Councillors discussed the move to a higher targeted water rate noting it was a fairer approach and aligned costs more closely with service users. The rates instalment process and payment arrangements were also discussed, with staff advising that further alternative payment systems had been paused.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Setting of 2026/27 Rate, Due Dates for payment and the Penalties Regime" be received.
- (2) That the Ōpōtiki District Council, pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, set the following rates (including GST) for the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027:

1 GENERAL RATES

(a) General Rate

Pursuant to Section 13 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a general rate of 0.3137 cents in the Dollar of Capital Value on all rateable rating units in the Ōpōtiki District.

<i>Revenue Sought</i>	<i>\$13,392,174</i>
-----------------------	----------------------------

(b) Uniform Annual General Charge

Pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a uniform annual general charge of \$719.57 per rating unit on every rateable rating unit in the district.

<i>Revenue Sought</i>	<i>\$3,556,582</i>
-----------------------	---------------------------

2 TARGETED RATES

(a) Water Supply Charges

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate for water supply within the following water supply areas as follows:

	Supply Name	
(i) A full charge for the ordinary supply of water in respect of each separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit to which water is supplied.	Ōpōtiki/ Hukutaia Te Kaha Ōhiwa	\$664.79 \$346.85 \$1,629.36
(ii) A half charge in respect of every rating unit to which water can be, but is not supplied, situated within 100m of any part of the waterworks.	Ōpōtiki/ Hukutaia Te Kaha Ōhiwa	\$322.40 \$173.42 \$814.68
Revenue Sought:	Ōpōtiki/ Hukutaia Te Kaha Ōhiwa	\$1,606,480 \$126,203 \$35,031

Pursuant to section 19 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 a targeted rate for water supplied by meter is applied as well as the connection charge outlined above as follows

Any property that is connected to one of the above water supplies where there is a water meter, the metered volumes of water used shall be charged at the following marginal rates per cubic meter up to each daily use threshold.	Ōpōtiki/	0m ³	\$1.62
	Hukutaia	2m ³	\$2.45
		3.5m ³	\$3.26
		4.5m ³	\$4.07
		10m ³	\$4.88
	Te Kaha	0m ³	\$2.87
		2m ³	\$4.30
		3.5m ³	\$5.71
		4.5m ³	\$7.17
		10m ³	\$8.63
	Ōhiwa	0m ³	\$2.87
		2m ³	\$4.30
		3.5m ³	\$5.71
		4.5m ³	\$7.17
		10m ³	\$8.63

(b)

Sewerage rates

Pursuant to Sections 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate in each urban drainage area as follows:

	Scheme Name	2026/27
(i) One full charge in respect of every separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit connected to a public sewerage drain.	Ōpōtiki	\$658.54
	Waihou Bay	\$1,084.38
(ii) Half of the full charge in respect of each rating unit to which sewer drainage can be, but is not connected, situated within 30m from any part of the public sewerage drain.	Ōpōtiki	\$329.27
	Waihou Bay	\$542.19
(iii) 80% of the full charge in respect of every separate toilet pan, water closet, or urinal where there are multiple connections on one rating unit.	Ōpōtiki	\$526.83

Note:

A residence of not more than one household shall be deemed to have not more than one water closet, toilet pan, or urinal.

Charge (i) does not apply when charge (iii) does.

<i>Revenue Sought</i>	<i>Ōpōtiki</i>	<i>\$1,249,974</i>
	<i>Waihau Bay</i>	<i>\$27,652</i>

(c) **Waiotahe Wastewater Extension**

Pursuant to Sections 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate shall be set as a fixed amount per rating unit connected to the Waiotahe Wastewater Extension of \$0.00.

<i>Revenue Sought:</i>	<i>Waiotahe</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>
	<i>Extension</i>	

(d) **Refuse Collection Charge**

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate for kerbside refuse collection within the defined Ōpōtiki Ward and Waiotahe/Waioweka Ward collection areas set as follows:

- (i) A full charge of \$277.90 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit (except those not used or inhabited) within the defined Ward collection areas
- (ii) A half charge of \$138.95 per rating unit that is not used or inhabited within the defined Ward collection areas.

<i>Revenue Sought</i>	<i>\$667,245</i>
-----------------------	------------------

(e) **Communities of interest**

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a communities of interest targeted rate set as an amount per rating unit as follows:

- (i) **Residential communities of interest**
\$128.25 per rateable rating unit within the defined rating areas where land use is residential.

<i>Revenue Sought</i>	<i>\$295,415</i>
-----------------------	------------------

- (ii) **Rural communities of interest**

**\$58.26 per rateable rating unit within the defined rating areas
where land use is rural.**

***Revenue Sought* \$142,155**

(iii) Commercial/industrial communities of interest

**\$2,064.79 per rateable rating unit in the district where land use is
commercial or industrial.**

***Revenue Sought* \$413,990**

3 INSTALMENT DATES

**That the Ōpōtiki District Council resolves that all rates are payable in two
equal instalments, due on or before:**

- Instalment One: 21 September 2026**
- Instalment Two: 22 March 2027**

4 ADDITIONAL CHARGES ON UNPAID RATES

**That the Ōpōtiki District Council authorise the addition of penalties to unpaid
rates in accordance with the following regime:**

**Under the provisions of Sections 57 and 58 of the Local Government (Rating)
Act 2002, a penalty of 10% will be added to the amount of the first instalment
of rates remaining unpaid after the due date, on 21 September 2026; and of
the second instalment of rates remaining unpaid after the due date, on 22
March 2027.**

Browne/Wharewera

Carried

**4. NEW ROAD NAMES: PĀKŌWHAI CRESCENT, HOU O TE RANGI LANE, p153
AND NGĀTI TŪ LANE**

The Asset Officer noted the road naming process, including consultation with relevant iwi and hapū and compliance with Council's Road Naming Policy.

Page 153 of the agenda, clause 2 - Councillors suggested that the term "shelled" would be more appropriate than "bombed".

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "New Road names: Pākōwhai Crescent, Hou O Te Rangi Lane, and Ngāti Tū Lane" be received.**

(2) That the new roads are named according to standard AS/NZS 4819:2011 as follows:

- a. Pākōwhai Crescent for 3A – 7 Balneavis Place and 79 Brabant Street subdivision**
- b. Hou o Te Rangī Lane for 47 Buchanan Street subdivision**
- c. Ngāi Tū Lane for 52-54 Ford Street subdivision.**

Petersen/Nelson

Carried

Philip Jones entered the meeting at 9.40am.

Leon Pieterse entered the meeting at 9.48am.

The Asset Officer left the meeting at 9.49am.

5. SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEAD START PATHWAY

p161

The Group Manager Business Support presented the report and stated that the decision was not about amalgamation or supporting a particular future local government structure, but whether Council wished to remain involved in exploring options through the Government's voluntary Head Start pathway.

Councillors' concerns:

- Cost to ratepayers.
- Lack of Government funding support.
- Uncertainty around future governance arrangements.

Staff advised:

- Participation would allow Council to work with neighbouring Councils, gather information and help influence potential outcomes.
- Community feedback to date has largely been focused on loss of identity, with some support for an Eastern Bay Unitary Council. There is also concerns being raised about what would happen to Ōpōtiki if there was to be a Bay-wide Unitary Council.

Councillor Howe suggested an Eastern Bay collective Steering Group be formed. He did not think serious discussions could take place until there is agreement between the three Eastern Bay Councils.

It was agreed that it is important to remain engaged in the process and continue working with Eastern Bay Councils to assess options.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Board receives the report titled Simplifying Local Government Head Start Pathway".**

- (2) That Council directs staff to continue working with neighbouring councils to investigate potential local government reorganisation options.**
- (3) That Council acknowledges the Government's intention to introduce a compulsory backstop process for councils that do not progress through the Head Start pathway.**
- (4) That any decision regarding submission of an outline proposal to Central Government be brought back to Council for formal consideration and approval.**

Browne/Petersen

Carried

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.57AM.

**THE FOREGOING MINUTES ARE CERTIFIED AS BEING A
TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD AT A SUBSEQUENT
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 29 JUNE 2026**

D G T MOORE

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR



**MINUTES OF AN ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2026, IN THE ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 108 ST JOHN
STREET, ŌPŌTIKI AT 10.00AM**

PRESENT:

Philip Jones (Chairperson)
Mayor David Moore
Councillor Barry Howe
Councillor Dean Petersen

IN ATTENDANCE:

Deputy Mayor Maude Maxwell
Councillor Curley Keno
Councillor Pāpā Wharewera, via Teams

Rachael Burgess (Group Manager Business Support)
Antoinette Campbell (Group Manager Strategy and Development)
Nathan Hughes (Group Manager Service Delivery)
Carol Mio (Manager People and Culture)
Billy Kingi (Finance Manager)
Maheesha Silva (Governance Support Officer)
Ranjini Manoharan (Executive Support Officer)
Gae Finlay (Executive Assistant and Governance Lead)

GUESTS:

Darryl Knoesen (Audit New Zealand)
Andrsew Michl (New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency)

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APOLOGY

Councillor Nelson.

RESOLVED

(1) That the apology be sustained.

Petersen/HWTM

Carried

DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS IN RELATION TO OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Nil.

1. MINUTES – RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 17 NOVEMBER 2025 p6

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 17 November 2025 be received.**

Jones/Petersen

Carried

2. RISK AND ASSURANCE ACTION SHEET p15

The Group Manager Business Support advised:

- There are several items outstanding relating to the Procurement Policy.
- It is planned to bring a draft Procurement Policy to the next Risk and Assurance Committee meeting.
- An 'update expected' column will be added to the Action Sheet.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Risk and Assurance Action Sheet be received.**

HWTM/Howe

Carried

3. RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2026 p16

The Chairperson made the following comments:

- Looking at high risk items around the LTP and how they are being worked through by staff with Elected Members.
- Government reforms and the risk around the Work Plan – what are the emerging risks coming as part of the LTP process?
- Rates capping – what does that mean and when is it actually going to be effective?

The Group Manager Business Support noted that a Risk Register to the LTP will be brought to the next meeting, along with a scan of what the emerging LTP issues related to reforms are.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Risk and Assurance Committee Work Programme 2026 be received.**

Jones/HWTM

Carried

Darryl Knoesen (Audit New Zealand) entered the meeting at 10.09am.

4. FINANCIAL HEALTH REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

p17

In response to queries staff advised:

- Debt Management – have been collaborating with Bay of Plenty Regional Council, especially where there is a common ratepayer.
- Capital Works Programme – NZTA funding is a risk if we are not delivering.
- Compliance – this is another risk with the main risk being Council's wastewater infrastructure and the investment allocated over the 10-year period.
- Asset Integrity – the Group Manager Service Delivery could speak more to this at a future meeting.
- Borrowing – most of Council's borrowing is at a fixed rate.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Financial Health Report to 31 December 2025" be received.**

Petersen/Jones

Carried

5. RISK REGISTER REVIEW AND UPDATES

P25

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Risk Register review and Updates" be received.**
- (2) That the Committee agrees to include the 'Risk Matrix' developed for the Simplifying Local Government proposal to the Risk Register so that it can be monitored while the reform proposal is being considered by Central Government.**

HWTM/Howe

Carried

6. AUDIT NEW ZEALAND ANNUAL REPORT 25J MANAGEMENT LETTER

p38

The Group Manager Business Support advised:

- The report covers last years 25J audit.

- Internally, the audit process ran a lot smoother this time; have caught up on the compounding timeframe implications from the late adoption of the LTP and had staffing in place to cope with the audit.
- Project planning was worked through with the audit team.
- There are two qualifications which are based on the same qualifications made in the 24J audit, around water and roading service data available.

Darryl Knoesen, Audit New Zealand, extended an apology for the meeting from Leon Pieterse. He acknowledged that the audit went well and read out a summary of the audit, including outcomes and recommendations.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Audit New Zealand Annual Report 25J Management Letter" be received.**

Petersen/HWTM

Carried

The Executive Support Officer and the Governance Support Officer left the meeting at 10.55am.

The Executive Support Officer rejoined the meeting at 10.57am.

The Executive Support Officer left the meeting at 11.00am.

The Governance Support Officer rejoined the meeting at 11.01am.

The Executive Support Officer rejoined the meeting at 11.02am.

Andrew Michl (New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency) joined the meeting at 11.02am.

7. ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL INTERNAL ASSURANCE PROGRAMME 2025-2028 p53

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Ōpōtiki District Council Internal Assurance Programme 2025-2028 be received.**

Jones/Howe

Carried

Councillor Keno left the meeting at 11.04am.

8. DRAFT ASSET CAPITALISATION POLICY REPORT p58

The Chairperson commented as follows

- The capitalisation threshold seems a little low.
- Diminishing value for vehicles – in theory reflects the better market value, but that is not depreciation.

- Some minor changes will be discussed with the Group Manager Business Support.
- Audit will want to cast an eye over it for reasonableness.
- Relatively comfortable that the Policy is implemented.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Draft Asset Capitalisation Policy Report" be received.**
- (2) That the Committee provides feedback/recommendations on the draft Asset Capitalisation Policy (Appendix 1) directly to staff.**
- (3) That the Committee notes that the development of this policy responds to Audit recommendations and forms part of Council's financial management improvement programme.**

HWTM/Petersen

Carried

Andrew Michl introduced himself to the Committee.

9. RATEPAYER ASSISTANCE SCHEME

p86

Andrew Michl advised that the Ratepayer Assistance Scheme was modelled off a scheme in Canada which worked extremely well. It is similar to a reverse mortgage but significantly cheaper.

The Chairperson queried if the Committee has delegated authority to resolve clause 3 of the recommendations. He suggested that clause 3 be a recommendation to Council. It is important for Council to understand what it means, how much it will cost. There also needs to be more information around what the costs and risks are going forward.

The Chairperson noted that clauses 4 and 5 of the recommendations will be removed and included in a report to Council. He moved clauses 1, 2 and 3 of the recommendations, with an amendment to clause 3 to note that it is a recommendation to Council from the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Howe.

The motion was PUT and CARRIED.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Ratepayer Assistance Scheme" be received.**
- (2) That the Committee receives Appendix 1: Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS).**

(3) That the Committee recommends to Council that the Committee provides in-principle support for further development of the RAS subject to:

- **Confirmed participation from Central Government, the Local Government Funding Agency, and other Councils;**
- **Satisfactory completion of detailed design, due diligence, and financial analysis.**

Jones/Howe

Carried

10. LGFA GUARANTOR CONSIDERATION

p97

Andrew Michl spoke to the powerpoint presentation which covered the following:

- LGFA is a Funding Vehicle
- LGFA Overview
- LGFA Credit Ratings
- LGFA Capital
- Council Financial Distress – Mitigants
- Council Financial Distress – LGFA Impact
- Prudent Approach to risk Management
- LGFA Historic and forecast Financials.

Andrew Michl made the following points:

- If you want to borrow more than \$20m you need to be a guarantor
- If, in time, you have a Water CCO and that entity wants to join, that is another reason requiring guarantor status.

Responding to queries from the Chair, Andrew Michl advised:

- A Council's obligation under the guarantee is its rates as a percent of all others; as at June 2025 it was .1%
- LGFA also has security over water charges
- The discount in interest rate, once becoming a guarantor, is .1%.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "LGFA Guarantor Consideration" be received.**
- (2) That the Committee endorses the proposal for Ōpōtiki District Council to become a guarantor of the LGFA, and recommends that this be referred to Council for formal approval.**

Petersen/Howe

Carried

The Manager People and Culture left the meeting at 11.41am and returned at 11.43am.

The Governance Support Officer left the meeting at 11.54am.

11. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

p112

A revised Resolution to Exclude the Public was recommended by the Chairperson to allow Darryl Knoesen (Audit New Zealand) and Andrew Michl (Local Government Funding Agency) to remain for the public excluded section of the meeting.

SECTION 48 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION & MEETINGS ACT 1987

- 1. THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:**

12. Confirmation of In-Committee Minutes – Risk and Assurance Committee meeting 17 November 2025.

13. Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Human Resources Report.

- 2. THAT the following persons be permitted to remain at this meeting after the public has been excluded:**

Name: Darryl Knoesen (Audit New Zealand) and Andrew Michl (Local Government Funding Agency)

Items: 12-14 inclusive

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

Item No	General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
12.	Confirmation of In-Committee Minutes – Risk and Assurance Committee meeting 17 November 2025	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists.	Section 48(1)(a)
13.	Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Human Resources Report	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists.	Section 48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act or section 6 or section 7 or section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may require, which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

12.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Protect information (commercial sensitivity) Protection from improper pressure or harassment Prevent disclosure or use of official information Carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(b)(ii) Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Section 7(2)(j) Section 7(2)(h)
13.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Protection from improper pressure or harassment	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(f)

HWTM/Howe

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the resolutions made while the public was excluded be confirmed in open meeting.**
- (2) That the public be readmitted to the meeting.**

Petersen/Howe

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the in-committee minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on 17 November 2025 be received.**

HWTM/Petersen

Carried

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Human Resources" be received.**

Howe/Jones**Carried**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 12.03PM.

**THE FOREGOING MINUTES ARE CERTIFIED AS BEING A
TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD AT A SUBSEQUENT
MEETING OF THE RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 29 JUNE 2026**

**PHILIP JONES
CHAIRPERSON**

**MINUTES OF A COAST COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING DATED, TUESDAY, 30 JUNE 2026 IN THE
ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 108 ST JOHN STREET, ŌPŌTIKI AT 10.00AM**

PRESENT:

Cr Pāpā Wharewera (Chairperson)
Gaylene Dudek (Deputy Chairperson)
Te Ataarangi Parata
Tullulah Ross

IN ATTENDANCE:

His worship the Mayor David Moore

Stace Lewer (Chief Executive Officer)
Rachael Burgess (Group Manager Business Support)
Antoinette Campbell (Group Manager Strategy and Development)
Michael Fryer (Strategy and Policy Manager)
Billy Kingi (Finance Manager)
Nikki Maurirere-Emberson (Project Lead Service Delivery)
Joel Hingston (Principal Policy Advisor)
Scott James (Strategic Policy Analyst)
Gae Finlay (Executive Assistant and Governance Lead)
Ranjini Manoharan (Executive Support Officer)
Maheesha Silva (Governance Support Officer)

The chairperson opened the meeting with a Karakia.

APOLOGIES

Allen Waenga

RESOLVED

(1) That the apologies be sustained.

Parata/Ross

Carried

DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS IN RELATION TO MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Board Member Ross declared an interest in Item 08 (Coast Initiatives Fund Application – Otuwhare Marae Charitable Trust – Apanui E Tu Whanau 2027).

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – COAST COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
19 MAY 2026**

p3

The following amendment is to be made to the minutes:

- Item 02 – Group Managers’ Report – Survey Link Discussion: Board Member Dudek requested a survey link for community feedback.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minutes of the Coast Community Board meeting held on 19 May 2026 are confirmed as a true and correct record subject the amendment requested by the Board.**

Wharewera/Ross

Carried

The Executive Support Officer left the meeting at 10.12am.

2. GROUP MANAGERS’ REPORT

p8

The Group Manager Strategy and Development presented the report along with the Group Manager Business Support and the Finance Manager.

LGFA Guarantor Consideration

In response to a question regarding borrowing limits, the Finance Manager clarified that becoming an LGFA member does not change the existing financial ratios and limits reported through quarterly reporting. The \$20m ceiling is due to Council not currently being a guarantor.

Update on Regional Spatial Plan Programme-Pre-Enactment Phase

The Group Manager Strategy and Development advised that work is underway with neighbouring councils and the Regional Council on a regional spatial plan. It was noted that Council adopted the Eastern Bay Spatial Plan last year and that existing spatial plans place the Bay of plenty in a good position. Further updates will be provided.

Adoption of Climate Strategy and Action Plan

The Group Manager Strategy and Development advised that Council adopted the Climate Strategy and Action Plan last month and that future projects should have regard to its goals and objectives.

Dog Control Policy and Gambling and TAB Venue Policy

The Group Manager Strategy and Development stated that consultation is underway on the Dog Control Policy and Gambling and TAB Venue Policy.

Local Government Reform – Community Engagement Update

The Group Manager Business Support stated that Council had resolved to continue working with other Eastern Bay Councils and the Regional Council on options for the district as part of the Simplifying Local Government Reform Programme. Consultation is underway, with further community engagement planned.

Discussion focused on the importance of maintaining local representation, local voice and connections with coast communities under any future governance arrangements. Board members also discussed the importance of retaining community board funds and reserves for local benefit.

Staff noted that there is currently uncertainty regarding future governance structures representation arrangements and encourages community feedback through formal consultation channels.

Motion

Moved: Dudek

Seconded: Ross

That the Board recommends that Council considers the importance of maintaining local representation and local voice, and retaining Community Board funds and reserves for the benefit of the Coast community in any future local government reform decision-making.

The motion was PUT and CARRIED

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Board recommends that Council considers the importance of maintaining local representation and local voice, and retaining Community Board funds and reserves for the benefit of the Coast community in any future local government reform decision-making.**

Dudek/Ross

Carried

Ōpōtiki Rising – Economic Development Engagement

The Group Manager Strategy and Development provided an update on engagement for the Ōpōtiki Economic Development Strategy. It was noted that engagement had taken place in Te Kaha and that feedback received included themes relating to tourism, visitor experiences, roading access, trades and employment pathways, community facilities, recreation, housing, health support, local enterprise and youth opportunities.

Further engagement activities are planned, including community events and engagement at Waihou Bay. Feedback received will help inform the Economic Development Strategy and other related Council strategies and projects.

Board members discussed the accessibility of engagement activities, the value of networking opportunities, and the importance of promoting events and information more widely within the community.

RESOLVED

(2) That the report titled “Group Managers’ Report” be received.

Ross/Dudek

Carried

3. COAST RECREATION PROJECT ACTION PLAN

p23

The Strategic Policy Analyst provided an update on the Coast Recreation Project and advised that consultation materials, including a survey and community engagement activities, had been prepared. Consultation is scheduled to commence on 1 July 2026, within an in-person engagement event also planned.

Board members discussed the origins of the funding, potential recreation options, and the importance of community participation in the consultation process. Discussion also included aspirations for community recreational facilities and the need to consider future operational and maintenance requirements.

It was noted that feedback received through consultation would help inform recommendations to the Coast Community Board.

RESOLVED

(1) That the report titled “Coast Recreation Project Action Plan” be received.

- (2) That the Board commences consultation across the coast to better understand community needs in relation to the development of a recreational space.**

Ross/Parata

Carried

4. HONO MAI| CONNECT WITH COUNCIL – PROPOSED TE KAHA EVENT

p33

The Project Lead Service Delivery presented the proposed Hono Mai community engagement event in Te Kaha next month. The event would provide an opportunity for Council teams to engage with the community, share information on projects and services, and gather feedback.

It was noted that feedback from the previous event highlighted a desire for more in-person Council engagement and information on Council services.

Board members discussed potential timing for the event and the opportunity for Board members to participate in the planning working group and attend the event.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled “Hono Mai| Connect with Council – proposed Te Kaha event” be received.**
- (2) That the Coast Community Board confirm their support and endorsement for this event to go ahead in July 2026.**

Ross/Wharewera

Carried

The Project Lead Service Delivery left the meeting at 11.16am.

5. COAST INITIATIVES FUND REPORT

p44

The Finance Manager advised that there had been no changes from the last report other than an adjustment to the estimated interest.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled “Coast Initiatives Fund Report” be received.**

Ross/Dudek

Carried

6. COAST INITIATIVES FUND COMPLETION REPORT -

p51

KAUAETANGOHIA MARAE TE WHANAU A APANUI ANZAC REMEMBRNCE DAY

Board members noted positive feedback from the community, with comments that the event was well attended, the hall was full, and the kaupapa and kai were well received.

Board Members also discussed expenditure items funded through the application process and noted that, for future funding applications, conditions may need to be stipulated when funding is approved.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Coast Initiatives Fund Completion Report - Kauaetangohia Marae Te Whanau a Apanui ANZAC Remembrance Day" be received.**

Ross/Parata

Carried

7. COAST INITIATIVES FUND COMPLETION REPORT -

p79

**TE WHANAU A APANUI COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE –
TE ROOPU HAUORA TE KAHA MEDICAL UPGRADE PROJECT**

Board members noted that the project exceeded the initial budget and that some items were donated.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Coast Initiatives Fund Completion Report -Te Whanau A Apanui Community Health Centre – Te Roopu Hauora Te Kaha Medical Upgrade Project" be received.**

Dudek/Ross

Carried

8. COAST INITIATIVES FUND – FUNDING APPLICATION:

p95

OTUWHARE MARAE CHARITABLE TRUST – APANUI E TU WHANAU 2027

Board members supported the Kaupapa but noted that further information is required including supporting quotes and clarification of the bank details. It was also noted that previous funding of \$10,000.00 had been allocated to the previous host of the event.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Coast Initiatives Fund – Funding Application: Otuwhare Marae Charitable Trust – Apanui E Tu Whanau 2027" be received.**
- (2) That the Board declines the funding application.**

- (3) That the applicant be encouraged to reapply with supporting quotes and clarification of bank account details.

Wharewera/Parata

Carried

**9. COAST INITIATIVES FUND – FUNDING APPLICATION:
LIFE EDUCATION TRUST EBOP MOVEMENT OF MOBILE CLASSROOM**

p103

The Board discussed the application's eligibility under the current funding criteria.

Board members noted that the applicant was outside the Coast Community Board area and that previous decisions where applications from organisations outside the Coast area had been declined. It was agreed that the application be declined.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Coast Initiatives Fund – Funding Application: Life Education Trust EBOP Movement of Mobile Classroom" be received.
- (2) That the Board declines the funding application from Life Education Trust.

Ross/Parata

Carried

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 11.33AM WITH A KARAKIA.

**THE FOREGOING MINUTES ARE CERTIFIED AS BEING
A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD AT A SUBSEQUENT
MEETING OF THE COAST COMMUNITY BOARD HELD
ON TUESDAY, 11 AUGUST 2026.**

**PĀPĀ WHAREWERA
CHAIRPERSON
COAST COMMUNITY BOARD**



**MINUTES OF AN ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 20 MAY 2026, IN THE ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
108 ST JOHN STREET, ŌPŌTIKI AT 1.00PM.**

PRESENT: Councillor Dean Petersen (Chairperson)
Deputy Mayor Maude Maxwell
Councillor Steve Nelson

IN ATTENDANCE: Stace Lewer (Chief Executive Officer)
Nathan Hughes (Group Manager Service Delivery)
Rachael Burgess (Group Manager Business Support)
Antoinette Campbell (Group Manager Strategy and Development)
Ian McLeod (Programme Lead – Service and Delivery)
Billy Kingi (Finance Manager)
Nikki Maurirere-Embersson (Project Lead- Service & Delivery)
Ben Jacques (Project Coordinator- Service & Delivery)
Ranjini Manoharan (Executive Support Officer)
Maheesha Silva (Governance Support Officer)

APOLOGY

An apology from Mayor David Moore Ex Officio, was noted.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

Nil.

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE
MEETING 14 APRIL 2026**

p5

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minutes of the Performance and Delivery Committee Meeting held on 14 April
2026 are confirmed as a true and correct record.**

Petersen/Nelson

Carried

Programme Lead provided an update noting following:

- Year two update and initial year three forecast presented using high, medium and low confidence levels.
- Three scenarios modelled: deliver all projects, drop low-confidence, drop low and medium-confidence.
- Forecast carry-forward from year two to three is \$8.9 m (2.6-fold increase)
- Dropping low-confidence projects reduces spend to \$20.6m, dropping low and medium reduces to \$15.5m.
- Improvements include strengthened front-end planning, enhances delivery team, improved processes/ templates, and a shift to proactive delivery.
- External risks identified: geopolitical tensions, extreme weather, supply chain challenges and local government reform.
- Resourcing plan in development: additional project managers required, funded through capital projects with fixed-term arrangements considered.
- Ōtara water main identified as a mature, high-risk project that could be brought forward and delivered in year three within existing headroom.

The Chair queried impact of the Government announcement, response was to continue LTP delivery with agility in a changing environment.

In response to questions raised on decision requiring Council trigger, Chief Executive Officer noted that time is required to progress projects and external work. Group manager Service Delivery confirmed that internal project management capacity is limited, doubling delivery will require more project managers.

The Chair queried how to align long-term planning with delivery capacity to reduce carry forwards. The Chief Executive Officer advised this is a key objective of the transition, with improved processes to be applied to the new LTP, noting late additions create knock-on effects.

In response to a query what success looks like, the Chief Executive Officer stated a $\geq 90\%$ delivery target is what we are aiming for.

The Chair queried about visibility of outcomes. The Chief Executive Officer noted positive outcomes are being delivered, though renewals projects can be sidelined.

The Project Lead - Service and Delivery presented the Ōpōtiki Netball Resurfacing Project noting the following:

- Key dates, deliverables and a \$700,000 budget were outlined.
- Project is fully funded through Better Off funding and must be completed by 31 January 2027.
- Asset assessment identified asphalt cracking, flooding, drainage issues and eroding bank issue; no regular maintenance schedule exists for stormwater or surrounding assets.
- Court surface options presented: non-cushioned (asphalt only), acrylic, and high rebound cushioned surfaces (i.e. Rebound Ace).
- Four delivery options were outlined: Section Limited (minimum), Standard Option One (new asphalt on three courts closest to road, cushioned surface on three northern courts that doesn't require new asphalt), Standard Option Two (new asphalt on all six courts, cushioned surface that requires new asphalt on three northern courts), and Premium (above budget).
- All six courts will receive a new surface.
- The current trajectory is to proceed with:
 1. Cushioned surface on three northern courts (with lighting).
 2. New asphalt on remaining three courts (allowing for future application of acrylic surface to if contingency or underspend allows).
 3. Drainage improvements included.

Discussion noted future funding could add surface layers without redoing asphalt, so cost differences are not significant. The committee supported the proposed approach. However, requested cost options for a full six-court upgrade to a cushioned surface, and noted further information should be brought back if additional funding is required.

Concerns were raised about motorcycles and horses accessing the courts, mitigation includes barriers and closing existing fence gateways.

It was noted that if an underspend in Better Off funding occurs reallocation of approved funds is restricted to three waters projects.

The Programme Lead presented Otara Watermain replacement highlighting following:

- Water main from the treatment plant to Ōpōtiki township has defective pipe material (approx. 25 years old vs expected 80-100 years), with a major failure earlier this year.
- LTP allocation is approximately \$6m over 10 years, design has been progressed.
- A 2km high risk section has been identified, with replacement estimated at \$1.3m.

- 300 metres of pipe has been purchased at reduced cost to hold as standby stock.
- Opportunity to align replacement with road resurfacing to reduce costs.
- Project is relatively simple to deliver and contributes to renewals expenditure.

In response to a query asked by Councillor Nelson regarding warranties, the Group Manager Service and Delivery advised due diligence has been completed on the purchased pipe, with a decision to be made on whether to use it or retain it for maintenance response.

The Chair queried about the town stop bank construction. The Group Manager Service and Delivery confirmed design is underway, with consideration to fast-track sheet piling procurement while prices are favourable, managing consent risk, and potentially reporting back to the next meeting.

The Chair queried about the Te Kaha second bore. It was confirmed the bore tested well; however, high water losses are being investigated, with leakage suspected. Demand management is a priority, and additional metering is being installed. The Programme Lead noted the existing bore is at risk during peak summer use, with options under investigation including additional storage, dual source, new groundwater source, or a new reservoir, and a preferred treatment plant site identified.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report titled "Performance and Delivery – Delivery Programme Update" be received.**
- (2) That the Committee supports the direction of the Ōpōtiki Netball Court Resurfacing Project as presented.**
- (3) That the Committee requests that options and costs be explored to provide cushioned surface for all six courts.**
- (4) That if additional funding is required for the Ōpōtiki Netball Court Resurfacing Project to provide cushioned surface for all six courts, bring a report to Council for consideration.**

Petersen/Nelson

Carried

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 2.27PM.

**THE FOREGOING MINUTES ARE CERTIFIED AS BEING
A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD AT A SUBSEQUENT
MEETING OF THE PERFORAMNCE AND DELIVERY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 JULY 2026.**

**COUNCILLOR DEAN PETERSEN
CHAIRPERSON**

Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum

Open Minutes

Commencing:	Thursday 11 June 2026, 9:30am
Venue:	Council Chambers, Rotorua Lakes Council, 1061 Haupapa Street, Rotorua and online via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)
Chairperson:	Rotorua Lakes Council - Mayor Tania Tapsell
Deputy Chairperson:	Whakatāne District Council - Mayor Nándor Tánczos
Members:	Bay of Plenty Regional Council - Chair Matemoana McDonald Kawerau District Council - Mayor Faylene Tunui Ōpōtiki District Council - Mayor David Moore Taupō District Council - Deputy Mayor Kevin Taylor Tauranga City Council - Mayor Mahé Drysdale Western Bay of Plenty District Council - Mayor James Denyer
Alternate Members:	Bay of Plenty Regional Council - Deputy Chair Glenn Dougal Tauranga City Council - Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular (online) Western Bay of Plenty District Council - Deputy Chair Margaret Murray-Benge (online) Whakatāne District Council - Deputy Mayor Julie Jukes (online)
In Attendance:	Mayor Peter Revell, Thames-Coromandel District Council <u>Councillors Bay of Plenty Regional Council</u> Cr Stuart Crosby (online) Cr John Scrimgeour (online) <u>Councillors Tauranga City Council</u> Cr Glen Crowther (online) Cr Steve Morris (online) Cr Marten Rozeboom (online) Cr Rod Taylor (online) <u>Councillors Western Bay of Plenty District Council</u> Cr Grant Daly (online) <u>Chief Executives</u> Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chief Executive - Fiona McTavish Kawerau District Council Chief Executive - Morgan Godfery Ōpōtiki District Council Chief Executive - Stace Lewer Rotorua Lakes Council Chief Executive - Andrew Moraes Taupō District Council Chief Executive - Julie Gardyne Tauranga City Council Chief Executive - Marty Grenfell Western Bay of Plenty District Council Chief Executive - Matt Potton Whakatāne District Council Chief Executive - Steven Perdia

Thames-Coromandel District Council Chief Executive – Aileen Lawrie (online)

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Staff

Karen Aspey – General Manager People & Leadership; Manini Abernethy – Spatial Planning Team Leader; Coral Hair – Committee Advisor

Rotorua Lakes Council Staff

Stephanie Kelly – Acting Group Manager District Development; Damon Mathfield – Manager Spatial & Policy Planning

Western Bay of Plenty District Council

Katy McGinity, Strategic Advisor: legislative Reform and Special Projects (online)

Department of Internal Affairs (DIA)

Hēmi Smiler, Executive Director, Simplifying Local Government; Rebecca Maplesden, DIA Partnership Director, Bay of Plenty/Gisborne Tairāwhiti/ Hawke's Bay/ Manawatū-Whanganui and Taranaki

Apologies:

Taupō District Council Mayor John Funnell

The Chairperson reminded those present that this meeting was being livestreamed and recorded and that the recording would be made available on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council website [Mayoral Forum - 11 June 2026](#)

1. Karakia Whakatuwhera/Opening Prayer

A karakia was provided by Mayor Tapsell.

2. Apologies

Mayor Tapsell advised that the Minister of Local Government, the Honourable Simon Watts had been invited but was unable to attend the meeting.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:

- 1 Accepts the apology from Taupō District Council Mayor John Funnell.**

**Tapsell/Tunui
CARRIED**

3. Acceptance of Items not on the Agenda

3.1 Thames-Coromandel District Council presentation

Refer to item 7.3.

4. Order of Business

Item 7.3, the Labour Opposition Spokesperson for Local Government Tangi Utikere had put in his apologies and was unable to attend the meeting. A further invitation would be extended to Tangi Utikere to attend the September 2026 meeting.

5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Minutes

Minutes to be Confirmed

6.1 Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum Minutes - 12 March 2026

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:

- 1 Confirms the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum Minutes - 12 March 2026 as a true and correct record.

Denyer/Tapsell
CARRIED

7. Reports

7.1 Timeline of Bay of Plenty Councils' Decisions on the Head Start Pathway Proposals

Presented by: Mayor Tapsell

Key Points:

- Regular updates happening with Mayors/Chair of the Bay of Plenty councils
- Some councils had undertaken public consultation with their communities on potential options
- Recognised that councils were due to make decisions by the end of July 2026.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:

- 1 Receives the report, Timeline of Bay of Plenty Councils' Decisions on the Head Start Pathway Proposals.

Tunui/Tapsell
CARRIED

7.2 Simplifying Local Government Executive Director on Head Start Pathway

Presented by: Hēmi Smiler, Executive Director, Simplifying Local Government, Department of Internal Affairs (DIA)

Rebecca Maplesden, DIA Partnership Director, Bay of Plenty/Gisborne Tairāwhiti/ Hawke's Bay/ Manawatū-Whanganui and Taranaki

Key Points:

Head Start Pathway

- Head Start participation was encouraged, but not required
- Councils should keep progressing planning regardless of their head start status
- Acknowledged councils were having to make decisions about Head Start without a clear understanding of what a backstop reorganisation would look like
- Advised councils not to wait for a defined backstop before acting.

Backstop

- Ministers would confirm their approach to the backstop in May 2027
- The work undertaken by councils/regions could influence how Ministers shaped the backstop reorganisation.

Cabinet & Timeline

- Cabinet would receive a further update/report in May 2027, which would include confirmation of the Government's approach.

Regional Approach

- Focus on what was best for the region overall, not just individual councils
- Continue thinking and planning at a regional level.

Single Unitary Authority

- A single territorial authority becoming a unitary authority was possible however this:
 - Must be part of a broader regional proposal
 - Must demonstrate it was in the best interests of the region
 - Must show how it would collaborate regionally particularly with Regional Spatial Planning.

Regional Functions

- Some functions must be considered and managed regionally, including:
 - Regional Spatial Planning
 - Catchment Management
 - Transport
- Proposals should outline solutions for delivering these at a regional level.

Proposal Structure & Local Voice

- Proposals should clearly describe:
 - The proposed structure (e.g. tier of unitary authorities and what sat beneath)
 - How local representation/strong local voice would be maintained (e.g. local boards, community boards or advisory committees)

- Detail did not need to be highly specific (e.g. exact member numbers) but must show a credible approach.

Case for Change and meeting Assessment Criteria

- Proposals must make a strong case for change and show how assessment criteria were being met
- There were no strict thresholds for assessment criteria
- Some assessment criteria may be given more weight than others and this should be explained
- Be transparent about any trade-offs made
- Proposals would be assessed holistically, without rigid pass/fail thresholds
- Identify areas that still needed further work and were not able to be resolved.

Financial Considerations (Debt Harmonisation)

- Detailed solutions were not required at this stage
- Proposals should:
 - Acknowledge challenges like debt harmonisation
 - Indicate possible options being considered

Potential Crown Involvement

- There may be potential involvement of Crown Commissioners in backstop reorganisation although details were not confirmed at this stage.

In Response to Questions:

Funding and Financing

- Financial sustainability, including debt harmonisation, of the new entities would be front of mind for Cabinet when considering Head Start proposals
- Cabinet was interested in funding and financing more broadly and keen to consider approaches by councils for new tools to be used
- Head Start bespoke legislation could provide access to new funding and financing tools outside the Local Government Act 2002, e.g. flexibility around rates capping
- Government had stated positions on funding tools such as visitor and bed-night levies; however, the Head Start Pathway gave councils the opportunity to consider new funding and financing tools
- No dedicated transition funding confirmed from Government
- If funding was necessary to support the transition this should be included in the Head Start proposal and DIA would provide advice about funding and financing options to establish these entities
- Head Start councils would have first access to new funding and financing tools. Whether councils in the backstop process would have access to these same tools was not known at this stage.

Māori Representation

- For new unitary authorities, options for Māori wards included:
 - Redesigning wards and going out to a public poll
 - Carrying over previous Māori ward referendum results in transitional arrangements
 - Creating a statutory basis for Māori representation through legislation
- No confirmed model for Māori representation and Cabinet would decide the final approach
- If unresolved, representation issues should be explicitly included in proposals.

Head Start vs Backstop

- Councils outside the Head Start pathway would continue under current arrangements but would be incorporated into a later, centrally directed round of reforms, with fewer opportunities to shape outcomes locally
- Not certain what the design of the backstop would be in May 2027 and it was unclear what flexibility that may provide to councils in this process
- Recognised that the Head Start pathway gave councils advantages:
 - Greater flexibility
 - Access to new legislative and funding tools
 - Ability to shape local outcomes
- Recognised that the Backstop pathway provided:
 - Less flexibility, more centrally directed outcomes
 - Councils became “takers” of Head Start outcomes
- If a Head Start proposal was rejected, councils would move to the compulsory backstop process.

Stranded Councils

- Councils not aligned with Head Start proposals may become “stranded”
- Stranded councils would be encouraged to work with neighbouring councils
- Possible options:
 - Shared arrangements with neighbouring councils
 - Redistribution of regional functions
 - Councils jointly taking over functions
- Decisions about who would lead the backstop process, the Combined Territorial Boards made up of mayors, Crown Commissioners or a combination would be a decision for Cabinet in 2027
- Stranded issues likely to be addressed in the detailed design stage of the Head Start proposals.

Governance, Process and Timeline

- Key milestones:
 - 9 August 2026 – Head Start Proposals due
 - September 2026 – Cabinet signals direction
 - September 2026-May 2027 – detailed design phase
 - May 2027 – final Cabinet decision and bespoke legislation developed
 - October 2028 elections – new unitary authorities hold elections
- Some flexibility during detailed design phase, with opportunity for refinement
- Tight timelines driven by need to legislate before 2028 elections
- The Cabinet expected that there may be some changes during the detailed design phase and any changes would need to be worked through with Ministers and Cabinet to seek their comfort with changes. Significant late changes (e.g. changing number of unitaries) were not expected
- If councils were not ready to decide by 9 August 2026, then the backstop process would be followed.

Representation and local voice

- Noted Federated Farmers submission to Simplifying Local Government proposals emphasised separating urban and provincial government and strengthening local input e.g. community boards, catchment committees to ensure reforms delivered cost savings and simplified decision-making without losing responsiveness to rural communities’ needs
- Head Start Proposals should recognise the tension between:
 - Achieving efficiencies of scale; and
 - Maintaining fair and effective representation of communities of interest

and the weighting that each of these was given should be clearly demonstrated in the proposal

- A key consideration in the proposal was how local voices would be heard and ensuring strong local governance at the second tier layer would assist with mitigating the concerns raised about larger unitary authorities not hearing and seeing local communities. Suggested models included:
 - Local boards (Auckland Council)
 - Community Boards

Economies of Scale and Service Delivery

- Need to demonstrate economies of scale in proposals
- Achieved through:
 - Consolidation of services
 - Shared delivery models
- Recognised the challenges of providing evidence of economies of scale within short timeframes.

Transition Risks and Implementation

- Key risks identified:
 - Loss of staff and expertise due to uncertainty
 - Length of uncertainty period (Aug 2026 to May 2027)
 - Risk of infrastructure delivery delays
- DIA would provide Ministers with advice on the deliverability of proposals and depending on the number of proposals received implementation may be announced at the same time or staged (phased approach)
- Government was aiming to provide greater certainty from September 2026.

Boundaries and Structural Design

- Opportunity to change boundaries, but:
 - Not a central focus of Head Start
 - Required strong justification and engagement with neighbours
 - Need to understand the impact on neighbouring councils and include in the proposal
- Not constrained by existing regional boundaries
- The Government had not undertaken an exercise to determine unitary authority boundaries across New Zealand and Ministers had a genuine openness and interest in what each region decided this would look like. There was a clear signal in the Cabinet Paper that up to three unitary authorities could be created in any given region.
- If the region put forward a unitary model with more than three authorities, this would need to demonstrate economies of scale, and if not approved through the Head Start Pathway, would be progressed through the backstop process and used as a basis for going forward.

Central Government Role/Compliance and Regulatory Functions and Long-Term Plan Implications

- The new Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport had not yet begun work on establishing a national compliance and enforcement framework for local government
- Ministers were mindful that Long-term Plan and representation review processes did not sequence well with the Head Start pathway timeframes Councils were encouraged to include the impact, both on costs and resourcing, in their proposals
- An option of a “light” LTP was being discussed with the Office of the Auditor General

- Possible future options would require legislative relief or changes and this was unlikely before the General Election in November 2026 given the current legislative agenda and may not line up with a new government's 100 day plan.

Key Points - Members:

- Seeking assurance that solutions to debt disparities would be developed through the detailed design phase between September 2026 and May 2027
- Considered that the core issue facing councils was the underfunding of councils and that removing constraints (e.g. roading from rates caps) and new funding levies could ease pressures
- Transition costs (e.g. water reform) expected to be significant
- Concerns raised that existing Māori representation for territorial local authorities may be removed under Head Start and continued uncertainty about whether previous referenda would be binding
- Considered Head Start outcomes would limit future choices for councils not participating
- Questioned how tightly councils would be held to their Head Start proposal and how much ability councils had to make changes, given the limited ability to consult communities before 9 August 2026
- Expectation that the detailed design phase would allow more meaningful engagement with communities and opportunities to amend the Head Start proposal as a result of this engagement
- Strong push by elected members for authentic community input, not to be assumed as an unwillingness to participate in reform processes.
- Key issues was maintaining local voices and ensuring rural communities were not disadvantaged
- Bay Plenty councils had been delivering shared services for many years – refer to item 7.4 for further details
- Seeking relief from Government to avoid duplication of effort if major changes occurred soon after Long-term Plans completed in 2027.

The Chair thanked Hēmi Smiler and Rebecca Maplesden for their presentation and response to questions.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:

- 1 Receives the presentation on Simplifying Local Government Executive Director on Head Start Pathway.**

**Tánczos/Moore
CARRIED**

7.3 Thames-Coromandel District Council Presentation

Presented by: Peter Revell, Mayor, Thames-Coromandel District Council

Key Points:

- Mayor Revell thanked the Forum for the opportunity to put forward a proposal for Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC) to be included in the Bay of Plenty Head Start Proposal
- The purpose of the presentation was to help the members understand the TCDC district, who they were, what they were requesting and next steps
- The TCDC governance structure comprised five wards and five community boards
- As a holiday destination TCDC had summer populations of 110,000 and a resident population of 32,000 and they needed infrastructure to deal with peak summer demand
- TCDC was a district of high deprivation levels which varied across the district
- Waters was currently in-house despite best efforts to join with Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council in their joint water entity
- Strong debt position derived from a historical policy of paying debt on assets within the life cycle of the assets
- TCDC was considering several options including potential coastal or Bay of Plenty mergers. Two scenarios were considered by TCDC:
 - Scenario 1 – becoming part of a single Bay of Plenty region
 - Scenario 2 – becoming part of a sub-region that included Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council
- TCDC saw either scenario as a genuine option based on the following rationale and commonalities:

Geographical

- Colville to Lottin Point was a geographical unit
- Contiguous marine and coastal area
- Geological, landform, ecological continuity
- Faced similar challenges in climate change and resilience
- Significant catchment alignment

Cultural

- Shared community characteristics and challenges
- Marine and conservation community values
- Shared deprivation
- Shared coastline experiences
- Common recreational destination with absentee ratepayers
- Shared regulatory challenges around marine environment
- Iwi whakapapa – Mataatua, Te Arawa

Economic

- Large metro included
- Similar peak demand challenges
- Many similar communities
- Aligned with local waters done well aspiration
- Shared tourist, aquaculture and horticulture economies

Compliance with assessment criteria with weightings added to these criteria

- Simplifies local governance – 25%
- Supports the new planning system – 10%
- Economies of scale – 25%
- Maintains local voice – 30%

- Deliverability – 10%
- Other options with Waikato councils were being considered
- TCDC was currently undertaking community feedback and would then narrow options to a shortlist and go back out for community feedback before landing on a preferred option
- Committed to an option that met the Government's requirements
- Believed the mechanics of any proposal could be delivered with experienced capable managers making it work
- The most important thing to get right was representation and ensuring local voice was heard.

In Response to Questions:

- Mayor Revell had spoken to Mayor Toby Adams, Hauraki District Council
- TCDC did consider looking north to the Hauraki Gulf but the Head Start Pathway exempted Auckland Council from this process

Non-resident ratepayers mostly lived in Auckland and Hamilton and TCDC was seeking their response to options. Believed if they got it right for permanent residents then non-permanent residents would be happy.

7.4 Shared Services and Functional Review

Presentation Shared Services Roadmap

Presented by: Stace Lewer, Chief Executive, Ōpōtiki District Council and Andrew Moraes, Chief Executive, Rotorua Lakes Council

Key Points:

- A multi-criteria assessment (MCA) framework had been developed to assess the suitability of functions for shared service delivery models
- Functional analysis was also being carried out to apply a broader regional systems lens to council activities and help inform potential reorganisation planning
- Had developed a matrix, based on work the Regional Council had undertaken, that assigned where services should be delivered, individually (user pays), locally, sub-regionally, regionally, catchment or national level and where these would be funded, governed and managed
- Detailed work completed on Biosecurity function illustrated how this approach would be applied to other functions
- Transport, Catchment Management and Regional Spatial Planning were functions that were required by the Government to be delivered regionally in the Head Start proposals
- If approved today, Chief Executives would continue the functional review process applying the matrix
- The following services were identified for further evaluation and business case development:
 - Waste Management services
 - Building Consent Authority services
 - Information Technology services
- A review of spell out (BOPLASS) would be carried out to better understand whether it was the most appropriate delivery model for future shared services initiatives.

In Response to Questions:

- Recommended that pausing work now until after the Head Start proposal was not necessary as the two workstreams could continue in parallel, were complementary and built on work already in progress
- Acknowledged work pressures and were mindful of Head Start as a priority and noted the potential to leverage BOPLASS to reduce staff workload
- Noted that work on a future rating system needed to start soon to enable a smooth transition
- Suggested learning from other councils such as Auckland and Marlborough who had undertaken transitions over periods of 5-15 years
- Recommended a stocktake of 15 years of shared services work in the Bay of Plenty.

Key Points - Members:

- Comfortable that the Chief Executives maintained the focus on Head Start as a priority while enabling parallel progress with shared services and functional analysis review
- Collaboration and shared services opportunities were to be pursued, especially for long-term efficiency and future rate impact
- Emphasised the importance of showing visibility of existing shared services work
- Raised the question of when to update councils on this work and left that with Chief Executives to consider
- Auckland Council Deputy Mayor Desley Simpson was willing to speak to a future Mayoral Forum meeting.

Resolved**That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:**

- 1 Receives the report, Shared Services and Functional Review.**
- 2 Endorses the process to identify and progress additional shared services opportunities in the Bay of Plenty region.**
- 3 Endorses progressing evaluation and business case development for the following shared service opportunities:**
 - **Waste Management services**
 - **Building Consent Authority services**
 - **Information Technology services.**
- 4 Endorses the continuation of the functional review process to apply to a broader lens to council activities and support future reorganisation planning.**
- 5 Notes that progressing shared services initiatives supports regional preparedness for anticipated local government reform and strengthens collaboration across Bay of Plenty councils.**
- 6 Requests Chief Executives to report back on implementation pathways, governance considerations, risks and prioritised business cases for future shared services opportunities.**

**Tunui/Moore
CARRIED**

7.5 Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan

Presentation Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan

Presented by: Stephanie Kelly, Acting Group Manager District Development Rotorua Lakes Council; Damon Mathfield, Manager Spatial & Policy Planning Rotorua Lakes Council; Manini Abernethy Spatial Planning Team Leader Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Key Points:

- Provided an update on the Bay of Plenty regional spatial planning (RSP) programme. The programme emphasised the importance of sub-regional spatial planning within a wider regional framework to meet the requirements of the resource management system reform
- The focus of the pre-enactment phase (now to September 2026) was to set a strong foundation for post-enactment requirements
- Progress updates since the 12 March Mayoral Forum meeting included:
 - Letter sent 21 April 2026 from Mayoral Forum to Minister Bishop seeking confirmation of appropriateness of proposed approach. Response received 27 May 2026
 - Establishment of a Project Control Group (PCG) of senior staff across all the partner councils
 - Technical groups now working on specific parts of the project. Council partners were working together to finalise the draft data stocktake and gap analysis report
 - Hui 11 June 2026 of Council Māori policy units across the region to develop approach for working with iwi and hapū at all levels of the project
 - A plan on a page encapsulated the process and legislative timeframes
 - Draft process agreement and programme plan workshops
 - A draft communications and engagement framework was being developed
- Post enactment activities would be undertaken that would trigger the establishment of the Spatial Planning Committee and secretariat
- Next steps included:
 - partnership with iwi
 - pre-enactment engagement with partners and key stakeholders
 - developing process agreement option reports and programme plan for direction from the September Mayoral Forum.

In Response to Questions:

- The joint committees set up across the region reported to each council who then reported to the Mayoral Forum
- The RSP would need to align with boundaries from the Simplifying Local Government process and should Thames-Coromandel District Council become part of a Bay of Plenty unitary council, the RSP would need to take that into account
- The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) was the administrator of the offshore islands and acted as a local authority in terms of planning matters. The process agreement would outline in more detail the co-ordination between the DIA and local authorities to ensure offshore islands were appropriately integrated into RSPs.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum:

- 1 Receives the report, Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan.**

Tapsell/Drysdale

CARRIED

8. Consideration of Items not on the Agenda

None

9. Karakia Kati/Closing Prayer

A karakia was provided by Mayor Tapsell.

12:12 pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

Chair Tania Tapsell
Chairperson, Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum

Regional Transport Committee

Open Minutes

Commencing:	Friday 26 June 2026, 9.30 am
Venue:	Council Chambers, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)
Chairperson:	Cr Ken Shirley - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC)
Deputy Chairperson:	Cr John Scrimgeour – BOPRC
Members:	Cr Matemoana McDonald – Chair, BOPRC, Cr Berice Julian – Alternate, Kawerau District Council (KDC), Mayor David Moore - Ōpōtiki District Council (ODC) (via Zoom), Mayor Tania Tapsell - Rotorua Lakes Council, Mayor Mahé Drysdale - Tauranga City Council (TCC), Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular – Alternate, TCC, Mayor James Denyer - Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC), Cr Grant Dally – Alternate, WBOPDC, Mayor Nándor Tánczos - Whakatane District Council (WDC) (via Zoom), Deputy Mayor Julie Jukes – Alternate, WDC (via Zoom), Andrew Corkill - Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), Ngaire Atmore – Alternate, NZTA (via Zoom), Steve Zahorodny - Alternate, KiwiRail (non-voting) (via Zoom)
In Attendance:	<u>External Advisor:</u> Phil Gillbanks – NZ Police Road Safety Advisor <u>BOPRC:</u> Cr Tim Maltby, Cr Kat Macmillan, Oliver Haycock – Director, Public Transport, Staff Presenters – as listed in the minutes, Amanda Seath – Committee Advisor <u>External:</u> Cr Glen Crowther – TCC, Public Forum Presenters – as listed in the minutes
Apologies:	Mayor Faylene Tunui – KDC, Dan Kneebone – Port of Tauranga Advisor, Marie Rutherford – NZ Automobile Association Advisor

1. Apologies

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Mayor Tunui, Dan Kneebone and Marie Rutherford tendered at the meeting.**

Julian/Denyer
CARRIED

2. Chair's Statement

The Chair reminded all present that the meeting was being livestreamed and recorded, and the recording would be made available on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council YouTube channel following the meeting: [Regional Transport Committee 26 June 2026](#).

3. Order of Business

Agenda Item 7.3 - Matakana Island Ferry Financial Assistance - Options Assessment was to be taken following Agenda Item 6.1 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes, to accommodate members of the public who had travelled from Matakana Island.

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Confirms the changes to the Order of Business as detailed above.**

Scrimgeour/Tunui
CARRIED

4. Public Forum

4.1 Debs Turner - Bus Routes 20, 21, 22 and the OnDemand Service

Key Points:

- Frequent public transport patron - provided feedback based on personal observations/experiences:
 - The majority of bus stops were too far apart
 - Benefits would be gained from running some of the Tauranga routes anti-clockwise e.g. Routes 1, 5 and 2 - particularly on weekends where current scheduling caused missed connections to other routes
 - If Route 20 travelled down Girven Road to Maranui Street, then via State Highway 2 to Te Puke, passengers would save time not having to go to Bayfair
 - Mount Maunganui services would benefit from smaller vehicles (similar to the BayBus OnDemand model) due to the narrow streets. This would also provide improved accessibility given the long walking distances to bus stops
 - Route 21 needed a bus stop closer to the shops/cafes at the top end of town to make it more accessible
 - Disappointed at the OnDemand service ceasing as it was an important means of transport for many individuals and families with limited options
 - Simple changes and listening to the community was key in getting more people on buses
- Highlighted the efficiencies and ease of use with public transport in Christchurch, in relation to timetabling and connectivity to the main centre.

Key Points - Members:

- Commended Debs for her regular feedback which assisted staff to understand issues i.e. driver and scheduling errors, missed stops and

identifying improvements to services.

In Response to Questions:

- Had provided feedback during public consultation prior to the December 2018 bus network redesign, however did not feel the majority of people supported changes that were ultimately implemented.

4.2 Lindsey Horne - The Future is Rail

Presentation: The Future is Rail

Key Points:

- A sold-out event held in May 2026 saw the return of a passenger train to The Strand in Tauranga, travelling through the Kaimai tunnel and taking passengers over the Matapihi Bridge, to Mount Maunganui and Ōmokoroa
- There was strong community support for the vision of train stations in Pāpāmoa, downtown Tauranga and other locations linking communities and reducing congestion
- Requested key considerations of the Committee:
 - Enabling regular event trains into the region this year for large events e.g. international cricket and concerts
 - Identify the rail corridor and station sites in the Regional Spatial Plan so future rail options were not prevented
 - A feasibility study for passenger rail be included in the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) for funding, co-funded with NZTA
 - Advocate for central government to future-proof Kaimai tunnel and for electrification of the golden triangle.

In Response to Questions:

- Questions that a feasibility study would answer included funding options; operating/governance structure; service timetabling; phased timing e.g. whether inter-regional should be introduced first to enable metro services; which 'realised benefits' rail could enable e.g. addressing congestion, enabling housing and connecting Auckland, Hamilton, the Port etc.]

4.3 Heidi Hughes - The National Public Transport Month Campaign

Presentation: Bay of Plenty's Mode Shift Movement

Tabled Document 1 - Briefing Paper - Bay of Plenty's Mode Shift: A partnership to turn transport investment into transport habits

Key Points:

- The Wednesday Challenge was a behaviour change programme working with schools and commuters to encourage people to use alternative modes of transport, particularly during high peak times
- Currently received no funding from councils in the Bay of Plenty
- Provided statistics to date of the nationally expanding programme, sourced from live data
- Outlined foundation programmes and other campaigns underway – Public Transport Month and Walk to Work for Good
- Investment in the programme through the RLTP would multiply the benefits gained and the impact on people's transport habits.

Key Points - Members:

- Commended the positive impact observed with reduction of vehicles/congestion on Wednesdays, particularly around schools and noted the potential for extending these benefits.

Key Points - Staff:

- The RLTP development process ran in parallel with councils' Long term Plan (LTP) process, and would assist the Committee to determine priorities for the region. Any projects included in the RLTP must also be included in the relevant councils' LTP
- Whilst BOPRC chose not to make a provision for this initiative in transport budgets during the recent Annual Planning process, other council departments may have alternative options to assist with seed funding.

In Response to Questions:

- Noted a cultural shift in schools beyond the initial Wednesday Challenge, with changes evident in fuller bicycle stands and less occupied carparks
- Had a list of schools wanting to join once funding was secured – the annual cost to run the programme was approximately \$2k per school.

4.4 Mr Maru Samuels – Barge Subsidy for Matakana Island and Rangiwaia Island Residents

Tabled Document 2 - Matakana Island - Connecting People to Life and Community

Key Points:

- Mr Samuels was joined by Matakana Island residents Pania Wilson and Pamela Tutaki
- Fully supported the recommendations in the report (Agenda Item 7.3 - Matakana Island Ferry Financial Assistance - Options Assessment), especially endorsing Option 5 (b)
- Every journey for residents of Matakana Island began with a ferry crossing as it was the primary connection to the mainland, connecting residents with work, education, healthcare and essential services
- These everyday trips enabled residents to connect with other communities, participate in society and contribute to the economy
- Acknowledged the conversations and visits undertaken by staff to engage with the community over the past 12 months and commended the process.

Key Points - Members:

- NZTA did not subsidise vehicles travelling on ferries as the priority was to subsidise people's movements, rather than vehicles.

In Response to Questions:

- Confirmed that the views and support expressed in the presentation were shared by the majority of the Matakana Island community
- Had considered the options in the report and the current budget allocation, with a preference for Option 5 (b). Did not support re-allocation of the current budget.

5. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

6. Minutes

Minutes to be Confirmed

6.1 Regional Transport Committee Minutes - 20 February 2026

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Confirms the Regional Transport Committee Minutes - 20 February 2026 as a true and correct record.

Denyer/Scrimgeour
CARRIED

7. Reports

Decisions Required

7.1 Matakana Island Ferry Financial Assistance - Options Assessment

Presented by: Niki Carling – Manager, Transport Planning and Andrew Williams – Team Leader, Transport Strategy

Key Points:

Considered Option 5 (b) in the report as the best option for delivering within the existing budget and before the next financial year, whilst minimising administrative complexity.

Resolved

- 1 Receives the report, Matakana Island Ferry Financial Assistance - Options Assessment;
- 2 Notes the NZTA position on funding the transport of vehicles on ferries included in *Attachment 1*;
- 3 Endorses Option 5(b) as outlined within the report for further development and implementation;
- 4 Notes the inclusion of the Matakana Ferry as an integral (exempt) service in the draft Bay of Plenty Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-36.

Denyer/Scrimgeour
CARRIED

10.27 am – The meeting adjourned.

10.43 am – The meeting reconvened.

7.2 Chairperson's Report

Tabled Document 3 - Agenda Item 7.1, Attachment 5: Road safety education and promotion reports from sub regions

Presented by: Oliver Haycock – Director, Public Transport, Simon Bell – Manager, Transport Operations and Andrew Williams – Team Leader, Transport Strategy

Key Points:

- Whilst the Matakana Island Ferry was not currently eligible for SuperGold cardholder discounts, exemptions could be granted at ministerial discretion.

Key Points - Members:

- BOPRC was the only public transport authority that offered free bus services for school children.

In Response to Questions:

- Staff would circulate the latest BayBus OnDemand trial report to members via email following the meeting
- Feedback would be sought during future changes to the network which had potential for significant impact on patrons. Staff also held an extensive catalogue of feedback received, used to identify opportunities to incorporate during review processes
- Under the National Ticketing Solution (NTS), each region had the discretion to set their own fares
- NZTA guidance on the placement of urban bus stops was every 400 metres – the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) contained a KPI to achieve 80% of residential dwellings within 500 metres of a bus stop.
- Express services would be a key consideration during future developments

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Chairperson's Report;**
- 2 Endorses the draft letter to NZTA in Attachment 4, in support of Whakatāne District Council's request to retain the current 100% Funding Assistance Rate for all Special Purpose Roads, and delegates authority to the Chair to approve any minor amendments before signing the final letter on behalf of the committee;**
- 3 Writes a letter to the Minister of Transport advocating for the Matakana Island Ferry service to be eligible for the SuperGold concessionary fare scheme, and delegates authority to the Chair to sign on behalf of the Committee.**

**Denyer/Scrimgeour
CARRIED**

Andrew Corkill **abstained** from voting.

Information Only

7.3 NZTA Waka Kotahi Quarterly Update

Presentation: Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency Quarterly Update

Andrew Corkill – Director Regional Relationships, Waikato and Bay of Plenty, NZTA

Key Points:

- Outlined the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) development timeline and a potential drop in funding due to the fuel crisis/ effects on revenue gained through fuel excise taxes
- Provided an update on the State Highway Investment Proposal (SHIP), which depended on the release of the Government Policy Statement for Land Transport (GPS) to confirm priorities
- The National Ticketing System, Motu Move (NTS) was now being rolled out in greater Christchurch and a roadshow would come to the Bay of Plenty for the Committee to be involved
- Average speed safety cameras installed were observing greater driver compliance
- Community driver testing officers were being brought to the Eastern and Western Bay for people that faced barriers in obtaining their licence
- Summarised responses and works underway to rectify impacts from extreme weather events
- Provided updated on Takitimu North Link (Stages 1 and 2), Tauriko West and Ōmanawa Bridge replacement projects
- State Highway (SH) 29 safety improvements and maintenance had been completed
- SH2 safety improvements were underway, with a programme of works agreed upon in consultation with the community regarding the Appleton Road intersection, raised in the public forum of a previous meeting.

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, NZTA Waka Kotahi Quarterly Update.**

**Tapsell/Shirley
CARRIED**

Decisions Required (Continued)

7.4 Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-2036 - Approval for Public Consultation

Presented by: Andrew Williams – Manager, Transport Strategy and Tapuwaerenga Hall – Transport Planner

Key Points:

- The Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) provided was a working draft

- Highlighted a key risk of delaying consultation would cause misalignment with the RLTP development and future funding through the NLTP.

Key Points - Members:

- Highlighted the importance of specific iwi/hapū consultation during this process, particularly as landowners
- Noted that this was a large amount of mostly new information provided to the Committee following the merging of the Public Transport Committee.

In Response to Questions:

- Work on improving the Waihi Beach bus service was underway, however the RPTP process itself did not affect this or other service reviews e.g. Katikati to Ōmokoroa
- This was a strategic document with an action plan being the next step, which would feed into the RLTP process to support funding outcomes
- Acknowledged the large amount of information provided and reminded members that the process to date had been thorough, and undertaken by staff and elected members through the previous Public Transport Committee
- Within the RPTP there were short, medium and long term aspirations for each part of the subregions
- As the RPTP was a draft document, there was significant opportunity through the submission process to provide input on aspects members would like to see have a stronger presence/consideration in the document
- As part of consultation, direct communication would be sent to a stakeholder list which included iwi/hapū contacts and Hauora centres as additional avenues for receiving feedback.

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-2036 - Approval for Public Consultation;**
- 2 Approves the draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-36 for public consultation in accordance with s125 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003;**
- 3 Authorises the undertaking of a special consultative procedure, as provided for under s87(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2002, to consult on the Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-36;**
- 4 Delegates the Director, Public Transport, in consultation with the Chair of the Regional Transport Committee where appropriate, to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-36, prior to public release;**
- 5 Approves Key Performance Indicators 2 and 17 for inclusion in the draft RPTP 2026-36.**

**Scrimgeour/Denyer
CARRIED**

- 6 Appoints a subcommittee to undertake hearings and deliberations on the draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-36, for recommendation to the Regional Transport Committee, made up of the following members:**

- **Cr Ken Shirley – BOPRC**
- **Mayor Mahé Drysdale – TCC**
- **Mayor James Denyer - WBOPDC**
- **One member each to represent Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau District Councils, (with discretion to appoint an alternate member); to be advised to the Chair via email**
- **One member to represent Rotorua Lakes Council (with discretion to appoint an alternate member), to be advised to the Chair via email.**

**Drysdale/Tapsell
CARRIED**

Information Only (Continued)

7.5 Public Transport Procurement Programme Update

Presentation: Public Transport Procurement Programme Update

Presented by: Jen Proctor – Principal Advisor, Transport

Key Points:

- Noted that this was a complex programme with an ambitious timeline
- Outlined the procurement timelines and phases
- The reason for the 15 – 18 month implementation phase timeline was to enable mobilisation of services and zero emission fleets, supporting procurement of infrastructure, along with other operation requirements e.g. bus depots
- The process for the Eastern Bay was slightly different following a recent network review, and complimentary options to deliver higher outcomes were being explored
- Outlined programme considerations including unit structure, network design, contract length and funding
- Funding bids to the 2027-30 NLTP needed to be submitted by December 2026, with future funding levels not formally confirmed until late 2027.

Key Points - Members:

- Expressed concern over the timeframes, implications of local government reform and highlighted the importance of flexibility in the contracts to address these concerns.

In Response to Questions:

- Contract extensions had already been secured for Tauranga urban, Tauranga schools, the northern corridor and Rotorua. However, further contract extensions were unlikely to be successful
- Noted that extensions had also been made around delivery of the NTS to mitigate risk around this programme
- The 15 to 18 month guideline was to allow for new entrants to the region time to acquire land and resources, set up depots, driver resourcing/training etc. There were longer lead times associated with the capital works to deliver supporting infrastructure for zero-emission vehicles. Market engagement with suppliers supported these timeframes
- A targeted approach to engagement was being undertaken, along with broader consultation through the RPTP and RLTP processes

- Noted the additional dimension created by the local government reforms, and advice was being sought from NZTA and Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) in relation to the impacts on this process
- Moving to a zero emission fleet was not compulsory, however central government had a target for public transport to be zero emission by 2035. It was becoming increasingly challenging to source new diesel vehicles.

Resolved

That the Regional Transport Committee:

- 1 Receives the report, Public Transport Procurement Programme Update;**
- 2 Notes the proposed changes to the public transport units and that these have been included in the draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2026-2036.**

**Julian/Denyer
CARRIED**

8. Verbal Update Opportunity from Committee Members and Advisors

8.1 BOPRC Chair - Cr Matemoana McDonald

Key Points:

- Suggested a workshop covering the issues raised today in terms of public transport would be critical, and should also include the costs of public transport over the past three years and what was likely to occur in the transport portfolio moving forward.

8.2 Chairperson Cr Ken Shirley

Key Points:

- Agreed that a workshop should be scheduled to focus on the potential challenges, issues and financial implications for regional transport (especially public transport), in the context of the potential new entities that would come out of local government reform
- The workshop could include a presentation from public transport operators, along with an expert in the public transport space provided from NZTA.

8.3 Inspector Phil Gillbanks - NZ Police Road Safety Advisor

Key Points:

- There was a wider picture across the whole network that still needed considering for public transport and the future
- Although Bay of Plenty was sitting plus 1 on fatalities across the network, the highest number was currently sitting with the Waikato region

- Point to point cameras were working well and overall speeds looked to be reducing
- Oral fluid testing for drugs had begun to be rolled out with testing started and some positive results being shown.

12.46 pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

Cr Ken Shirley
Chairperson, Regional Transport Committee

Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee

Open Minutes

Commencing:	Friday 3 July 2026, 10:00am
Venue:	Council Chambers, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)
Chairperson:	Mayor Faylene Tunui - Kawerau District Council (KDC)
Members:	<u>Ōpōtiki District Council (ODC):</u> Mayor David Moore, Cr Curley Keno (Alternate) (via Zoom) (until 12:09pm) <u>Tauranga City Council (TCC):</u> Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular (Alternate), Cr Kevin Schuler (Alternate) (both via Zoom) <u>Whakatāne District Council (WDC):</u> Mayor Nándor Tanczos <u>Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC):</u> Mayor Tania Tapsell (via Zoom) until 12:00pm <u>Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana (BOPRC):</u> Deputy Chair Glenn Dougal, Cr John Scrimgeour (Alternate) <u>Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC):</u> Cr Shane Beech (Alternate) <u>National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)</u> Shona Morgan – Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor
In Attendance:	<u>Emergency Management Bay of Plenty (EMBOP):</u> Jono Gracie – Regional Manager; Paul Greenshields – Manager, Planning; Stace Tahere – Manager, Operations; Shell Brandt – Advisor, Planning; Samme Moore – Senior Advisor, Communications and Engagement <u>TCC:</u> Sarah Omundsen – General Manager Regulatory and Community Services <u>WDC:</u> Leny Woolsey. General Manager Strategy and Growth <u>BOPRC:</u> Reuben Fraser – General Manager, Regulatory Services; Merinda Pansegrouw – Committee Advisor <u>WBOPDC:</u> Matt Potton, Chief Executive (Via Zoom) <u>Northland CDEM:</u> Brendan Gray, Partnerships Manager – Emergency Management – Northland Emergency Management Group <u>Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK):</u> Sasu Wihapi (via Zoom) <u>External:</u> As listed in the minutes
Apologies:	Deputy Chair Mayor James Denyer, Mayor Mahé Drysdale and Mayor Tania Tapsell for early departure at 12:00pm

Declaration of Public Recording

Committee members were reminded that the meeting was being recorded and that the recording would be made available on the BOPRC website and archived for a period of three years: [Civil Defence Emergency Management Joint Committee Meeting - 3 July 2026](#)

Opening Karakia

Provided by: Stace Tahere - Manager, Operations, EMBOP.

Recognition of Cr Malcolm Campbell

- Acknowledged the significant service and contribution of Councillor Malcolm Campbell following his passing on 21 May 2026 after a short illness
- Recognised his more than 20 years of dedicated service to the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, including his roles as Mayor of Kawerau and Eastern Bay constituency Regional Councillor
- Noted his strong commitment to community wellbeing, regional collaboration, and resilience-building, and formally recorded its appreciation for his valued leadership and governance contributions
- A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect. The Committee expressed its sincere condolences to Councillor Campbell's family, colleagues, and the wider community.

Recognition of Volcanologist Brad Scott

Brad Scott joined the meeting via Zoom.

- Acknowledged and thanked Brad Scott for his outstanding contribution over 52 years as a volcanologist with Earth Sciences New Zealand (formerly GNS Science)
- Recognised Brad's significant support to the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group, particularly his expertise in volcanic monitoring, risk assessment, emergency response, and his ability to communicate complex scientific information to decision-makers and communities
- Extended appreciation for his longstanding service and ongoing contribution to the science sector in his new Emeritus role.

Welcome

- Jono Gracie, Regional Manager, EMBOP
- Matt Potton, WBOPDC new Chief Executive
- Shona Morgan, Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor, NEMA, standing in for Lily Foulds.

1. Apologies

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

- 1 Accepts the apologies from Deputy Chair Mayor James Denyer, Mayor Mahé Drysdale and Mayor Tania Tapsell (for early departure at 12:00pm) as tendered at the meeting.**

**Moore/Dougal
CARRIED**

2. Order of Business

The Order of business was changed to address agenda Item 8.1 at the commencement of the meeting to acknowledge Cr Malcolm Campbell and welcome the new BOPRC alternate representative, Cr John Scrimgeour.

3. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None advised.

4. Minutes

Minutes to be Confirmed

4.1 Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Minutes - 16 April 2026

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. Confirms the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Minutes - 16 April 2026 as a true and correct record.

Tunui/Moore
CARRIED

2. Reports

Decisions Required

5.1 Acknowledgement of Councillor Malcolm Campbell and Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Joint Committee - Membership Update

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. Receives the report, Acknowledgement of Councillor Malcolm Campbell and Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Joint Committee - Membership Update.
2. Acknowledges with appreciation the significant contribution of Councillor Malcolm Campbell to the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee and expresses its sincere condolences on his passing;
3. Confirms the appointment of Councillor John Scrimgeour as an alternate member of the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee, representing the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, as recommended by Regional Council at its Council meeting dated 25 June 2026; and
4. Welcomes BOPRC Alternate representative, Councillor John Scrimgeour to the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee.

Moore/Tánczos
CARRIED

5.2 Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Statutory Appointments

Presented by: Jono Gracie EMBOP Regional Manager.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. Receives the report, Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Statutory Appointments;
2. Endorses the appointment of Jonathan Gracie, Regional Manager, Emergency Management Bay of Plenty as Alternate Group Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s26(2) of the CDEM Act;
3. Endorse the appointment of Stace Tahere, Manager Operations, Emergency Management Bay of Plenty as Group Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s26(1) of the CDEM Act;
4. Endorses the appointment of Sam Fellows, Group Manager, Organisational Performance and Innovation, Rotorua Lakes Council as Local Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s27(1) of the CDEM Act 2002;
5. Endorses the appointment of Bradley Singh, General Manager, Infrastructure, Western Bay of Plenty District Council as Local Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s27(1) of the CDEM Act 2002;
6. Endorses the appointment of Matthew Leighton, Planning and Policy Manager, Western Bay of Plenty District Council as Local Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s27(1) of the CDEM Act 2002;
7. Endorses the appointment of Joel Hingston, Principal Policy Advisor, Opotiki District Council as Local Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s27(1) of the CDEM Act 2002;
8. Rescinds the appointment of Mark Crowe, former Director, Emergency Management Bay of Plenty as Group Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group as defined under s26(3) of the CDEM Act 2002;
9. Rescinds the appointment of Tom McEntyre, former employee of Tauranga City Council as Local Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group; and
10. Rescinds the appointment of Adele Henderson as Local Controller for the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group due to a change in role.

Dougal/Tánczos
CARRIED

Minute note: Mayor Tánczos advised that Whakatāne District Council was preparing a formal request to the Joint Committee, seeking the rescindment of Mike Avery as a Local Controller. Accordingly, Mike Avery's name was removed from "**Schedule 1 - Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Appointed Controllers**" signed by the Chair, pending receipt of the notification to be submitted to the Joint Committee for formal rescindment at the next meeting.

5.3 The Final Draft of the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Annual Plan for 2026-2027

Presented by: Paul Greenshields, EMBOP Manager, Planning.

Key Points - Staff:

- The draft 2026/2027 Annual Plan would operationalise the strategic direction set out in the Group Plan and aligned with its 12 strategic objectives and established the work programme for the 2026/27 year
- Mirrored the Four R's (risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery) framework and structure of the Group Plan
- Activities would be led by EMBOP, with delivery requiring engagement and contribution from Group members and partner agencies
- Pointed out that activities had been assigned priorities of A, B or C, with A priorities representing the Group's highest-priority and core activities
- Progress on activities would be reported quarterly through governance reporting
- The 2026/27 Annual Plan contained 19 Priority A activities, representing a comprehensive work programme for the year
- Confirmed that since the Committee's previous consideration of the Annual Plan, the review of the Regional Fuel Plan had been elevated to a Priority A activity due to the significance of the current global fuel situation
- Subject to the approval of the Annual Plan, the Group Office would develop a coordination plan setting out timelines, quarterly milestones and lead responsibilities for implementation.

Key Points - Members:

- Sought clarification on how risks identified in the Annual Plan, particularly those relating to the proposed Emergency Management legislation and the changing operating environment, would be monitored and reported to the Committee
- Requested that members be kept informed of decisions affecting the Group that were being made externally
- Raised a question regarding including a priority in the plan relating to the coordination of central government funding, noting that discussions had already occurred between councils and relevant parties.

In Response to Questions:

- Advised that updates on identified risks would be provided through the regular performance reporting cycle
- The Emergency Management Bill was currently before Parliament and that further work programmes would be developed by NEMA as the legislation progressed
- Pointed out that legislative changes might influence how some activities and legislative requirements were delivered in the future
- Confirmed that that relevant updates from NEMA would be circulated to members through the usual communication channels as decisions were made
- Confirmed that the coordination of central government funding had been raised through the Co-ordinating Executive Group (CEG) as an action point, in close liaison with NEMA.

Items for Staff Follow Up:

- EMBOP to continue reporting on identified risks and legislative developments through the regular performance reporting cycle
- EMBOP to circulate updates from NEMA to Committee members as information became available regarding the Emergency Management Bill and related reforms
- To amend the draft 2026/2027 Annual Plan by incorporating a statement regarding the coordination of central government funding, which was presently being progressed as a CEG action point.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

- 1. Receives the report, The Final Draft of the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Annual Plan for 2026-2027;**
- 2. Supports amending the Final Draft of the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Annual Plan 2026-2027 to include a statement noting that the coordination of central government funding had been identified as an issue and was being progressed through the Co-ordinating Executive Group, in collaboration with NEMA and relevant national work programmes; and**

**Tánczos/Tunui
CARRIED**

- 3. Approves the Final Draft of the Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Annual Plan for 2026-2027, subject to the inclusion of amendment contained in Resolution 2.**

**Dougal/Beech
CARRIED**

Information Only

5.4 Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Training KPI Report

Presented by: Stace Tahere, Manager, Operations.

Key Points:

- Since the April 2026 meeting, 11 training courses had been delivered across the region. Training had focused on intermediate and functional courses, supporting both new personnel entering the emergency management sector and the development of more senior operational capability
- Working closely with iwi partners to deliver joint training programmes involving council, iwi and emergency management personnel
- Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) training was being provided to partner agencies in response to identified increasing demand
- Increased demand for multi-agency coordination training reflected the growing frequency and complexity of emergency events
- A Tier 2 regional exercise was scheduled for September 2026, involving Bay of Plenty councils and partner agencies
- A national Tier 4 exercise, led by NEMA and focused on a Pacific tsunami scenario, was scheduled for October 2026

- The Bay 8 surge capability programme would continue in the coming financial year, providing a pool of trained council staff from across the region who could be deployed to support areas affected by emergencies
- The recent recruitment campaign for New Zealand Response Team 16 had attracted strong public interest and a high number of prospective volunteers. (New Zealand Response Team 16 was recognised as an important regional capability, providing volunteer support during emergencies, including community welfare assistance, flood response, road clearance and deployment to affected communities)
- The activities outlined, aligned with and supported delivery of the Annual Plan priorities.

Key Points - Members:

- Endorsed the continued focus on training and capability development and acknowledged the progress being made in this area
- Thanked staff for excellent work; invited liaison with Whakatāne District Council staff to include WDC's most recent training data in future reports.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

- 1. Receives the report, Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Training KPI Report.**

**Dougal/Tánczos
CARRIED**

5.5 Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Office Annual Plan Performance Monitoring Quarterly (Q3) Report 2025-2026

Presented by: Paul Greenshields, Manager, Planning.

Key Points:

- Confirmed that steady progress had been made against the current Annual Plan for 2025-2026, despite weather events earlier in the year
- Reported that the activity to develop, complete and socialise a regional guideline for engagement in land-use planning processes would not be fully completed within the current financial year. To mitigate this delay, the focus for the current year had been narrowed to completing the development phase of the guideline. The remaining work would be carried forward into the 2026/27 Annual Plan as a Priority A activity
- Quarter 4 results would be reported through the Group Annual Report
- Apart from the land-use planning guideline activity, all Annual Plan activities had been completed
- The forthcoming Annual Report would outline completed activities, achievements and successes and would be presented through the next governance reporting cycle.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. Receives the report, Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Office Annual Plan Performance Monitoring Quarterly (Q3) Report 2025-2026.

**Tunui/Beech
CARRIED**

5.6 National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Update Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Joint Committee - July 2026

Presented by: Shona Morgan, Senior Regional Emergency Management Advisor, NEMA.

Key Points:

- The Emergency Management Bill (No 2) was expected to progress through its second reading in Parliament during this week
- Advised that, while the offshore island provisions were expected to commence following Royal Assent, NEMA's Policy Team had confirmed there would be sufficient time for implementation, engagement, and guidance before the provisions took effect
- Provided an update on progress with the Emergency Management Sector Operational Systems (EMS-OS) Programme Delivery project following the successful allocation of funding
- The regional EMS-OS workshop hosted by the BOPCDEM had been well attended by councils across the region
- Feedback from the workshop would help inform the next stage of the project and support development of the subsequent business case.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. Receives the report, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Update Bay of Plenty CDEM Group Joint Committee - July 2026.

**Tánczos/Beech
CARRIED**

5.7 Emergency Management Bay of Plenty Regional Manager's Written Update

Presented by: Jono Gracie, Regional Manager, EMBOP.

Key Points:

- Outlined the implications of the Emergency Management Bill (No. 2) for Joint Committee members, with supporting information provided in the agenda pack
- Highlighted that emergency management was increasingly being recognised as a core council function, aligning with the Group's submission on the Bill
- Pointed out that not all matters raised in the Group's submission had been adopted, including the issue of offshore island responsibilities
- Reiterated the concern that shared responsibility for offshore islands could create uncertainty around accountability and decision-making during

emergencies. We expect to be contacted by the Department of Internal Affairs following EM Bill implementation to progress arrangements.

- The proposed multi-member Emergency Management Committee framework closely reflected the existing Joint Committee structure, with enhanced clarity regarding local responsibilities: the Bill would require committees to plan for emergency management, identify hazards and risks, and implement relevant aspects of regional emergency management plans
- Advised that Mayors would retain emergency declaration powers, with further clarification provided in the legislation regarding declaration arrangements and mayor-elect powers
- Information sheets in the agenda provided further details on the proposed multi-member Emergency Management Committee model and the role of mayors under the Bill
- Further training and guidance on the new legislative framework would be provided once the Bill was enacted.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted with concern that the issue of offshore island responsibilities had been raised through the Group's submission on the Emergency Management Bill and remained subject to ongoing discussions, including matters with legal implications. Acknowledged the efforts in advocating for greater clarity on accountability and responsibilities
- Pointed out that the request for clarification was being made on behalf of all Bay of Plenty communities and residents, not solely the Committee
- Reiterated the importance of clear roles, responsibilities and decision-making arrangements for emergency management in the Bay of Plenty
- Since greater clarity was still required regarding risk reduction responsibilities and the identification of accountability for offshore island emergency management, members welcomed indications that further clarity would be provided as the legislation progressed and following Royal Assent
- Expressed appreciation for the work undertaken to represent the interests of the Bay of Plenty region throughout the legislative review process.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

- 1. Receives the report, Emergency Management Bay of Plenty Regional Manager's Written Update.**

**Tánczos/Dougal
CARRIED**

5.8 Regional Manager Recruitment Process

Presented by: Reuben Fraser - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana General Manager, Regulatory Services

Key Points:

- Presented the report to the Committee in response to concerns raised at the previous meeting about the recruitment and appointment process for the Regional Manager position

- Outlined the legislative and governance framework that applied to the recruitment and appointment process
- Detailed the process that had been followed for the recruitment and appointment of the Regional Manager
- Purpose was to inform Committee members and facilitate discussion on potential improvements to future recruitment and appointment processes
- Invited feedback/identification of any opportunities to strengthen the process going forward.

Key Points - Members:

- Thanked staff for providing the report in response to concerns raised at the previous meeting regarding the Regional Manager recruitment process
- Acknowledged the administrative role undertaken by Bay of Plenty Regional Council; emphasised the importance of governance oversight/due diligence by Joint Committee members representing councils across the region
- Noted that, for other significant leadership appointments, governance representatives were typically involved in shortlisting or recruitment oversight processes
- While acknowledging that the current appointment process had been completed and welcoming the successful appointee, members expressed a desire for greater governance involvement in future recruitment processes
- Suggested that Joint Committee members be provided with an opportunity to contribute to recruitment discussions in a confidential setting, while respecting applicant privacy and sensitivities
- Noted the Joint Committee's governance responsibility for emergency management outcomes and the importance of being satisfied that robust recruitment and appointment processes had been followed
- Emphasised that the purpose of the discussion was to focus on strengthening future processes and providing assurance to Committee members, who held ultimate legal responsibility, while supporting an inclusive and collaborative approach
- Highlighted that future recruitment processes should provide confidence that candidates had the capability to lead and operate effectively across the entire Bay of Plenty region. Chair noted that her recent involvement on the appointment panel provided the assurance that this objective had been met.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

- 1. Receives the report, Regional Manager Recruitment Process.**

**Tapsell/Dougal
CARRIED**

5.9 Verbal Update: "Simplifying Local Government" - Potential Models for Joint Committee/Emergency Management

Presented by: Reuben Fraser - Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana General Manager, Regulatory Services

Key Points - Staff:

- In response to a request from the Joint Committee Chair, offered observations on implications for emergency management as a result of the various options currently being considered as part of the Bay of Plenty Head Start local government reorganisation discussions
- Referenced fact sheets that had been included in the agenda as part of the EMBOP Regional Manager's update (item 8.7) as well as the various options that the Mayoral Forum was currently considering
- Acknowledged that each member council was independently considering the approach that would best meet the needs of its communities
- Outlined key considerations, advantages/disadvantages and trade-offs for each of the options under consideration by the Mayoral Forum, including a single regional unitary authority, three unitary authorities (with or without a CCO and/or Joint Committee), and two unitary authorities.
- Pointed out that the proposed Emergency Management Bill would place greater emphasis on governance arrangements through stronger accountability, planning, reporting and compliance requirements
- Effective emergency management relied on strong alignment with planning, hazard management, infrastructure and recovery functions. Fragmented governance structures could potentially increase duplication, reduce specialist capability and create coordination challenges during multi-district or region-wide emergencies
- Emphasised that, regardless of the governance model ultimately selected, emergency management capability should be protected, regional-scale functions preserved where appropriate, and integration with planning, infrastructure, hazard management and recovery built into the design
- Concluded that not all governance models carried the same level of emergency management risk, and that more fragmented structures would require deliberate shared governance, capability and regional settings to avoid degradation of performance over time.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted the information on the potential benefits, risks, advantages and disadvantages of the options under consideration
- Cautioned against making recommendations on preferred governance options, noting that councils were currently undertaking individual community engagement processes and elected members may hold differing views; it was critical for elected members to keep an open mind while continuing to consider the issues
- Acknowledged the role of staff in providing impartial advice on the implications and functions associated with each option, enabling member councils to make informed decisions
- Recognised that the proposed reforms provided an opportunity to reconsider CDEM boundaries and governance arrangements, including whether future regional arrangements should extend beyond current regional council boundaries
- Suggested that greater engagement between Ministers responsible for local government reform, resource management reform and emergency management would assist in understanding the implications of governance changes for the CDEM system
- Concern was expressed regarding the compressed timeframe for local government reform and the potential unintended consequences for emergency management arrangements
- The importance of recognising the dual roles of territorial authority staff during emergencies was highlighted, including the operational, emotional

and resource pressures associated with responding to emergencies while maintaining council functions

- Committee members expressed interest in understanding how similar issues were being considered across the national CDEM network and in learning from the experiences of other regions
- Noted that discussions were occurring nationally among CDEM Group Managers regarding the implications of reform, with a focus on identifying critical functions rather than preferred structural models
- The importance of maintaining strong local delivery of emergency management services and preserving community connections, regardless of future governance arrangements, was emphasised.

Items for Staff Follow Up:

- NEMA Representative Shona Morgan to convey the Joint Committee's comments and concerns to NEMA Leadership
- EMBOP to engage with the wider Civil Defence Emergency Management network and report back to the Joint Committee on any relevant feedback/findings.

Resolved

That the Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee:

1. **Receives the report, Verbal Update: "Simplifying Local Government" - Potential Models for Joint Committee/Emergency Management.**

**Dougal/Tánczos
CARRIED**

6. Public Excluded Section

Resolved

Resolution to exclude the public

- 1 **Excludes the public from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting as set out below:
The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:**

Item No.	Subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution	When the item can be released into the public
6.1	Public Excluded Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Minutes - 16 April 2026	As noted in the relevant Minutes.	As noted in the relevant Minutes.	To remain in public excluded.
6.2	Bay of Plenty CDEM Whakaari/White Island Coronial Inquiry Update 3 July 2026	Withholding the information is necessary to maintain legal professional privilege.	48(1)(a)(i) Section 7 (2)(g).	On CDEMG Chair and the Regional Manager EMBOP's approval.
6.3	Government Inquiry into the Fatal Landslides in Tauranga	Withholding the information is necessary to maintain legal professional privilege.	48(1)(a)(i) Section 7 (2)(g).	On CDEMG Chair and the Regional Manager EMBOP's approval.

**Tunui/Dougal
CARRIED**

The Committee moved into the public excluded session at 11:42am and reconvened in public at 12:18pm.

Closing Karakia

Provided by: Stace Tahere – EMBOP Manager, Operations.

Next hui

Friday, 25 September 2026, at Western Bay of Plenty District Council Chambers.

12:20pm – the meeting closed.

CONFIRMED

Mayor Faylene Tunui
Chairperson, Bay of Plenty Civil Defence
Emergency Management Group Joint Committee

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 24 July 2026
To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 4 August 2026
From : His Worship the Mayor, David Moore
Subject : **MAYORAL REPORT 30 May 2026 – 24 JULY 2026**
File ID : A1407434

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report provides an update to Council on meetings and events attended by His Worship the Mayor for the period 30 May 2026 to 24 July 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) **That the report titled “Mayoral Report 30 May 2026–24 July 2026” be received.**

PURPOSE

1. To provide an update to Council on meetings and events attended by His Worship the Mayor.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

2. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034:
 - ☒ Community Priority One: Strong relationships and partners
 - ☐ Community Priority Two: Investment in our district
 - ☐ Community Priority Three: Wellbeing is valued
 - ☐ Community Priority Four: Our communities are resilient
 - ☐ Community Priority Five: Growth is sustained over time

DISCUSSION

3. Since 30 May 2026 I have attended or met with the following:

2 June 2026

Whakatāne

Regional Land Transport Plan 2027-2037 meeting

Eastern Bay of Plenty Joint Committee meeting

3 June 2026

Bay of Plenty Mayors and Chair catch up meeting, via Teams

5 June 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty Mayors and CEs meeting re Head Start proposal, via Teams

LGNZ briefing: Simpson Grierson re Head Start Proposal, via Zoom

8 June 2026

Councillor/CEO catch up meeting

9 June 2026

Ordinary Council meeting

Simplifying Local Government and Local Water Done Well discussion with Te Whānau a Apanui

10 June 2026

Met with Opotiki College Student Leadership team

Bay of Plenty Mayors and Chair catch up meeting, via Teams

11 June 2026

Rotorua

Bay of Plenty Regional Council presentation – Head Start proposal

Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum meeting

15 June 2026

Council workshop

LGNZ briefing: Lessons From Auckland's Amalgamation, via Zoom

16 June 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty Councils – meeting with Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatāne

17 June 2026

Bay of Plenty Mayors and Chair catch up meeting, via Teams

19 June 2026

LGNZ briefing: Department of Internal Affairs on Head Start Guidance

23 June 2026

Radio New Zealand interview, via Zoom

Water Services Working Group meeting, via Teams

LGNZ briefing: Minister of Local Government, via Zoom

26 June 2026

LGNZ briefing: National Council, via Zoom

Regional Transport Committee meeting, via Zoom

29 June 2026

Extra Ordinary Council meeting

Risk and Assurance Committee meeting

30 June 2026

Coast Community Board meeting

Ōpōtiki Harbour Management Committee meeting

1 July 2026

Update to Council – Ezra Schuster, Regional Public Service Commission

Eastern Bay of Plenty elected members and CEs meeting, Whakatāne

2 July 2026

LGNZ briefing: Partnering with Iwi Māori Through Head Start, via Zoom

Zone 3 meeting, Napier

Simplifying Local Government and Local Water Done Well discussion with Ngai Tai Chair, Anaru Vercoe, via Teams

3 July 2026

Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee Meeting, Tauranga

6 July 2026

Performance and Delivery Committee meeting

7 July 2026

Ōpōtiki Rising Business Breakfast

Simplifying Local Government and Local Water Doone Well discussion with Te Tāwharau o Te Whakatōhea CEO, Dickie Farrar

8 July 2026

Councillor/CEO catch up meeting

Council workshop

Eastern Bay of Plenty Mayors meeting, via Teams

Bay of Plenty Mayors and Chair catch up meeting, via Teams

9 July 2026

LGNZ briefing: Lessons from UK Local Government Amalgamation, via Zoom

14 July 2026

Opotiki Rising – Visitor Economy and Business Outlook Forum

15 July 2026

Simplifying Local Government – Update to Councillors

Met with East Coast MP, Jo Luxton

Bay of Plenty Mayors and Chair catch up meeting, via Teams

16 July 2026

Catch up meeting with MP Dana Kirkpatrick, via Teams

17 July 2026

Visit to Tasman District Council

21 July 2026

Water Services Working Group meeting, Kawerau

22 July 2026

Te Maruata meeting, via Zoom

24 July 2026

Bay of Plenty Mayors and CEs meeting, Tauranga

Financial/budget considerations

4. There are no financial/budget considerations associated with this report.

Risks

5. There are no risks associated with this report.

Community wellbeing considerations

6. The purpose of Local Government now includes promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future ('the 4 wellbeings').
7. The subject matter of this report has been evaluated in terms of the 4 wellbeings during the process of developing this report.
8. There are no known social, economic, environmental, or cultural considerations associated with this matter.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of significance

9. On every issue requiring a decision, Council is required to determine how significant a decision is to the community, and what the corresponding level of engagement should be. Council uses the Significance Flowchart in the Significance and Engagement Policy to determine the level of significance.
10. The level of significance related to the decision in this report is considered to be **low**. Because the decision is determined to have **low** significance in accordance with the policy, the corresponding level of engagement required is **Inform**.

Assessment of engagement

11. As the level of significance has been determined to be **low**, the level of engagement required is **Inform** according to the Engagement Framework of the Significance and Engagement Policy:

INFORM

To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen.

12. The tools that Council will use for the 'Inform' level of engagement include a report in the public agenda of the Council meeting and may include a combination of public notices in the newspaper and/or on Council's social media.

David Moore

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 24 July 2026
To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 4 August 2026
From : Finance Manager, Billy Kingi
Subject : **CORRECTION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR IN THE 2026/27 RATES RESOLUTION**
File ID : A1407592

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Following adoption of the 2026/27 Annual Plan and Rates Resolution, a typographical error affecting one targeted rate within the adopted Rates Resolution was identified.
- The Annual Plan, supporting financial models and Revenue and Financing Policy consistently provide for the connected Ōpōtiki/Hukutaia Water Supply targeted rate to be **\$644.79 per separately used or inhabited part (SUIP)**. However, the adopted Rates Resolution incorrectly records this amount as **\$664.79 per SUIP**.
- The discrepancy is limited to this single figure and arose through an administrative transcription error during preparation of the Rates Resolution.
- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to correct the typographical error so that the Rates Resolution accurately reflects the funding decisions contained within the adopted 2026/27 Annual Plan. No other rates are affected.
- The full corrected 2026/27 Rates Resolution details are attached as **Appendix 1**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report titled "Correction of Typographical Error in the 2026/27 Rates Resolution" be received.
2. That Council notes that a typographical error occurred in the adopted 2026/27 Rates Resolution in relation to the connection Ōpōtiki/Hukutaia Water Supply targeted rate.

3. **Notes for the corrected statement to read: Ōpōtiki/Hukutaia Water Supply (Connected) "\$644.79" per separately used or inhabited part, rather than "\$664.79" per separately used or inhabited part.**
4. **That the Ōpōtiki District Council, pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, resolves to correct the adopted Rates Resolution of 29th June, to replace the incorrect figure of \$664.79 with the corrected amount of \$644.79 for Ōpōtiki/Hukutaia Water Supply (Connected), as per the corrected 2026/27 Rates Resolution details which are attached to the report as Appendix 1.**

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to correct a typographical error identified in the adopted 2026/27 Rates Resolution.

Item	Adopted Rates Resolution	Correct Amount
Ōpōtiki/Hukutaia Connected Water Supply Charge	\$664.79	\$644.79

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

2. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan:
 - ☒ Community Priority One: Strong relationships and partners
 - ☒ Community Priority Two: Investment in our district
 - ☒ Community Priority Three: Wellbeing is valued
 - ☒ Community Priority Four: Our communities are resilient
 - ☒ Community Priority Five: Growth is sustained over time

BACKGROUND

3. Council adopted the 2026/27 Annual Plan and subsequently adopted the 2026/27 Rates Resolution in accordance with the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 on 29th June 2026.
4. Following adoption, a reconciliation was carried out between:
 - the adopted Annual Plan;
 - the Funding Impact Statement;
 - the Revenue and Financing Policy; and
 - the adopted Rates Resolution.

5. This review identified a discrepancy relating to the connected Ōpōtiki/Hukutaia Water Supply targeted rate. The adopted Annual Plan specifies the charge as **\$644.79**, however the Rates Resolution recorded the amount as **\$664.79**. The difference of **\$20.00 per SUIP** resulted from a typographical error during preparation of the Rates Resolution.
6. All supporting financial information, revenue calculations and budgets were based upon the correct figure of **\$644.79**.
7. No other rates or funding assumptions are affected.
8. The original rates report notes that the Rates Resolution must be consistent with the adopted Annual Plan and Revenue and Financing Policy.

DISCUSSION

9. The identified error is administrative in nature. It does not alter:
 - Council's funding requirements;
 - the total rates requirement;
 - the financial strategy adopted through the Annual Plan;
 - any policy decisions made by Council;
 - the intended level of service; or
 - Council's underlying budget.
10. The correction simply aligns and corrects the wording of the Rates Resolution with the funding decisions already adopted through the Annual Plan.
11. The correction should be made before rates are assessed and issued to ensure consistency across Council's statutory documents.
12. The corrected Rates Resolution is attached in Appendix 1.

Financial/budget considerations

13. There is no impact on Council's adopted budgets.
14. The correction ensures that rates are assessed in accordance with the adopted Annual Plan and avoids over-rating affected properties.

Policy and planning implications

15. The Rates Resolution is the statutory mechanism by which rates are set under the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.
16. As the discrepancy was identified immediately following adoption and before implementation of the rating assessment process, correcting the typographical error ensures consistency between the Rates Resolution and the adopted Annual Plan.

Impact on mana whenua

17. There is no impact on mana whenua.

Climate impact considerations

18. The decisions and matters of this report are assessed to have low climate change implications and considerations.

Risks

19. The overall risk associated with the typographical error is considered low, provided the correction is made before the 2026/27 rates are assessed and invoiced. Prompt correction will ensure consistency between the adopted Annual Plan, Funding Impact Statement, Revenue and Financing Policy, and the Rates Resolution, reducing legal, financial, operational and reputational risk.
20. If the incorrect amount were used when issuing rates assessments, affected ratepayers would be overcharged by \$20 per separately used or inhabited part (SUIP). This could require corrected assessments, refunds, administrative costs and potential interest adjustments.
21. Identifying and correcting the error proactively demonstrates good governance, transparency and sound financial management. Conversely, failing to address the discrepancy could affect public confidence in Council's financial administration.
22. Correcting the error before rates are assessed and invoiced minimises disruption to Council systems and avoids the need for reissuing invoices or undertaking additional administrative work.

Community wellbeing considerations

23. The process of preparing, reviewing and adopting the 2026/27 Annual Plan requires Council officers and elected members to acknowledge how best it can deliver on the four wellbeings (Economic, Cultural, Social, and Environmental) in a way that is cost-effective for businesses and households. The Rates Resolution supports and is consistent with the 2026/27 Annual Plan.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT**Assessment of significance**

24. On every issue requiring a decision, Council is required to determine how significant a decision is to the community, and what the corresponding level of engagement should be. Council uses the Significance Flowchart in the Significance and Engagement Policy to determine the level of significance.

25. The level of significance related to the decision in this report is considered to be **low**. Because the decision is determined to have **low** significance in accordance with the policy, the corresponding level of engagement required is **Inform**.

Assessment of engagement

26. As the level of significance has been determined to be **low**, the level of engagement required is **Inform** according to the Engagement Framework of the Significance and Engagement Policy:

INFORM

To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen.

27. The rate requirement for the 2026/27 financial year was established through the 2026/27 Annual Plan which was not required to be subject to special consultative procedure, in this instance, under the Local Government Act 2002.

CONCLUSION

28. A typographical error has been identified in the 29 June adopted 2026/27 Rates Resolution affecting one targeted water supply rate.
29. The proposed correction aligns and corrects the Rates Resolution with the adopted Annual Plan, Funding Impact Statement and Council's intended rating decisions, ensuring the correct charge is applied to affected properties.
30. By correcting the typographical error before rates are assessed, Council ensures that its statutory rating documents remain internally consistent and accurately reflect the funding decisions made through the adoption of the 2026/27 Annual Plan.

Billy Kingi

FINANCE MANAGER

1 GENERAL RATES

(a) General Rate

Pursuant to Section 13 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a general rate of 0.3137 cents in the Dollar of Capital Value on all rateable rating units in the Ōpōtiki District.

Revenue Sought **\$13,392,174**

(b) Uniform Annual General Charge

Pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a uniform annual general charge of \$719.57 per rating unit on every rateable rating unit in the district.

Revenue Sought **\$3,556,582**

2 TARGETED RATES

(a) Water Supply Charges

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate for water supply within the following water supply areas as follows:

	Supply Name	
(i) A full charge for the ordinary supply of water in respect of each separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit to which water is supplied.	Ōpōtiki/	\$644.79
	Hukutaia	
	Te Kaha	\$346.85
	Ōhiwa	\$1,629.36
(ii) A half charge in respect of every rating unit to which water can be, but is not supplied, situated within 100m of any part of the waterworks.	Ōpōtiki/	\$322.40
	Hukutaia	
	Te Kaha	\$173.42
	Ōhiwa	\$814.68

Revenue Sought:	Ōpōtiki/	\$1,606,480
	Hukutaia	
	Te Kaha	\$126,203
	Ōhiwa	\$35,031

Pursuant to section 19 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 a targeted rate for water supplied by meter is applied as well as the connection charge outlined above as follows

Any property that is connected to one of the above water supplies where there is a water meter, the metered volumes of water used shall be charged at the following marginal rates per cubic meter up to each daily use threshold.	Ōpōtiki/ Hukutaia	0m ³	\$1.62
		2m ³	\$2.45
		3.5m ³	\$3.26
		4.5m ³	\$4.07
		10m+ ³	\$4.88
	Te Kaha	0m ³	\$2.87
		2m ³	\$4.30
		3.5m ³	\$5.71
		4.5m ³	\$7.17
		10m+ ³	\$8.63
	Ōhiwa	0m ³	\$2.87
		2m ³	\$4.30
		3.5m ³	\$5.71
		4.5m ³	\$7.17
		10m+ ³	\$8.63

- (b) **Sewerage rates**
Pursuant to Sections 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002,
a targeted rate in each urban drainage area as follows:

	Scheme Name	2026/27
(i) One full charge in respect of every separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit connected to a public sewerage drain.	Ōpōtiki	\$658.54
	Waihau Bay	\$1,084.38
(ii) Half of the full charge in respect of each rating unit to which sewer drainage can be, but is not connected, situated within 30m from any part of the public sewerage drain.	Ōpōtiki	\$329.27
	Waihau Bay	\$542.19
(iii) 80% of the full charge in respect of every separate toilet pan, water closet, or urinal where there are multiple connections on one rating unit.	Ōpōtiki	\$526.83

Note:

A residence of not more than one household shall be deemed to have not more than one water closet, toilet pan, or urinal.

Charge (i) does not apply when charge (iii) does.

Revenue Sought	Ōpōtiki	\$1,249,974
	Waihau Bay	\$27,652

- (c) **Waiotahe Wastewater Extension**
Pursuant to Sections 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002,
a targeted rate shall be set as a fixed amount per rating unit
connected to the Waiotahe Wastewater Extension of \$0.00.

Revenue Sought:	Waiotahe	\$0.00
	Extension	

- (d) **Refuse Collection Charge**
Pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002,
a targeted rate for kerbside refuse collection within the defined
Ōpōtiki Ward and Waiotahe/Waioweka Ward collection areas set as
follows:

- (i) A full charge of \$277.90 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit (except those not used or inhabited) within the defined Ward collection areas
- (ii) A half charge of \$138.95 per rating unit that is not used or inhabited within the defined Ward collection areas.

***Revenue Sought* \$667,245**

(e) Communities of interest

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a communities of interest targeted rate set as an amount per rating unit as follows:

(i) Residential communities of interest

\$128.25 per rateable rating unit within the defined rating areas where land use is residential.

***Revenue Sought* \$295,415**

(ii) Rural communities of interest

\$58.26 per rateable rating unit within the defined rating areas where land use is rural.

***Revenue Sought* \$142,155**

(iii) Commercial/industrial communities of interest

\$2,064.79 per rateable rating unit in the district where land use is commercial or industrial.

***Revenue Sought* \$413,990**

3 INSTALMENT DATES

That the Ōpōtiki District Council resolves that all rates are payable in two equal instalments, due on or before:

- Instalment One: 21 September 2026
- Instalment Two: 22 March 2027

4 ADDITIONAL CHARGES ON UNPAID RATES

That the Ōpōtiki District Council authorise the addition of penalties to unpaid rates in accordance with the following regime:

Under the provisions of Sections 57 and 58 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a penalty of 10% will be added to the amount of the first instalment of rates remaining unpaid after the due date, on 21 September 2026; and of the second instalment of rates remaining unpaid after the due date, on 22 March 2027.

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 24 July 2026
To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 4 August 2026
From : Group Manager Business Support, Rachael Burgess
Subject : **SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEAD START PATHWAY PROPOSAL**
File ID : A1408172

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 5 May 2026, the Government announced its Simplifying Local Government Reform programme, introducing a voluntary Head Start pathway that enables councils to develop locally led proposals for future governance arrangements prior to the introduction of a compulsory backstop process.
- Outline proposals must be submitted by 9 August 2026, with successful proposals progressing to the development of a detailed proposal during 2026–27.
- Having considered the available options, Ōpōtiki District Council has worked collaboratively with Whakatāne and Kawerau District Councils to jointly prepare an Outline Proposal recommending the establishment of an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council.
- The proposal concludes that an Eastern Bay of Plenty configuration best reflects existing communities of interest and provides a practical and achievable pathway for reform.
- While there is strong support for the proposed Eastern Bay of Plenty unitary authority, concerns have been raised throughout the process that the proposed implementation timeframe is tight and may limit opportunities for meaningful community engagement, a comprehensive representation review, and effective integration with other reform programmes currently underway.
- Council is now asked to consider whether to approve the attached Outline Proposal for submission as part of the Head Start Pathway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **That the report titled " Simplifying Local Government Head Start Pathway Proposal" be received; and**
- 2) **That Council approves the attached *Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council Head Start Outline Proposal* for submission to the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (formally Department of Internal Affairs) as part of the Head Start Pathway; and**

- 3) That Council notes that the Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council Outline Proposal is being considered for approval by Whakatane District Council on 4 August 2026 and Kawerau District Council on 5 August 2026; and
- 4) That Council supports a consistent wider regional view for three Unitary Councils including Eastern Bay, Western Bay, and Rotorua-Central configurations, and supports Head Start proposals and long-term aspirations of other councils on this basis; and
- 5) That Council agrees to work with the other Councils, and the current Regional Council, in implementation planning and delivery should the Head Start proposals be approved; and
- 6) That Council approves the Mayor signing, on behalf of the Council, a letter of endorsement from all Mayors of the Bay of Plenty acknowledging and supporting each other's sub-regional proposals and preferences for a three Unitary Council structure in the Bay of Plenty; and
- 7) That Council agrees to work with other councils to consider wider regional and cross boundary function delivery where appropriate in future unitary delivery models; and
- 8) That Council provide delegation to the Ōpōtiki District Council Chief Executive to make any final minor adjustments to the proposal document in consultation with the Kawerau and Whakatane District Council Chief Executives if required; and
- 9) That Council acknowledges that unbudgeted resourcing may be requested for the next stage of Head Start pathway, subject to a cabinet in-principle decision in support of the Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council proposal.

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to submit the attached **Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council Head Start Outline Proposal** (attached as Appendix 1) to the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) under the Government's voluntary Head Start pathway for Simplifying Local Government Reform.
2. The proposal is for an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council model which encompasses the existing territories covered by the Kawerau District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council and Whakatāne District Council, and has been developed collaboratively by these councils.
3. The report summarises the work undertaken since Government announced the reform programme, outlines the key matters considered during development of the proposal, presents the key benefits and risks associated with submission, and seeks Council approval for the proposal to be lodged before the Government's 9 August 2026 deadline.
4. Councils across the Bay of Plenty have also agreed to make common resolutions to acknowledge and support each other's sub-regional proposals. The alignment of approaches across the Bay of Plenty, and collective endorsement, is expected to add substantial weight to each of the individual proposals.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

5. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034:
 - ☒ Community Priority One: Strong relationships and partners
 - ☒ Community Priority Two: Investment in our district
 - ☒ Community Priority Three: Wellbeing is valued
 - ☒ Community Priority Four: Our communities are resilient
 - ☒ Community Priority Five: Growth is sustained over time

BACKGROUND

6. The Government's Simplifying Local Government reform programme has been developed to explore opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness and coordination across local government.
7. Following consultation on initial reform proposals, Government announced revised policy settings on 5 May 2026. These changes replaced the previously proposed Combined Territories Board model with two new pathways:
 - A voluntary Head Start pathway, intended for councils that are willing and able to reorganise quickly. It allows councils to submit an outline proposal to establish one or more new unitary authorities; and
 - A compulsory Backstop pathway, to apply to councils that do not progress through the Head Start pathway and whereby Government may determine future arrangements should councils not progress their own proposals.
8. The Head Start pathway is intended for councils willing to progress local government reorganisation proposals within a compressed timeframe. Under this pathway, councils may develop proposals for one or more new unitary authorities that would undertake both territorial authority and regional council functions.
9. Outline proposals are due to be submitted to Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) by midnight on Sunday 9 August 2026. Should Cabinet provide in principle support for a proposal, participating councils have until March 2027 to prepare a final proposal.
10. Government has outlined that proposals will be assessed against five broad criteria:
 - a) Maintenance of local representation and community voice;
 - b) Support for the new planning system;
 - c) Simplified local governance;
 - d) Economies of scale; and
 - e) Deliverability

11. While the Head Start pathway is voluntary, Government has signalled that councils not participating may subsequently become subject to a compulsory reform process under the proposed Backstop mechanism.

Ōpōtiki District Council key decisions to date

12. At its Extraordinary Council meeting on 29 June 2026, Council considered the Government's reform programme and directed staff to continue working collaboratively with neighbouring councils to investigate potential local government reorganisation options that best reflected the interests of the Ōpōtiki and East Coast communities.
13. As the Head Start process has progressed, three potential amalgamation configurations have been explored. It is important to note that due to the limited time made available by central government the assessment of options was high level only. The options included:
 - an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council;
 - an Eastern Bay and Rotorua configuration;
 - a Bay of Plenty-wide unitary authority;
 - a further option was considered allowing reform to proceed through the compulsory Backstop process.
14. A programme of work has been carried out to understand the simplifying local government reform, work through the potential options and provide guidance on a preferred direction. This has included high-level and light touch governance and organisational analysis, financial modelling, community and iwi engagement, stakeholder discussions, and ongoing collaboration with other Bay of Plenty councils to assess potential governance configurations against the Government's published assessment criteria.
15. Following a review of the Governments criteria, technical advice, community feedback and discussions with neighbouring councils, the Eastern Bay option has consistently emerged as the preferred configuration. It is considered to provide the best balance between maintaining strong local representation while achieving the organisational capability and efficiencies sought through reform.
16. At a Council workshop held on 15 July 2026, elected members received a further update on the progress of this work and considered the emerging findings from the technical analysis and engagement activities. Following those discussions, Council directed staff to continue working in partnership with the Eastern Bay councils towards the development of an Eastern Bay of Plenty Outline Proposal consistent with the Head Start guidance published by the Department of Internal Affairs on 5 May 2026.

17. During that workshop, Council also discussed its position regarding implementation timeframes. While supporting the development of an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council proposal, Council confirmed its preference that implementation occur through to the 2031 local government elections, rather than aligning with the 2028 local government elections.
18. This reflects Council's view that additional time would enable more meaningful engagement with the Ōpōtiki community, allowing residents the opportunity to understand, consider and provide informed feedback on the proposed governance changes.
19. Council also considers that an extended implementation period would better support a comprehensive representation review, integration with other significant local government reform programmes, and a more orderly transition to any future governance arrangements.

DISCUSSION

20. Following Council's direction to continue working with neighbouring councils, a collaborative programme of work was established between Ōpōtiki District Council, Whakatāne District Council and Kawerau District Council to investigate future governance options for the Eastern Bay of Plenty. This work has been overseen by a joint working group comprising representatives from each council and supported through regular meetings of Mayors, Chief Executives and senior staff.
21. Given the compressed timeframe established by the Government, the focus has been on developing an evidence-based Outline Proposal that meets the Department of Internal Affairs' published requirements while identifying a governance model capable of delivering improved long-term outcomes for the Eastern Bay of Plenty.
22. The proposal has been informed by both technical analysis and community feedback and has been developed collaboratively to ensure a consistent regional approach.
23. The proposal is intended to be jointly submitted to Central Government subject to formal endorsement from each Council at the following meetings:
Ōpōtiki District Council on 4 August 2026
Whakatāne District Council on 4 August 2026
Kawerau District Council on 5 August 2026
24. Development of the proposal has included:
 - assessment of alternative governance configurations, including an Eastern Bay of Plenty unitary authority, an Eastern Bay plus Rotorua model, and a Bay of Plenty-wide unitary authority;
 - high level governance and organisational analysis to assess how regional and territorial functions could be integrated within a future unitary authority;

- financial modelling and high-level assessment of organisational capability, service delivery and financial sustainability;
 - consideration of existing communities of interest, economic linkages and regional partnerships;
 - review of legislative requirements and Government assessment criteria;
 - identification of opportunities, benefits, implementation challenges and key risks;
 - consideration of future governance, representation and transition arrangements;
 - engagement with iwi, neighbouring councils, community organisations and stakeholders; and
 - development of a coordinated Bay of Plenty approach that recognises the complementary proposals being advanced by the Western Bay and Rotorua sub-regions.
25. As an outline proposal, the document is not intended to provide the detailed implementation planning that would be required should Cabinet support progression to the next stage. Instead, it establishes the strategic case for reform, identifies the preferred governance model, outlines the anticipated benefits and risks, and provides the basis upon which a detailed proposal could subsequently be developed.

Regional endorsement will strengthen Bay of Plenty proposals

26. The resulting Outline Proposal concludes that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides the strongest alignment with the Government's assessment criteria while preserving local representation, strengthening organisational capability and supporting long-term economic, environmental and community outcomes. It also demonstrates how the proposal contributes to wider regional coherence by forming part of a three sub-region governance framework across the Bay of Plenty.
27. Councils across the Bay of Plenty have agreed to make common resolutions to acknowledge and support each other's sub-regional proposals. This includes three unitary council proposals for the wider Bay of Plenty providing for an Eastern Bay region, Western Bay region, and Rotorua region.
28. At the time of drafting this report, work is also underway to arrange a letter of endorsement from all Mayors across the Bay of Plenty, to this same effect, to accompany Head Start proposals when they are submitted. Importantly for Rotorua Lakes Council, this will enable the eligibility of their proposal to become a unitary council by ensuring it has endorsement from at least two councils.
29. The alignment of approaches across the Bay of Plenty is expected to add strength to each of the component proposals. Ongoing collaboration at this level will also be critical to successful implementation if/when proposals move to that stage.

Key Benefits of an Eastern Bay of Plenty Proposal

30. The attached Outline Proposal concludes that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council represents the governance model that best balances the Government's objectives for reform with the desire of local communities to retain a strong Eastern Bay identity and meaningful local representation.
31. One of the principal benefits of the proposal is the integration of regional and territorial council responsibilities within a single organisation. Bringing these functions together would simplify governance arrangements, reduce duplication and provide a more coordinated approach to planning, infrastructure investment, environmental management and service delivery.
32. Importantly, the proposal has been developed around the Eastern Bay's well-established communities of interest. It seeks to retain governance that remains connected to local communities, recognises existing social, cultural and economic relationships, and preserves an Eastern Bay focus for future decision-making.
33. Community engagement undertaken throughout the project consistently reinforced the importance of maintaining local representation and ensuring decisions continue to reflect the unique aspirations and priorities of Eastern Bay of Plenty communities.
34. The proposal also builds upon the strong collaborative relationships that already exist between the participating councils and with iwi. These existing partnerships provide a solid foundation for deeper integration while supporting continued collaboration on matters of regional significance.
35. Collectively, these benefits position the Eastern Bay of Plenty to respond more effectively to future opportunities and challenges while strengthening advocacy with central government and improving the region's ability to attract investment, funding and long-term economic development opportunities.

Key Risks of an Eastern Bay of Plenty Proposal

36. While the Outline Proposal sets out the rationale and potential benefits for local government reform, there remain a number of important risks, assumptions and uncertainties that Council should recognise when considering whether to submit the proposal.
37. The most significant challenge remains the compressed timeframe established by the Government. The Head Start pathway has required councils to undertake governance analysis, technical investigations and community engagement within a relatively short period. Although substantial work has been completed, further detailed analysis would ordinarily be expected before decisions of this significance are implemented. This risk is partially mitigated by the staged nature of the Head Start process, which provides an opportunity to undertake more detailed work should Cabinet support progression to the next phase.

38. There also remains uncertainty regarding the legislative framework supporting the Government's reforms. While the Government has clearly signalled its intended direction, the necessary legislation has not yet been enacted, and future Government decisions may influence implementation arrangements, assessment criteria or timeframes.
39. Similarly, the outcome of Cabinet's consideration of Outline Proposals remains uncertain, meaning there is no guarantee that the proposal will progress beyond the current stage.
40. Implementation itself would represent a significant organisational change programme involving governance arrangements, representation reviews, integration of services, staff transition, asset management, financial systems and organisational culture. While these matters would be addressed through a future implementation programme, they represent significant pieces of work requiring careful planning and ongoing engagement with affected communities and stakeholders.
41. A further risk relates to the potentially significant costs of implementing local government reorganisation. While reform aims to improve long-term capability and efficiency, there is no guarantee that amalgamation will deliver cost savings. Transition costs could be substantial and may include programme management, legal and technical advice, ICT and system integration, organisational change, staff transition, representation reviews, branding, communications, and the alignment of services and processes. These costs are not yet quantifiable and would require detailed assessment during the next phase of the reform process.
42. There has also been careful consideration of the risks associated with the implementation timeframe. While all three participating councils support the establishment of an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council, Ōpōtiki District Council considers implementation through to 2031 would provide greater opportunity for meaningful community engagement, a comprehensive representation review and better alignment with other significant local government reform programmes currently underway.
43. A further key risk is the uncertainty around Council's ability to withdraw from the Head Start pathway if the detailed proposal phase identifies significant financial, governance or implementation issues. The Government has not yet indicated whether an "off-ramp" will be available for councils that enter the Head Start process. As a result, there is a risk that Council could become committed to a reform pathway before the full implications are known, with limited ability to reconsider its participation should the proposal ultimately prove unviable or no longer represent the best outcome for the district.
44. Finally, it is recognised that local government reform is a matter of high public interest. Continued communication with communities, iwi and stakeholders will be essential to maintaining public confidence, ensuring transparency and providing meaningful opportunities for participation should the proposal progress beyond the current Outline Proposal stage.

Community Engagement

45. Recognising the significance of the Government's proposed local government reforms, Ōpōtiki District Council has undertaken a programme of engagement with communities, iwi, stakeholders and neighbouring councils to inform development of the Eastern Bay of Plenty Head Start Outline Proposal.
46. The Government's compressed timeframe has limited the scope of engagement that could reasonably be undertaken prior to submission of an Outline Proposal. In response, Council adopted a pragmatic approach that sought to maximise opportunities for participation while acknowledging that more comprehensive engagement would be required should the proposal progress to the next stage.
47. Engagement activities have included community information sessions as part of the Ōpōtiki Rising consultation events, online information and feedback through the Hono Mai engagement platform, an online survey, stakeholder meetings, discussions with iwi, elected member engagement and direct conversations with residents and community organisations.
48. Within Ōpōtiki District, Council supported a range of engagement opportunities to encourage public participation. This included public information sessions, promotion of the online engagement platform, opportunities for written submissions, elected member discussions within the community and a recent community drop-in session at Te Kaha, where residents were able to speak directly with staff about the proposed reforms and ask questions regarding the potential impacts on local governance.
49. The online survey attracted 33 responses from across the district and provided valuable insights into community priorities. While views differed regarding the Government's overall reform programme, several consistent themes emerged including a strong preference for an Eastern Bay of Plenty council grouping.
50. Respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining meaningful local representation, preserving the Eastern Bay identity, protecting local decision-making, recognising existing communities of interest and ensuring that future governance arrangements continue to reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the Ōpōtiki District and East Coast communities. Respondents also recognised opportunities to strengthen organisational capability and improve service delivery, provided these outcomes were achieved without diminishing local influence.
51. Feedback received through community meetings and stakeholder discussions closely aligned with the survey findings and reinforced the importance of ensuring any future governance arrangements continue to maintain strong local connections while delivering improved organisational capability.

Themes emerging from public engagement

52. General public response indicates strong support for an Eastern Bay of Plenty unitary model, with approximately 76% of 33 survey (and direct email) responses favouring that option. This sentiment was also reflected in public consultation results from other parts of the District.
53. Recurring themes include maintaining local voice and representation, recognising established communities of interest, preserving strong council-iwi relationships, building on the history of collaboration between the Eastern Bay councils, and ensuring decision-making and investment remain responsive to the distinct needs and opportunities of the Eastern Bay, rather than being diluted within a larger regional structure.
54. Among those who preferred an alternative, views generally reflected either opposition to the Government's proposed reforms or a belief that a larger unitary authority would be better placed to realise economies of scale and efficiency gains.
55. The Community Engagement report compiling the survey results is attached as Appendix 2.

Engagement with iwi

56. Council have undertaken engagement with iwi during the development of the Outline Proposal. While no single iwi position has emerged regarding future governance arrangements, discussions have demonstrated broad support for continuing to investigate an Eastern Bay of Plenty configuration.
57. Common themes arising from iwi engagement included the importance of protecting Treaty settlement arrangements, maintaining meaningful local representation, recognising established relationships and communities of interest, and ensuring future governance arrangements appropriately reflect natural catchments and existing partnerships.
58. Iwi also expressed concerns regarding the compressed Government timeframes, the limited information currently available and the cumulative impact of multiple Government reform programmes on iwi capacity to participate effectively.
59. Importantly, iwi consistently expressed a desire to remain actively involved as this work progresses and to continue working alongside councils during the development of any future detailed proposal.

Engagement with partner councils

60. Development of the Outline Proposal has also been supported through ongoing collaboration with Whakatāne District Council and Kawerau District Council. Each council has undertaken engagement within its own district and with its respective iwi and community stakeholders.
61. While each district has its own unique perspectives and priorities, engagement undertaken by the partner councils has identified similar themes supporting continued investigation of an Eastern Bay

of Plenty governance model. This shared feedback has provided confidence that the jointly developed proposal appropriately reflects the interests of the participating districts while recognising the distinct identity of each community.

62. Should Cabinet support progression of the Outline Proposal, further engagement would be undertaken to inform the development of a detailed proposal and future governance arrangements. This will provide communities, iwi and stakeholders with additional opportunities to consider the proposal in greater detail and provide informed feedback before any implementation decisions are made.

OPTIONS

63. A range of potential amalgamation configurations were explored as part of the initial options assessment, including an Eastern Bay of Plenty configuration, an Eastern Bay plus Rotorua configuration, and a wider Bay of Plenty model. As discussions have progressed, feedback from communities and iwi, conversations between neighbouring councils, and consideration of the opportunities and challenges associated with each option have increasingly pointed toward an Eastern Bay of Plenty configuration.
64. While further work would be required to refine any proposal, the Eastern Bay option has emerged as the configuration most closely aligned with the themes consistently raised throughout the process, including maintaining local voice, recognising established communities of interest, strengthening council-iwi relationships, building on existing inter-council collaboration, and retaining a strong focus on the distinct opportunities and challenges of the Eastern Bay.
65. A draft outline proposal to establish a single unitary authority for the Eastern Bay of Plenty is attached to this document for consideration and approval by Council.
66. This new Eastern Bay Unitary Council would combine the existing functions of the three territorial authorities and Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council functions within the Eastern Bay's boundaries, joining regional and local responsibilities under one organisation.
67. Council has the opportunity to either actively participate in the Government's Head Start pathway by submitting the Head Start Pathway proposal or it can adopt a more passive approach by awaiting further direction through the proposed Backstop process.
68. While both approaches involve uncertainty, participation enables Council to remain directly involved in discussions regarding future local government arrangements and retain influence over outcomes that may affect the district.
69. The following options have been assessed against Council's strategic objectives, potential risks, impacts on mana whenua, and the broader interests of the Ōpōtiki community.

OPTION 1: Participate in the Head Start Pathway by submitting a proposal

Description	<i>Council confirms its participation in the Head Start pathway by submitting a joint proposal with Whakatane and Kawerau District Councils for an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Authority.</i>
Advantages	• <i>Locally led approach to local government reform.</i> • <i>Greater influence over future governance arrangements.</i> • <i>Reflects Eastern Bay communities of interest.</i> • <i>Strengthens collaboration with neighbouring councils.</i> • <i>Positions Council to participate in the next stage of the Head Start process.</i> • <i>Supports continued community, iwi and stakeholder engagement.</i> • <i>Enables Government to consider an Eastern Bay solution developed by local councils.</i>
Disadvantages	• <i>Ongoing commitment of staff time and organisational resources.</i> • <i>Potential requirement for additional funding if the proposal progresses.</i> • <i>Continued uncertainty while Government considers reform.</i> • <i>Compressed timeframes have limited engagement opportunities.</i> • <i>No certainty the proposal will be supported by Government.</i>
Impact on mana whenua	• <i>Supports continued partnership with iwi and hapū.</i> • <i>Recognises Treaty settlement commitments and existing relationships.</i> • <i>Enables mana whenua to help shape future governance arrangements.</i> • <i>Reinforces the importance of local representation and shared catchments.</i> • <i>Commits to ongoing engagement should the proposal progress.</i>
Strategic alignment	• <i>Supports strong partnerships and regional collaboration.</i> • <i>Reform was not anticipated in the Long-Term Plan 2024–2034.</i> • <i>Supports Council's commitment to locally led decision making.</i> • <i>Maintains current strategic direction pending Government decisions.</i> • <i>Aligns with Council's advocacy for strong local representation.</i> • <i>Enables Council to proactively influence future governance arrangements.</i>
Associated risks	• <i>Government policy remains subject to legislative change.</i> • <i>Proposal may not progress beyond the Outline Proposal stage.</i> • <i>Limited time available for detailed analysis and engagement.</i> • <i>Future implementation would require significant organisational change and transition cost.</i> • <i>Additional technical work and funding may be required.</i> • <i>Reduced local influence if reform proceeds through the Government's Backstop pathway instead.</i>

OPTION 2: Do Not submit a proposal in the Head Start Pathway

Description	<i>Council elects not to participate and awaits future Government direction through the Backstop process.</i>
Advantages	• <i>Avoids immediate project and resource commitments.</i> • <i>Reduces short-term staff workload pressures.</i> • <i>Allows greater focus on existing Council priorities.</i> • <i>Provides additional time for Government policy and legislation to develop.</i> • <i>Delays decisions until further information is available.</i>
Disadvantages	• <i>Reduced opportunity to influence future local government reform.</i> • <i>Greater risk of government-led decision making.</i> • <i>Increased likelihood of reform progressing through the Backstop pathway.</i> • <i>Loss of opportunity to advocate for an Eastern Bay governance model.</i> • <i>Reduced ability to shape implementation timeframes and governance arrangements.</i> • <i>Missed opportunity to build on regional collaboration.</i>
Impact on mana whenua	• <i>Reduced opportunity for mana whenua to influence a locally developed proposal.</i> • <i>Greater reliance on Government-led engagement processes.</i> • <i>Increased risk that local iwi aspirations are considered through a broader regional process.</i> • <i>Less opportunity to strengthen existing council-iwi partnerships through collaborative proposal development.</i>
Strategic alignment	• <i>Consistent with maintaining the current governance structure in the short term.</i> • <i>Limits Council's ability to proactively influence future strategic direction.</i> • <i>May reduce Council's role in shaping future regional governance.</i> • <i>Does not support Council's stated preference for a locally led reform process.</i>
Associated risks	• <i>Government may progress reform through the compulsory Backstop pathway.</i> • <i>Reduced local influence over future governance arrangements.</i> • <i>Potential governance model may not reflect Eastern Bay communities of interest.</i> • <i>Less opportunity to shape future representation arrangements.</i> • <i>Potential reputational risk if Council is perceived as not participating in reform.</i> • <i>Future decisions may be made with limited direct input from Ōpōtiki District Council.</i>

OPTION 3: Defer Decision Pending Further Information

Description	<i>Council delays a decision while seeking further information from Government</i>
Advantages	• <i>Allows additional time to consider available information.</i> • <i>Enables further clarification of Government policy and guidance.</i> • <i>Provides opportunity to receive additional technical or legal advice.</i> • <i>Allows further discussion with partner councils and stakeholders.</i> • <i>May enable additional community and iwi engagement (subject to available time).</i>
Disadvantages	• <i>Prevents submission of an Outline Proposal before the Government deadline.</i> • <i>Reduces certainty for partner councils progressing the joint proposal.</i> • <i>Delays Council's ability to confirm its preferred position.</i> • <i>May limit Council's influence over the final proposal.</i> • <i>Could impact collaborative regional planning and project timelines.</i>
Impact on mana whenua	• <i>Provides limited additional opportunity for engagement if time permits.</i> • <i>Creates uncertainty for iwi participating in the current process.</i> • <i>May delay continued discussions on future governance arrangements.</i> • <i>Could reduce confidence in the collaborative approach adopted to date.</i>
Strategic alignment	• <i>Supports informed decision-making where additional information is required.</i> • <i>Delays Council's participation in the Government's reform process.</i> • <i>May be inconsistent with agreed project milestones and Government timeframes.</i> • <i>Could affect Council's ability to pursue a locally led reform pathway.</i>
Associated risks	• <i>Government submission deadline will be missed.</i> • <i>Council will forfeit the opportunity to participate in the Head Start pathway.</i> • <i>Increased likelihood of reform progressing through the Government's Backstop pathway.</i> • <i>Reduced influence over future governance arrangements.</i> • <i>Potential reputational impact with partner councils and stakeholders.</i> • <i>Disruption to the jointly developed Eastern Bay proposal.</i> • <i>Additional meetings may be required to enable a decision before the submission deadline.</i>

Financial/budget considerations

70. Council's participation in the Head Start pathway has been delivered through existing staff resources and collaboration with Whakatāne District Council and Kawerau District Council, with technical support commissioned where appropriate.

71. The work completed to date has been accommodated within existing operational budgets and the sharing of resources across the participating councils. While this has required staff to redirect effort from other planned activities, it has minimised the need for additional unbudgeted expenditure.
72. Should the Outline Proposal receive in-principle support from Cabinet and progress to the detailed proposal stage, additional specialist advice, technical investigations, financial analysis, legal advice and community engagement activities are likely to be required. The scope, timing and associated costs of that work are not yet known.
73. A request for funding support from central government is included in the proposal.

Policy and planning implications

74. The Government's Simplifying Local Government Reform programme was announced after adoption of Council's Long-Term Plan 2024–2034 and was therefore not anticipated during development of Council's current strategic planning documents.
75. Participation in the Head Start pathway does not amend or replace any existing Council policy, strategy or planning document. Council will continue to operate under the current legislative and governance framework unless and until any future reorganisation proposal is approved and implemented.
76. Should the Government progress local government reform, there may be significant implications for Council's future strategic framework, governance arrangements, representation arrangements, planning documents and service delivery responsibilities. These matters would be considered through subsequent phases of the reform process and would be subject to further Council decisions.
77. Until greater certainty is available regarding the Government's reform programme, Council's planning, financial management and operational decision-making will continue to be undertaken on the basis of the current local government structure.

Impact on Mana Whenua

78. The proposed reform has the potential to influence future governance arrangements, partnership mechanisms and decision-making processes involving mana whenua across the Eastern Bay of Plenty.
79. Engagement undertaken throughout development of the Outline Proposal has reinforced the importance of protecting council-iwi relationships and ensuring future governance arrangements continue to support meaningful partnership with iwi and hapū.
80. Iwi have consistently highlighted the importance of maintaining strong local representation, recognising existing communities of interest, protecting shared catchments and ensuring sufficient time is available for meaningful engagement throughout the reform process.

81. Participation in the Head Start pathway provides Council and mana whenua with the opportunity to help shape a locally led proposal that reflects the aspirations and unique characteristics of the Eastern Bay of Plenty, rather than relying solely on a centrally determined approach through the Government's Backstop pathway.
82. Should the Outline Proposal progress, ongoing engagement with mana whenua will remain a critical component of developing the detailed proposal and future governance arrangements.

Climate impact considerations

83. The recommendations contained within this report have no direct climate change implications.
84. Future local government structures may influence long-term regional planning, climate adaptation and environmental management arrangements. However, these matters remain uncertain at this stage.

Community wellbeing considerations

85. The purpose of Local Government now includes promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future ('the 4 wellbeings').
86. The subject matter of this report has been evaluated in terms of the 4 wellbeings during the process of developing this report as outlined below.

Social

87. Future local government arrangements may affect representation, accessibility and responsiveness of local government services.

Economic

88. Reform has potential to influence service delivery efficiency, infrastructure planning and economic development opportunities across the region.

Environmental

89. Future governance arrangements may affect environmental management, resource management and climate adaptation functions currently undertaken at both regional and territorial levels.

Cultural

90. The reform process has implications for relationships with iwi, hapū and local communities and therefore requires careful consideration of cultural wellbeing outcomes.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of significance

91. On every issue requiring a decision, Council is required to determine how significant a decision is to the community, and what the corresponding level of engagement should be. Council uses the Significance Flowchart in the Significance and Engagement Policy to determine the level of significance.
92. The level of significance related to the decision in this report is considered to be **high**.
93. The matter has generated considerable community interest and has the potential to significantly affect future governance structures.

Overview of Engagement and Community Views

94. The Government's compressed timeframes have limited the opportunity for extensive engagement. Despite these constraints, Council has sought to maximise opportunities for communities, iwi, stakeholder and elected member participation through information sharing, public consultation, direct discussions and targeted engagement activities.
95. A range of formal and informal engagement with iwi has included online and individual hui, discussions with Iwi Chairs, chief executives and iwi leadership, and ongoing conversations between elected members, Council staff and iwi representatives.
96. The community feedback received provides a sound understanding of community views on the matter through recent information activities, feedback processes, and ongoing conversations with iwi and hapū, stakeholders and the wider community.
97. Should the proposal proceed beyond the outline proposal stage, additional communication and engagement would be undertaken to inform the development of any detailed proposal and associated implementation arrangements.

Assessment of engagement

98. As the level of significance has been determined to be **high**, the level of engagement required is **Consult** according to the Engagement Framework of the Significance and Engagement Policy:

INFORM	To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen.
KŌRERO	To ask the community for feedback, ideas, opinions, and information about the development process
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives, and proposals to inform decision making.

INVOLVE	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	Working together to develop an understanding, work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.
EMPOWER	Final decision-making is in the hands of the public. Under the Local Government Act 2002, the Mayor and Councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of their constituents

CONCLUSION

99. The Government's Simplifying Local Government reform programme represents one of the most significant changes to local government in recent decades.
100. The Government's Head Start pathway provides councils with a limited opportunity to develop locally led proposals that reflect the needs, aspirations and communities of interest of their districts before the introduction of a compulsory reorganisation process.
101. Over recent months, Ōpōtiki District Council has worked collaboratively with Whakatāne District Council and Kawerau District Council to investigate future governance options for the Eastern Bay of Plenty. This work has included technical analysis, community and iwi engagement, stakeholder discussions and consideration of a range of governance configurations.
102. The resulting Outline Proposal concludes that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council represents the preferred model for the sub-region and provides a strong strategic response to the Government's reform objectives.
103. While Council continues to support the proposed governance model, it has consistently maintained that an extended implementation through to the 2031 local government elections would provide greater opportunity for meaningful community engagement, a comprehensive representation review and alignment with other significant local government reform programmes.
104. Approving submission of the Outline Proposal does not commit Council or the community to a final governance outcome. Rather, it enables Council to present a locally led proposal for Government consideration and, if supported by Cabinet, to participate in the next phase of work where more detailed analysis, consultation and engagement will be undertaken before any final decisions are made.

Rachael Burgess

GROUP MANAGER BUSINESS SUPPORT

Outline Proposal for an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Authority

Kawerau District Council – formally approved on [date tbc]

Opotiki District Council – formally approved on [date tbc]

Whakatāne District Council – formally approved on [date tbc]

Unapproved draft – for approval by partnering councils on 4-5 August 2026

Contents

1.	Executive Summary.....	3
1.1.	Introduction from Participating Councils	3
1.2.	Proposal Overview	5
1.3.	Proposal eligibility	5
2.	Strategic Case for Change	6
2.1.	Why Change is Needed	6
2.2.	Why an Eastern Bay of Plenty Solution	6
2.3.	Why Now	7
3.	Community Engagement and Perspectives	8
3.1.	Overview of engagement	8
3.2.	Iwi and Māori Conversations.....	9
3.3.	Community Feedback.....	10
4.	Proposed Structure and Governance Arrangements.....	12
4.1.	Proposed Structure	12
4.2.	Local Governance and Representation.....	12
4.3.	Regional Planning and Strategic Leadership	13
4.4.	Wider Collaboration Where Needed.....	13
5.	Wider regional coherency and benefit	15
5.1.	Inter-council engagement	15
5.2.	A Coherent Regional Approach	15
5.3.	A Regionally Beneficial and Locally Appropriate Solution.....	16
6.	How an Eastern Bay Proposal Meets Criteria	19
6.1.	Supports the New Planning System	19
6.2.	Simplifies Local Governance.....	23
6.3.	Provides Economies of Scale	27
6.4.	Maintains Local Voice	32
6.5.	Deliverability.....	36
6.6.	Supports Treaty Settlements	47
7.	Conclusion and Request to Progress.....	51
7.1.	Summary of the Proposal.....	51
7.2.	Why the Proposal Meets the Head Start Criteria.....	51
7.3.	Request to Progress to Detailed Design Phase.....	52
7.4.	Government Role to Enable Successful Reform	52
8.	Appendices.....	54

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction from Participating Councils

Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council jointly submit this Outline Proposal to establish a single **Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council**. This would combine the current territorial authority functions of Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council, together with the regional council functions currently exercised within the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The proposal is submitted under Government's Simplifying Local Government announcement of 5 May 2026 and in accordance with the corresponding Head Start pathway policy available from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

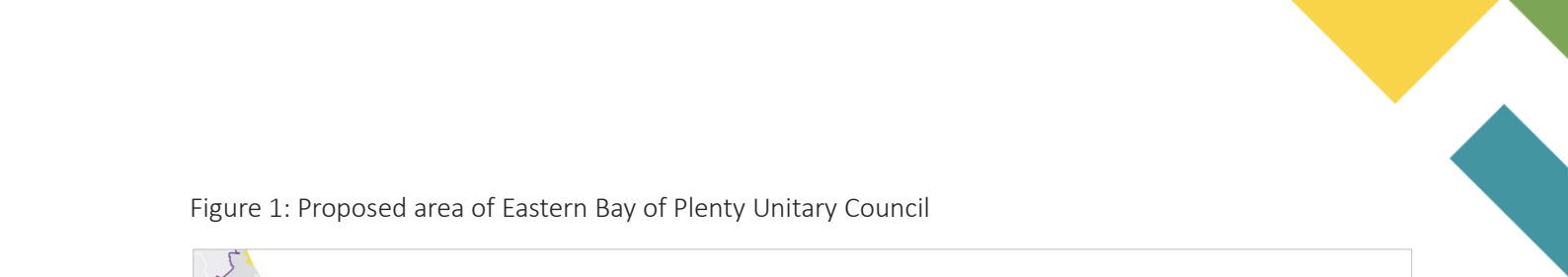
The Head Start pathway provides councils with an opportunity to shape their own future arrangements before wider reform is implemented. Eastern Bay councils have chosen to work collaboratively to develop a locally led proposal that reflects the unique characteristics, aspirations, opportunities, and challenges of the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

Importantly, respective council decisions to progress via the Head Start pathway with an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council have been informed by robust community engagement and ongoing iwi conversations. This proposal seeks to ensure that the future structure of local Government is shaped by the communities, iwi, and councils of the Eastern Bay.

An Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides the most balanced and enduring response to local Government reform. It achieves the Government's objectives of simplifying local Government, improving organisational capability and efficiency, strengthening strategic decision-making, and supporting the new planning system, while retaining strong local representation, meaningful iwi partnerships, and decision-making that remains connected to local communities.

The proposal reflects extensive discussion between councils, engagement with communities, and early conversations with iwi partners. Strong support has emerged for an Eastern Bay configuration over other potential models with consistent themes that any future governance arrangements should maintain an Eastern Bay focus and protect the ability of local communities to influence decisions affecting their future.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council proposal has been developed with an awareness of the wider Bay of Plenty reform landscape. While focused on achieving the best outcome for the Eastern Bay, the proposal recognises and supports the ability of neighbouring councils and sub-regions to pursue arrangements that reflect their own communities of interest, engagement feedback and locally determined preferences. Collectively, these approaches contribute to a coherent Bay of Plenty framework that balances regional collaboration with strong local representation and decision-making.



1.2. Proposal Overview

The Eastern Bay of Plenty councils – Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council – propose to establish a single unified council (unitary authority) for the Eastern Bay of Plenty. This new Eastern Bay Unitary Council would combine the existing functions of the three territorial authorities and part of Bay of Plenty Regional Council within the Eastern Bay's boundaries, joining regional and local responsibilities under one organisation.

The aim is to create a streamlined governance structure that can better meet our communities' needs, eliminate duplication, and achieve greater resilience and efficiency. The participating councils consider this proposal represents the best balance between local voice and organisational scale. It creates a council of sufficient size to meet future challenges while retaining close connections to the communities it serves.

The proposed authority would:

- Serve approximately 56,000 residents.
- Cover approximately 7,600 square kilometres.
- Bring together local and regional Government functions within a single organisation.
- Replace the current four-entity model affecting the Eastern Bay with one integrated council.
- Build on established Eastern Bay communities of interest and existing inter-council collaboration.
- Maintain strong local representation and democratic accountability.
- Support meaningful Māori participation in governance and decision-making.
- Support implementation of the Government's new planning system.
- Strengthen organisational capability and resilience.
- Deliver efficiencies through simplification and reduced duplication.
- Provide a practical and achievable pathway for reform.

1.3. Proposal eligibility

This proposal has been developed collaboratively by the three directly affected territorial local authorities in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and is put forward with formal support from each of these councils. Importantly, council decisions to progress via the Head Start pathway with an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council have been informed from community engagement and ongoing iwi conversations. The proposal clearly meets eligibility requirements having been submitted by two or more territorial authorities (in this instance from three), and meeting (both) the requirements of representing either the majority of directly affected territorial authorities, or the majority of population across directly affected areas.

2. Strategic Case for Change

2.1. Why Change is Needed

The participating councils recognise that local Government is operating in an increasingly complex and interconnected environment. Communities and places are facing opportunities and challenges that extend beyond traditional council boundaries and require coordinated responses across planning, infrastructure, environmental management, economic development, resilience, and community wellbeing.

At the same time, expectations of local Government continue to grow and change. Significant reform programmes, evolving regulatory requirements, long-term infrastructure needs, climate adaptation, and increasing community expectations all require strong organisational capability and effective coordination across functions and agencies.

The participating councils consider that reform presents an opportunity to create a governance model that is better aligned to these future demands. The goal is not simply structural change, but a stronger platform for integrated decision-making, long-term planning, and the delivery of improved efficiencies and effective outcomes for the communities of the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

2.2. Why an Eastern Bay of Plenty Solution

The case for an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council is articulated throughout this proposal and reflected across the assessment criteria, community perspectives, and strategic considerations that underpin it. In considering future governance arrangements, the participating councils explored a range of potential configurations, including maintaining existing arrangements, larger regional structures, and alternative sub-regional models.

Engagement completed during the timeframe clearly conveys the respective communities across the Eastern Bay of Plenty, prefer and support an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council.

The participating councils concluded that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides the most appropriate balance between local responsiveness and organisational capability. Unlike the current arrangement, an Eastern Bay model would bring local and regional functions together within a single organisation, creating stronger alignment between planning, infrastructure, environmental management, economic development, and service delivery.

The Eastern Bay already functions as a recognised community of interest, with strong social, cultural, economic, environmental, and whakapapa connections. Existing patterns of labour, workforce and freight movement, shared infrastructure, economic linkages, council collaboration, and established relationships with iwi provide a strong foundation for governance at this scale.

Compared with larger regional alternatives, an Eastern Bay model is better positioned to retain a clear focus on Eastern Bay opportunities, efficiencies, challenges, and priorities. It enables decisions to be made closer to the communities affected by them, supports strong local representation, and reduces the risk that smaller communities become secondary to the priorities of larger population centres.

The proposal also builds on existing strengths and relationships. The Eastern Bay councils have a well-established history of collaboration across strategic planning, economic development, transport initiatives, emergency management, and regional advocacy, while longstanding council-iwi relationships provide a strong platform for future governance arrangements.

The participating councils therefore consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides the best balance of local voice, organisational capability, strategic alignment, and long-term sustainability. It delivers the scale and efficiencies needed to respond to future challenges while retaining the local connection, identity, and responsiveness that Eastern Bay communities value.

2.3. Why Now

The current reform programme presents a significant opportunity to proactively shape the future of local Government in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Through the Head Start pathway, councils are able to work together to develop a locally led model that reflects the region's communities, aspirations, and long-term priorities.

Rather than waiting for future reform decisions, the participating councils, informed by community engagement results, have chosen to use this opportunity to shape an outcome that builds on the Eastern Bay's existing strengths, partnerships, and communities of interest. The Head Start pathway provides a timely mechanism to establish a governance model that is fit for the future and designed around the needs of the Eastern Bay.

3. Community Engagement and Perspectives

3.1. Overview of engagement

There has been overwhelming support from the community, many iwi, community groups, industry and businesses that an Eastern Bay Unitary Council would best serve the future of the region. The participating councils recognise that local Government reform is not an organisational exercise, it is re-arranging whole communities. The widespread support and endorsement received for an Eastern Bay Unitary Council shows confidence for the long-term success of this proposed merger to serve the region.

Figure 2: An Eastern Bay proposal is aligned to clear community preference

The Kawerau District community has strongly endorsed an Eastern Bay model, with 80% of the 348-plus feedback responses received (including 248 formal survey responses).	For the Opotiki District , approximately 76% of 33 survey (plus direct email) responses supported an Eastern Bay of Plenty unitary model.	In the case of Whakatāne District approximately 66% of 97 survey (plus direct email) responses supported an Eastern Bay of Plenty unitary model.
---	--	---

Several themes consistently emerged through the respective community engagement:

- Protecting local voice and representation to remain connected and responsive to local communities.
- Ensuring Eastern Bay voice and influence is not lost within any larger scale model.
- Retaining Te Ao Māori voice via Māori representation.
- Reflecting established Eastern Bay communities of interest with strong social, economic, cultural, environmental, and whakapapa connections.
- Continuing to build on established partnerships between iwi and local Government.
- Building on existing collaboration that already exists in the Eastern Bay.
- Ensuring efficiencies and affordability for communities, without the burdens of debts of larger regions.
- Finding appropriate balance of economies of scale alongside localism and local responsiveness.

The Head Start pathway has operated within compressed Government timeframes. Despite these constraints, Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council have undertaken an extensive range of engagement activities to seek community feedback that has informed the decision-making of elected members to progress this proposal.

Outside of the Council-to-Council discussions, much of the iwi and public engagement process has been individually led by each of the participating councils for each respective District. This has enabled genuine and community-led views to inform the resulting decision for an Eastern Bay proposal.

A consistent theme has emerged across engagement activities- while views on local Government reform vary, there is significantly stronger support for an Eastern Bay-focused approach. Engagement has shown widespread opposition to larger regional alternatives where population disparity would occur.

Engagement has included:

- Discussions between councils of the Eastern Bay, wider Bay of Plenty and beyond.
- Engagement with iwi leaders, iwi organisations, and post-settlement governance entities.
- Public information sessions and community meetings.
- Online engagement portals and feedback surveys.
- Discussions with businesses, community organisations, and consultation partners.
- Ongoing conversations through existing council networks and relationships.

Engagement will continue throughout the ensuing detailed design phase. However, the views received to date provide valuable insight into the communities' priorities and aspirations for the region and future representation.

3.2. Iwi and Māori Conversations

The participating councils recognise the importance of engaging with iwi and Māori throughout the development of this proposal and each Council has led engagement within their respective districts. Engagement has occurred through existing relationships, formal and informal discussions, online hui, individual meetings, regional forums, and ongoing conversations involving iwi leadership with Mayors, elected members, chief executives and council staff.

These conversations have sought to share information regarding the Government's reform programme, understand iwi perspectives and aspirations, identify opportunities and concerns associated with reform, and ensure iwi perspectives help inform proposal development. While engagement remains ongoing several common themes have been identified:

- Protecting Treaty settlement arrangements, statutory obligations, co-governance arrangements, and established partnership agreements.
- Maintaining local voice and influence, with governance remaining connected to local communities, whenua, and catchments.
- Preserving and strengthening existing council-iwi relationships that have developed over many years.
- Recognising existing catchments, communities of interest, whakapapa relationships, and cultural connections.
- Enabling meaningful iwi participation in the design of future governance arrangements rather than iwi simply responding to predetermined outcomes.

- Acknowledging that iwi and Māori geography is not defined by Government and under any local Government model will likely result in some cross-boundary implications for cultural interests, rohe and whakapapa.
- Concerns regarding the compressed reform timeframe and the cumulative impact of multiple reform programmes on iwi capacity and resources.

Overall, engagement suggests strong interest in ensuring any future governance arrangements remain closely connected to the Eastern Bay of Plenty's communities, relationships, places, catchments, and the cultural connections that give them meaning

3.3. Community Feedback

Community engagement has been undertaken across all three participating councils through a range of mechanisms appropriate to the timeframes available under the Head Start pathway. Engagement activities have included public information sessions, community meetings and conversations, council-hosted information and feedback channels, online surveys, discussions with community groups and organisations, conversations with local businesses and stakeholders, and direct engagement by elected members.

Engagement undertaken to date has provided useful insight into community perspectives on local Government reform and potential future governance options. While views vary regarding reform itself, several consistent themes emerged from community feedback:

- Maintaining strong local voice and representation, with communities remaining well connected to decision-makers.
- Preserving an Eastern Bay focus and ensuring governance remains responsive to Eastern Bay priorities, opportunities, and challenges.
- Recognising the established social, cultural, economic, environmental, and historical connections that already exist across the Eastern Bay.
- Retaining and strengthening Eastern Bay identity rather than becoming part of a significantly larger governance structure.
- Supporting greater organisational capability, resilience, and efficiency, provided these benefits do not come at the expense of local influence and representation.
- Retaining decision-making, employment opportunities, investment, and organisational capability within the Eastern Bay.
- Achieving an appropriate balance between the benefits of reform and maintaining strong local connections to communities.

Collectively, these themes align closely with the rationale underpinning this proposal and reinforce the view that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides an appropriate balance between organisational capability, local representation, and long-term community outcomes.

Should this proposal proceed beyond the outline proposal stage, further community and stakeholder engagement would be undertaken to inform the development of a detailed proposal, including the proposed governance arrangements, implementation approach, and transition planning.

This additional engagement would provide opportunities for more detailed discussion of the proposed model and enable communities, iwi and Māori, stakeholders, and affected parties to help shape the final proposal. Undertaking further engagement as part of this next stage is also necessary to ensure each participating council meets its obligations under the Local Government Act 2002, including the requirements of its Significance and Engagement Policy, by ensuring that communities are appropriately informed and have meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions of this significance.

4. Proposed Structure and Governance Arrangements

4.1. Proposed Structure

The proposal seeks to establish a single Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council comprising the current territories of Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council. The proposed authority would assume both territorial authority functions and regional council functions currently exercised within the Eastern Bay of Plenty, creating a single organisation responsible for governance, planning, infrastructure, environmental management, regulatory functions, and community services across the Eastern Bay region. It is expected some matters will continue to be delivered collaboratively at greater scale where necessary and advantageous.

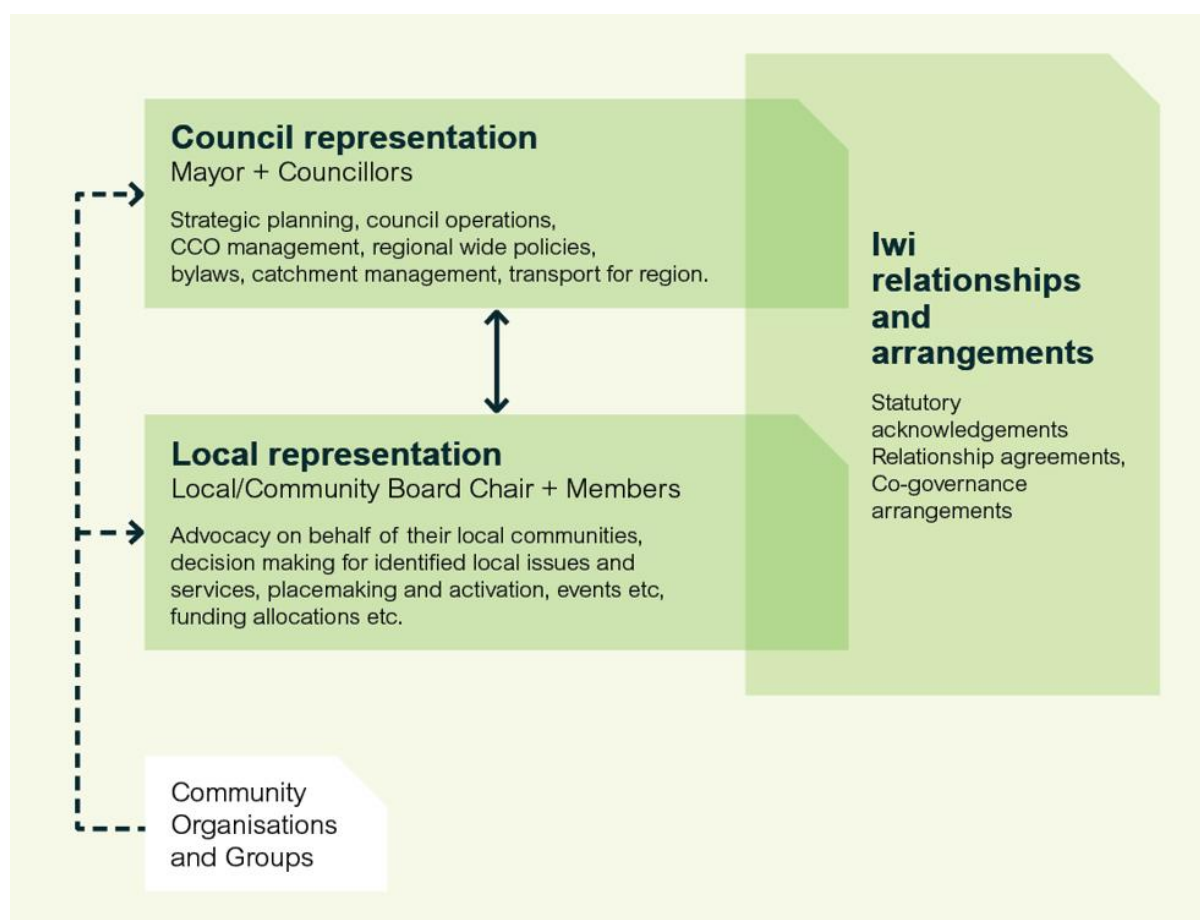
The participating councils consider that a unitary authority model provides the most effective balance between strategic leadership, organisational capability, service delivery integration, and local representation. The proposed structure is intended to simplify governance by bringing together functions that are currently delivered through multiple organisations while improving alignment between planning, investment, and service delivery.

4.2. Local Governance and Representation

The participating councils are committed to ensuring that any future governance structure maintains strong local voice and accessibility while supporting effective strategic leadership across the Eastern Bay. Local representation and community influence will be critical to the long-term success of any future governance model. The detailed design of representation arrangements would be undertaken during the next phase of the Head Start process. However, it is anticipated that the future governance structure would include a combination of:

- An elected Mayor and governing body responsible for strategic leadership and region-wide decision-making.
- Continuation of Māori wards to support meaningful Māori participation in governance and decision-making as endorsed by respective Eastern Bay communities in the recent Government legislated referenda to retain Māori representation in governance.
- Wards and representation arrangements that reflect communities of interest and provide fair and effective representation.
- Local representation mechanisms, such as community boards, local boards, or other locally focused governance arrangements, to ensure decisions remain connected to local communities and local priorities.

Figure 3: Proposed Structure for an Eastern Bay Unitary Council



4.3. Regional Planning and Strategic Leadership

The participating councils envisage a single Eastern Bay of Plenty planning framework that aligns regional and territorial planning functions within one organisation. This would build upon existing collaborative planning initiatives such as Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan and support implementation of the Government's future planning system through a more integrated approach to land use planning, infrastructure planning, environmental management, and growth management.

Bringing these functions together within a unitary authority would strengthen the connection between strategy, investment, and delivery and support more coordinated responses to the opportunities and challenges facing the Eastern Bay.

4.4. Wider Collaboration Where Needed

The participating councils recognise that some matters will continue to benefit from collaboration beyond the boundaries of individual unitary authorities and in some instances that matters are required under legislation to take a broader approach. While the detailed design of these arrangements would be considered during the next phase of the process, it is anticipated that mechanisms such as joint committees, shared governance arrangements, council-controlled

organisations, or other collaborative structures will be used where appropriate. Collaborative arrangements are already a common necessity within local Government and are expected to be simplified through governance consolidation

It is expected that ongoing collaboration will be needed with regards to:

- Spatial planning coordination.
- Transport planning.
- Catchment management, environmental management, pest management where appropriate to extend beyond unitary authority boundaries.
- Emergency management planning.
- Stewardship of Quayside Holdings.

The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council can provide strong local leadership while also participating constructively in governance and service arrangements that support wider Bay of Plenty outcomes.

5. Wider regional coherency and benefit

5.1. Inter-council engagement

Since the Government's Head Start announcement, councils across the wider Bay of Plenty have each worked to explore options for local Government reorganisation and assess potential responses to the Government's reform programme. From the outset, inter-Council engagement has occurred through multiple channels at including:

- Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum discussions.
- Eastern Bay Joint Committee discussions.
- Chief Executive forums and regular discussions.
- Eastern Bay staff working group process.
- Eastern Bay Council workshops, briefings, and meetings.

Through these processes, councils have shared information, assessed options, considered policy guidance, discussed emerging evidence, and explored potential governance configurations. The process has enabled participating councils to progressively develop a shared understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and implications associated with local Government reform.

An Eastern Bay of Plenty proposal and workstreams have progressively come together reflecting the convergence of views of Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council. Importantly, these views have been informed by a clear view from local communities, and fit into a collective and coherent wider regional direction.

5.2. A Coherent Regional Approach

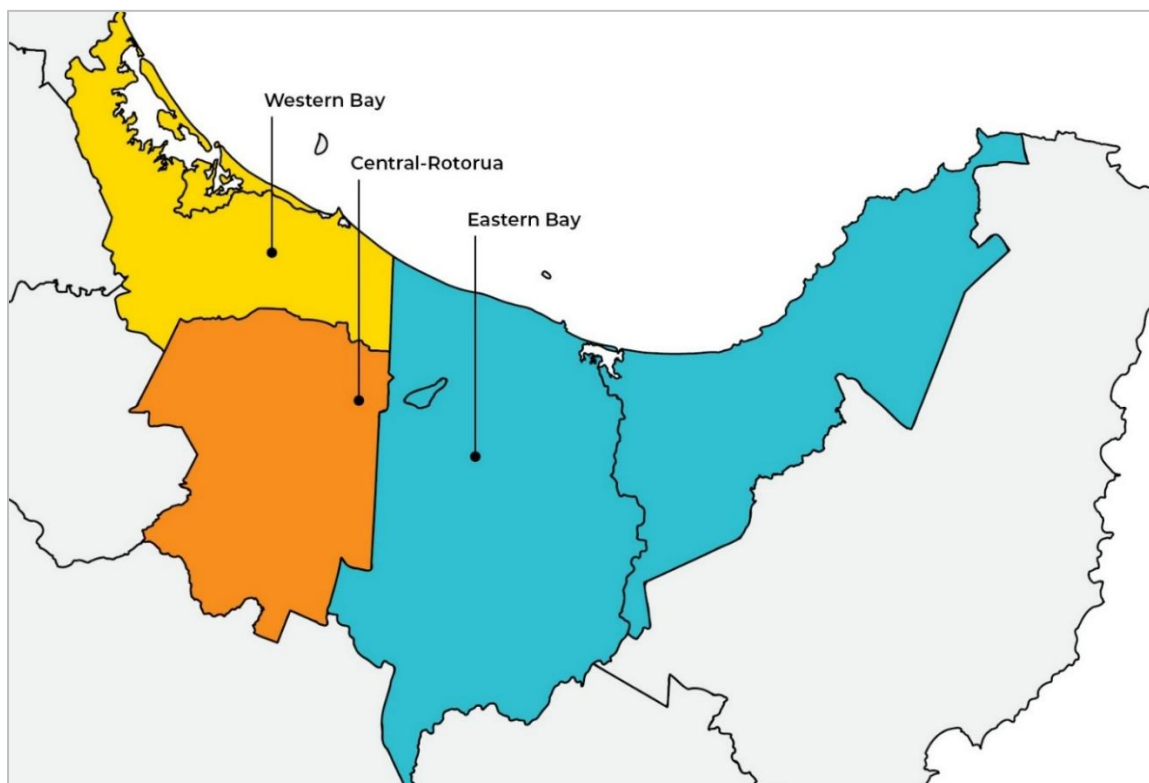
At the wider Bay of Plenty level, a coherent multi sub-regional model is emerging that reflects in many instances how the Bay of Plenty already coordinates and collaborates its efforts. The participating Councils (for the Eastern Bay proposal) acknowledge and support the distinct sub-regional models and proposals covering the wider Bay of Plenty including for Western Bay of Plenty with Tauranga City, and for a Central-Rotorua unitary model.

Councils across the Bay of Plenty have all made formal resolutions acknowledging and supporting each other's sub-regional proposals and a letter of endorsement from all Mayors across the Bay of Plenty, to this same effect, is attached to this proposal.

The participating councils recognise that local Government reform cannot occur in isolation and that future governance arrangements should contribute positively to both local outcomes and the wider Bay of Plenty region. Discussions across the Bay of Plenty involving councils, chief executives, mayors, iwi representatives, and other stakeholders. These conversations have explored how future governance arrangements can collectively support an effective and coherent regional structure across the wider Bay of Plenty.

The Eastern Bay proposal has been developed in full awareness of the wider context and reflects a view that the Bay of Plenty is comprised of distinct sub-regions, each with its own communities of interest, opportunities, challenges, and priorities.

Figure 4: Sub-regional identities that make up the wider Bay of Plenty



5.3. A Regionally Beneficial and Locally Appropriate Solution

While this proposal is focused on establishing governance arrangements that best meet the needs of the Eastern Bay of Plenty, the participating councils consider that it also delivers significant benefits for the wider Bay of Plenty region. Together with the complementary proposals being advanced for the Western Bay and Rotorua sub-regions, it supports a coherent regional governance framework that reflects the Bay of Plenty's distinct communities of interest while strengthening the capability of local government across the region.

The Bay of Plenty is characterised by three distinct sub-regions—Eastern Bay, Rotorua and the Western Bay—each with different growth patterns, economic drivers, demographic characteristics, environmental pressures and infrastructure priorities. Enabling each sub-region to operate as a capable unitary authority allows governance, planning, investment and service delivery to be aligned more closely with local needs and aspirations. This brings strategic decision-making closer to implementation, improves accountability for outcomes, and enables councils to respond more effectively to the circumstances of their own communities, while continuing to collaborate on matters where a regional approach delivers greater value.

The proposal would also simplify governance arrangements within the Eastern Bay by bringing regional and territorial functions together within a single organisation. This provides greater clarity of

accountability for communities, streamlines decision-making, and enables infrastructure, environmental management, housing and economic development initiatives to be planned and delivered in a more integrated manner. A more capable Eastern Bay partner also strengthens regional collaboration by providing a single organisation able to participate effectively in shared regional initiatives and jointly owned delivery arrangements where these provide efficiencies or address cross-boundary issues.

The participating councils consider that this sub-regional model represents the most effective balance between preserving local voice and achieving the benefits of organisational scale. It aligns with the Bay of Plenty's existing communities of interest and complements the wider regional direction being advanced through the three-sub-region approach. Rather than creating a single region-wide authority, it retains governance that is locally responsive while enabling collaboration on issues that extend beyond individual council boundaries.

Regional benefits are therefore an important outcome of this proposal, but they are not its primary purpose. The proposal stands on its own merits as the governance model best suited to the Eastern Bay of Plenty. At the same time, it contributes to a stronger, more resilient and better coordinated system of local government across the Bay of Plenty, supporting improved economic development, infrastructure delivery, environmental stewardship and long-term prosperity for the region as a whole.

Key ways a sub-regional approach can strengthen the wider Bay of Plenty include:

- Creating stronger local accountability by aligning decision-making with the communities, and places most affected by those decisions, while reducing the distance between communities and their elected representatives.
- Reflecting established communities of interest that already exist across the Eastern Bay, Western Bay, and Rotorua/Central areas, rather than attempting to govern highly diverse areas through a single structure.
- Building on existing sub-regional planning frameworks, including Our Places Eastern Bay, SmartGrowth, and the Rotorua Future Development Strategy, which already provide mature foundations for growth, infrastructure, transport, and environmental planning.
- Improving strategic focus and responsiveness by enabling each sub-region to concentrate on its own growth patterns, economic drivers, infrastructure priorities, environmental challenges, and community aspirations.
- Preserving and strengthening relationships with iwi and hapū by maintaining governance arrangements at a scale that more closely reflects existing relationships, settlements, catchments, and communities.
- Creating strong and capable regional partners that can work collaboratively on matters requiring a wider Bay of Plenty perspective, including transport, emergency management, catchment management, regional spatial planning, environmental stewardship, and strategic investment.

- Reducing governance complexity within each area through the integration of regional and territorial functions, while allowing cross-boundary issues to be managed through targeted collaborative mechanisms where regional scale is genuinely required.
- Supporting a more resilient regional governance system by distributing leadership, capability, expertise, and decision-making across multiple strong authorities rather than concentrating responsibility within a single organisation.
- Retaining economic capability, investment attraction, organisational expertise, and local employment opportunities within each part of the region, supporting more balanced economic development outcomes across the Bay of Plenty.
- Enabling innovation and tailored service delivery by allowing each area to develop solutions that reflect local circumstances while sharing successful approaches across the wider region.
- Strengthening regional collaboration by bringing together a smaller number of capable and strategically focused authorities, each able to participate effectively in regional governance, advocacy, and collective problem-solving.
- Providing a coherent long-term governance framework for the Bay of Plenty, where distinct but interconnected unitary authorities work together on shared regional outcomes while maintaining the local responsiveness, democratic legitimacy, and community connection needed to serve their communities effectively.
- Delivering a model where the strength of the wider Bay of Plenty is built on the strength of its constituent parts, recognising that strong sub-regions, working collaboratively, can collectively achieve better regional outcomes than a single centralised governance structure.

6. How an Eastern Bay Proposal Meets Criteria

6.1. Supports the New Planning System

The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides a practical and effective platform for implementing the Government's new planning system while delivering improved planning outcomes for Eastern Bay communities. The proposal supports the new planning system because it:

- Builds on existing spatial planning frameworks already operating across the Eastern Bay.
- Supports effective participation in Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Planning.
- Simplifies future Land Use Plan development and administration.
- Supports integrated Natural Environment Planning and catchment management.
- Maintains effective Regional Land Transport Planning while strengthening local transport planning and delivery.
- Strengthens alignment between planning, infrastructure, environmental management, transport, and delivery.
- Maintains planning continuity during a period of significant reform. Provides a single Eastern Bay planning voice into wider Bay of Plenty planning outcomes.

6.1.1. Overview

The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would strongly support implementation of the Government's new planning system.

The proposal aligns with the core architecture of the new planning system by supporting coordinated development of Regional Spatial Plans, simplifying future Land Use Plan preparation, maintaining integrated management of natural systems and catchments, and strengthening the connection between planning, infrastructure, and transport planning. It also builds upon planning foundations already established across the Eastern Bay, reducing disruption and supporting continuity through a period of significant reform.

A key advantage of the proposed structure is that it aligns governance, growth planning, infrastructure investment, environmental management, transport planning, and service delivery within a single organisation. This supports one of the fundamental objectives of the new planning system: bringing strategy closer to delivery. Rather than planning through multiple organisations and implementing through others, an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would be better positioned to align planning decisions with infrastructure investment, environmental outcomes, growth management, transport networks, and community priorities.

6.1.2. Supporting Regional Spatial Plans and Land Use Plans

The three Eastern Bay councils have jointly developed and adopted Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan, establishing a shared strategic framework for growth, housing, infrastructure, economic development, resilience, environmental stewardship, and community wellbeing.

Alongside the Eastern Bay two other sub-regional spatial plans/future development strategies for the Bay of Plenty provide a mature planning foundation that contributes to a wider regional picture, while recognising the distinct opportunities and priorities within each sub-region. It is expected that each respective spatial plan would continue to contribute towards the broader scale (Regional) Spatial Plan requirements. Irrespective of the Head Start outcome, the Eastern Bay councils will continue to work at pace alongside the rest of the region to prepare the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan on current boundaries, consistent with the Government's expectation in the guidance. An Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would enable the Eastern Bay to participate in these processes through a single organisation with a unified strategic mandate. This would simplify coordination, reduce duplication, and strengthen alignment between regional planning and local implementation.

Figure 5: Well established sub-regional spatial plan framework for the Bay of Plenty

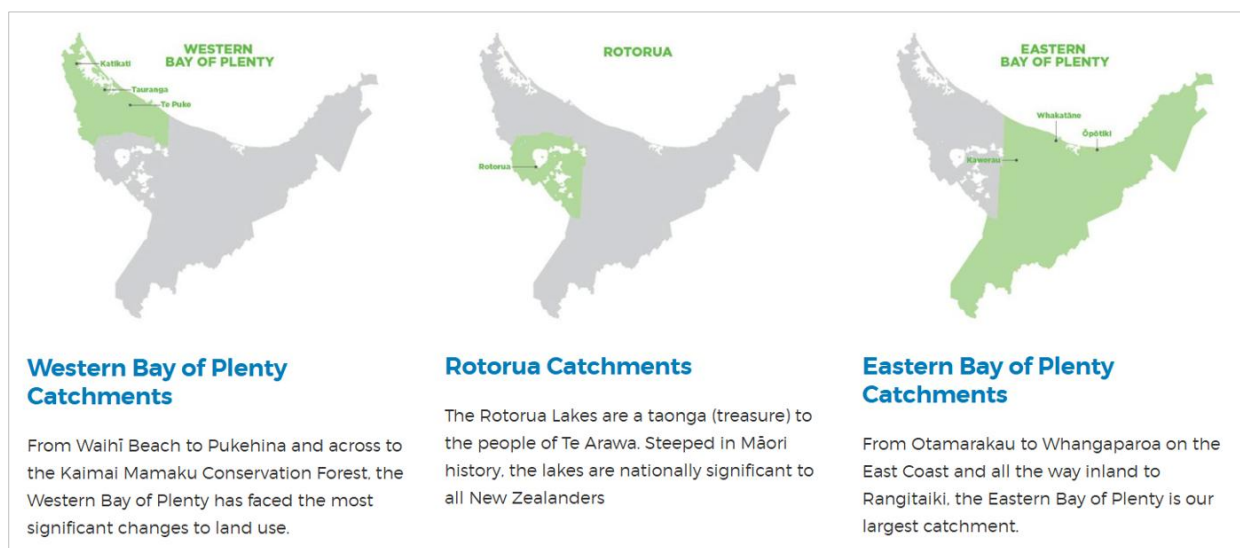
Our Places Eastern Bay's spatial plan has a strong emphasis on coordinating future growth across multiple smaller urban areas and towns, while balancing community character, Māori land development, infrastructure, jobs, natural hazards, and climate resilience.	SmartGrowth Western Bay's long-term, partnership-led growth framework, integrates urban form, infrastructure, transport, community development, tangata whenua aspirations, and the natural environment across Tauranga and the Western Bay of Plenty.	Rotorua Future Development Strategy Long Term Future Development Strategy focusing on ensuring Rotorua has sufficient housing and business capacity and a staged growth pathway over 30 years.
--	--	--

The Planning Bill requires each district to have one land use plan. Rather than three land use plans being notified by December 2029, a single Eastern Bay District Land Use Plan would be produced, reducing duplication and supporting a more coordinated planning framework for communities, iwi, businesses, and landowners.

6.1.3. Supporting Environmental Planning and Catchment Management

The Eastern Bay contains the largest catchment area within the Bay of Plenty region. Existing Bay of Plenty Regional Council management arrangements already operate at a catchment scale that aligns closely with the geography of the proposed Eastern Bay authority, providing a strong foundation for future Natural Environment Planning. The proposal therefore builds upon an existing management geography rather than requiring significant change to the way environmental systems are currently understood and managed.

Figure 6: Catchment management boundaries in the Bay of Plenty (sourced from BOPRC)



Natural environmental systems are acknowledged to function at varying scale and there will always be some difference in alignment with what are effectively artificial local government boundaries. Cross boundary implications are likely to occur at whatever scale local government boundaries are created. While an Eastern Bay unitary council aligns well with existing management scale for catchments, it is expected that some cross boundary management arrangements will be needed, even as others become simplified. For example, cross boundary arrangements will be needed for the Tarawera River Catchment Plan with its head waters at Lake Tarawera in the Rotorua District, meanwhile the Ōhiwa Harbour Strategy becomes simplified from three local councils down to one (amongst other non-council partners).

6.1.4. Supporting Transport Planning

Transport planning is closely linked to land use planning, infrastructure investment, economic development, and growth management. The participating councils recognise that Regional Land Transport Planning will continue to benefit from collaboration across the wider Bay of Plenty. An Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would continue to participate in these regional processes alongside neighbouring authorities, ensuring continuity of regional transport planning while providing a stronger and more coordinated Eastern Bay voice.

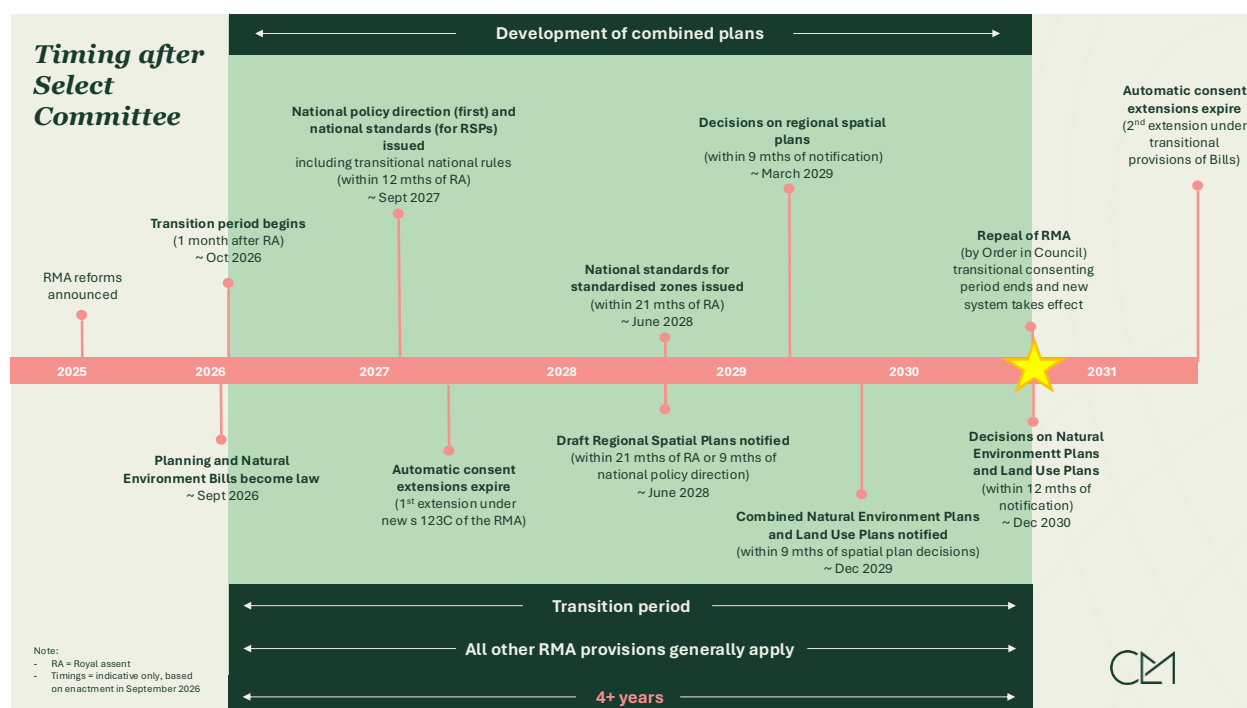
At the same time, local transport planning responsibilities would be consolidated within a single organisation, strengthening the relationship between transport investment, growth planning, infrastructure provision, economic development, housing, and community outcomes. The participating councils also note that the Eastern Bay transport network operates as an integrated system supporting workforce movement, freight, economic activity, access to services, and social connections across district boundaries. Management currently falls across multiple administrations, and a unified authority would be better positioned to align transport investment and asset management across this network.

6.1.5. Maintaining Planning Momentum Through Reform

The proposal builds on planning programmes, partnerships, and governance arrangements that are already in place. Work on the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan, future Land Use Plans, and Natural Environment Plans can continue throughout any transition period, maintaining momentum and reducing disruption.

The participating councils intend to continue progressing planning reform work regardless of the outcome of the Head Start process. Existing planning initiatives, growth strategies, infrastructure programmes, and environmental projects can therefore continue with confidence.

Figure 7: Planning reform transition timeline



6.1.6. What Still Needs to be Worked Through

Under the policy criteria ‘supporting the new planning systems’- should the proposal progress, further work will be required to:

- Confirm transfer of planning functions currently undertaken by Bay of Plenty Regional Council.
- Undertake work to determine continuity arrangements, the cost implications and funding of regional functions.
- Finalise governance arrangements for Regional Spatial Planning and Regional Land Transport Planning.
- Confirm future Natural Environment Plan responsibilities and administration.
- Confirm ongoing arrangements for cross-boundary catchment management.
- Assess workforce, capability, and organisational requirements needed to support the new planning system.

6.2. Simplifies Local Governance

The participating councils consider that the proposal delivers substantial governance simplification while retaining local responsiveness, community influence, and regional connectivity. The proposal simplifies local governance because it:

- Replaces four local government organisations with a single Eastern Bay authority.
- Integrates local and regional functions within one organisation.
- Reduces governance complexity and duplication.
- Creates clearer accountability for local outcomes.
- Simplifies interactions with local government for communities, iwi, businesses, and stakeholders.
- Maintains strong local representation and democratic participation.
- Supports effective regional collaboration through a single Eastern Bay voice.
- Aligns governance structures with the way the Eastern Bay already plans, collaborates, and operates.

6.2.1. Overview

A primary objective of the Government's reform programme is to simplify local government.

The participating councils consider that the current arrangements affecting the Eastern Bay of Plenty create unnecessary complexity through the separation of local and regional functions across multiple organisations. While collaboration between councils is generally strong, communities, iwi, businesses, and government agencies are often required to engage with multiple councils to address issues that span planning, environmental management, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, and regulatory functions.

The proposed Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would simplify this arrangement by bringing local and regional functions together within a single organisation, creating clearer accountability, more integrated decision-making, and a simpler experience for those interacting with local government.

6.2.2. From Four Organisations to One

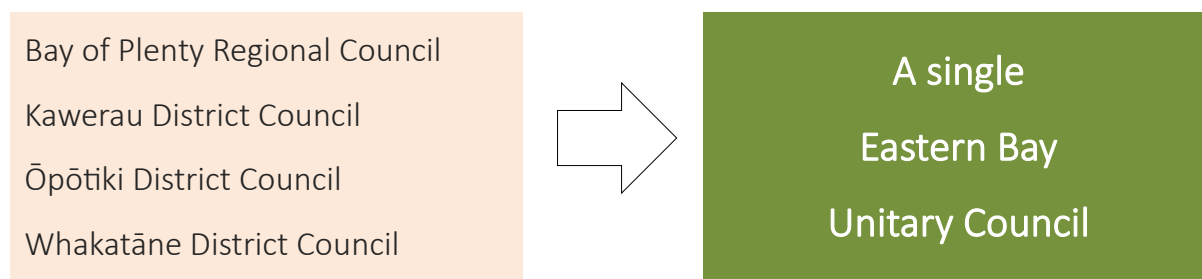
The most significant simplification achieved through the proposal is structural. Under the current model, responsibility for local government functions in the Eastern Bay is shared between four entities. Under the proposed model, these responsibilities would be consolidated within a single Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council.

This would reduce the number of organisations involved in local decision-making, planning, environmental management, infrastructure provision, and regulatory functions, while creating a single governance framework for the Eastern Bay. Additionally, this will simplify the relationship between

local government and central government by consolidating the relationships, interaction, and interface with central government agencies and ministries.

The proposal also reflects the reality that the Eastern Bay already increasingly operates as a connected sub-region. Strategic initiatives such as Eastern Bay Joint Committee, Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan, Eastern Bay Economic Development Strategy, emergency management arrangements, transport initiatives, and numerous collaborative projects are already being developed and implemented collectively. The proposed governance structure aligns governance with the way the Eastern Bay is already planning and working together.

Figure 8: Governance is simplified from four local government entities to one



6.2.3. Clearer Accountability and Decision-Making

Many issues affecting the Eastern Bay currently require coordination across multiple councils and governance structures. Planning, environmental management, growth management, transport, infrastructure investment, emergency management, and economic development frequently involve overlapping responsibilities and multiple decision-making processes.

A unitary authority would bring these functions together within a single organisation, simplifying governance arrangements and providing clearer accountability for outcomes. For example, matters that currently require input from both territorial and regional councils, such as planning, environmental management, land use, infrastructure investment, and transport, could be considered through a single governance framework. This would reduce duplication, improve coordination, provide a singular, efficient and effective decision-making mechanism, and provide communities with a clearer understanding of where responsibility sits.

A simpler governance structure would also improve the ability to balance competing priorities and align long-term strategy with operational delivery across the Eastern Bay.

6.2.4. A Simpler Experience for Communities

Local government should be easy for people to understand and engage with. The proposed model would simplify interactions for residents, iwi, businesses, developers, community organisations, and government agencies by reducing the number of organisations involved in local government processes.

This is particularly relevant for planning, consenting, environmental management, infrastructure investment, and community advocacy, where responsibility currently sits across both territorial and regional council structures. The simplification would also benefit iwi organisations, landowners,

businesses, and industry groups whose interests frequently span current district or regional boundaries. Rather than navigating multiple organisations, planning frameworks, bylaws, and regulatory processes, communities would increasingly interact with a single authority responsible for both local and regional functions within the Eastern Bay. The proposal therefore creates a more coherent and accessible local government system for those that we serve.

6.2.5. Maintaining Local Representation and Access

The participating councils recognise that simplifying governance should not come at the expense of local voice. Community feedback consistently identified support for an Eastern Bay-focused solution that simplifies governance while maintaining strong local representation and accessibility. Feedback across all three districts indicated significantly stronger support for an Eastern Bay arrangement and widespread opposition to larger regional alternatives.

The proposal therefore combines governance simplification with a commitment to maintaining strong local representation locally focused representation arrangements. The detailed design phase would further consider mechanisms such as community boards, local boards, or other place-based governance arrangements to ensure local communities continue to influence decisions affecting their areas. Further, it is expected that multiple service centres would continue to operate through the Eastern Bay to ensure simplification does not come at the cost of accessing local government services.

This approach enables governance structures to be simplified while retaining meaningful local participation, access and democratic accountability.

6.2.6. Supporting Effective Regional Collaboration

The participating councils recognise that some functions will continue to benefit from collaboration beyond the boundaries of the proposed unitary authority. Importantly, collaboration would occur between fewer organisations than is currently the case. Rather than requiring three Eastern Bay councils to participate in regional forums and processes, the Eastern Bay would participate through a single authority and a unified Eastern Bay position. This has the potential to simplify regional coordination while strengthening the Eastern Bay's influence within wider Bay of Plenty discussions.

Examples of activities likely to continue benefiting from wider regional collaboration include:

- Regional Spatial Planning
- Regional Land Transport Planning
- Catchment management
- Emergency management
- Joint procurement and shared services through existing (nine Council) arrangement
- Stewardship of Quayside Holdings

6.2.7. What Still Needs to be Worked Through

Under the policy criteria ‘simplifying local governance’ - should the proposal progress, further work will be required to:

- Refine the future governance and representation arrangements for the proposed authority.
- Consider options for maintaining strong local voice and community influence.
- Confirm arrangements for Māori participation and representation.
- Develop future governance arrangements for activities requiring collaboration beyond the Eastern Bay.
- Identify any legislative, regulatory, or implementation matters required to support establishment of the new authority.

6.3. Provides Economies of Scale

The participating councils consider that the proposal achieves an appropriate balance between economies of scale, organisational capability, and local responsiveness. The proposal provides economies of scale because it:

- Creates an organisation of sufficient scale to effectively undertake both local and regional functions.
- Provides cost efficiencies through reduced duplication across governance, management, planning, and support functions.
- Strengthens specialist capability and workforce resilience.
- Creates opportunities for stronger procurement and infrastructure delivery efficiencies and capacity.
- Builds on existing shared services and collaborative arrangements.
- Supports a stronger and more consistent platform for economic development and investment.
- Improves financial sustainability and organisational resilience.
- Retains a strong Eastern Bay focus while achieving the benefits of increased scale.

6.3.1. Overview

The participating councils recognise that economies of scale are an important consideration in local government reform. The proposed authority will provide cost efficiencies through economies of scale, streamlining of services and rationalisation of duplicate functions and provides opportunities to strengthen organisational capability, and enhance long-term financial sustainability.

The proposed Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would create an organisation of sufficient scale to undertake both local and regional functions while remaining closely connected to the communities it serves. With approximately 56,000 residents and more than \$100 million in annual rates revenue before consideration of transferred regional functions, the proposed authority would be comparable to, and in some respects larger than, several existing New Zealand unitary authorities. The participating councils consider that the proposal achieves an appropriate balance between organisational scale, capability, financial sustainability, and local responsiveness.

6.3.2. Achieving the Right Scale

The participating councils consider that the Eastern Bay model balances many of the benefits associated with larger organisations while avoiding some of the complexity, distance, and loss of local focus, and dis-economy of scale that can arise through significantly larger arrangements.

The proposed authority would combine the resources, assets, workforce, and capabilities of three existing councils into a single organisation capable of undertaking a broader range of functions, developing deeper specialist expertise, and providing greater organisational resilience. A key strength of an Eastern Bay proposal is that numerous anticipated scale benefits are already being tested and demonstrated through existing collaboration. Some recent examples include- Eastern Bay Spatial Plan, Eastern Bay Economic Development Strategy, Eastern Bay Road Safety Services, Kawerau Whakatāne boundary adjustment initiatives for Industrial development, Local Waters Done Well, Central Government Advocacy Regional Deals Proposal, Rangitāiki River Forum & Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum to name a few.

The scale of an Eastern Bay Unitary Authority is broadly comparable with, and in some instances larger than, existing New Zealand unitary authorities such as Nelson, Marlborough and neighbouring Gisborne. The participating councils consider this provides confidence that the proposed authority has sufficient scale to effectively undertake both territorial and regional council functions while remaining locally focused.

6.3.3. Examples of Efficiency Opportunities

Early exploration identified a number of practical opportunities where economies of scale may be achieved through consolidation. This is based on early high-level assumptions and further detailed financial analysis will be needed to fully understand the efficiency savings and the implementation costs.

Financial planning and reporting: Moving from three Long Term Plans, Annual Plans, Annual Reports and audits to a single set of planning and reporting documents is expected to generate efficiencies of approximately \$1.0-1.1 million per annum while simplifying compliance and audit requirements.

Unified rating system: Moving from multiple rating systems held by each of the respective councils, to a single unified rating system for the Eastern Bay is expected to gain efficiencies with benefits to ratepayers.

Governance, management and corporate services: Consolidating governance structures, executive leadership, organisational management and support services is expected to reduce duplication and improve capability, with indicative efficiencies of approximately \$1.25 million per annum from organisational management, \$500,000 per annum from governance functions, and \$750,000 per annum from corporate services.

Planning, regulatory and environmental services: A unified planning and regulatory function would reduce reliance on external contractors, strengthen specialist inhouse or staffing capability, and improve service consistency. Indicative savings of approximately \$650,000 per annum have been identified across regulatory, planning and strategy functions, with a single Building Consent Authority potentially contributing a further \$140,000-\$200,000 per annum.

Digital systems and technology: Existing alignment of Datacom and Datascape systems across the councils provides opportunities to simplify future investment and support a single technology environment, with indicative efficiencies of approximately \$400,000-\$500,000 per annum. Other councils across the Bay of Plenty currently use different ERP platforms.

Infrastructure delivery and procurement: Consolidation of capital programmes provides opportunities for stronger procurement outcomes, more coordinated project delivery, and better long-term asset management. A conservative 2% efficiency assumption across the planned capital programme suggests approximately \$12 million in potential savings over the seven-year programme.

Emergency management and organisational resilience: Existing collaboration between emergency management teams demonstrates opportunities to pool specialist capability, increase surge capacity, reduce duplication, enhance in-house training provision and strengthen resilience during emergency events and peak workloads.

Economic development: The Eastern Bay already operates collaboratively through the Eastern Bay Economic Development Strategy and earlier joint arrangements. A single authority would provide a more coordinated platform for investment attraction, economic development, and regional advocacy.

Shared services: Existing participation in shared services arrangements through Bay of Plenty Local Authority Shared Services (BOPLASS) demonstrates the benefits of regional collaboration and procurement. Opportunities remain to build on these arrangements where wider Bay of Plenty scale continues to provide value.

6.3.4. Stronger Capability and Service Delivery

The participating councils consider that one of the most significant benefits of increased scale is improved organisational capability. This acknowledges that smaller councils can face challenges attracting, retaining and developing specialist expertise across a range of specialist and/or high demand roles.

Early exploration identified examples where specialist functions are already supported through external contracts, shared service arrangements, or collaborative delivery. The proposal provides an opportunity to strengthen in-house capability across these functions by creating a larger and more resilient organisation. This would reduce reliance on external providers, support stronger career pathways, and improve the ability to respond to changing workloads, emergencies, and regulatory requirements.

The proposal may create opportunities for the Eastern Bay to take a stronger leadership role in selected regionally significant functions. For example, the Eastern Bay already contains the largest catchment area within the Bay of Plenty and associated catchment management and drainage schemes. Subject to detailed design and wider regional discussions, there may be opportunities for the Eastern Bay authority to become a centre of expertise for catchment management and related services, potentially supporting neighbouring Bay of Plenty authorities through shared service or collaborative arrangements. This would build on existing capability, provide economies of scale across the wider region, and support continued integrated management of the Bay of Plenty's natural systems.

6.3.5. More Effective Infrastructure Investment and Procurement

The participating councils collectively manage significant infrastructure networks, transport assets, community facilities, and public services across the Eastern Bay. Current Long-Term Plans identify

approximately \$561 million of capital expenditure across the three councils between 2027/28 and 2033/34. Using a conservative efficiency assumption of just 2%, the combined programme could generate approximately \$12 million in procurement and delivery efficiencies across the remaining seven years of the current Long Term Plan programme, equating to approximately \$1.2 million to \$2.4 million per annum depending on programme delivery timing.

Bringing this investment programme together within a single authority would provide opportunities to improve investment sequencing, procurement strategy, contractor certainty, and long-term asset management. This approach is expected to provide wider benefits to the local economy by creating a clearer and more predictable infrastructure pipeline for contractors, suppliers, and related business growth investment operating in the Eastern Bay.

6.3.6. Supporting a Stronger Eastern Bay Economy

The Eastern Bay economy already functions at a scale larger than individual district boundaries.

Key industries including horticulture, forestry, manufacturing, geothermal energy, agriculture, aquaculture, Māori enterprise, and tourism operate across the Eastern Bay and rely on shared infrastructure, transport networks, labour markets, and supply chains.

The proposal would provide greater consistency in planning, consenting, infrastructure delivery, economic development activities, and investment decisions. This would reduce administrative complexity and provide a more coordinated platform to support business growth, investment, and employment across the Eastern Bay.

The participating councils also consider that the proposal helps retain organisational capability, increased procurement scale, employment opportunities, and decision-making within the Eastern Bay rather than concentrating these activities elsewhere.

6.3.7. Financial Sustainability and Resilience

The proposal would create a broader rating base, larger asset portfolio, increased organisational capability, and greater resilience to future financial and operational pressures.

A larger organisation is better positioned to respond to infrastructure renewal demands, changing regulatory requirements, emergency events, workforce pressures, and emerging service expectations. It also provides greater flexibility to deploy resources across the Eastern Bay where they are most needed.

The participating councils acknowledge that transition costs will be incurred and that not all efficiencies will be realised immediately. However, the longer-term benefit is the creation of a stronger, more capable, and more sustainable organisation that is better equipped to support Eastern Bay communities into the future.

6.3.8. What Still Needs to be Worked Through

Under the policy criteria 'providing economies of scale' - should the proposal progress, further work will be required to:

- Conduct in depth financial analysis to confirm potential efficiency opportunities and transition costs.
- Understand the set up and transition costs associated with the new unitary council- including any financial support available from central government.
- Confirm future arrangements for regional assets, investments, liabilities, and revenue streams - including investment income that strengthens infrastructure delivery capacity and supports the unitary delivery model.
- Agreed approach for the financial consolidation of the three Council's, including treatment of debt, rates and levels of service.
- Assess opportunities for further service integration and organisational optimisation.
- Develop workforce and organisational design proposals, of note, including for a broader range of functions.
- Confirm procurement, infrastructure delivery, and shared service opportunities associated with the proposed authority.

6.4. Maintains Local Voice

The participating councils consider that an Eastern bay configuration provides the strongest balance between the benefits of reform and the retention of local voice. The proposal maintains local voice because it:

- Aligns governance with an established Eastern Bay community of interest.
- Maintains decision-making close to the communities affected by those decisions.
- Retains a strong voice for provincial, rural, coastal and inland communities.
- Supports fair and effective representation across the Eastern Bay.
- Provides a strong foundation for Māori representation.
- Strengthens existing partnerships between councils and iwi.
- Responds directly to community feedback regarding local voice and local influence.
- Retains an Eastern Bay focus while achieving greater organisational capability and resilience.

6.4.1. Overview

Maintaining local voice is one of the defining strengths of the Eastern Bay proposal. The participating councils recognise that local government reform must not come at the expense of community representation, local influence, or meaningful participation in decision-making. Throughout engagement, a consistent theme emerged that future governance arrangements should remain connected to the people, places, and communities they serve.

The participating councils consider that the proposed Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides the strongest opportunity to achieve the benefits of reform while retaining strong local and Māori representation, local accountability and affordability, and strong community influence.

6.4.2. Reflecting an Established Community of Interest

The Eastern Bay already functions as a well-established community of interest.

The Eastern Bay is characterised by a network of interconnected provincial towns, rural communities, iwi and Māori landholdings, productive agricultural and horticultural areas, forestry estates, coastal settlements, and marae communities. While each community retains its own identity, people routinely move throughout the Eastern Bay for employment, education, healthcare, recreation, commerce, and cultural activities. Major industries including horticulture, forestry, manufacturing, geothermal energy, agriculture, aquaculture, tourism, and Māori enterprise also operate across current district boundaries rather than within a single district.

The proposal therefore aligns governance with an existing community of interest rather than attempting to create one through structural reform. This provides a strong foundation for maintaining local identity and community influence while achieving the benefits of a larger organisation.

6.4.3. Keeping Decision-Making Close to Communities

The participating councils consider that local government in a predominantly rural and provincial part of New Zealand benefits from being closely connected to the places it serves. The Eastern Bay is centred on the towns of Whakatāne, Kawerau, and Ōpōtiki but is equally shaped by smaller communities such as Murupara, Edgecumbe, Matatā, Ōhope, Tāneatua, Te Teko, Wainui, Waiotaha, Kutarere, Te Kaha, Waihou Bay, and many other rural and coastal settlements. While connected through shared regional interests, these communities often experience different priorities, opportunities, and service needs.

Compared with larger regional alternatives, an Eastern Bay authority is better positioned to understand these local circumstances and maintain direct relationships between communities and decision-makers. The participating councils consider that decisions affecting Eastern Bay communities should continue to be influenced by representatives who live, work, and remain closely connected to the area.

Community feedback consistently identified concerns that larger governance models could dilute local influence and reduce accessibility to elected members and decision-makers. The Eastern Bay proposal directly responds to these concerns by retaining governance within an Eastern Bay geography while still achieving increased organisational efficiencies and capability.

6.4.4. Strong Representation for Communities Across the Eastern Bay

The participating councils are committed to ensuring that future representation arrangements continue to provide fair and effective representation across the range of communities that make up the Eastern Bay.

The Eastern Bay includes urban centres, rural settlements, farming communities, coastal communities, forestry communities, marae communities, and significant areas of Māori freehold land. Future governance arrangements will need to reflect this diversity while supporting effective strategic leadership across the Eastern Bay as a whole.

The future design stages would consider the most appropriate combination of wards, Māori wards, community boards, local boards, or other place-based governance arrangements to ensure communities continue to have meaningful access to representation and decision-making.

The participating councils consider that local voice can be maintained while simplifying governance structures, provided representation arrangements are designed around communities of interest and local accessibility.

6.4.5. Māori Representation

The Eastern Bay has one of the highest proportions of Māori population in New Zealand, with approximately 55 percent of residents identifying as Māori and ten iwi having strong and enduring connections to the region.

The participating councils consider that governance at an Eastern Bay scale provides the strongest platform for Māori representation when compared to significantly larger regional alternatives. Existing Māori wards across the participating councils provide an important foundation for future representation arrangements, while the demographic makeup of the Eastern Bay supports a strong Māori voice in local governance. Of note, Eastern Bay communities, through legislated and binding referenda, have endorsed that governance would retain Māori representation in the coming two local government elections.

By comparison, a wider Bay of Plenty arrangement would substantially change the demographic makeup of the region. The participating councils consider that governance at an Eastern Bay scale provides greater opportunity for Māori perspectives to remain visible, influential, and connected to local decision-making.

6.4.6. Partnership with Iwi

A key strength of the proposal is the opportunity to maintain and strengthen partnership between local government and iwi.

The Eastern Bay is home to ten iwi with longstanding relationships with councils through Treaty settlement arrangements, co-governance arrangements, joint management arrangements, strategic planning initiatives, environmental programmes, and community partnerships. These relationships are often deeply connected to specific places, taiao (environment for example catchments), waterways, and communities throughout the Eastern Bay.

Throughout engagement, iwi consistently emphasised the importance of maintaining local influence, protecting existing relationships, recognising whakapapa and catchment connections, and ensuring iwi remain active participants in the design of future governance arrangements and ongoing decision-making.

The participating councils consider that genuine partnership is more achievable at an Eastern Bay scale than within significantly larger governance structures. Working closely with ten iwi in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, as opposed to more than thirty across the broader Bay of Plenty allows for more meaningful and responsive relationships, engagement, and partnership. Expanding governance to a wider Bay of Plenty geography would increase complexity and risk diluting the locally focused relationships that have developed over time.

The proposal therefore builds on existing council-iwi relationships rather than requiring entirely new partnership arrangements and governance relationships to be established. The participating councils consider this provides a stronger foundation for meaningful iwi participation, shared stewardship, and long-term partnership.

6.4.7. Community Support for an Eastern Bay Approach

While covered later in this proposal document – importantly, community engagement undertaken across the three participating councils identified a clear overwhelming preference for an Eastern Bay-focused model over larger regional alternatives. Maintaining local voice, strong Māori representation, self-determination, and access to local government are common themes of feedback.

6.4.8. What Still Needs to be Worked Through

Under the policy criteria ‘maintaining local voice’ - should the proposal progress, further work will be required to:

- Refine the future governance and representation arrangements for the proposed authority.
- Consider options for maintaining strong local voice and community influence.
- Ensure continuation of Māori representation and participation arrangements.
- Further develop ongoing partnership arrangements with iwi including participation in any transitional governance arrangements.
- Identify any legislative, regulatory, or implementation matters required to support establishment of the proposed authority.

6.5. Deliverability

The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council can be established in time for the 2028 local government elections through the Head Start pathway. The proposal is considered deliverable because it:

- Provides a credible and phased implementation pathway from proposal development through to establishment and post-go-live stabilisation.
- Focuses on achieving a “minimum viable establishment” by 2028, with longer-term harmonisation and optimisation continuing after commencement.
- Builds on an existing multi-council programme structure with established workstreams and governance arrangements.
- Includes a clear transition governance model, supported by a dedicated transition board, programme office, and specialist workstreams.
- Prioritises continuity of essential services, statutory functions, regulatory responsibilities, and community outcomes throughout the transition.
- Identifies key dependencies, including enabling legislation, regional council cooperation, workforce transition, financial integration, and Treaty settlement arrangements.
- Provides practical mechanisms to coordinate with wider reforms, including Local Water Done Well, planning reform, regional spatial planning, and other government initiatives.
- Recognises and actively manages implementation risks through phased delivery, strong programme governance, business continuity planning, and stakeholder engagement.
- Maintains flexibility to address matters requiring further detailed design, including governance arrangements, local representation, Māori participation, financial settings, and regional collaboration mechanisms.
- Demonstrates a shared commitment among participating councils to establishing a unitary authority while transparently acknowledging differing views on the preferred implementation timeframe.

6.5.1. Overview

This proposal is advanced on the basis that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council can be established through the Head Start pathway in time for the 2028 local government elections, subject to Cabinet approval, enabling legislation, and a disciplined transition programme. The Head Start guidance is explicit that deliverability will be assessed by whether proposals are realistic and provide confidence that new arrangements can be implemented by the 2028 local elections. It also

makes clear that an outline proposal is not expected to contain a full transition and implementation plan, but must provide a credible high-level pathway, identify major risks and dependencies, and be honest about what remains to be resolved in detailed design.

The proposed change is significant but manageable. It involves bringing together Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council and Kawerau District Council into one Eastern Bay unitary authority, with regional council functions transferred for the Eastern Bay of Plenty area. This is the structural model already described elsewhere in this proposal: a single Eastern Bay authority combining local and regional responsibilities for the participating districts. Deliverability therefore depends on a clear distinction between the legal establishment of the new authority by 2028 and the staged optimisation of systems, services and operating practices after go-live. This section proceeds on that basis.

The core delivery proposition is that the new authority can be legally established, governed, staffed at a foundational level, and ready to assume statutory responsibilities by the 2028 elections. Not every internal system, service standard, bylaw, rating policy, asset plan or operating procedure needs to be fully harmonised before day one. Some integration work can and should continue after establishment, provided the new council has the statutory authority, governance arrangements, executive leadership, financial controls, service continuity arrangements and transition programme required to operate safely, efficiently and effectively from commencement. This approach is realistic, reduces unnecessary implementation risk, and aligns with the Head Start guidance, which tests whether the proposal is workable in practice rather than fully designed at an outline stage.

The Eastern Bay councils are already working through this proposal as a joint programme. The working group has allocated workstreams including structure and case for change, service delivery, financials and affordability, governance and representation, implementation and transition, engagement and alignment, and data and evidence support.

Project management and coordination have also been identified as necessary to coordinate timelines, milestones and cross-council delivery. These arrangements provide a practical starting point for the formal transition programme described below.

6.5.2. Implementation approach

Implementation would be delivered through a phased programme, moving from outline proposal to detailed design, legislation, transition readiness, go-live and post-establishment stabilisation. The phasing reflects the official Head Start timetable, including outline proposals in 2026, detailed design through late 2026 and early 2027, final Cabinet decisions in 2027, legislation in 2027/2028 and implementation beginning ahead of the October 2028 elections.

Phase 1: Establishment mandate and transition set-up — 2026

Following submission of the outline proposal, the immediate focus would be to maintain momentum amongst participating councils. During this period the participating councils would continue to operate as separate statutory entities, but would prepare the governance, programme and technical foundations required for detailed design.

Key actions would include:

- confirming the participating councils' mandate and decision-making pathways;
- establishing a formal transition programme structure;
- confirming workstream leads and resourcing requirements;
- identifying critical information required from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council and other affected organisations;
- preparing a detailed transition workplan for Cabinet's in-principle decision point;
- confirming principles for service continuity, staff engagement, iwi engagement, community communication and financial control; and
- developing a shared risk register and issues escalation process.

This phase would not pre-empt Cabinet's decision. Its purpose is to ensure that, if the proposal proceeds, the participating councils are ready to move quickly into detailed design. This is consistent with the Head Start guidance that the detailed design phase will address matters such as transition arrangements, personnel transfers, asset transfers, council-controlled organisations, debt management, representative structures and community and iwi engagement outcomes.

Phase 2: Detailed design and legislative preparation — late 2026 to mid-2027

If Cabinet agrees with the proposal in principle, the participating councils would move into a structured detailed design phase. This phase would convert the outline proposal into an implementable reorganisation model. It is expected that the Eastern Bay proposal will work collaboratively with other proposals and transition teams in the wider Bay of Plenty for coordination, phasing and regional delivery.

The detailed design phase would focus on the decisions required before legislation is finalised, including:

- the legal form, name, boundaries and commencement arrangements for the new authority;
- transfer of territorial authority functions and Eastern Bay regional functions;
- transitional and first-term governance arrangements;
- representation principles, Māori representation, local boards or other local decision-making mechanisms;
- treatment of Treaty settlement obligations and relationship agreements;
- asset, liability, debt and reserve transfer principles;
- treatment of council-controlled organisations and shared service entities;
- staff transfer principles and employment transition arrangements;
- first-year budget, financial delegations and audit requirements;
- rating, revenue and financing transition settings;
- continuation of existing bylaws, plans, policies, consents, delegations and enforcement powers;
- regional collaboration mechanisms for functions requiring Bay-wide integration; and

- understanding what Government support is required through legislation, funding, or technical assistance.

The work should be structured around “minimum viable establishment” for 2028. That means identifying which matters must be resolved before the new authority legally commences, which matters can be resolved through transitional provisions, and which matters can be phased into the first triennium. This will avoid overloading the pre-election period with work that can be managed responsibly after establishment.

Phase 3: Transition readiness and shadow arrangements — mid-2027 to early 2028

Once Cabinet confirms final policy decisions and legislation is introduced, the programme would shift from design to readiness. The new authority would not yet be operating, but the transition programme would prepare the organisation, people, systems and governance settings required for go-live.

Key readiness activities would include:

- establishing a transition board, joint committee or equivalent statutory transition body;
- appointing a transition chief executive or transition programme director, subject to legislative settings;
- confirming the first organisational structure at a level sufficient for day-one operation;
- completing staff transfer planning and consultation;
- confirming interim delegations and decision rights;
- mapping critical service delivery functions and business continuity arrangements;
- preparing the first integrated budget and transition funding plan;
- confirming interim financial management and procurement controls;
- preparing day-one customer service, communications and contact arrangements;
- determining the continuity of statutory registers, consents, compliance files and regulatory workflows;
- preparing election arrangements for the first Eastern Bay Unitary Council; and
- confirming regional collaboration arrangements for transport, catchment management, spatial planning, civil defence and other functions where wider Bay of Plenty coordination is required.

This phase should prioritise continuity. Residents, ratepayers, iwi, businesses, consent holders, contractors and staff should experience a clear transition of accountability, not a sudden disruption in services.

Phase 4: Establishment and go-live — 2028 local government elections

The new Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council would commence in conjunction with the 2028 local elections, subject to enabling legislation. At go-live, the new council would assume the statutory functions, assets, liabilities, staff and obligations specified in the legislation and transfer of instruments.

The first year of the new authority should be treated as a stabilisation period. The focus would be on:

- maintaining service delivery;
- supporting elected members and local representative bodies;
- ensuring statutory compliance;
- bedding in financial, governance and employment arrangements;
- confirming the first full work programme of the new council;
- progressing representation and local voice arrangements where these require further refinement;
- aligning policy, planning and service frameworks; and
- reporting transparently to communities on transition progress.

This is a practical and credible implementation model. It accepts that some harmonisation will continue after the 2028 election, but it does not defer the establishment of the new authority. It is therefore consistent with the Head Start expectation of implementation by the 2028 local elections while recognising the operational reality of local government amalgamation.

6.5.3. Transition governance

A dedicated transition governance arrangement will be required to provide pace, discipline, and accountability. The Head Start guidance specifically expects proposals to describe how implementation would be set up, including whether a transition board or joint committee would be used, who would be involved, key decisions already made and major risks or challenges.

The Eastern Bay councils would establish a formal Eastern Bay Transition Board or statutory joint committee immediately following Cabinet agreement in principle. Its role would be to oversee detailed design, manage transition risk, coordinate the participating councils, and prepare the new authority for establishment. The existing proposal already anticipates a transitional working group as part of the governance decision-making pathway, and this should now be strengthened into a clear transition governance model for the detailed design phase.

While details will need to be further considered and confirmed, it is expected a transition governance model should include:

- A transition director;
- Elected member representation from each participating council;
- Chief executive representation from each participating council;
- Iwi/Māori partnership representation, designed in a way that respects existing relationships and Treaty settlement obligations;
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council involvement for regional function transfer, asset, liability and workforce matters;
- Independent technical support for legal, finance, transition, employment, planning and assurance matters; and

- A programme office responsible for schedule, risks, dependencies, reporting and decision tracking.

The transition body should not replace the statutory responsibilities of existing councils before legislation takes effect. Existing councils would continue to govern and deliver services until the new authority commences. The transition body's role would be to coordinate decisions, prepare advice, recommend transition settings, manage risks, and ensure that the participating councils and the Crown have a single coherent decision making and delivery pathway.

A disciplined programme structure should sit beneath the transition body. Workstreams should include governance and representation, iwi/Treaty settlement arrangements, regional function transfer, finance and rating, people and workforce, service delivery, digital and information management, asset and liability transfer, planning and regulatory continuity, communications and engagement, legal/legislation, and assurance. This aligns with the workstream approach already being used by the Eastern Bay working group and with the areas the Head Start guidance expects to be resolved through detailed design.

6.5.4. Timing and phasing

The delivery timetable would be presented as a clear implementation path to 2028, with staged optimisation beyond go-live. The distinction is important: the proposal is not asking to defer the establishment of the authority to 2031; rather, it proposes a realistic establishment pathway by 2028, with further integration managed through the first term of the new council.

Figure 9: Overview of delivery phases and indicative timing

Phase	Indicative timing	Core purpose	Key outputs
Mandate and mobilisation	Aug – Sep 2026	Prepare for Cabinet in-principle decision and maintain local alignment	Confirm transition structure, workstreams, programme plan, risk register and information requirements
Detailed design	Oct 2026 – Mar 2027	Convert outline proposal into an implementable final proposal	Operating model, governance model, transfer principles, local voice framework, financial and staffing approach
Final policy and legislation	May 2027 – Q1 2028	Secure statutory authority for establishment	Cabinet final decisions, legislation, transition powers, transfer instruments and commencement provisions
Transition readiness	2027 – 2028	Prepare the organisation for day-one operation	Transition body, interim delegations, service continuity plan, staff transfer plan, budget and election readiness
Go-live	Oct 2028	Establish new elected authority	First Eastern Bay Unitary Council elected and statutory responsibilities commence

This phasing recognises the tight Head Start timetable. Internal briefings have identified that a 2028 pathway meets the deliverability criterion and provides earlier certainty, but also carries a tight timeframe, high demand on staff and governance, greater implementation risk, and less time for engagement. The proposed mitigation is not to defer establishment, but to separate essential establishment tasks from longer-term optimisation and to use strong transition governance to manage the critical path.

6.5.5. Sequencing with other reforms and Council functions

Deliverability depends on sequencing this proposal with wider local government reform rather than treating it as a stand-alone structural exercise. The Head Start guidance asks whether proposals align with other local government programmes, including Local Water Done Well and City and Regional Deals, or whether future alignment is planned.

Planning reform and regional spatial planning: The new authority must support, not disrupt, the new planning system. The proposal should therefore maintain active participation in Bay of Plenty regional spatial planning during transition and ensure that any new Eastern Bay arrangements are compatible with the planning legislation and regional plan-making requirements. The Head Start guidance is explicit that sub-regional unitary authorities must continue spatial planning at the regional level, and that councils must move at pace to prepare regional spatial plans on current boundaries following enactment of the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill.

Local Water Done Well: Water reform creates a major dependency because water assets, funding, governance, and delivery arrangements may change during the same period. The deliverability approach should avoid duplicating governance change, confusing accountability, or overloading scarce technical capacity. Water transition decisions should be mapped into the Head Start transition plan so that staff, assets, debt, customer systems and investment planning are not reworked twice where this can be avoided. Dependent on a confirmed direction for Eastern Bay water reform this may require collaboration across multiple new unitary authorities.

Regional transport, catchments and environmental functions: Some regional functions will require collaboration beyond the Eastern Bay boundary. The detailed design phase should identify which functions transfer directly to the new authority, which require shared service or joint committee arrangements, and which require transitional support from the regional council or successor arrangements. This is particularly important for transport, catchment management, science, monitoring, flood protection, biosecurity, and emergency management. The Head Start guidance expects clear mechanisms for sub-regional authorities to work with the rest of the region on regional planning outcomes and regional services such as catchment management.

Long-term planning and financial cycles: Establishment by 2028 will intersect with annual planning, long-term planning, audit, rating, and financial reporting cycles. The transition programme should therefore include a finance and audit workstream to confirm how existing plans and budgets carry over, how the first integrated budget is prepared, how rating transition is managed, and how transition costs are funded.

Representation reviews: Amongst the participating eastern Bay councils, Whakatāne District Council faces an upcoming statutory requirement to progress its representation review. Under status quo

arrangements, this is required in time to inform the 2028 local election while Ōpōtiki and Kawerau are timed for the 2031 election. Clarity from central government is requested as soon as possible to inform this requirement and give clarity to transition programme development.

6.5.6. Key dependencies

Successful delivery depends on several matters that sit partly outside the control of the participating councils.

Legislation and Crown decisions: The most important dependency is timely enabling legislation. The proposal requires legislation that establishes the new authority, transfers functions, provides transitional powers, preserves existing statutory decisions and instruments, and deals with assets, liabilities, staff, rates, bylaws, delegations, legal proceedings and Treaty settlement obligations.

Regional council information and cooperation. A credible transition requires timely access to information about regional council functions, assets, liabilities, staff, contracts, funding streams, reserves, schemes, data systems and statutory obligations in the Eastern Bay. The working group has already identified the need for regional council data across all workstreams and proposed a shared workspace for regional data requests.

Financial and rating transition: A unitary authority requires a robust financial starting position. This includes debt allocation, asset transfer values, treatment of reserves, rating policy transition, revenue and financing settings, insurance, audit, treasury, procurement and transition cost funding.

Workforce transition: The new council will depend on retaining local government capability through a period of uncertainty. Staff transfer arrangements need to be lawful, transparent, and timely. Critical roles in planning, regulatory services, finance, customer service, digital systems, infrastructure, emergency management and environmental functions need early attention.

Iwi, hapū and Treaty settlement arrangements: Existing Treaty settlement arrangements must be upheld with the same or equivalent effect, and detailed arrangements should be worked through with affected PSGEs and the Crown. The guidance identifies this as a separate requirement and expects engagement to continue after outline proposals are submitted.

Bay-wide coordination: Because this is a sub-regional proposal, deliverability also depends on practical arrangements with the rest of the Bay of Plenty. Those arrangements do not need to be fully agreed at outline stage, but the proposal must demonstrate that regional services will not be fragmented and that collaboration mechanisms can be designed in detailed design.

6.5.7. Risks and mitigation

Figure 10: Overview of delivery risk and mitigation

Risk	Why it matters	Mitigation
Timeframe to 2028	The pathway is ambitious, and implementation pressure could affect quality, engagement, and staff capacity.	Use a minimum viable establishment model for 2028, with staged optimisation after go-live; maintain a disciplined transition board, programme office, critical path and readiness gateway.
Legislative delay or insufficient transition powers	The new authority cannot be established without enabling legislation and clear transfer of provisions.	Identify legislative requirements early; work with officials on practical transition provisions; seek clear powers for staff, assets, liabilities, rates, bylaws, plans, delegations and legal continuity.
Regional function fragmentation	Transport, catchments, civil defence, science, monitoring and environmental functions may require regional integration.	Ensure regional council knowledge and expertise informs any transition and is retained in resulting functions. Map regional functions in detailed design; establish joint committees, shared services or service-level agreements where functions extend beyond the Eastern Bay.
Service disruption during transition	Communities must continue receiving core services while councils are reorganised.	Prioritise business continuity, keep existing operational teams in place during transfer, maintain local service centres, and sequence system changes after day one where necessary.
Workforce uncertainty and loss of capability	Staff retention is essential to continuity and institutional knowledge.	Communicate early and transparently; confirm staff transfer principles; identify critical roles; offer clear pathways into the new organisation; minimise avoidable uncertainty.
Financial uncertainty	Transition costs, debt allocation, asset transfers, and rating harmonisation could affect affordability.	Establish finance and rating workstream; undertake due diligence; prepare transition budget; seek Government assistance where appropriate; phase rating harmonisation if required.
Iwi and Treaty settlement complexity	Settlement arrangements and partnership mechanisms must not be diminished.	Work with PSGEs and the Crown in detailed design; map all affected arrangements; include equivalent-effect provisions in legislation; include iwi/Māori representation in transition governance.
Local voice and transparency concerns	Communities may fear loss of access, identity, or influence	Develop local representation principles early; maintain service centres; design local boards, community boards or other local decision-making mechanisms through detailed design. Ensure strong communications planning throughout.

Reform overload	Planning reform, Local Water Done Well; regional deals and rates settings may compete for the same capacity.	Maintain an integrated reform dependency register; sequence major decisions; avoid duplicative system changes; escalate capacity constraints through the transition board.
Insufficient alignment with non-participating councils	Wider Bay of Plenty arrangements will affect transport, catchments and planning.	Engage early with neighbouring councils and the regional council; focus on practical continuity mechanisms; use targeted agreements rather than broad unresolved commitments.

6.5.8. What still needs to be worked through

The outline proposal is intentionally high-level. The Head Start guidance expects the detailed design phase to distinguish what has been agreed from what needs further investigation, including regional council functions, costs and benefits, representative structures, transitional arrangements, implementation planning, iwi/Māori engagement outcomes and community engagement outcomes.

The following matters should be expressly carried into detailed design:

- The precise statutory commencement date and transfer date;
- The legal mechanism for establishing the new authority;
- The form, membership and powers of the transition board or joint committee;
- The first-term governance model and election arrangements;
- The local representation framework, including local boards, community boards or other place-based mechanisms;
- Māori representation on governance arrangements;
- Continuation and strengthening of Iwi- Council relationships and partnerships;
- The full map of regional functions transferring to the Eastern Bay authority;
- Functions requiring Bay-wide collaboration or shared delivery;
- Asset, liability, debt, reserve and investment transfer principles;
- Rating transition and revenue and financing policies;
- Treatment of council-controlled organisations and shared service entities;
- Staff transfer principles, employment obligations and organisational design;
- Transition cost estimates and funding sources, including any funding support from central government to assist with transition costs;
- Continuity of consents, bylaws, enforcement actions, regulatory instruments and statutory delegations;
- Digital, data, records and information management transition;

- Communications and engagement plan for communities, iwi, staff, businesses and stakeholders; and Government support required through legislation, technical advice, funding or transition assistance.

6.5.9. Delivery confidence

During the development of this Head Start Pathway proposal, all partner councils raised concerns that the implementation timeframes outlined in the Head Start guidance are challenging and will constrain the ability to undertake a robust and meaningful review of future representation arrangements.

All councils recognise the importance of ensuring that decisions are well considered, evidence-based and informed by meaningful community engagement. Additional time would allow councils to undertake a more comprehensive representation review to fully explore future governance and representation arrangements that are equitable, locally appropriate and reflective of the subregion's large geographic area and specific social, economic and cultural context. In the absence of a longer timeframe, Central Government funding would assist in meeting the Government's deadlines with a more robust proposal.

The concern about timeframes stems from the desire to take the opportunity available to maximise the benefits for our communities. However, the participating councils recognise that the Government's Head Start framework establishes the parameters within which proposals must be progressed and are committed to finding the best outcomes within the parameters we are given.

The Eastern Bay councils collectively support the establishment of a unitary authority and remain committed to working together through the Government's Head Start process to develop a detailed proposal. Importantly, this is not a new partnership created for the purposes of reform. Rather, it builds on an established history of strong collaboration and trusted relationships, providing a solid foundation for the next phase of the proposal.

6.6. Supports Treaty Settlements

The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council provides an appropriate platform for maintaining and strengthening Treaty partnership arrangements while delivering the benefits of local government reform. The proposal supports Treaty settlements and iwi-Crown arrangements because it:

- Maintains existing Treaty settlement commitments and obligations at a local level within its communities, while the Crown as the Treaty partner honours its primary obligations. Supports continuation of statutory acknowledgements and relationship agreements.
- Provides continuity for co-governance, joint management, and partnership arrangements.
- Builds upon longstanding council-iwi relationships already established within the Eastern Bay.
- Supports meaningful iwi participation in future governance arrangements.
- Maintains governance at a scale that aligns closely with existing iwi relationships and communities of interest.
- Provides confidence that settlement arrangements can be transferred with the same or equivalent effect.

6.6.1. Overview

The participating councils recognise that Treaty settlement arrangements, statutory obligations, co-governance arrangements, and council-iwi partnerships are fundamental components of local government within the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

The proposal has been developed on the basis that existing Treaty settlement arrangements will be maintained and given the same or equivalent effect under any future governance structure at the local level. The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council can support existing relationships, strengthen partnership with iwi, and provide continuity for settlement commitments while maintaining local accountability and responsiveness.

Through early engagement, iwi consistently emphasised the importance of protecting existing arrangements, preserving longstanding relationships, recognising whakapapa and catchment connections, and remaining actively involved in the design of future governance arrangements.

6.6.2. Existing Treaty Settlement Landscape

The Eastern Bay councils are party to several Treaty settlement arrangements that establish legally binding commitments with iwi. A key principle of the proposal is that existing Treaty settlement arrangements should continue to operate with the same or equivalent effect following reorganisation. The participating councils do not consider that local government reform should diminish, invalidate, or

weaken existing settlement commitments. Rather, the new authority would inherit and continue the relevant responsibilities, obligations, and relationships currently held by the participating councils.

Figure 11: The following settlements fall within the Eastern Bay of Plenty region

Name of Iwi	Name of Settlement
Te Whakatōhea	Te Whakatōhea Settlement Act 2024
Ngāti Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau	Ngāti Tūwharetoa (Bay of Plenty) Claims Settlement Act 2005
Ngāti Awa	Ngāti Awa Settlement Act 2005
Ngāti Rangitihi	Ngāti Rangitihi Claims Settlement Act 2022
Ngāti Manawa	Ngāti Manawa Settlement Act 2012
Ngai Tūhoe	Ngai Tūhoe Settlement Act 2014
Ngāti Whare	Ngāti Whare Settlement Act 2012
Ngāti Māhino	Ngāti Māhino Settlement Act 2011

Note: Te Whānau-a-Apanui and Ngai Tai have not completed their settlements but are expected to reach settlement status by 2031.

Within the Eastern Bay region multiple arrangements fall into each of the following three categories and all of which will require transfer to the new authority. This includes 1. Statutory acknowledgements, 2. Relationship Agreements and 3. Co-Governance Arrangements including both Joint Management Agreements and Joint Committees of Council.

6.6.3. Statutory acknowledgements

All Eastern Bay settlements include statutory acknowledgements. Section 189 of the Planning Bill requires territorial authorities to ensure their ability to fulfil these obligations is not impeded. The new unitary authority will therefore continue to:

- Recognise acknowledged sites and areas of significance
- Notify PSGEs (Post-Settlement Governance Entity) of relevant consent applications
- Embed statutory acknowledgements into planning and decision-making processes.

6.6.4. Co-Governance Arrangements – Joint Management Agreements

Several settlements provide Joint Management Agreements. These arrangements vary across settlements and include both:

- Established joint management bodies; and
- Statutory powers enabling iwi to initiate joint management agreements.

These arrangements sit within the Joint management framework provided for in the Resource Management Act 1991. Across the Eastern Bay, the key arrangements are:

- **Te Whakatōhea Settlement Act 2024** – establishes a joint management body for Te Ngaio property, Tirohanga Dunes (Site 2), and other specified council reserves. Membership is shared equally between council and Whakatōhea representatives.
- **Ngāti Manawa Settlement Act 2012** – provides Ngāti Manawa with the statutory power to give notice to council requiring a joint management agreement to be entered into, including provisions relating to the management of the Horomanga Wash local purpose reserve.
- **Ngāti Whare Settlement Act 2012** – provides Ngāti Whare with the same statutory power to initiate a joint management agreement, including joint management responsibilities for the Horomanga Wash reserve.

Under section 20 of the Planning Bill, any joint management agreement that exists immediately before the transition date continues in effect. The agreements must be treated as relating to the equivalent functions under the Planning Act or the Natural Environment Act.

Where iwi have not been able to activate their joint management arrangements before the law change, we would look to give effect to section 9 of the Planning Bill. This section provides a pathway for the Crown and PSGEs to agree how the arrangement should operate under the new system, including making any agreed wording changes and progressing legislation (if needed).

6.6.5. Joint Committees

There are three Joint Committees established through Treaty settlements, each of which is treated as a joint committee for the purposes of clause 30(1)(b) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002.

- **Rangitaiki River Forum (established in 2012)** – a joint committee that brings Ngāti Manawa, Ngai Tuhoe, Ngāti Whare, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Whakatāne Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council together to protect and enhance the environmental, cultural, and spiritual health and well-being of the Rangitaiki river
- **Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group (established in 2022)** – a joint committee that brings Ngāti Rangitahi, Ngāti Māhino, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa alongside Rotorua Lakes, Whakatāne Council, Kawerau Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Councils together to support, coordinate, and promote the integrated restoration of the mauri of the Tarawera River catchment.
- **Whakatōhea Kaitiaki Forum (in development)** – a joint committee enabling Whakatōhea to express and discuss their interests in rivers and catchments within their area of interest, and to participate in the design and implementation of solutions affecting those areas.

These committees will likely be incorporated into the governance structure of the new unitary authority, with settlement legislation updated where required to ensure they operate with equivalent effect. In drafting its MOU with Ōpōtiki District Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council, the Whakatōhea Kaitiaki Forum is incorporating flexibility to respond to changes in membership as a result of local government reform.

6.6.6. Engagement with Affected Post-Settlement Governance Entities (PSGEs)

Most PSGEs in the Eastern Bay have been engaged through the Simplifying Local Government process. Engagement to date has been high-level and focused on ensuring iwi are aware of the proposal, understanding expectations for ongoing engagement, and identifying which Treaty settlement arrangements may be affected. While more information about Iwi conversation is covered later in this document, relevant key themes from engagement include:

- A strong desire to progress a sub-regional Eastern Bay unitary model rather than a region-wide unitary model.
- A “whole of catchment” approach is essential and the Eastern Bay contains the largest catchment in the Bay of Plenty region
- Working together early – iwi want to be involved from the start and help shape the authority
- Protecting settlements – strong concern around Treaty settlement arrangements and how these will be kept in a new unitary authority.

6.6.7. What Still Needs to be Worked Through

Under the policy criteria ‘supporting treaty settlements’ - should the proposal progress, further work will be required to:

- Confirm the detailed treatment of existing settlement obligations and arrangements under the future authority.
- Continue engagement with affected iwi and post-settlement governance entities.
- Confirm how co-governance, joint management, and partnership arrangements will operate following reorganisation.
- Identify any legislative amendments or transfer mechanisms required to give existing arrangements continuing effect.
- Further develop future partnership and participation arrangements with iwi.

7. Conclusion and Request to Progress

7.1. Summary of the Proposal

This Outline Proposal seeks to establish an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council comprising the current territories of Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council. The proposed unitary authority would bring together local and regional Government functions within a single organisation, creating a simpler governance structure while maintaining strong local representation and accountability.

Engagement undertaken to date has provided useful insight into community and iwi perspectives on local Government reform and potential future governance options. Engagement activities have included public information sessions, community meetings and conversations, council-hosted information and feedback channels, online surveys, discussions with community groups and organisations, conversations with local businesses and stakeholders, and direct engagement by elected members. Through these processes there has been overwhelming preference from the community, many iwi, community groups, industry and businesses that an Eastern Bay Unitary Council would best serve the future of the region.

The participating councils consider that the Eastern Bay of Plenty represents a coherent and well-established region with strong social, cultural, economic, environmental, and governance connections. The region has a demonstrated history of collaboration, strong communities of interest, significant Māori participation, and an established track record of working collectively to address shared opportunities and challenges.

Within the broader Bay of Plenty, the direction is towards multiple coherent sub-regions – an approach which has formal endorsement from all Mayors across the region. A Bay of Plenty comprising several strong, locally accountable unitary authorities working collaboratively where beneficial on matters of regional significance is likely to deliver better long-term outcomes than a single, highly centralised governance model. By combining local responsiveness with regional collaboration, a sub-regional approach has the potential to create a stronger local government across the wider region overall.

The proposal has been developed in response to the Government's Simplifying Local Government reform programme and reflects extensive consideration of alternative governance configurations, engagement with communities, discussions with iwi, and collaboration between participating councils.

7.2. Why the Proposal Meets the Head Start Criteria

The participating councils consider that the Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council presents a strong case for progression through the Head Start pathway. The proposal builds on an established and coherent sub-region, simplifies governance arrangements, strengthens organisational capability, supports the implementation of future planning reforms, and maintains strong local representation and community influence. It also reflects the importance of existing council-iwi relationships and the continued protection of Treaty settlement arrangements.

The proposal responds directly to the opportunities and challenges facing the Eastern Bay of Plenty. It enables council to build capability, resilience, and strategic alignment, while ensuring that decision-making remains connected to the communities it serves. The proposed model achieves an appropriate balance between organisational scale and local voice, creating a governance structure that is both future-focused and grounded in the identity and aspirations of the Eastern Bay.

Importantly, the proposal is built on strong foundations. The participating councils have a longstanding history of collaboration, the Eastern Bay is widely recognised as a distinct community of interest, and engagement with councils, iwi, and communities has consistently reinforced the value of an Eastern Bay-focused approach. Taken together, the participating councils consider the proposal to be well aligned with the objectives and assessment criteria of the Head Start programme and worthy of progression to the detailed design phase.

7.3. Request to Progress to Detailed Design Phase

Whakatāne District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council, and Kawerau District Council respectfully request that the Government approve this Outline Proposal for progression to the detailed design phase of the Head Start pathway.

The participating councils acknowledge that significant further work would be required should the proposal proceed. This would include the detailed design of governance arrangements, representation models, organisational structures, financial analysis, legislative requirements, transition planning, and ongoing engagement with iwi and communities.

The councils are committed to working collaboratively throughout this next phase to ensure that any final proposal provides a durable, effective, and locally supported governance model for the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

The participating councils consider that an Eastern Bay of Plenty Unitary Council represents the most appropriate balance between local voice, organisational capability, strategic leadership, iwi partnership, community identity, and long-term sustainability, and respectfully seek Cabinet's approval to continue developing the proposal.

7.4. Government Role to Enable Successful Reform

The Simplifying Local Government policy has been described as the most significant reform of the local Government sector since the current arrangements were established in 1989 (some 37 years ago). The change process will require careful planning and substantial resource, while at the same time working through concurrent reforms, and ensuring business as usual continuity.

The change process for Auckland is an example of what can be possible with appropriate legislation and support. In the Auckland example this notably including a resourced transition authority and support from the Local Government Commission support to lead aspects of transition.

The participating councils will require a close working relationship with Government through detailed design and implementation. The support required is practical rather than open-ended. While the next stage of proposal refinement may uncover further details and implications, it is currently expected that Government support should consider the following:

- Timely policy decisions and drafting of bespoke enabling legislation;
- Regulatory relief to support to support councils through transition – such as but not limited to Long Term Plans, audit expectations, representation reviews for example;
- Transitional provisions that allow continuity of services, staff, decisions, plans, bylaws, delegations and legal obligations;
- Support for Treaty settlement transfer and Crown engagement with affected PSGEs;
- Access to technical advice on regional function transfer, planning reform alignment and local government reorganisation practice;
- Enabling legislation for rapid minor boundary adjustments if required;
- Transition funding or reorganisation assistance for unavoidable one-off costs;
- Clear guidance on how the Head Start proposal interacts with Local Water Done Well, regional spatial planning, City and Regional Deals and the backstop process; and
- A clear process for resolving issues affecting the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, neighbouring councils or region-wide assets and liabilities.

This support is consistent with the Head Start guidance, which asks councils to identify barriers to implementation and be specific and realistic about the nature and extent of assistance sought from Government.

8. Appendices

Appendix A: [to come] Participating Council Resolutions from KDC, ODC, WDC

Appendix B: [to come] Combined Bay of Plenty Mayors letter of endorsement for three sub-regional direction

SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ōpōtiki District Community Engagement Report

JULY 29

CONNECT HONO MAI



Executive dashboard

Community engagement at a glance

33

Total respondents
Voluntary online survey

8 June – 24 July

Engagement period
2026

70%

Local decisions very important
23 of 33 respondents

76%

Preferred Eastern Bay model
25 of 33 respondents

TOP PRIORITIES

Local decision-making
and affordability
19 selections each

TOP CONCERN

Loss of local voice
23 selections

TOP PROTECTION

Local decision-making powers
23 selections

What we heard

Ten messages consistently reflected across the survey

- 1** Protect local decision-making and ensure Ōpōtiki priorities remain visible.
- 2** Retain meaningful local representation and accessible elected members.
- 3** Avoid centralising frontline services away from Ōpōtiki and East Coast communities.
- 4** Demonstrate how reform will affect rates, debt and long-term affordability.
- 5** Protect community identity, history and established local relationships.
- 6** Maintain and improve community facilities, services and local service centres.
- 7** Secure fair and sustained investment in rural infrastructure and resilience.
- 8** Preserve strong iwi and hapū participation in future governance arrangements.
- 9** Use collaboration and shared capability where it produces genuine efficiencies.
- 10** Take sufficient time to test assumptions, explain trade-offs and engage communities.

Contents

Section	Title	Page
1	Executive summary	4
2	Introduction and methodology	6
3	Respondent profile	9
4	Community priorities and local decision-making	12
5	Concerns, opportunities and protections	17
6	Governance preferences	22
7	Integrated qualitative analysis	25
8	Conclusions and recommendations	29
Appendix A	Detailed quantitative tables	31
Appendix B	Methodological notes	36

Executive summary

Ōpōtiki District Council invited members of the community to share their views on the future structure of local government through a Connect Hono Mai engagement survey. Thirty-three responses were received between 8 June and 24 July 2026. The survey is not statistically representative of the district; however, the responses provide a detailed and useful record of the values, concerns and conditions that respondents believe should guide reform.

The central finding is that community support for structural change is conditional. Respondents recognised possible benefits from better coordination, shared expertise and stronger infrastructure planning, but consistently placed local voice, local decision-making and affordability ahead of organisational scale.

Local decision-making and affordability were the most frequently selected priorities, each chosen by 19 respondents (58%). Local representation followed with 16 selections (48%). 23 respondents (70%) said it was very important that decisions affecting Ōpōtiki continue to be made locally, and a further seven (21%) said this was somewhat important.

Loss of local voice was the dominant concern, selected by 23 respondents (70%). Reduced community connection was selected by 15 respondents (45%), centralisation of services by 13 respondents (39%). These findings indicate that respondents associate larger governance structures with a risk of increasing distance between communities and decision-makers.

Despite these concerns, respondents identified opportunities. Improved infrastructure planning was selected by 15 respondents (45.5%), better coordination by 11 (33.3%), and simpler governance by ten respondents (36.4%). Twelve respondents selected an “other” response, with several using the free-text field to state that they did not yet see a clear opportunity or needed more information.

Views on the proposed amalgamation were divided: 13 respondents supported a merger, 15 opposed it and five were unsure. However, when asked to choose between the three models presented, 25 respondents (76%) preferred an Eastern Bay sub-regional unitary council. This indicates that model preference and support for reform are not the same question. Some respondents who opposed amalgamation still regarded an Eastern Bay model as the least disruptive or most locally coherent option should reform proceed.

Headline implications

- Local representation and decision-making should be treated as core design requirements, not secondary safeguards.
- Financial modelling needs to clearly explain rates, debt, transition costs and the distribution of regional investment.
- The Eastern Bay model has the strongest stated preference, but this does not amount to unconditional support for amalgamation.
- Future engagement should test detailed representation and service-delivery arrangements before implementation decisions are finalised.

Executive summary

Key evidence

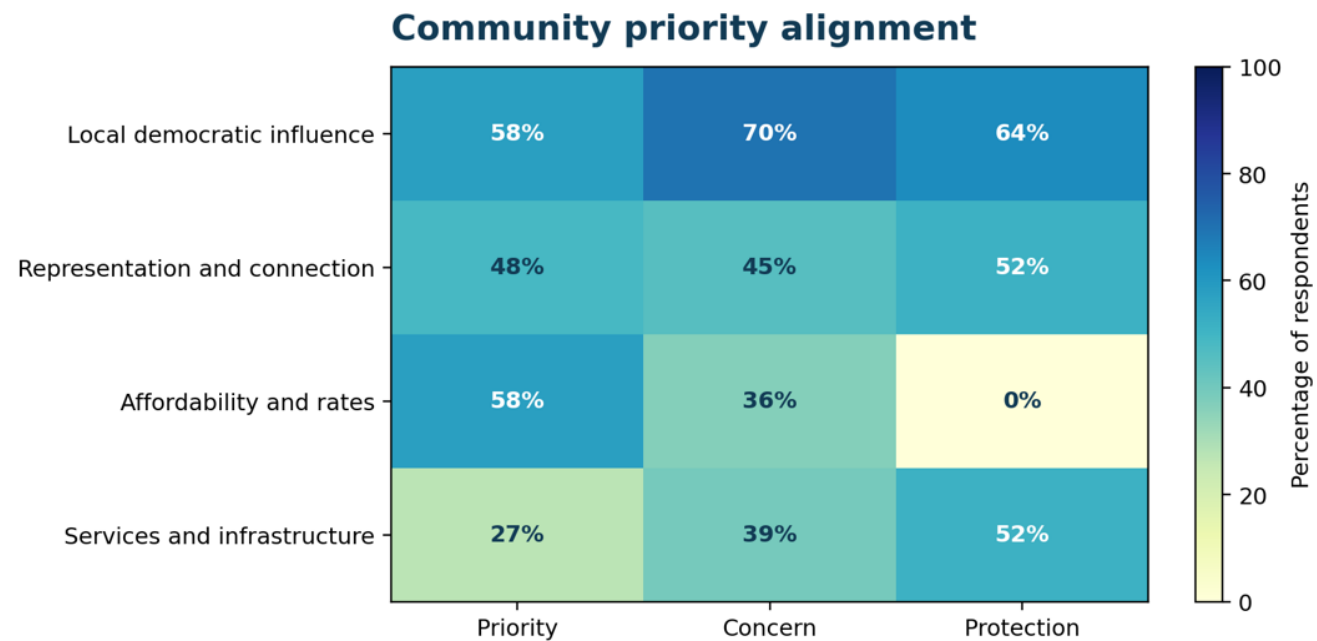


Figure 1. Community priority heat map. Alignment between priorities, concerns and protections; Percentages are of all 33 respondents.

“In a nutshell we must maintain our autonomy in some areas, and not dilute, localised voice and decision-making powers.”

Survey respondent

Introduction and methodology

The Government's Simplifying Local Government reform programme prompted councils to consider how local territorial authorities could be reorganised. Ōpōtiki District Council used Connect Hono Mai to seek early community feedback on the issues that matter most, the principal risks and opportunities, and preferences among possible governance models to inform its approach to the Head Start pathway.

The engagement was designed as an exploratory survey rather than a referendum or statistically representative resident survey. Its purpose was to provide an evidence-informed picture of the views contributed by respondents and to strengthen Council's understanding of the safeguards and outcomes the community expects.

Survey structure

- Demographic questions: age, ethnicity, district area and iwi affiliations.
- Multi-response questions: priorities, concerns, opportunities and community protections.
- Single-response questions: importance of local decision-making, importance of iwi and hapū participation, amalgamation support and preferred governance model.
- Open-text questions enabling respondents to explain their reasoning and provide further feedback.

Interpretation

Percentages for single-response questions are calculated using the 33 completed responses as the denominator. For multi-response questions, respondents could select several options; percentages therefore show the proportion of respondents selecting each option and do not sum to 100%.

Where an "other" option was selected, the accompanying written response was retained as qualitative evidence. In several questions, respondents stated that the form required them to select options before progressing. This limitation is acknowledged when interpreting the opportunity and model questions.

Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative analysis

Quantitative analysis

The Excel response export was used as the source of truth. Each option was counted directly from the binary response fields. Counts and percentages were cross-checked across all 33 response records.

The analysis reports exact response counts and percentages to one decimal place. No weighting has been applied, and no missing demographic response has been imputed.

Qualitative thematic analysis

134 populated open-text fields were reviewed. Comments were coded against recurring themes including local voice, affordability, centralisation, identity, infrastructure, efficiency, environmental management, iwi and hapū relationships, and concerns about the reform process and timeframe.

A single comment could receive more than one theme code. Theme counts are therefore indicative of the breadth and recurrence of issues, rather than a measure of support or opposition. Representative quotations have been selected to illustrate themes and are presented without respondent names.

Sentiment analysis

Overall sentiment toward amalgamation is reported directly from the question regarding support, opposition or uncertainty. Written comments were used to interpret the reasons for those positions. The report avoids assigning a simplistic positive or negative label to comments where respondents expressed both opportunities and concerns.

“We need to invest in a more sustainable future and we can only do that if we all work together.”

Survey respondent

Methodology

Limitations and responsible use

- The sample size is small (n=33) and participation was voluntary.
- The results should not be generalised as a statistically representative view of all district residents.
- Several respondents selected more than the stated number of options or indicated that form settings constrained their choices.
- Some participants were responding on behalf of organisations, while most responded as individuals.
- The findings are most useful as an early engagement evidence base and should be supplemented by further consultation as proposal details develop.

These limitations do not diminish the value of the engagement. The consistency of several themes across demographic groups and across different survey questions provides a strong indication of the matters Council should address transparently in future work.

Respondent profile

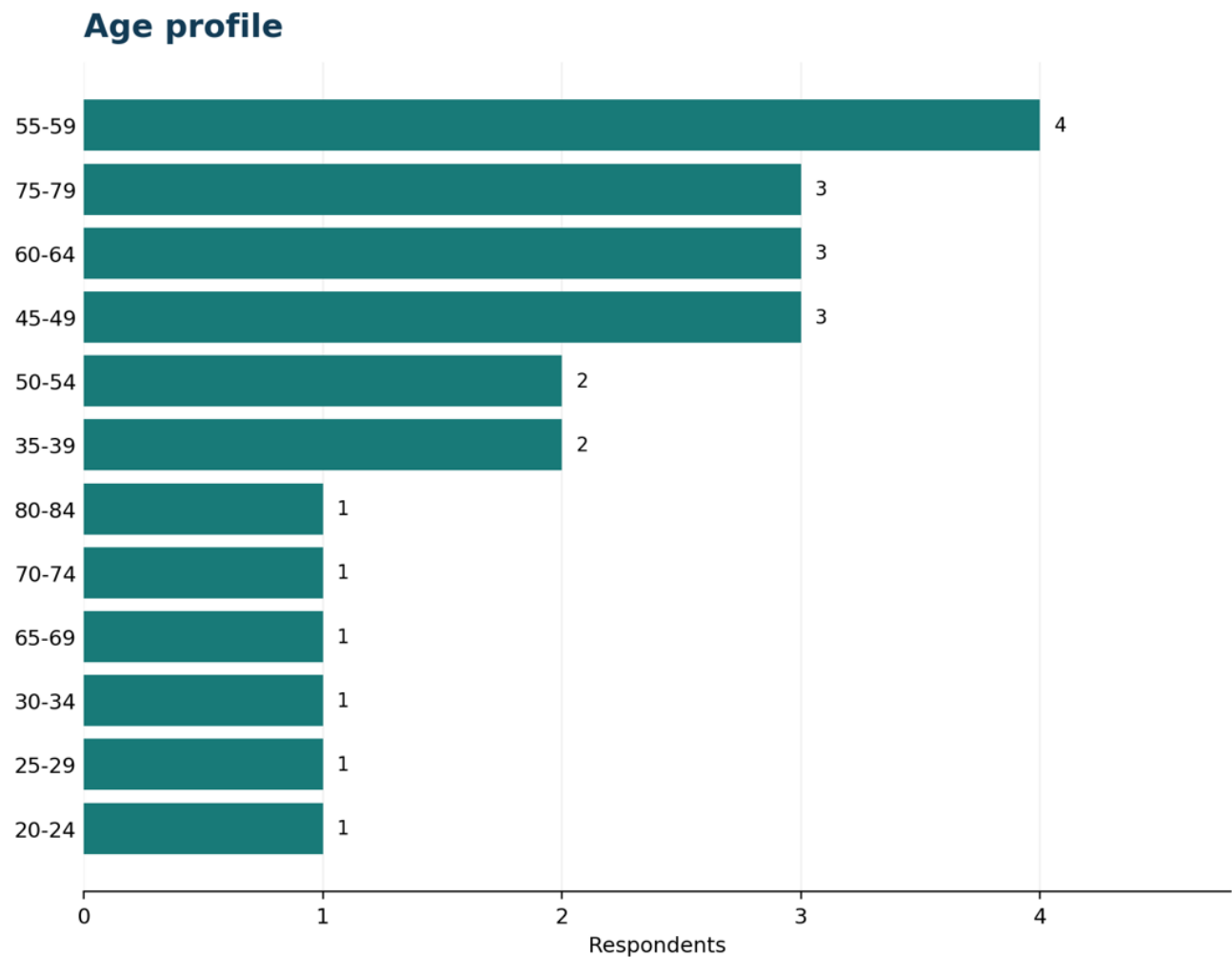


Figure 2. Age profile of respondents (n=33).

The survey attracted responses across a broad adult age range, with the largest concentration in the 45–64 and 75–79 bands. Eleven respondents did not record an age group, which should be considered when interpreting demographic patterns.

Respondent profile

Ethnicity and location

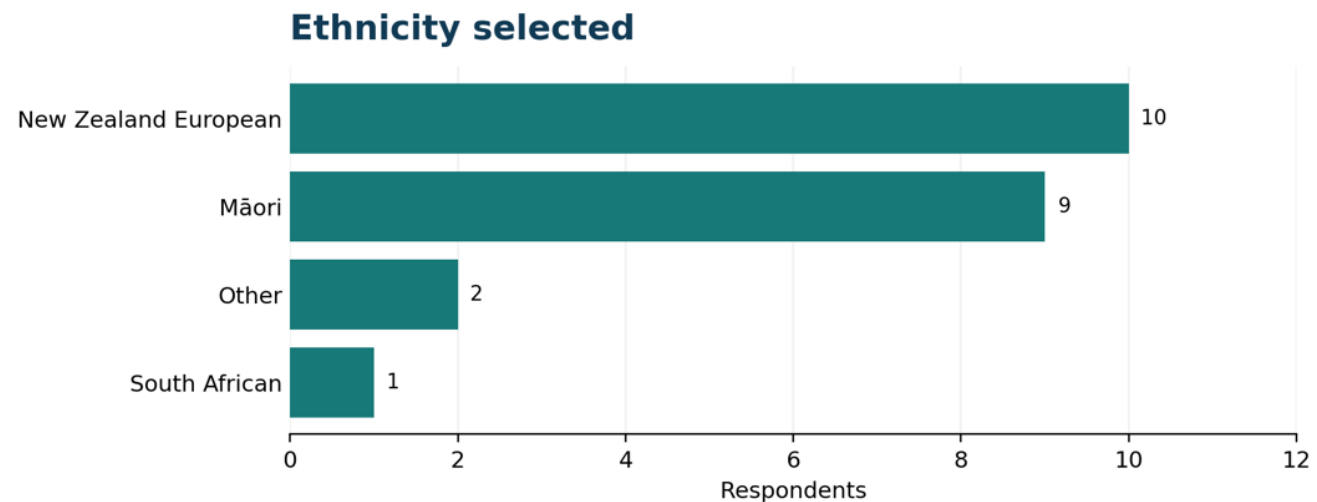


Figure 3. Ethnicity selected by respondents.

Ten respondents selected New Zealand European and nine selected Māori. Other recorded responses included South African and other ethnicities. Eleven respondents did not select a listed ethnicity.

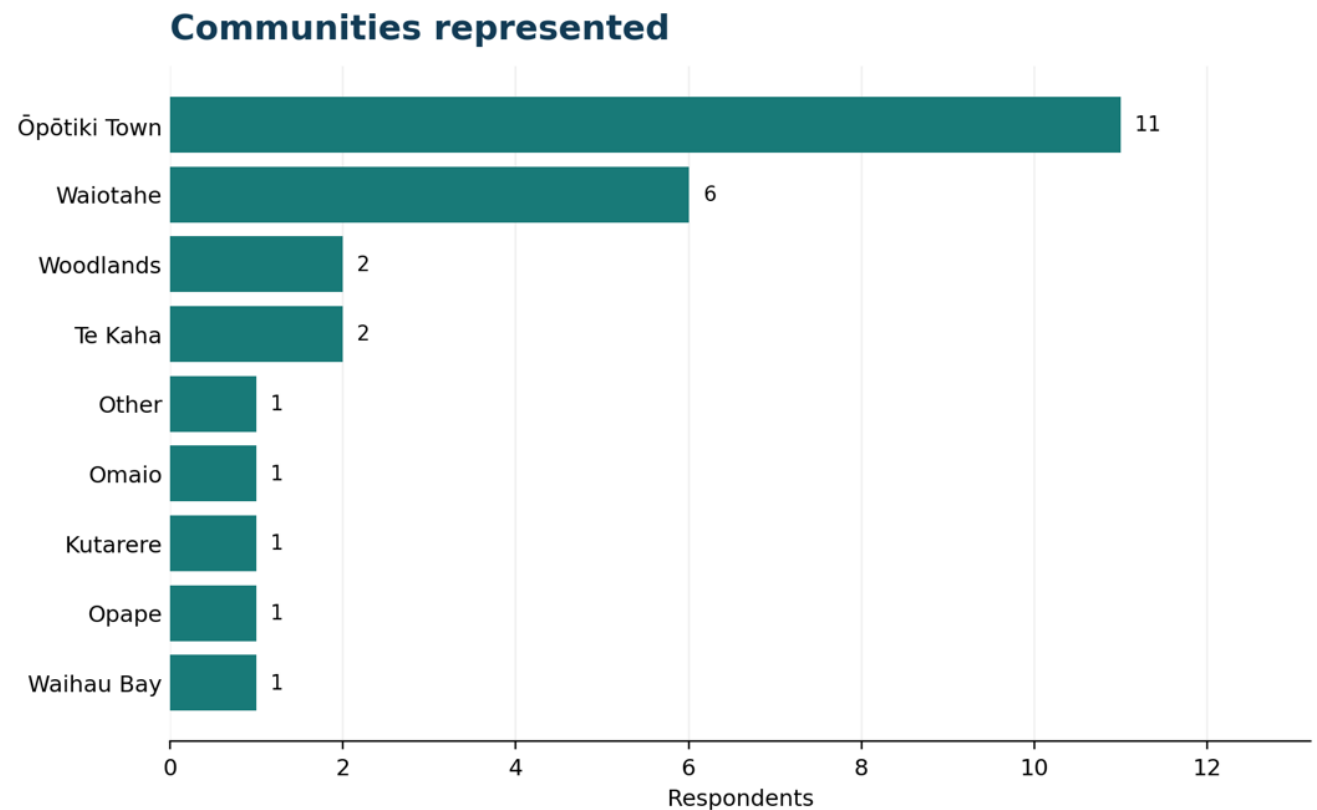


Figure 4. Communities represented in the survey.

Respondent profile

What the profile means

Eleven respondents identified with Ōpōtiki Town and six with Waiotahe. Responses were also received from Woodlands, Ōpape, Waihou Bay, Te Kaha, Ōmaio and Kutarere, together with one “other” response.

The participation of coastal and rural communities is important because many written comments focused on distance, access to services, rural investment and the risk that smaller communities could be overlooked in a larger authority.

“We are a small community in Kutarere, we are overlooked up on Hiwarau Rd now, what does our future hold”

Survey respondent

Community priorities and local decision-making

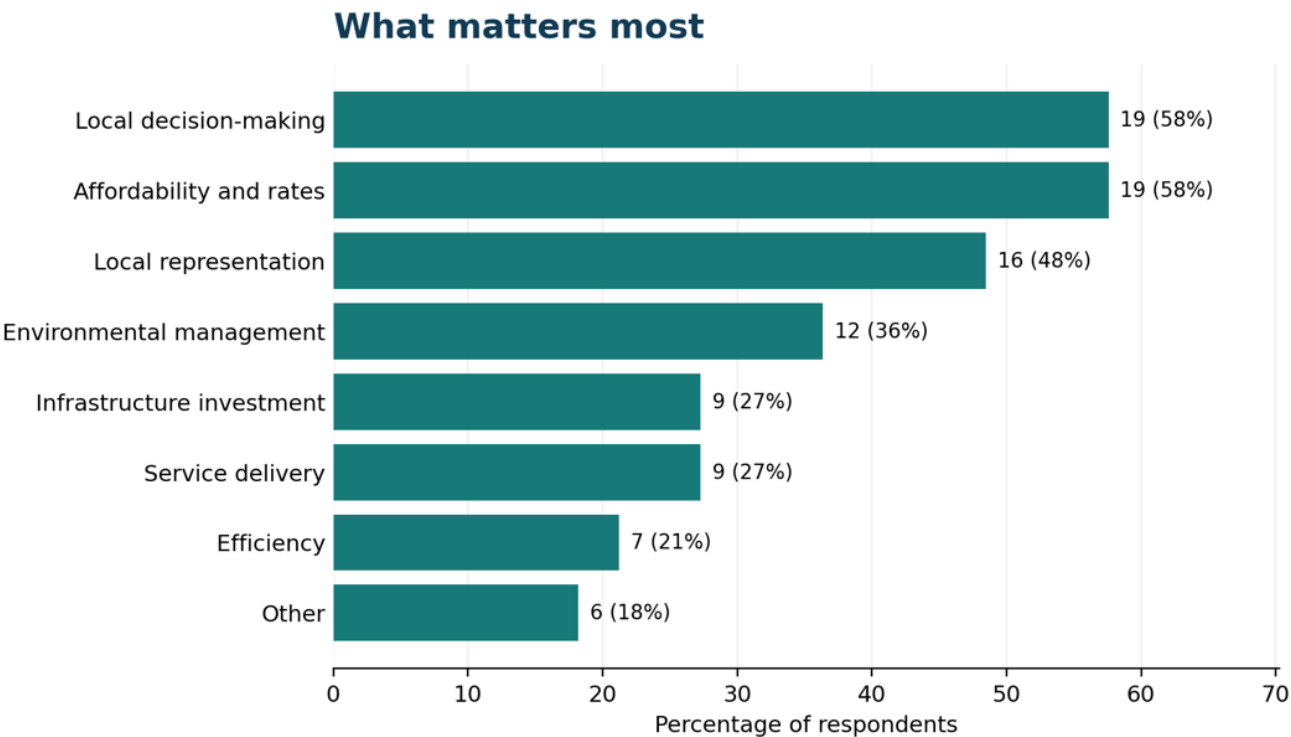


Figure 5. Top three matters identified by respondents. Multiple responses permitted.

Local decision-making and affordability and rates were each selected by 19 respondents (58%). Local representation was selected by 16 (48%), environmental management by 12 (36%), and service delivery and infrastructure investment by nine each (27%).

The pattern shows that respondents are assessing reform through both a democratic and a practical lens. They want local influence protected but also expect governance arrangements to remain affordable and capable of funding long-term infrastructure and environmental outcomes.

Community priorities

Exact results

What top three items matter most?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Affordability and rates	19	57.6%
Local decision-making	19	57.6%
Local representation	16	48.5%
Environmental management	12	36.4%
Infrastructure investment	9	27.3%
Efficiency	7	21.2%
Service delivery	9	27.3%
Other	6	18.2%

Multiple responses permitted. Percentages are based on all 33 respondents and do not sum to 100%.

Interpretation

The two equal highest priorities—local decision-making and affordability—show that respondents do not regard democratic voice and financial performance as competing goals. They expect both. Local representation, environmental management and infrastructure investment form a second tier of priorities and reinforce the expectation that any larger authority would need to remain locally responsive while strengthening technical capacity.

“ODC is doing a great job already so it's hard to choose a top 3. It achieves a lot with a small budget.”

Survey respondent

Local decision-making

A defining test for reform

Importance of local decision-making

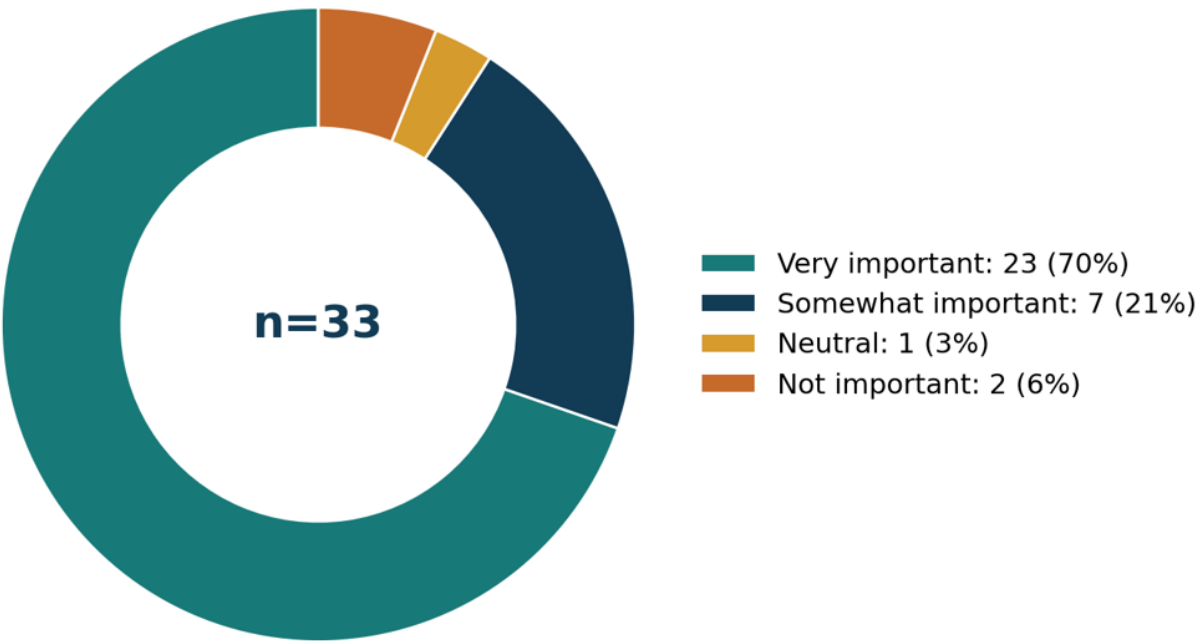


Figure 6. Importance that decisions affecting Ōpōtiki continue to be made locally (n=33).

Twenty-three respondents (70%) considered local decision-making very important and seven (21%) considered it somewhat important. Together, 30 respondents (91%) viewed local decision-making as at least somewhat important.

Written comments connect local decision-making with knowledge of local conditions, responsiveness, accountability and the ability to protect district-specific priorities.

“Only local residents understand the requirements of their locality.”

Survey respondent

Local voice and representation

What respondents expect

- Locally elected representatives who remain accessible to residents.
- Decision-making delegations that allow district and community matters to be resolved locally.
- Representation arrangements that recognise geography and communities of interest, not population alone.
- Community boards or similar structures with meaningful authority.
- Transparent reporting on how investment is distributed between communities.

These expectations suggest that retaining a local office or service centre, while important, would not by itself satisfy community concerns. Respondents are seeking influence over decisions and investment, not only access to administration.



“We need to retain as much local voice and local representation and local decision-making as possible.”

Survey respondent

Community priority heat map

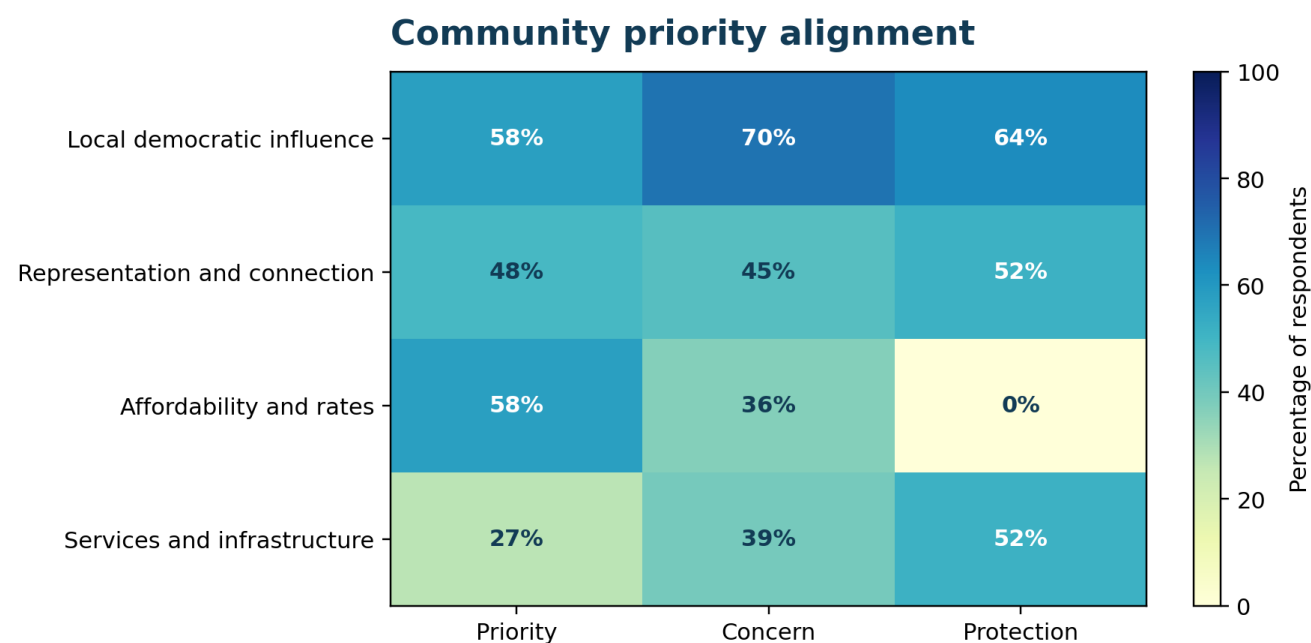


Figure 7. Alignment between selected priorities, related concerns and desired protections.

The heat map shows the convergence between what respondents value, what they fear losing and what they want protected. Local democratic influence is the strongest and most consistent pattern across the survey.

Concerns, opportunities and community protections

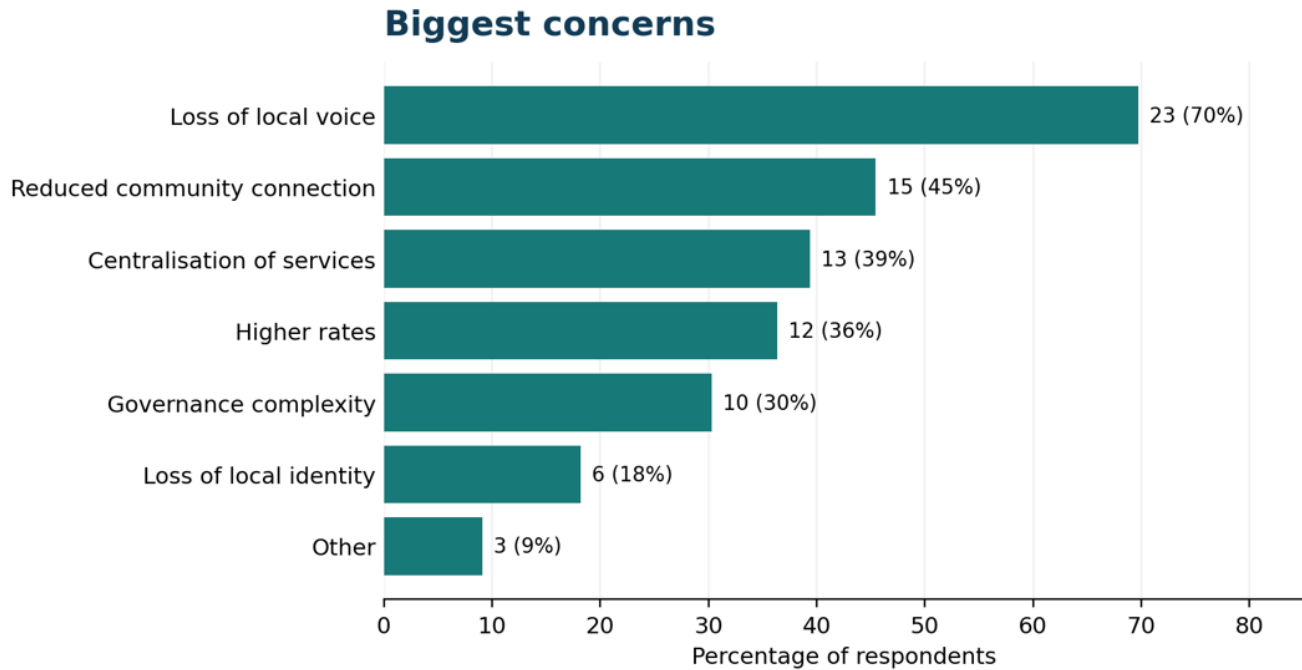


Figure 8. Biggest concerns identified by respondents. Multiple responses permitted.

Biggest concerns for Ōpōtiki District

Response option	Count	Percentage
Loss of local voice	23	69.7%
Reduced community connection	15	45.5%
Centralisation of services	13	39.4%
Higher rates	12	36.4%
Governance complexity	10	30.3%
Loss of local identity	6	18.2%
Other	3	9.1%

Loss of local voice was selected by 23 respondents (70%). Reduced community connection was selected by 15 (45%), centralisation of services by 13 (39%) and higher rates by 12 (36%).

The concern profile is consistent with the written feedback. Respondents repeatedly referred to the experience of other centralisation and amalgamation processes, the different circumstances of larger urban centres and the risk that district resources could be redirected elsewhere.

Community concerns

Exact results and interpretation

Biggest concerns for Ōpōtiki District

Response option	Count	Percentage
Loss of local voice	23	69.7%
Reduced community connection	15	45.5%
Centralisation of services	13	39.4%
Higher rates	12	36.4%
Governance complexity	10	30.3%
Loss of local identity	6	18.2%
Other	3	9.1%

Multiple responses permitted.

“The bigger government entities become, whether local, regional or national, the more distant they become from the communities that they exist to serve.”

Survey respondent

Opportunities

Potential benefits are conditional

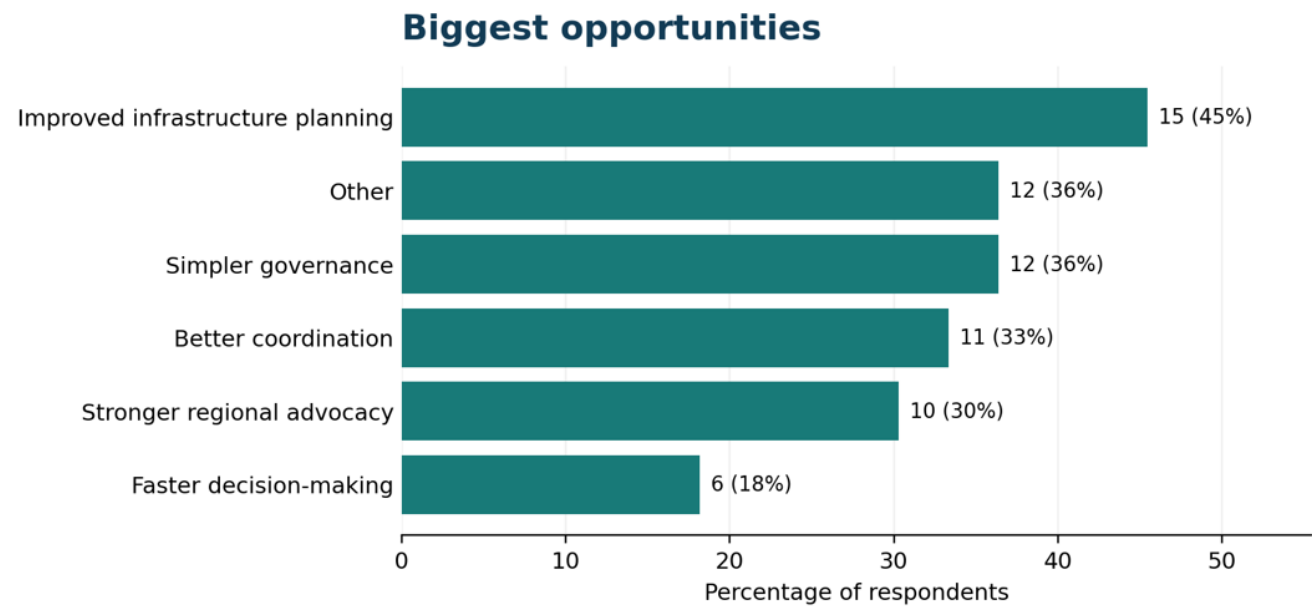


Figure 9. Biggest opportunities identified by respondents. Multiple responses permitted.

Opportunity	Count	Percentage
Improved infrastructure planning	15	45.5%
Simpler Governance	12	36.4%
Better Coordination	11	33.3%
Stronger regional advocacy	10	30.3%
Faster decision-making	6	18.2%
Other	12	36.4%

Improved infrastructure planning was the most frequently selected opportunity, chosen by 15 respondents (45%). Simpler governance was selected by 12 (36%), better coordination by 11 (33%) and stronger regional advocacy by 10 (30%).

The 12 “other” selections include both specific opportunities and comments that no clear opportunity had yet been demonstrated. They should therefore not be interpreted as a single positive category.

“Processes may be sped up/simplified. Maybe. Some of the functional infrastructure stuff, like upgrading sewerage networks, I could see maybe improving.”

Survey respondent

Protections and guarantees

What respondents want secured

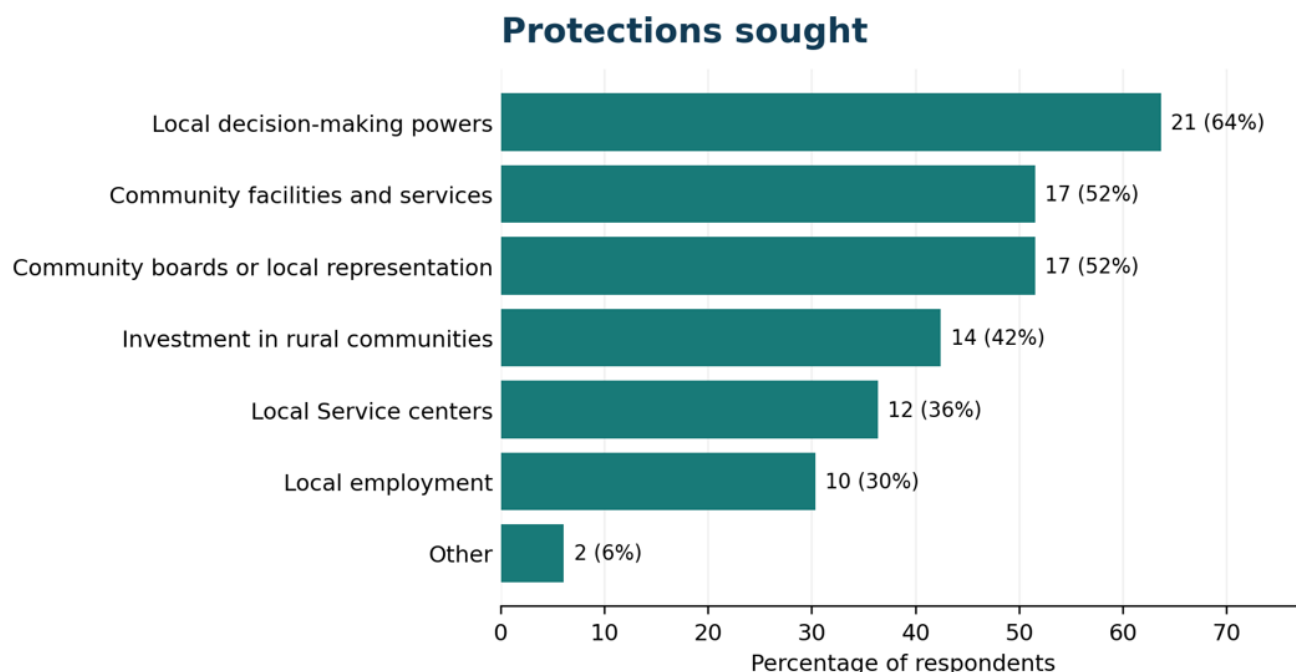


Figure 10. Protections sought for Ōpōtiki and East Coast communities. Multiple responses permitted.

What should be protected or guaranteed?

Opportunity	Count	Percentage
Local decision-making powers	21	63.6%
Community boards or local representation	17	51.5%
Community facilities and services	17	51.5%
Investment in rural communities	14	42.4%
Local Service centres	12	36.4%
Local employment	10	30.3%
Other	2	6.1%

Local decision-making powers were selected by 21 respondents (64%). Community boards or local representation and community facilities and services were each selected by 17 (52%), while investment in rural communities was selected by 14 (42%).

These results provide a practical framework for proposal design. Respondents want governance safeguards, service guarantees and investment commitments to be explicit rather than left to future organisational discretion.

Importance of iwi and hapū participation

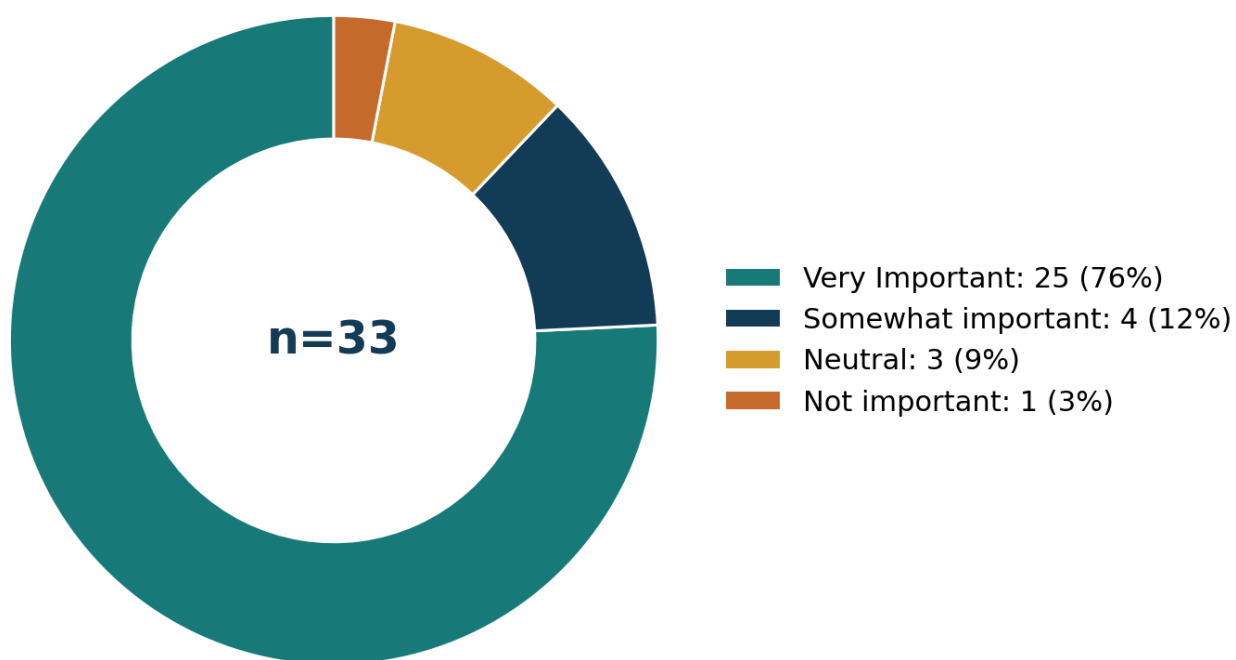


Figure 11. Importance of iwi and hapū participation.

Twenty-five respondents (76%) considered a strong iwi and hapū role very important and four (12%) considered it somewhat important. The results support carrying forward Treaty settlement commitments, co-governance arrangements and established relationships into any future structure.

Governance preferences

Support for Council merging under a new structure

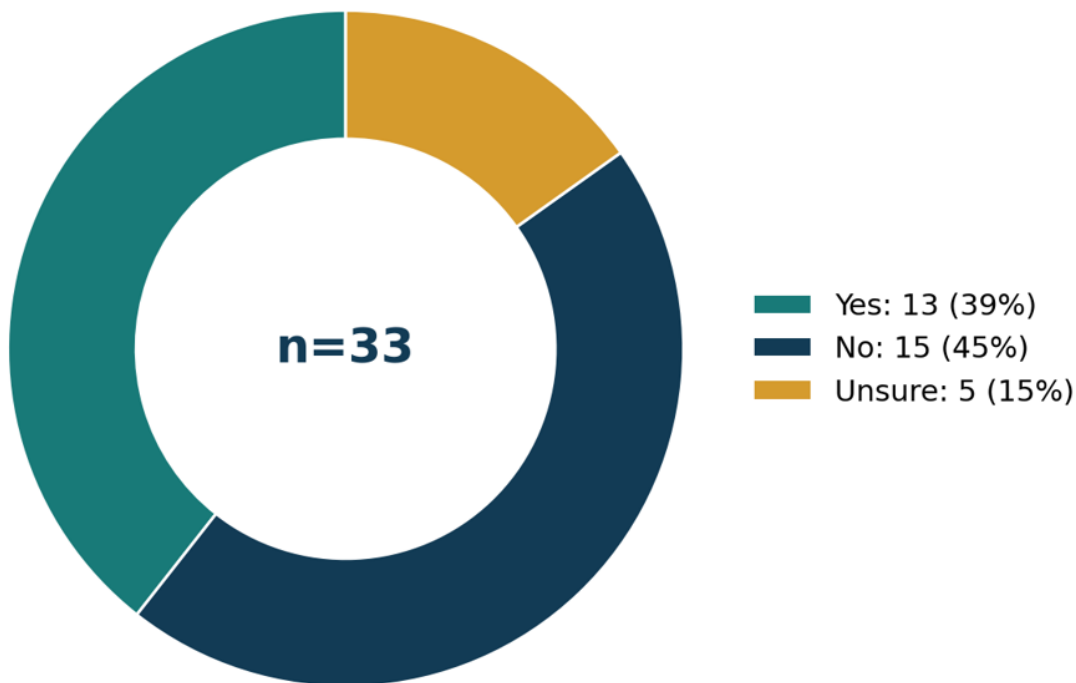


Figure 12. Support for Council merging under a new structure (n=33).

Views on amalgamation were divided. Thirteen respondents (39%) supported amalgamation, 15 (45%) opposed it and five (15%) were unsure. The result remains divided and does not show a clear community mandate either for or against structural change.

Written responses indicate that some opposition was directed at the process, timeframe or lack of evidence rather than at every possible form of collaboration. Conversely, several supportive respondents still required strong protections for local representation and local service delivery.

Preferred governance model

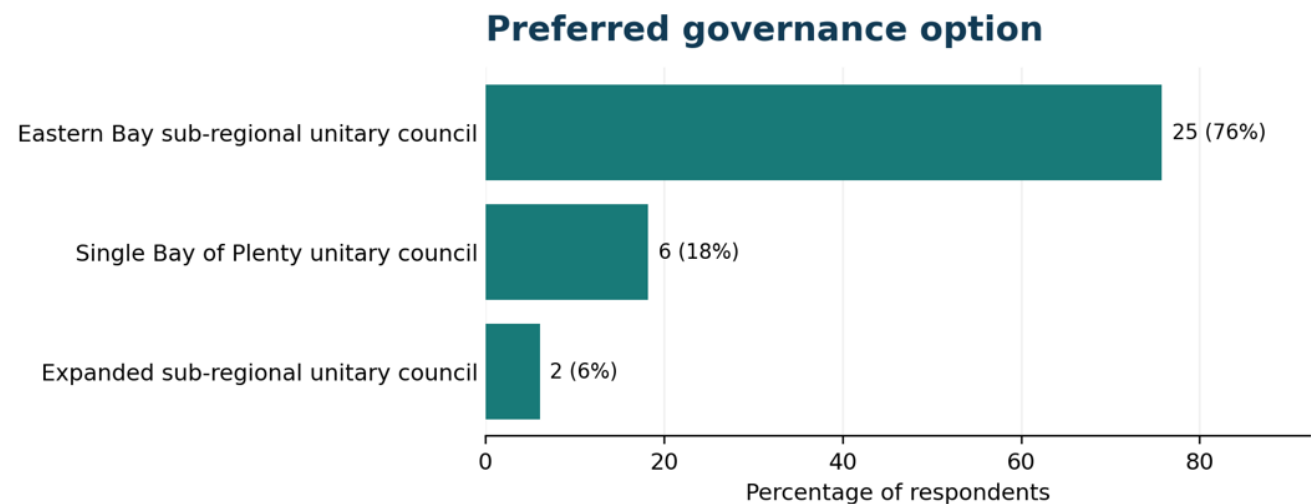


Figure 13. Preferred model among the three options presented (n=33).

Twenty-five respondents (76%) selected an Eastern Bay sub-regional unitary council covering the current Kawerau, Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki districts. Six (18%) selected a single Bay of Plenty unitary council and two (6%) selected an expanded sub-regional model.

The Eastern Bay preference is substantially stronger than the level of support for amalgamation. This indicates that some respondents who did not support structural reform still chose the Eastern Bay option as the most acceptable or least disruptive model if change is unavoidable.

“I would rather work with who we know, than who we don't know. Whakatane and Kawerau are our neighbors.”

Survey respondent

Preferred model by merger position

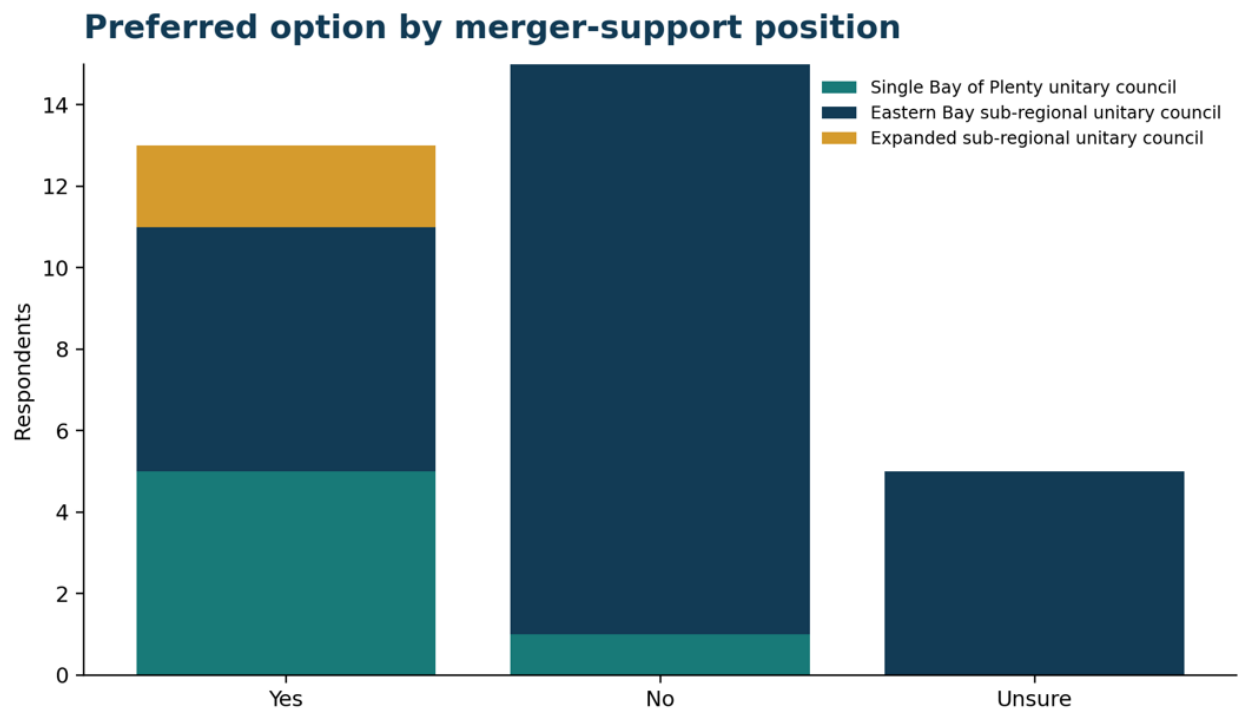


Figure 14. Preferred option by merger-support position

The cross-tabulation confirms that the Eastern Bay preference extends across supporters, opponents and respondents who were unsure about amalgamation. It should be interpreted as a conditional model preference rather than as a direct measure of support for structural change.

Respondents favouring the Eastern Bay model referred to geographic proximity, existing working relationships, similar rural and economic circumstances, shared catchments and the importance of avoiding dominance by larger urban centres.

Integrated qualitative analysis

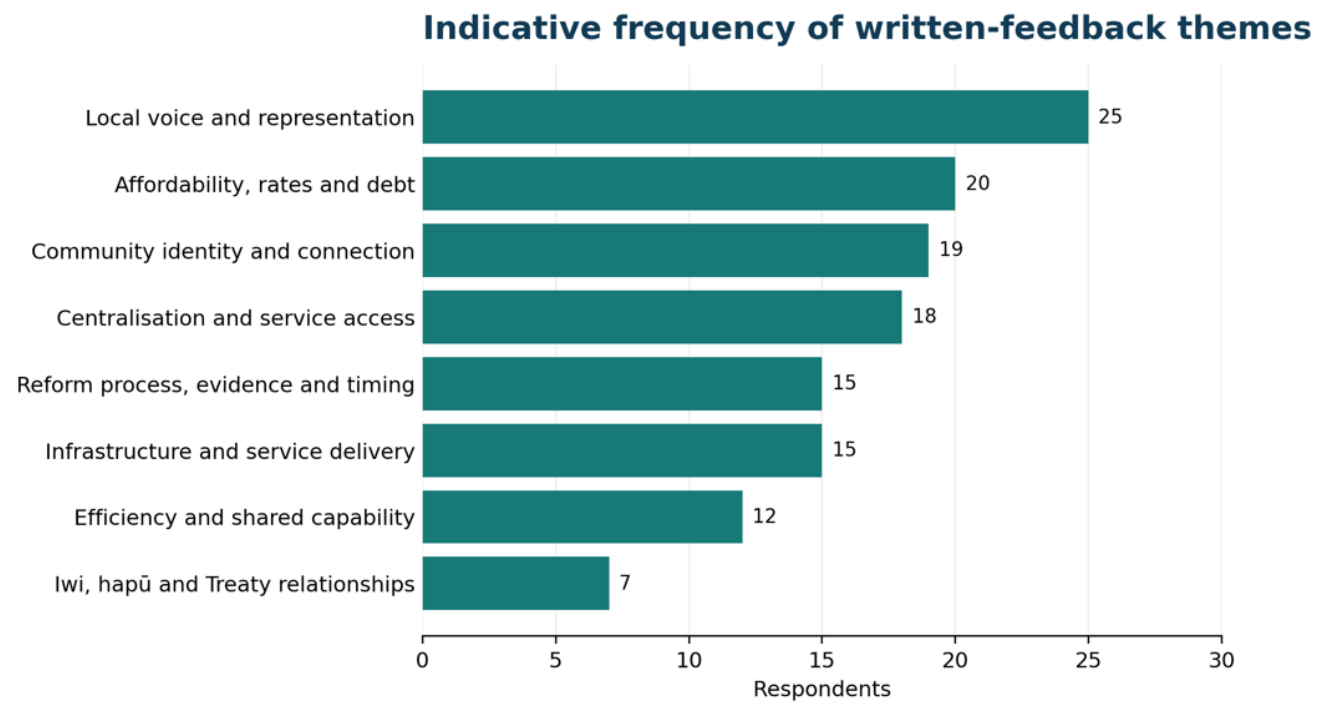


Figure 15. Indicative frequency of themes in 134 populated written-comment fields. Comments may receive multiple codes.

The qualitative feedback confirms that respondents are weighing potential organisational benefits against democratic, financial and service-delivery risks. Local voice and representation remains the most pervasive theme, followed by affordability, centralisation, infrastructure and concerns about reform process and timing.

Local voice and representation was the most pervasive theme. Affordability, rates and debt; centralisation and access; infrastructure and services; and concerns about the reform process also appeared frequently.

Sentiment analysis

A community weighing risk against opportunity



Overall sentiment toward merger is best described as divided and cautious. Positive comments generally referred to infrastructure planning, shared capability and stronger coordination. Negative comments focused on local influence, debt, rates, centralisation and examples of previous amalgamations. Mixed comments commonly accepted that reform may proceed but sought the most locally coherent model and strong protections.

A recurring mixed position was: reform may be imposed, and if so, Council should secure the most locally coherent model and the strongest possible protections.

“I don't agree with the whole amalgamation that is being forced by central govt - but I realise ODC doesn't have a choice and has to make the best of a bad decision.”

Survey respondent

Theme synthesis

What sits beneath the survey answers

Local voice and representation

This theme appeared in approximately 25 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Affordability, rates and debt

This theme appeared in approximately 20 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Community identity and connection

This theme appeared in approximately 19 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Centralisation and service access

This theme appeared in approximately 18 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Infrastructure and service delivery

This theme appeared in approximately 15 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Reform process, evidence and timing

This theme appeared in approximately 15 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Efficiency and shared capability

This theme appeared in approximately 12 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

Iwi, hapū and Treaty relationships

This theme appeared in approximately 7 populated written-comment fields. Comments were often interconnected with other themes and should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically weighted.

“There is nothing wrong with restructuring and efficiencies, but it is vital to also ensure the vital functions of the organisation are still enabled and happening.”

Survey respondent

Representative community voices

"Only local residents understand the requirements of their locality."

Survey respondent

"The stronger our voice is for local decision making and representation the better off our community will be."

Survey respondent

"Shared professional services could be more efficient and cost-effective."

Survey respondent

"We need to retain as much local voice and local representation and local decision-making as possible."

Survey respondent

"I would only like to merge with other small towns in our area so we can up the numbers to be heard better while also supporting each other."

Survey respondent

"In a nutshell we must maintain our autonomy in some areas, and not dilute, localized voice and decision-making powers."

Survey respondent

The quotations above illustrate the range of perspectives in the survey. They should be read as representative examples rather than as statistically weighted statements.

Conclusions and recommendations

The engagement demonstrates that respondents are willing to consider reform but expect the case for change to be evidenced and the local consequences to be clearly understood.

The strongest conclusion is that local voice must be built into the design of any future authority. This requires more than maintaining an office in Ōpōtiki. It requires representation, delegations, service standards, investment transparency and continuing community engagement.

The Eastern Bay sub-regional model is the preferred option among those presented, but the divided amalgamation support result means Council should not describe this as unconditional community endorsement. A more accurate interpretation is that the Eastern Bay configuration aligns most closely with the communities of interest and safeguards described by respondents.

Recommendations

1. Use local decision-making, representation and equitable investment as explicit design principles in the Head Start proposal.
2. Develop detailed representation options, including ward, Māori ward, community board and delegation arrangements, for further community testing.
3. Publish clear financial information on transition costs, debt, rates, asset ownership and the allocation of regional income and expenditure.
4. Identify service-level and local-presence guarantees for Ōpōtiki and East Coast communities.
5. Map existing Treaty settlement, co-governance and iwi–Council relationships and ensure equivalent or stronger arrangements are carried forward.
6. Explain how regional functions such as river management, environmental monitoring, civil defence and transport planning would operate under each model.
7. Undertake further engagement when detailed governance and financial information is available.
8. Report back to participants on how their feedback has influenced the proposal.

Final conclusion

The Connect Hono Mai engagement presents a consistent message: respondents are not simply asking Council to preserve the status quo, nor are they offering unconditional support for amalgamation. They are asking for a reform approach that strengthens capability without weakening the local relationships and accountability on which community confidence depends.

For these respondents, the success of reform will be measured by whether Ōpōtiki retains a meaningful voice, whether rural and coastal communities receive fair investment, whether services remain accessible, and whether the new structure is demonstrably affordable and effective.

Those principles provide a strong framework for Council’s ongoing work and for the further engagement that will be required as the proposal becomes more detailed.

“Change isn’t the problem. Losing our local influence is.”

Summary of the dominant survey narrative

Appendix A

Detailed quantitative results

A1. Age group

Response option	Count	Percentage
20-24	1	3.0%
25-29	1	3.0%
30-34	1	3.0%
35-39	2	6.1%
45-49	3	9.1%
50-54	2	6.1%
55-59	4	12.1%
60-64	3	9.1%
65-69	1	3.0%
70-74	1	3.0%
75-79	3	9.1%
80-84	1	3.0%

A2. Ethnicity

Response option	Count	Percentage
New Zealand European	10	30.3%
Māori	9	27.3%
South African	1	3.0%
Other	2	6.1%

A3. District area

Response option	Count	Percentage
Ōpōtiki Town	11	33.3%
Waiotahe	6	18.2%
Te Kaha	2	6.1%
Waihau Bay	1	3.0%
Opape	1	3.0%
Woodlands	2	6.1%
Kutarere	1	3.0%
Omaio	1	3.0%
Other	1	3.0%

Appendix A

Priority, importance and concern questions

A4. Priorities

Response option	Count	Percentage
Local representation	16	48.5%
Affordability and rates	19	57.6%
Service delivery	9	27.3%
Environmental management	12	36.4%
Efficiency	7	21.2%
Local decision-making	19	57.6%
Infrastructure investment	9	27.3%
Other	6	18.2%

A5. Importance of local decision-making

Response option	Count	Percentage
Very important	23	69.7%
Somewhat important	7	21.2%
Neutral	1	3.0%
Not important	2	6.1%

A6. Concerns

Response option	Count	Percentage
Loss of local voice	23	69.7%
Reduced community connection	15	45.5%
Higher rates	12	36.4%
Centralisation of services	13	39.4%
Governance complexity	10	30.3%
Loss of local identity	6	18.2%
Other	3	9.1%

Appendix A

Opportunity, protection and governance questions

A7. Opportunities

Response option	Count	Percentage
Better coordination	11	33.3%
Simpler governance	12	36.4%
Faster decision-making	6	18.2%
Improved infrastructure planning	15	45.5%
Stronger regional advocacy	10	30.3%
Other	12	36.4%

A8. Importance of iwi and hapū role

Response option	Count	Percentage
Very Important	25	75.8%
Somewhat important	4	12.1%
Neutral	3	9.1%
Not important	1	3.0%

A9. Protections

Response option	Count	Percentage
Local Service centers	12	36.4%
Community boards or local representation	17	51.5%
Investment in rural communities	14	42.4%
Local employment	10	30.3%
Local decision-making powers	21	63.6%
Community facilities and services	17	51.5%
Other	2	6.1%

A10. Support for merger

Response option	Count	Percentage
Yes	13	39.4%
No	15	45.5%
Unsure	5	15.2%

A11. Preferred governance option

Response option	Count	Percentage
Single Bay of Plenty unitary council	6	18.2%
Eastern Bay sub-regional unitary council	25	75.8%
Expanded sub-regional unitary council	2	6.1%

Appendix B

Methodological notes

Source data: Simplifying Local Government Form responses Data Connect Hono Mai export.

Engagement period: 8 June to 24 July 2026.

Number of response records analysed: 33

Open-text fields reviewed: 134

Quantitative treatment: every selected binary option was counted. Percentages use 33 as the denominator. Multi-response questions do not sum to 100%.

Qualitative treatment: 134 populated open-text fields were reviewed. Comments were coded against recurring themes. Coding was non-exclusive, meaning a comment could contribute to several themes.

Privacy: names and contact details contained in the raw export have not been reproduced in this report. Quotations are attributed generically to survey respondents.

Rounding: percentages are generally shown to the nearest whole number in charts and to one decimal place in detailed tables.

Caution: this was a voluntary engagement exercise and the results are not statistically representative of the entire Ōpōtiki District population.

Quality assurance

- All quantitative charts and tables are generated from the Excel response export.
- Counts were checked against the 33 source response records.
- Narrative conclusions distinguish amalgamation support from preferred-model selection.
- Comments indicating survey design constraints have been acknowledged in interpretation.

“Whichever model is chosen, it should enable alignment and efficiency at scale, preserve strong local voice and community identity, and deliver equitable outcomes across diverse communities.”

Organisational respondent

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 21 July 2026
To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 4 August 2026
From : Group Manager Strategy and Development, Antoinette Campbell
Subject : **PREPARING FOR THE BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL SPATIAL PLAN**
File ID : A1406170

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Planning Bill will require all regions to prepare a regional spatial plan, supported by a process agreement between local authorities that sets out governance, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making arrangements. To ensure the Bay of Plenty is well positioned to meet the proposed statutory timeframes, councils have undertaken a no regrets programme of pre-enactment work, including the approach to identifying key geographical areas, issues and opportunities, developing and assessing governance options for a future Spatial Plan Committee, preparing a draft work programme, and establishing draft governance and project structures.
- This report seeks the Council's feedback and direction on the proposed approach to identifying key geographical areas, issues and opportunities, the evaluation principles used to assess governance options, and a preferred Spatial Planning Committee option for further consideration by Bay of Plenty local authorities. This approach is set out in the Process Agreement Options Report – **Attachment 1**. The development of the first Regional Spatial Plan will be a collaborative exercise that clearly recognises the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, sub-regional joint committees and the future Spatial Planning Committee, with these roles reflected in the Process Agreement and relevant terms of reference.
- All Bay of Plenty councils will be receiving a similar report and recommendations before this matter is taken to the Mayoral Forum 10 September 2026 for strategic direction. Councils remain the final decision-makers on the Process Agreement and will be responsible for future direction setting and decision-making following enactment of the legislation. It is noted that the Mayoral Forum will continue to receive programme updates until the Spatial Planning Committee is established.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **That the report titled "Preparing for the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan" be received.**
- 2) **That the approach to identifying key geographical areas, issues, and opportunities laid out in section 7 of the Process Agreement Options Report (Attachment 1) is appropriate.**

- 3) **That the Spatial Planning Committee evaluation principles in section 8 of the Process Agreement Options Report (Attachment 1) are appropriate.**
- 4) **That identified spatial planning committee options and recommended direction is appropriate for further consideration by the local authorities of the BOP Region based on the current Planning Bill.**
- 5) **That there is understanding that the development of the first regional spatial plan for the BOP will be a collaborative exercise that recognises the roles and responsibilities of each local authority, sub-regional joint committee and the SPC and supports that these roles and responsibilities be clearly articulated in the Process Agreement and terms of reference of each part of the decision-making process.**
- 6) **That there is acknowledgment that the local authorities of the BOP region, as the final decision makers on the Process Agreement, will be responsible for any further direction and decision making on the matters contained in this report after enactment of legislation, including agreeing the Terms of Reference for the Spatial Planning Committee (noting a required update to the Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference).**

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Council on preparations for regional spatial planning in the Bay of Plenty and to seek feedback and direction on key matters that will inform development of the Bay of Plenty Process Agreement following enactment of the Planning Bill.
2. The report outlines the proposed approach to regional spatial planning, presents governance options for a future Spatial Planning Committee, and provides an overview of programme planning undertaken to support implementation of the new legislative framework.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

3. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034:
 - ☒ Community Priority One: Strong relationships and partners
 - ☒ Community Priority Two: Investment in our district
 - ☒ Community Priority Three: Well-being is valued
 - ☒ Community Priority Four: Our communities are resilient
 - ☒ Community Priority Five: Growth is sustained over time

BACKGROUND

4. Under the Planning Bill, which is to be enacted later in 2026, each region must produce a regional spatial plan, which will be a key document for setting long-term priorities and resolving competing demands for land, infrastructure, development, and environmental protection across the region. The regional spatial plan can help:

- strengthen investment conversations with NZTA, Kāinga Ora, Crown Infrastructure Partners and infrastructure agencies
 - help prioritise regional infrastructure
 - support funding bids and business cases
 - provide a clearer evidence base for investment decisions.
5. All local authorities within a region must agree on a number of matters relating to the preparation of a regional spatial plan and record that agreement in a process agreement. The process agreement must be adopted at the start of the regional spatial planning process, after the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act become law. Councils will be the final decision-makers on the Process Agreement and any subsequent direction-setting and decision-making under the regional spatial planning process, as acknowledged through Recommendation 6.

DISCUSSION

6. The proposed process agreement principles, assumptions, and options that have been developed to support preparation for regional spatial planning are outlined in **Attachment 1**. A draft regional spatial plan work programme has also been prepared to support planning and resource discussions ahead of enactment. Together, the process agreement options, assumptions and supporting analysis provide the foundation for discussion on key geographical areas, issues and opportunities, the evaluation principles, and governance arrangements that are presented to the Mayoral Forum for feedback and direction through Recommendations 2 to 4.
7. **Attachment 1** presents representation arrangements and structural Spatial Planning Committee options to be carried into post-enactment decisions. Direction is sought for further consideration by Bay of Plenty local authorities, consistent with Recommendation 4.
8. The project assumptions and proposed approach acknowledge that government structures in the BOP region may undergo significant change through Government decisions on the next phase of the Head Start pathway during the preparation and adoption of the first RSP. The proposed approach has tried to minimise the impact of any changes by using the three current sub-regions within the region as the building blocks of the RSP.

Statutory timeframes and work completed to date

9. The proposed statutory timeframes for preparing the regional spatial plan are tight. To ensure the region is well positioned to respond once the legislation is enacted, the following preparatory work has been done:
- The Mayoral Forum endorsed a programme of foundational ‘no regrets’ work for 2026 on 12 March 2026.

- A letter was sent to Minister Bishop seeking guidance on, and support for, the region's proposed approach, which emphasises the importance of sub-regional spatial planning within a broader regional framework. The Minister's response confirmed support for the region's pre-enactment work and noted that the regional spatial plan will need to align with the final legislation and any relevant national direction.
- A project control group, comprising senior staff from all partner councils, has been established and meets regularly to oversee and progress pre-enactment workstreams. Technical working groups have also been established to progress specific aspects of the project.
- Hui of council Māori policy teams from across the region have been held to develop an approach for working with iwi and hapū throughout all stages of the project.
- The pre-enactment Communications and Engagement Plan is being implemented.

Legislative framework

10. The Planning and Natural Environment Bills were introduced in December 2025 and are continuing to progress through the parliamentary process, with enactment currently expected in September 2026.
11. Alongside the primary legislation, a significant suite of national instruments (secondary legislation) is being developed to guide the transition to, and implementation of, the new planning system. Many of these instruments are expected to be released progressively from mid-2027 onwards.

PROCESS AGREEMENT

12. All local authorities within a region must agree on a number of matters relating to the preparation of a regional spatial plan and record that agreement in a process agreement. The process agreement must be adopted at the start of the regional spatial planning process, after the Planning and Natural Environment Bills become law. **Attachment 1** sets out the principles that will underpin the Process Agreement, including the assumptions and a range of options.
13. The Regional Spatial Plan will not remove the statutory decision-making responsibilities of individual councils. Councils will continue to make decisions on the process agreement, council plans, infrastructure investment priorities, annual plans, long-term plans and district or regional planning functions in accordance with legislation. **Attachment 1** includes a table suggesting how key milestone decisions will be made in the process.

Process Agreement Options

14. Process agreement governance options for the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan are outlined in Attachment 1:

- A statutory minimum Spatial Plan Committee.
 - An enhanced Spatial Plan Committee comprising continued recognition of existing sub-regional joint committees, and provision for Māori representation.
 - A series of additional considerations to provide feedback on, including the number of representatives from each local authority and how to provide for Māori representation.
15. The direction provided by central government to date is that ministerial appointments are intended to help align Crown investment. Ministers do not replace local decision makers. The Minister of Local Government (supported by MCERT) is the territorial authority for the offshore islands, at this stage it is expected that they will be part of the SPC in this role.
16. The options have been evaluated against the principles and assumptions.

Process Agreement assumptions

17. The assumptions listed in Attachment 1 provide a common starting point for developing the Process Agreement, recognising that some aspects of the planning system remain uncertain and may change once the legislation is enacted. The assumptions will be reviewed and refined as further direction is provided through the legislation, national instruments and regional decision-making processes. The assumptions are briefly summarised as follows:
- The Regional Spatial Plan will be prepared for the whole Bay of Plenty region.
 - Existing sub-regional planning arrangements, strategies, relevant plans and related technical evidence provide a starting point for a RSP noting the need to review the foundation of the plan to build on.
 - Māori interests and responsibilities will be reflected throughout the process.
 - Existing joint committee arrangements will continue, with roles refined through the process agreement or through other processes.
 - The approach will remain flexible to respond to changes in legislation and national direction.
 - Work will continue on a collaborative, whole-of-region, 'no regrets' basis.

PROGRAMME PLAN

Programme plan for developing the regional spatial plan

18. A draft programme plan has been prepared that outlines the activities required to develop the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan. The plan is based on the Planning Bill and will be reviewed once the final legislation is enacted. It will then be further refined and developed by the secretariat appointed by the Spatial Plan Committee.
19. The draft programme plan and resource requirements are provided for information to support discussion on regional spatial planning preparedness. Any future decisions relating to programme

scope, resourcing, funding and implementation will be considered by councils following enactment of the legislation, consistent with Recommendation 6.

20. The purpose of creating a draft programme plan at this stage is to:

- Raise awareness of the activities that may be required to develop the regional spatial plan.
- Support resource planning and allocation.
- Give the secretariat an agreed approach to programme planning to help meet the statutory timeframes for preparing the first regional spatial plan.

21. The draft programme plan builds on the high-level programme previously presented to the Mayoral Forum in March 2026. The plan incorporates further analysis of the Planning Bill and a review of plans developed by other regions. The summary below provides an overview of the detailed programme schedule currently being maintained by the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) programme team. To achieve adoption of the regional spatial plan by June 2028, the programme activities are proposed to be structured as outlined below (figure 1).

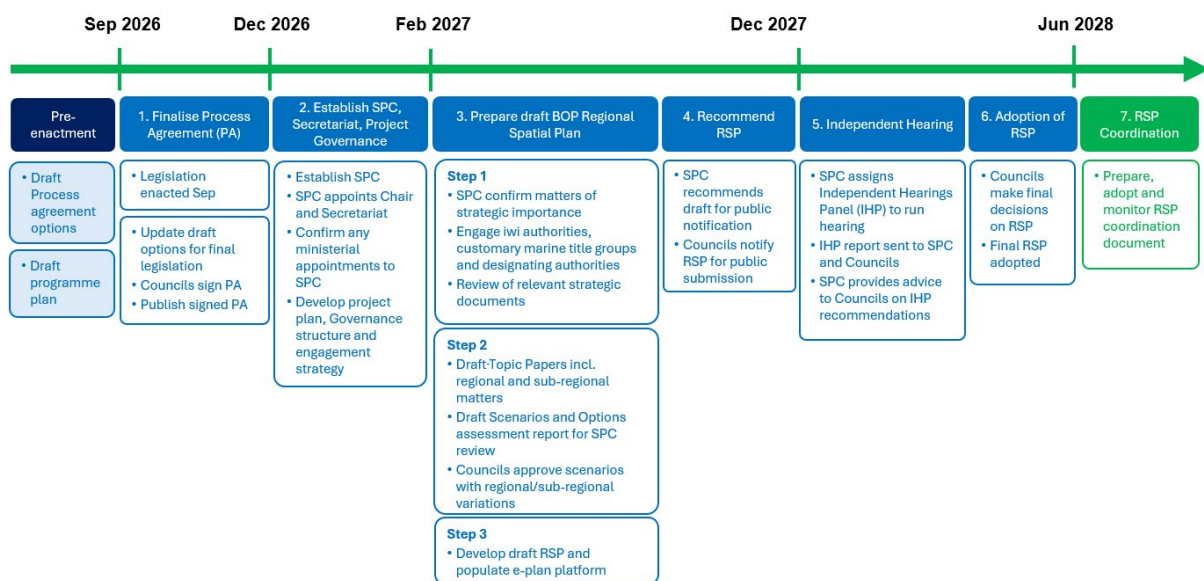


Figure 1. Draft programme plan for developing the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan.

Topic paper themes

22. Step 3 of the draft programme 'Prepare draft Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan' includes the development of topic papers covering regional and sub-regional matters. At this stage, it is understood that these topic papers will form the evidence base to inform consideration of scenarios and options for future urban development and infrastructure. Staff are still to fully consider how the inter-related nature of some mandatory matters (as specified in the Planning Bill) are best addressed together to ensure an integrated approach and understanding of an issue is achieved.

23. The following table outlines potential themes for these topic papers, informed by the findings of the ongoing data stock take and gap analysis. See Attachment 1 for more detail of the key geographic areas, issues and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on.

Mandatory matters – Sch 2 Clause 3(1)	Details
Environmental constraints and protections	a) Constraints on the use and development of land and the coastal marine area, including natural hazards, highly productive land, significant natural areas, priority biodiversity sites, outstanding natural features and landscapes.
Environmental limits	b) Identifying and protecting environmental limits
Development and urban growth	c) Sequenced future urban development areas and existing urban areas where significant change is planned, including priority areas for public investment in the short, medium, and long-term.
Infrastructure	d) Existing and future key infrastructure, including corridors and strategic sites and opportunities to make better use of existing infrastructure. e) Other infrastructure services that may be needed to serve future urban areas. g) Infrastructure and supporting activities.
Climate resilient development	f) Priority locations for adaptation plans prepared under the Climate Change Response Act 2002.
Land use patterns	h) Where necessary, existing and planned uses that require separation from incompatible activities. i) The gross pattern of urban, rural, industrial, and other development types to the extent required to: i. Inform consideration of scenarios and options for future urban development and infrastructure; or ii. Identify where separation of incompatible activities may be required.
Cultural environment	j) Any statutory acknowledgements from Treaty settlement legislation that apply in the region, including relevant statements of association and the areas to which they apply k) Identifying and protecting sites of significance to Māori and areas of significant cultural value and/or cultural landscapes l) Any customary marine title area or protected customary rights area in the region. Including other aspects of heritage and culture outlined in Sch 2 Cl 3(1)
Other matters	Potential themes
Other matters of strategic importance To be determined by the Spatial Planning Committee post-enactment and subject to national instruments	Economic and socio-economic, other matters from adjacent regions, National Infrastructure Plan, Upper North Island Strategic Alliance (UNISA), funding gap and feasibility, tourism/recreation assets and opportunities, energy connections, Cross-Regional Waste Strategy.

Financial/budget considerations

24. An initial resource schedule has been developed based on the draft programme plan to support councils with workforce planning. Resource requirements will be refined following enactment and presented to local authorities alongside updated Process Agreement options in late 2026. Costs are likely to be higher where external expertise is required, while greater use of existing council staff may reduce overall costs it will increase workload and potentially the ability to deliver current work programmes.
25. Bay of Plenty Regional Council have allocated budget to cover the 2026/27 costs of pre-enactment activities and early stages of developing the BOP Regional Spatial Plan.
26. Resource requirements will be reviewed, confirmed and discussed by project partners as part of developing the detailed programme plan in early 2027.

Impact on mana whenua

27. Māori engagement is a priority for the pre-enactment phase, recognising the need to uphold existing relationships, agreements and statutory obligations, while providing opportunities for Māori involvement in governance, advisory, technical, and plan development roles.
28. A range of options for Māori representation in the Spatial Planning Committee and participation within the regional spatial planning programme structure have been developed. They are intended to help shape future engagement with tāngata whenua and the development of the process agreement.
29. The options recognise that Māori involvement could be at multiple levels, including through membership of the Spatial Plan Committee, participation in the Secretariat or project delivery structures, Māori advisory groups, technical advisory roles, and targeted engagement with iwi and hapū. Existing relationships, Treaty settlement arrangements, co-governance structures, and other statutory mechanisms that already provide for Māori participation in planning and resource management processes need to be taken into account.
30. At this stage, the options are intended to inform future engagement and decision-making rather than represent a preferred or agreed model. Māori participation should be provided for across governance, advisory and technical levels of the programme, with representation arrangements that are well-mandated, transparent, and reflective of mana whenua interests and relationships within the region.

Climate impact considerations

31. The matters addressed in this report are of a procedural nature. Clarity is needed on how the Bills will align with, and give effect to, future climate adaptation legislation. That is a matter for the Select Committee and Parliament to resolve.

Risks

Risk/issue	Mitigation action
Timing and final form of legislation and national instruments and related changes	• Monitor possible amendments to the Planning Bill through the upcoming parliamentary process. • The process agreement options and programme plan will be reviewed and finalised with a decision sought from partner councils after enactment.
Time required to achieve alignment across councils and partners	• Preparation discussions across councils and partners are underway. • Direction is sought regularly through the agreed governance structure, with key decisions confirmed before progressing to the next stage of the work programme.
Capacity and resourcing constraints	• Bay of Plenty Regional Council is resourced to coordinate the pre-enactment work programme and contribute to the post enactment programme subject to the process agreement and the needs of the SPC/secretariat. • The pre-enactment programme plan identifies the expected timeframes and level of effort required, enabling councils to undertake resource planning. The Project Control Group will oversee the programme scope.
Ensuring iwi/hapū/Māori involvement in the Regional Spatial Plan Project Control Group and in the wider programme during the pre-enactment phase	• The Programme Team and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Te Amorangi team are coordinating discussions with council Māori policy/relationships teams/leads across the region to begin working directly with Māori. • A hui of council Māori policy teams from across the region has been held to develop an approach for working with iwi and hapū throughout all stages of the project.
Managing stakeholder and community expectations	• Stakeholders are being identified. • The pre-enactment Communication and Engagement Plan is being implemented, noting limited focus during the pre-enactment phase beyond partners.
Managing elected member expectations	• Councils are briefed regularly on the pre-enactment programme. • Ensure relevant staff from all partner councils are involved in the pre-enactment programme.
How will pre-enactment governance work across eight councils?	The governance structure is now in place with any items to be presented to councils, joint committees, and the Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum.
Broader operating environment changes – central government elections, other related reforms.	Maintaining situational awareness of our strategic and operating environment.

Risk/issue	Mitigation action
Gaps identified in technical analysis	• Assess whether any identified gaps are critical to delivery. • Make transparent decisions on whether identified gaps will be addressed, including the rationale for those decisions.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of significance & engagement

32. The pre-enactment Communication and Engagement Plan is being implemented, noting that there will be a limited focus on stakeholders beyond project partners during the pre-enactment phase. The preparation of the Regional Spatial Plan will be supported by statutory consultation and engagement processes set out in the final legislation.

NEXT STEPS

33. Staff note the following next steps:
- Further local authority and sub-regional joint-committee workshop(s) may be required on the draft Process Agreement options.
 - The Project Control Group will draft an outline Process Agreement following enactment. This will take into account direction from council, joint committees and Mayoral Forum as well as direct engagement with iwi / Māori.
 - Royal Assent of Planning and Natural Environment Acts is expected by late September 2026.
 - Project Control Group develops final draft Process Agreement.
 - Local authorities adopt Process Agreement by December 2026.
 - Establishment of a Spatial Planning Committee, Secretariat and project governance early 2027.
 - On establishment of the Spatial Planning Committee the subsequent amendment of the Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference to remove Regional Spatial Planning.

Antoinette Campbell

GROUP MANAGER STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

Attachment 1

BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL SPATIAL PLAN

***Draft* BOP Regional Spatial Plan - Process Agreement Options Report**

Prepared by the BOP Regional Spatial Plan Programme Control Group.

Version One: 17 July 2026

1 Introduction

Regional spatial planning provides an opportunity to align growth, infrastructure investment, climate resilience, environmental management and economic development across the Bay of Plenty. It can create a shared regional framework that can support council planning, inform Crown investment decisions and provide certainty for communities, iwi, infrastructure providers and investors.

The RSP will also provide an important platform for aligning infrastructure investment priorities and supporting investment discussions with central government agencies and infrastructure providers.

Local authorities across the Bay of Plenty region are working in partnership to prepare for regional spatial planning. Early engagement with iwi/Māori is also occurring, the results of this will be integrated into the next round of reporting on the Process Agreement.

2 Purpose of this report

All local authorities in each region must agree on a number of matters in relation to the preparation of a regional spatial plan and confirm that agreement in a document called a Process Agreement. The Process Agreement needs to be agreed at the start of the regional spatial planning process after the Planning and Natural Environment Bills become law. This report has been prepared as a deliverable of the pre-enactment phase to support that decision. This report is not the Process Agreement.

Clause 69 of the Planning Bill prescribes what is required to be covered in a Process Agreement and this report is structured around those requirements. A draft Process Agreement and the detail around structure and membership of the Spatial Plan Committee (SPC) for the Bay of Plenty (BOP) region will be prepared when the Bills become law.

This report invites feedback and direction from local authorities (as part of their consideration for decision-making), the sub-regional spatial plan joint committees and the Mayoral Forum on the following matters. The feedback and direction will be provided back to local authorities for consideration as part of their decision making on the RSP Process Agreement. These recommendations are included in the covering paper:

1. Receives the covering report - Preparing for the Bay of Plenty Regional Spatial Plan

2. That the approach to identifying key geographical areas, issues, and opportunities laid out in section 7 of Attachment 1 is appropriate.
3. That the Spatial Planning Committee evaluation principles in section 8 of Attachment 1 are appropriate.
4. That identified spatial planning committee options and recommended direction is appropriate for further consideration by the local authorities of the BOP Region based on the current Planning Bill.
5. That there is understanding that the development of the first regional spatial plan for the BOP will be a collaborative exercise that recognises the roles and responsibilities of each local authority, sub-regional joint committee and the SPC and supports that these roles and responsibilities be clearly articulated in the Process Agreement and terms of reference of each part of the decision-making process
6. That there is acknowledgment that the local authorities of the BOP region, as the final decision makers on the Process Agreement, will be responsible for any further direction and decision making on the matters contained in this report after enactment of legislation, including agreeing the Terms of Reference for the SPC (noting a required update to the Mayoral Forum Terms of Reference).

3 Assumptions

Assumptions were developed to ensure that all partners have a shared understanding of the current operating environment despite the level of uncertainty. This helps provide a baseline for the matters set out in this report. The assumptions will be updated as more certainty is provided.

- The first Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) is to be developed for the whole of the BOP region based on local authority boundaries as at enactment (September 2026). (see page 5 of [Head Start guidance](#)).
- That local government structures in the BOP region may undergo significant change through Government decisions on the next phase of the Head Start pathway during the preparation and adoption of the first RSP. Flexibility has been built into the proposed approach to try and minimise the impact of any changes by recognising the three current sub-regions within the region.
- The existing sub-regional spatial planning approach will be carried into sub-regional 'chapters' post-enactment (Figure 1).
- The existing sub-regional spatial planning arrangements (i.e., the Rotorua Future Development Joint Committee, the Eastern Bay of Plenty Joint Committee and the SmartGrowth Leadership Group) will also be retained post enactment, subject to any structural and/or governance review once the legislation is enacted to ensure it is fit for purpose under the new legislation and the Process Agreement.
- Māori interests, perspectives, and responsibilities are meaningfully reflected in decision-making to reflect the current approach to Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi across the Bay of Plenty.
- The existing sub-regional spatial plans/ strategies (Eastern Bay Spatial Plan, the Rotorua Future Development Strategy and SmartGrowth Strategy), Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plans along with related technical evidence e.g., Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment will provide substantial content and

strategic direction to inform the first regional spatial plan. A review of these existing plans will occur to ensure they meet the requirements of the new legislation, as well as other matters such as outcomes of recent planning initiatives or RSP engagement processes. A refresh of the SmartGrowth Strategy 2024 is also required as part of the Western Bay City and Regional Deal.

- Legislative requirements affecting RSPs will change between the Bills and the Acts so the way forward outlined in this report remains flexible and will be reviewed following enactment.
- The Minister of Local Government will be considered as a territorial authority for offshore islands in the region for the purposes of the process agreement options.
- Scope, form and content of regional spatial plans and the rest of the Combined Regional Plan will be directed by the Acts (Planning Act and Natural Environment Act) and national instruments (including digital enablement). The timeframe for release of these instruments is uncertain. The local authorities of the BOP will continue to operate in partnership and with a 'no regrets' approach¹ as agreed at the Mayoral Forum in March 2026.
- While the first-generation Bay of Plenty RSP will focus on the requirements of the Acts and relevant National Instruments as they evolve, the plan will be developed using good planning practice to ensure relevant issues, opportunities, and interrelationships are considered as appropriate to deliver the purpose of the Regional Spatial Plan notably the integration at the strategic level of decision making under the two Acts.

4 **Select Committee Report - **Placeholder for summary of relevant recommendations***

Text

5 **Regional Spatial Plan Structure**

The diagram below shows the proposed high-level structure of the RSP. The strong sub-regional focus was endorsed by the Mayoral Forum in March 2026. The sub-regional chapters are the building blocks that are informed by existing plans/strategies. Whole of region and inter-regional chapters will address matters best addressed at those levels.

The process agreement governance arrangement options have been developed and evaluated in line with this overarching approach. Note the inter-regional chapters (i.e.,

¹ A 'No regrets' approach relates to preparatory and coordination activities carried out prior to the enactment of the Bills—that is, tasks that must be completed regardless of any subsequent amendments to the Bills. This includes preparing evidence, alignment across partners, seeking direction and building on existing work, and undertaking a data stock take and gap analysis (*Mayoral Forum meeting March 2026*).

BOP/Waikato and BOP/Gisborne) are for example only, some relationships, like the waste strategy work span across multiple regions and there may be an inter-regional RSP matter with the Hawke's Bay. Matters related to the area of Taupō District Council within the Bay of Plenty Region area will be covered in the BOP RSP.

BOP Regional Spatial Plan Structure

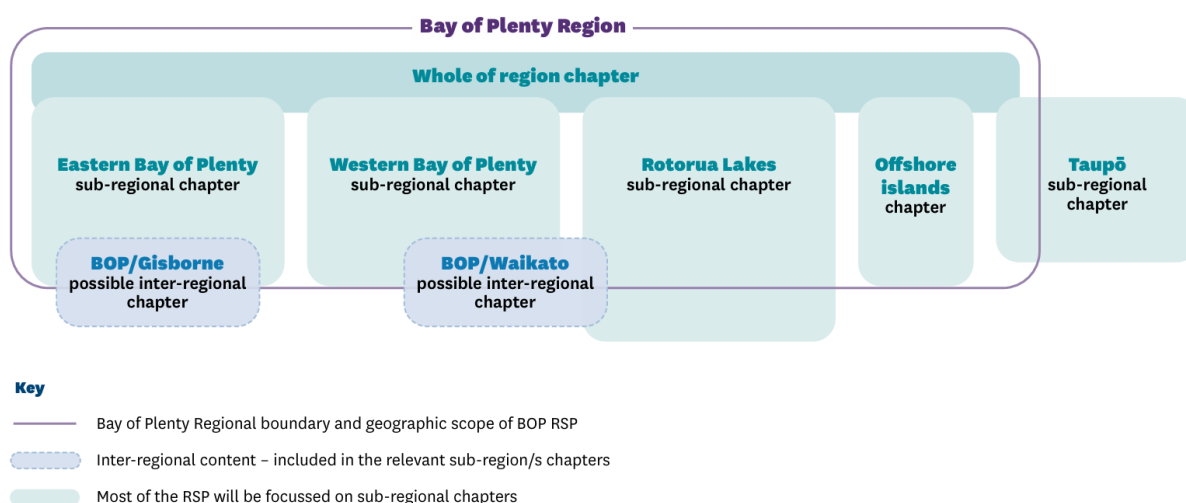


Figure 1²

The larger building blocks of the sub-regions indicate the parts of the plan where greater focus, time, and decision-making will occur.

6 Process Agreement approach

The Planning Bill requirements for the Process Agreement and the proposed BOP approach are summarised below. To support the Mayoral Forum to provide feedback and direction, further detail is provided below the table on core matters related to:

- **CI 69(1)(a)** key geographic areas, issues and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on
- **CI69(1)(b)** confirm roles of each local authority in the process and how the LAs will work together (includes CI 71-73) SPC and secretariat)
- **CI69(1)(e)** - how each local authority will ensure that its obligations or agreements under Treaty settlement legislation or other Joint Management Arrangements or Mana Whakahono a Rohe are upheld through the RSP process.
- **CI69(1)(f)** - how the SPC will consult iwi authorities.

² The Minister of Local Government (supported by MCERT) is the territorial authority for the offshore islands, Tūhua and Mōtītī in particular.

These matters are core to representation and decision-making.

Process Agreement Requirement	Approach
CI 69(1)(a) key geographic areas, issues and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on	Propose to use existing spatial plans/strategies and regional policies and plans (and associated evidence) as the starting point for identifying key geographical areas, issues and opportunities Audit existing plans/ strategies and evidence for any gaps as elected member direction, legislation and national instruments provide more guidance Use bottom-up and top-down spatial approach e.g., local sub-regional, regional, reinforcing decision making at the right level Make this a 'live' part of the RSP process that can be updated as more is known
CI 69(1)(b) confirm roles of each local authority in the process including how the LAs will work together. Includes CI71-73 SPC and secretariat.	Provide early clarity on the roles and working arrangements for how the LAs will work together throughout the RSP process. Use principles for evaluating and recommending an option for structure and make-up of the SPC Establish an SPC as soon as possible, in accordance with the scope of the Planning Act. Establish clarity on operational working arrangements, the secretariat and programme management approach with the SPC, as soon as it is established.
CI 69(1)(c) - how the local authorities will work with central government	Governance options explored within SPC options Principles based approach in the Process Agreement Early (pre-enactment) engagement with central government stakeholders to ensure understanding of the proposed RSP approach /" Confirmed in a Communication and Engagement plan prepared by the SPC in partnership with all the local authorities.
CI 69(1)(d) – the options for how the BOP local authorities will work with local authorities in adjacent regions	Use post-enactment arrangements such as MoUs between adjoining regions as required, tailored to unique relationships and matters of mutual interest.
CI 69(1)(e) - how each local authority will ensure that its obligations or agreements under Treaty settlement legislation or other JMAs or MWaR are upheld through the RSP process.	Māori policy advisors across the region with expertise on existing settlement legislation, relationships and agreements are developing options for working with Māori across the region This will include engagement with tāngata whenua prior to confirming the approach through the Process Agreement

CI 69(1)(f) - how the SPC will consult iwi authorities.	Māori policy advisors across the region with expertise on existing settlement legislation, relationships and agreements are developing options for working with Māori across the region. Confirmed through finalisation of the Process Agreement
CI 69(1)(g) - how the local authorities will work with infrastructure providers, development and sector groups, others with a strong interest in spatial planning, and communities.	Principles based in the Process Agreement e.g., early engagement to inform the development of the RSP Confirmed in a Communication and Engagement plan prepared by the SPC in partnership with all the local authorities.
CI 71 - Requirement to have spatial plan committee The local authorities of each region must work together to provide terms of reference to a committee to perform or exercise the functions, duties, and powers of a spatial plan committee under this Act.	Terms of Reference to be drafted once direction is provided on preferred SPC option and approach
CI 72 - Ministerial appointments to SPC 1 member as of right Additional members if the LA of that region agree	Minister will advise post-enactment: • If one member will be appointed to the SPC. If additional members will be appointed to the SPC, which must be agreed with local authorities
CI 73 Role of spatial plan committee	As per legislation, the role of the SPC includes: • Preparation of an RSP • Recommend local authorities to publicly notify a draft RSP • Provide advice to the local authorities on the independent hearings panel's recommendations • Prepare and consult on a co-ordination plan

7 **CI 69(1)(a) key geographic areas, issues and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on**

CI 69(1)(a) of the Bill requires key geographic areas, issues and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on to be identified in the process agreement. As previously outlined, the existing sub-regional spatial plans, Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plans were used as a starting point to identify key geographical areas, issues and opportunities. These will continue to be refined through as further direction is received from elected members, and through enactment of the Bills and national direction.

Below is a table outlining the current draft issues and opportunities that have been identified at a regional and sub-regional scale. These will be further refined as there are many overlaps and commonalities between issues and opportunities identified at different geographic scales.

Regional and/or cross sub-regional issues and opportunities		
1. Responding to constraints at regional scale including; natural hazards, highly productive land, significant natural areas, priority biodiversity sites and outstanding natural features and landscapes 2. Identifying and protecting environmental limits. 3. Opportunities to protect significant features in the coastal marine area, e.g., offshore islands, reefs, and ecosystems 4. Protecting areas of Significant Cultural Value and/or cultural landscapes in CMA alongside opportunities for resource use such as Aquaculture Management Areas 5. Identifying and protecting sites of significance to Māori across region, for example wāhi tapu and water bodies 6. Recognition of natural resources identified within Treaty Settlements (e.g., Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes, Rangitaiki River catchment) 7. Managing the effects of land use on harbours and estuaries e.g., Tauranga and Ōhiwa Harbours, Maketū and Waihi Estuaries. 8. Protecting the natural character and ecological functioning of terrestrial, freshwater and coastal environments. 9. Protecting, maintaining and restoring indigenous biodiversity with goal of no net loss. 10. Identifying priority locations for adaptation plans 11. Considering development and urban growth impacts at regional scale where there are defined corridors and strategic sites 12. Identifying and protecting key transport corridors, nodes and lifelines at regional scale e.g., state highways, public transport network, walking and cycling network, rail freight corridors, ports, and airports 13. Protecting human health limits for air and freshwater 14. Protecting geothermal systems (tourism and biodiversity) and identifying areas for conditional development (industrial process heat, municipal use and energy generation).		
Eastern Bay of Plenty issues and opportunities	Rotorua issues and opportunities	Western Bay of Plenty issues and opportunities
Opportunity to build off the Eastern Bay Spatial Plan settlement pattern and related work Growing and changing population requires diverse housing types. Supporting Ōpōtiki Harbour transformation and aquaculture development Recognising the importance of the Kawerau geothermal and industrial base and that this will grow over time Providing for greenfield development, in particular Awakeri, Matata and Hukutaia, and intensification of existing urban areas, including through zoning and infrastructure Supporting development on Māori-owned land including papakāinga and economic opportunities, through enabling	Opportunity to build off the Rotorua Future Development Strategy settlement pattern and related work Greenfield urban growth and land fragmentation putting pressure on highly productive land Providing sufficient well-located industrial land that responds to key drivers such as freight routes to the Port of Tauranga. Housing supply to provide range of housing choices to meet diverse needs of a growing and changing population (from within and adjacent to the sub-region) Opportunity to address infrastructure funding gaps and address infrastructure constraints e.g. power sup	Opportunity to build off SmartGrowth Strategy settlement pattern and related work Limited housing choice and a shortage of development-ready land for housing and business Opportunities to provide for intensification within those areas where supporting infrastructure and amenities exist and/or are being invested in Limited transport choice and growing congestion on key routes The need for successful centres and business areas to support communities and job growth Infrastructure level of service constraints, including closing the infrastructure deficit Insufficient funding and financing to deliver planned growth (and

zoning and infrastructure provision. Recognise the importance of the rural economy to the Eastern Bay of Plenty while managing the effects of land use activities. Supporting rural land use change over time and enabling innovation and associated activities while managing reverse sensitivity. Recognising the unique characteristics of Eastern Bay rural land (flood prone, reclaimed, drainage-dependent) and the socio-economic context. Investing in infrastructure to support tourism and other economic development The large area of Significant Natural Areas and Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes in the Eastern Bay of Plenty The significance of Treaty Settlements to the Eastern Bay of Plenty, particularly with regards to natural resources and their protection, development and use.	Consider how to address socio-economic disparities and housing affordability issues Support Papakāinga development opportunities Protect and enhance unique indigenous biodiversity e.g., geothermal areas of national significance. Opportunity to further explore and support economic sector opportunities with latent potential like energy e.g. geothermal and wood biomass Support the growth of key economic sectors such as forestry, tourism and freight and logistics Freshwater ecosystem health limits - nutrient, sediment and E. coli load reductions are required to meet desired outcomes for specific lakes. Enhancing the quality and function of the city centre and the Ōwhata and Ngongotahā centres - noting the growth strategy in adopted FDS promotes a compact city approach based on the preferred scenario. Rural land use and lakeside communities that were out of scope of the FDS Understanding and responding to Inter-regional strategic transport connections to adjoining sub-regions are fundamental due to split between regions.	the need to consider wider options) Increasing pressure from development on the natural environment Supporting tāngata whenua to realise their development aspirations The need to adapt to, and mitigate against the impacts of climate change and hazards The need to manage incompatible activities
Inter-regional		
1. Considering and responding to matters along key movement corridors (e.g., SH2, SH29 and SH5). 2. Consider key economic linkages/ relationships across regions impacting commuting, housing, industry, etc. 3. Catchments and groundwater resources that cross boundaries (e.g., Motu, Lake Rotorua).		

To address key issues and opportunities, and as part of the RSP preparation, it is anticipated that Topic Papers will be drafted across the matters required to address issues and opportunities at the appropriate scale. See the covering paper for the topic paper themes.

At this stage, it is understood that these topic papers will form the evidence base to inform consideration of scenarios and options for future urban development and infrastructure. Staff are still to fully consider how the inter-related nature of some mandatory matters (as specified in the Planning Bill) are best addressed together to ensure an integrated approach and understanding of an issue is achieved.

8 Roles of each local authority in the process and how local authorities will work together

A key matter to consider prior to enactment, to ensure we are ready to begin work on the RSP as soon as possible, is how local authorities will work together. This section considers both the governance and decision-making arrangements and the way the local authorities will work together at an operational level, through the following approach:

- Outline of RSP governance requirements
- Suggested principles to guide governance
- Evaluation of the 'Statutory Minimum' SPC and decision-making structure
- Key considerations for enhancing the structure
- Overview of an 'enhanced' SPC and decision-making structure
- Further matters for consideration moving forward.

Governance – Requirement to establish a Spatial Planning Committee

The Planning Bill requires the local authorities to establish and provide terms of reference to an SPC so that they can execute their role, currently set out in the Planning Bill as:

- Appoint a secretariat
- Prepare a draft regional spatial plan
- Prepare an options assessment report
- Consult on the draft regional spatial plan
- Recommend draft regional spatial plan to all local authorities in the region to publicly notify
- Provide advice to LAs on the independent hearings panel's recommendations on the draft
- Review and amend regional spatial plan
- Prepare and consult on a co-ordination plan
- Monitor and report on the coordination document

The proposed approach is to create an SPC and decision-making structure in parallel, to ensure that all the governance matters related to how local authorities will work together to deliver an RSP can be considered in an integrated manner.

The Planning Bill provides for what is effectively a ‘**statutory minimum**’ **SPC and decision-making structure**, with opportunity provided within the provisions to further tailor the SPC to reflect local decision making and governance preferences (i.e., an ‘**enhanced**’ **SPC and decision-making structure**). Key matters for consideration as part of the SPC structure are discussed below.

Principles

The following principles are proposed to help guide decision-making on the above key matters and other considerations. As detailed below, these have been used by the cross-region Project Control Group (PCG) to evaluate the ‘statutory minimum’ SPC and decision-making structure and identify how this might be enhanced through consideration of the above key SPC matters and other considerations:

1. **Representative Regional, Sub-regional and Local Perspectives** – Regional, sub-regional and local perspectives are appropriately represented and considered in all deliberations and decisions.
2. **Tāngata whenua representation** - Ensure the governance arrangement provides for tāngata whenua representation, so that Māori interests, perspectives, and responsibilities are meaningfully reflected in decision-making
3. **Collaborative** - Set up to share knowledge and expertise and constructively address issues early to achieve outcomes
4. **Simple, practical, effective and efficient** - Have as few governance layers as possible, with a clear purpose and delegations, supporting timely decision-making at the lowest level possible and minimising bureaucracy
5. **Capability** - Ensure the governance arrangement has access to the resources needed to discharge its role effectively, e.g., Independent Chair and specialist advisors to support evidence based and expert informed approach
6. **Future-proofed / adaptable** - Able to evolve in response to legislative change, project phases, and changing partner or stakeholder needs
7. **Legally recognised** - A SPC that meets statutory requirements and observes tikanga and principles of Te Tiriti

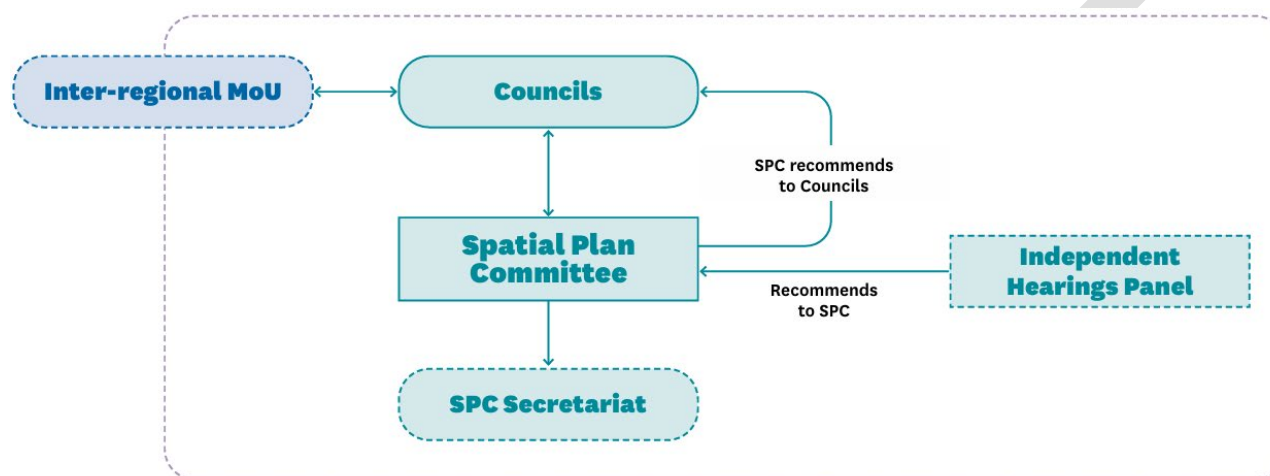
Council role in decision-making and sub-regional committees

As outlined in the assumptions, the existing sub-regional spatial planning arrangements are expected to be retained in some form, however they will be reviewed following enactment (Terms of Reference, structure and/or membership). Consistent with work undertaken to date, much of the preparation of the RSP is expected to occur at the sub-regional level through these committees, which include elected member and tāngata whenua and/or elected Māori representation to some extent depending on the sub-region.

Section 9 below also outlines the decision-making responsibilities of individual local authorities. This provides opportunities for local authority input and direction at key stages of RSP development. Together, the roles of local authorities and sub-regional committees provide a layered governance approach. This ensures local and sub-regional perspectives are considered alongside the regional and statutory roles of the SPC, providing important context for determining the SPC’s structure and representation in accordance with the principles outlined above.

Evaluation of the Statutory Minimum SPC and decision-making structure

The structure below is based on using Planning Bill minimum requirements only, for an SPC.



Decision making flow shown here is for the report back from the Independent Hearings Panel.

A more complete overview of decision-making flow for key milestone decisions is shown in section 9.

Key features of this statutory minimum are:

- Meets Bill requirements for an SPC
- Provides for 1 x Ministerial appointment (CI72(1)) with discretion for more (if requested)
- No provision for tāngata whenua or Treaty partner representatives in the SPC
- Existing sub-regional joint committees' roles and relationships would be directly to their Councils, not to SPC
- Council, refers to the decision-making processes of each council, this could be direct to council or through a committee
- Optional Independent Chair at discretion of the SPC
- Decision making relationships are limited to the Planning Bill requirements, i.e., for the BOP no reference to Joint Committees.

The number of SPC members would be dependent on representation per local authority. Based on 1 representative per local authority this is approximately 9; Based on 2 representatives per local authority this is approximately 15. Assumes no Independent Chair and no additional ministerial appointments.

A traffic light system was used to evaluate options against these principles. The evaluation results have been moderated by the cross-region Project Control Group (PCG) to ensure consensus on advice. The assessment options used, were as follows:

Green = Strong alignment with the principle and appropriate in the context of the BOP region based on the proposed new planning system legislation.

Orange = Moderate alignment with the principle but has trade-offs, risks, or gaps that would need to be managed in the context of the BOP region

Red = Inconsistent with the principle or introduces unacceptable trade-offs and risks that outweigh benefits.

An evaluation of the statutory minimum was undertaken and shows several important areas where enhancements would achieve better alignment with the guiding principles:

Principles used as criteria	Assessment of option	Considerations
Representative Regional, Sub-regional and Local Perspectives	Moderate alignment	Political accountability and visibility at the local district level as well as region-wide perspective. However, existing sub-regional joint committees' roles and relationships would be directly to their Councils, not to SPC. Enables same representatives on local, sub-regional and region-wide councils/committees for alignment and consistency.
Tāngata whenua representation	Inconsistent	Lack of Māori representation conflicts with treaty-based partnership principles does not reflect mana whenua relationships at the local government level in BOP.
Collaborative	Good alignment	Similar to familiar structures e.g., Regional Transport Committee and Emergency Management Joint Committee.
Simple, practical, effective and efficient	Good alignment	Simple structure leading to the establishment of potentially quick appointment processes within local authorities. Fewest members, so logistically easiest.

Capability	Moderate alignment	If there was only one representative per local authority may mean there is a lack of broad expertise.
Future-proofed / adaptable	Good alignment	Maintaining a watching brief on emerging legislation and head start proposals, can ensure the structure is future proofed.
Legally recognised	Aligned	Meets statutory minimum with local authorities represented.

8.1 Key considerations for enhancing the SPC and decision-making structure

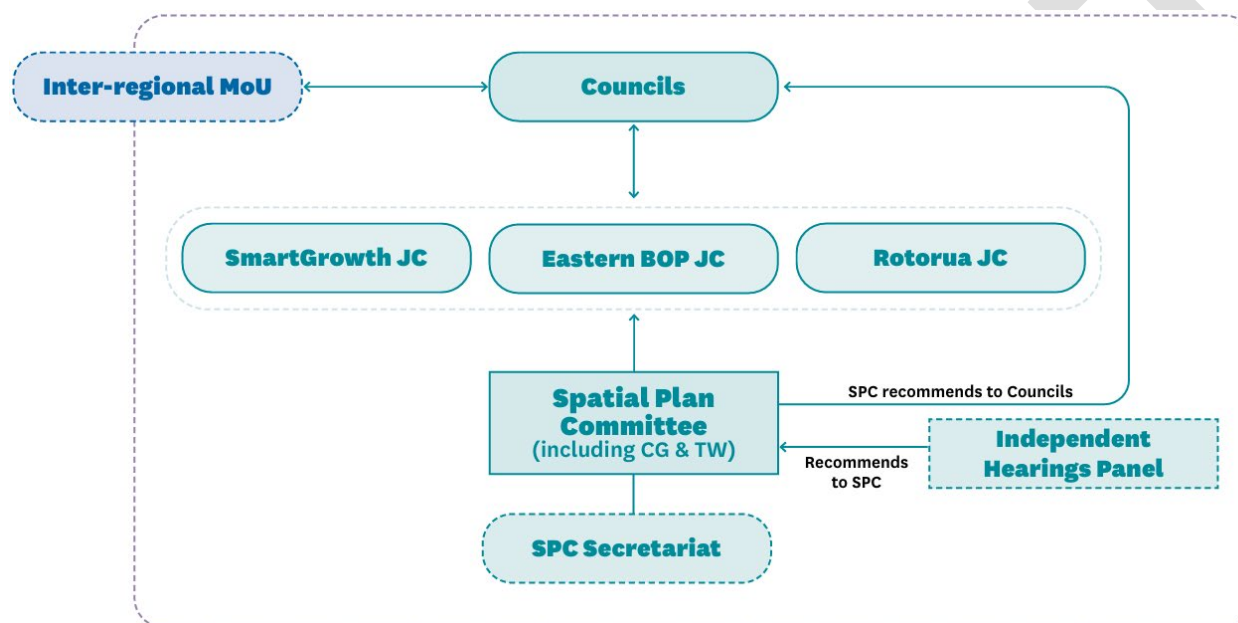
Having regard to the above, there are three key matters for consideration that will assist to respond to the above evaluation and shape the SPC and decision-making structure:

Key matter for consideration	Considerations
The most appropriate way to provide for tāngata whenua representation.	- Input is required from tāngata whenua representatives to advance this consideration. Further engagement is under way in this regard. - To date, and consistent with approaches on similar processes, it is understood that tāngata whenua interests are best provided for when representation is provided for at all levels of governance and project inputs. Representation within the SPC would: - Better reflect Treaty partnership principles and the intent of the Planning Bill - Bring mātauranga Māori and local cultural knowledge into strategic decision making from the outset - Help identify issues and opportunities earlier - Align governance with existing collaborative planning approaches used across the Bay of Plenty.
Providing for sub-regional working arrangements in the structure.	The existing sub-regional spatial planning arrangements are expected to be retained in some form. Consistent with work undertaken to date, much of the preparation of the RSP is expected to occur at the sub-

	regional level through these committees and associated structures, which include elected member and tāngata whenua and/or elected Māori representation to some extent depending on the sub-region. • Providing a sub-regional level provides for stronger connections or delegations to sub-regional Joint Committees via SPC Terms of Reference (ToR), hence any changes at this level will influence options for scale of the SPC. • Terms of Reference for existing Joint Committees (e.g., Sub-regional Joint Committees and the Regional Transport Committee) may need to be reviewed to reflect roles and responsibilities of the new SPC and the legal weight of the RSP across the planning system to provide clarity. Providing for sub-regional working arrangements in the structure: • Builds on well-established structures, relationships and governance arrangements already operating across the region • Reflects the sub-regional nature of matters to be addressed • Allows issues to be resolved closer to where they arise before escalation to the SPC • Makes better use of existing technical work, institutional knowledge and local relationships • Maintains local ownership while supporting regional consistency • Allows detailed place-based planning while the SPC focuses on regional strategic issues.
Whether one or two representatives for each local authority are provided on the SPC (and assume named stand-in).	• Consideration needs to be given to maintaining a SPC that is simple, practical, effective and efficient, while being appropriately representative. • Section 9 below also outlines the decision-making responsibilities of individual local authorities. This provides opportunities for local authority input and direction at key stages of RSP development. Together, the roles of local authorities and sub-regional committees provide a layered governance approach. This ensures local and sub-regional perspectives are considered alongside the regional and statutory roles of the SPC, providing important context for determining the SPC's structure and representation in accordance with the principles outlined above. • Advantages of one representative include: a potentially smaller and more efficient committee, streamlined decision-making, lower governance costs, and a stronger regional focus. • Advantages of two representatives include: potentially broader representation and expertise, improved continuity and resilience.

8.2 Possible enhanced SPC and decision-making structure, based on key considerations

Having regard to the above considerations, the following structure reflects an ‘**enhanced**’ **SPC and decision-making structure**, building from existing spatial plan decision-making arrangements across the BOP region and reflects the intent of the proposed planning system that Māori need to be involved at the strategic plan-making stage:



Decision making flow shown here is for the report back from the IHP.

A more complete overview of decision-making flow for key milestone decisions is shown in section 9

Key features of the above structure include:

- Provides for existing sub-regional joint committees
- Provision for Māori representation (requires work with iwi to create the preferred option)
- Provides for 1 x Ministerial appointment (CI72(1)) with discretion for more (if requested)
- Council, refers to the decision-making processes of each council, this could be direct to council or through a committee

The number of SPC members would be dependent on representation per local authority plus provision for a named alternate (ensures quorum can be met). Based on 1 representative per local authority this is approximately 12-14; Based on 2 representatives per local authority this is approximately 18-20.

An evaluation of this structure was undertaken and shows better alignment with the principles outlined above:

Principles used as criteria	Assessment of option:	Considerations:
Representative Regional, Sub-regional and Local Perspectives	Good alignment	The sub-regional level provides for stronger connections or delegations to sub-regional Joint Committees via SPC Terms of Reference (ToR), hence any changes at this level will influence options for scale of the SPC.
Tāngata whenua representation	Moderate alignment	Provides for Māori representation, however, may still be compromised rather than reflecting a true partnership balance with local government, in order to achieve a workable membership
Collaborative	Good alignment	Enhances collaboration, through increased diversity of views and perspectives resulting from a greater number of members.
Simple, practical, effective and efficient	Moderate alignment	May delay SPC appointments if longer appointment lead in times required, particularly for iwi authorities that may be seeking Treaty Settlement equivalency. A larger committee may reduce efficiencies and effectiveness.
Capability	Good alignment	Potential for a broad knowledge base with increased membership. Certainty of te ao Māori expertise
Future-proofed / adaptable	Good alignment	Maintaining a watching brief on emerging legislation and Government decisions on any relevant Head Start proposals can ensure structure is future proofed.

Legally recognised	Good alignment	Meets statutory minimum and legally recognised. Note that appointed Māori representatives on the SPC are anticipated to be able to have voting rights as members of a statutory committee under the Planning Act (not LGA) subject to the ToR for the SPC.
--------------------	----------------	--

8.1 Further Considerations

Overall consideration needs to be given to what governance arrangements best support regional needs, capability, implementation and enduring partnerships. Other potential optional members may be appointed or co-opted to enhance capacity and capability of the SPC. The following table provides an overview of some of these. It is proposed that these matters are considered further in the report to Councils to support the finalisation of the Process Agreement and SPC.

Additional considerations	Rationale
More than 1-2 members per local authority	The current options assume 1-2 members are appointed from each local authority. This is to provide balanced membership while managing the size of the SPC. It also reflects that much of the direction will be provided at the sub-regional level where each local authority has more membership. Additional members from local authorities will make the SPC a large committee, and potentially require consideration of increased membership from others, including tāngata whenua.
Independent Chair for the SPC	The chairing of the SPC will be complex due to regional scale, scope of responsibilities, and that it is a new Committee under new legislation delivering an RSP under a tight transition timeline. Therefore, consideration of an Independent Chair is suggested. Consideration should be given to including provision for an Independent Chair in the Draft ToR for the SPC to consider once it is established.
Māori representation options	Tāngata whenua and/or iwi authority (PSGE) representatives appointed to the SPC enables Māori participation and representation grounded in treaty-based partnership principles. Further to discussion above, and with direction from tāngata whenua, consideration should be given to shared decision-making models, such as equal representation between Māori and local government. Regardless of which option is selected, it

	requires robust and transparent nomination processes to ensure representation is credible, well-mandated, and reflective of those it serves. Appropriate representation for tāngata whenua for the offshore islands will be considered by MCERT.
Māori Advisory Group or sub-committee to the SPC.	Establishing a Māori advisory group or iwi forum to provide tikanga, mātauranga Māori, and strategic guidance. Design options could include a standing advisory group with formal rights to input into decision-making, alongside issue-specific advisory panels, covering areas such as taiao, housing, and infrastructure.
Additional voting and non-voting members may be co-opted from time to time to support the SPC, throughout the RSP preparation process through to adoption of a coordination plan, to provide expertise at critical points, such as confirming matters of strategic importance to the region, or developing the scenarios and options assessment report. Selection and appointment of other members beyond elected members, tāngata whenua and Ministerial appointment/s would likely need to be coordinated by the secretariat at the direction of the SPC.	To ensure that expertise exists to support complex decision-making. For example, the BOP Regional Transport Committee non-voting advisors currently include: NZ Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi), KiwiRail, Freight advisor, Road Safety Advisor, Environmental Sustainability Advisor, Port Advisor and the NZ AA. In the context of the RSP, a broader range of expertise may be relevant at different project stages, and non-voting technical advisors would most likely sit separately to the appointed voting representatives and seen as advisors (alongside council officers) rather than governance representatives.
Additional Ministerial representatives than the default option of one member appointed by the Minister at the time of SPC establishment is an option if the local authorities of the region agree.	The Mayoral Forum, and/or the SPC itself once established, to consider whether to advocate for additional representatives of Central Government and agencies that are responsible for delivery and oversight.

9 Decision making overview

The following table provides an overview of the proposed approach to decision making for key milestones in the development of the RSP for the committees and local authorities. The approach to each stage would depend upon the selected structural governance option for the SPC and sub-regional joint committees.

Step (Decision/Direction required)	Role of SPC	Role of sub-regional Joint Committees x 3	Role of Local Authorities x 8
1. Approve Process Agreement	N/A	Potential to recommend draft Process Agreement to respective partner councils	Provide input on draft options during pre-enactment phase. Approve Process Agreement
2. Approve ToR for SPC for BOP	Receive Process Agreement at first meeting Prepare draft budget, appoint Chair and Secretariat, draft funding split	Provide input on Draft SPC ToR Review the ToRs of Joint Committees	Approve ToR for SPC Nominate and appoint members to SPC. Based on recommendations from SPC - approve draft budget for Secretariat and SPC to deliver RSP work programme, plus funding split
3. Approve RSP work programme	Approval of work programme and delegations to secretariat Approve Communications and Engagement Plan for RSP	Potential to review draft RSP work programme	Receive updates
4. Prepare and approve options assessment report	Prepare an options assessment report	Joint Committee workshops	Council involvement to be established and set out in the Process Agreement.
5. Approval to publicly notify Draft RSP and appoint and instruct IHP	Recommend draft RSP to local authorities for notification Approve Communications and Engagement Plan	Provide input on behalf of local authorities	Formal approval at Council meeting. The local authorities must jointly appoint IHP pursuant to Sch 4 CI 3.
6. Adopt Final RSP	Provide advice to the relevant local authorities on the IHPs recommendations	Recommendation to local authorities	Final Adoption.

The statutory decision-making responsibilities of individual councils are retained. As shown in the table above, councils will continue to make decisions on the process agreement, council plans, infrastructure investment priorities, annual plans, long-term plans and district or regional planning functions in accordance with legislation.

This decision flow diagram shows that the SPC's role is to coordinate development of the Regional Spatial Plan, while local authorities remain responsible for key statutory decisions under the Planning and Natural Environment Bills and for related funding and infrastructure decisions through their own governance processes.

There is a formal dispute resolution process to manage situations where agreement cannot be reached through process.

Note: other partners with appointed rep at SPC may have their own role and decision-making process at critical steps, i.e. tāngata whenua and Minister/s of the Crown.

10 Secretariat and Programme

Delivering a successful RSP will require collaboration, coordination and engagement across local government partners, adjacent councils, iwi and Māori, central government, infrastructure providers, key stakeholders, communities and others. The whole of region approach proposed is based on collaboration and shared capability rather than centralisation. There is an opportunity for the secretariat and programme to leverage existing capability across all councils rather than creating a standalone organisation.

The Planning Bill states that an SPC must appoint a secretariat in accordance with regulations, which are currently flexible. It is assumed that the secretariat will support the SPC as its delivery arm, through programme delivery oversight (e.g., ensuring that key milestones are met and expectations like the integration of existing spatial plans, identifying agreed regional priorities and strengthening investment alignment), reporting, coordination and administration. It is proposed to investigate secretariat and programme structure in tandem considering the following functions and where they sit:

- **Governance support**
 - Ensure coordination and support for decision making (meeting coordination, agenda and minute management etc).
- **Project management**
 - Develop a programme plan and coordinate key tasks and milestones are coordinated.
- **Engagement**
 - Ensure communication and engagement are consistent at all levels on purpose, programme and aligns provides all with opportunities to understand and engage with regional spatial planning.
- **Technical at regional, sub-regional and local levels**
 - Ensure technical inputs to RSP deliver evidence that supports decision making.

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 24 July 2026
To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 4 August 2026
From : Chief Executive Officer, Stace Lower
Subject : **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UPDATE**
File ID : A1407044

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report provides an update to Council on LGOIMA requests and meetings/events attended by the Chief Executive Officer for the period 30 May 2026 to 24 July 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) **That the report titled "Chief Executive Officer's Update" be received.**

PURPOSE

1. To provide an update to Council on LGOIMA requests and meetings/events attended by the Chief Executive Officer.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

2. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034:
 - ☒ Community Priority One: Strong relationships and partners
 - ☐ Community Priority Two: Investment in our district
 - ☐ Community Priority Three: Wellbeing is valued
 - ☐ Community Priority Four: Our communities are resilient
 - ☐ Community Priority Five: Growth is sustained over time

DISCUSSION

3. LGOIMA Requests

LGOIMA Tracking (30/07/2025-31/07/2026)

Month	Submitter	Subject	Due	Total Days Incomplete
January 2026	Stuff Media	Unpaid rates, cost of recovery, council dispute	25/02/2026	131
June 2026	Joy Gribben	Financial Data on Disaster Recovery and Resilience Activities	17/07/2026	29
July 2026	Garry Watson	Breach of the district plan	30/07/2026	20
	Richard Morris	Hukutaia Growth Area project information	04/08/2026	17
	Damien Puddle	Playground Surfacing Data	10/08/2026	13
	2026-07-13 - Warrick McDonald	LIM comment concerning access to properties at Whanarua Bay	10/08/2026	13

4. Meetings / Events Attended by the Chief Executive Officer – 30 May 2026 –24 July 2026:

2 June 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty Joint Committee meeting, Whakatāne

3 June 2026

Water New Zealand, Water CE Forum: IBU Sub-Committee Meeting, via Teams

5 June 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty Mayors and CEs meeting re Head Start proposal, via Teams

CEs' meeting re Water Services, via Teams

LGNZ briefing: Simpson Grierson re Head Start Proposal, via Zoom

Met with Andrew Moraes, CE Rotorua Lakes Council, via Teams

8 June 2026

Councillor/CEO catch up meeting

WorkWell meeting

9 June 2026

Ordinary Council meeting

Simplifying Local Government and Local Water Done Well discussion with Te Whānau a Apanui

10 June 2026

Te Tāwharau o Te Whakatōhea Kaitiaki Forum meeting, via Teams
Met with Opotiki College Student Leadership team

11 June 2026

Rotorua

Bay of Plenty Regional Council presentation – Head Start proposal
Bay of Plenty Mayoral Forum meeting

12 June 2026

Bay of Plenty CEs meeting, Rotorua

15 June 2026

Council workshop

17 June 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs – meeting with Warren Ulusele, Director; Local Government, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington

18 June 2026

Wellington

Taituara CE Forum

Taituara Excellence Awards

19 June 2026

LGNZ briefing: Department of Internal Affairs on Head Start Guidance
CEs' meeting re Water Services, via Teams

23 June 2026

Water Services Working Group meeting
LGNZ briefing: the Minister of Local Government, via Zoom

24 June 2026

Councillor/CEO catch up meeting

25 June 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs catch up meeting, via Teams

Tenders and Procurement Sub-Committee meeting

26 June 2026

LGNZ briefing: National Council, via Zoom

Tauranga

BOPLASS Board meeting

Bay of Plenty CEs meeting

29 June 2026

Extra Ordinary Council meeting

Risk and Assurance Committee meeting

30 June 2026

Coast Community Board meeting

Ōpōtiki Harbour Management Committee meeting

1 July 2026

Update to Council – Ezra Schuster, Regional Public Service Commission

Eastern Bay of Plenty elected members and CEs meeting, Whakatāne

2 July 2026

Simplifying Local Government and Local Water Done Well discussion with Ngai Tai Chair, Anaru Vercoe, via Teams

Head Start Working Group update meeting, Whakatāne

6 July 2026

Performance and Delivery Committee meeting

7 July 2026

Ōpōtiki Rising Business Breakfast

Met with Emergency Management Bay of Plenty Regional Manager, Jono Gracie

Simplifying Local Government and Local Water Done Well discussion with Te Tāwharau o Te Whakatōhea CEO, Dickie Farrar

8 July 2026

Councillor/CEO catch up meeting

Council workshop

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs catch up meeting, via Teams

9 July 2026

LGNZ briefing: Lessons from UK Local Government Amalgamation, via Zoom

Attended "Townie Coffee"

Head Start Working Group update meeting, Whakatāne

13 July 2026

Met with Simon Appleton, Eastern Bridge Ltd

14 July 2026

Ōpōtiki Rising – Visitor Economy and Business Outlook Forum

15 July 2026

Simplifying Local Government – Update to Councillors

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs catch up meeting, via Teams

17 July 2026

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs catch up meeting, via Teams

21 July 2026

Water Services Group meeting, Kawerau

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs catch up meeting, via Teams

22 July 2026

Community Engagement event, Te Kaha

RMA Reform: Transitional Provisions presentation by Cooney Lees Morgan

Eastern Bay of Plenty CEs catch up meeting

Eastern Bay Chamber of Commerce Business After 5 event (Ōpōtiki)

24 July 2026

Bay of Plenty Mayors and CEs meeting, Tauranga

Financial/budget considerations

5. There are no financial/budget considerations associated with this report.

Risks

6. There are no risks associated with this report.

Community wellbeing considerations

7. The purpose of Local Government now includes promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future ('the 4 wellbeings').
8. The subject matter of this report has been evaluated in terms of the 4 wellbeings during the process of developing this report.
9. There are no known social, economic, environmental, or cultural considerations associated with this matter.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of significance

10. On every issue requiring a decision, Council is required to determine how significant a decision is to the community, and what the corresponding level of engagement should be. Council uses the Significance Flowchart in the Significance and Engagement Policy to determine the level of significance.
11. The level of significance related to the decision in this report is considered to be **low**. Because the decision is determined to have **low** significance in accordance with the policy, the corresponding level of engagement required is **Inform**.

Assessment of engagement

12. As the level of significance has been determined to be **low**, the level of engagement required is **Inform** according to the Engagement Framework of the Significance and Engagement Policy:

INFORM

To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen.

13. The tools that Council will use for the 'Inform' level of engagement include a report in the public

agenda of the Council meeting and may include a combination of public notices in the newspaper and/or on Council's social media.

Stace Lower

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

REPORT

Date : 24 July 2026

To : Ordinary Council Meeting, 4 August 2026

From : Chief Executive Officer, Stace Lower

Subject : **RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**

SECTION 48 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INFORMATION & MEETINGS ACT 1987

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- 15. Confirmation of In-Committee Minutes – Ordinary Council Meeting 9 June 2026.**
- 16. In-Committee Minutes – Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting 9 March 2026.**
- 17. Notes From Council Workshops.**

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

Item No	General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
15.	Confirmation of In-Committee Minutes – Ordinary Council Meeting 9 June 2026.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists.	Section 48(1)(a)
16.	In-Committee Minutes – Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting 9 March 2026.	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)
17.	Notes From Council Workshops	That the public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists	Section 48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act or section 6 or section 7 or section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may require, which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

15.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Protect information Protection from improper pressure or harassment Prevent disclosure or use of official information Carry out negotiations Maintain legal professional privilege Carry out commercial activities	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(b)(i) & (ii); (d) & (e) and Section 7(2)(c)(i) & (ii) Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Section 7(2)(j) Section 7(2)(i) Section 7(2)(g) Section 7(2)(h)
16.	Protect the privacy of natural persons Protect information (commercial sensitivity) Protection from improper pressure or harassment Prevent disclosure or use of official information Carry out commercial activities.	Section 7(2)(a) Section 7(2)(b)(ii) Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Section 7(2)(j) Section 7(2)(h)
17.	Protection from improper pressure or harassment Prevent disclosure or use of official information	Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Section 7(2)(j)