



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COUNCIL

Ngā Taipitopito Kaunihera

PRE-ELECTION REPORT 2025
Pūrongo i mua i ngā Pōtitanga

He kōrero mā ngā kaipōti me ngā kaitono pōti
Information for voters and potential candidates

STAND for
SOMETHING

TŪ TŪTURU

Whakatāne District
Elections 2025

 **WHAKATĀNE**
District Council
Kia Whakatāne au i ahau

whakatane.govt.nz/standforsomething



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Mō tēnei pūrongo

Local elections are your opportunity to help shape the future of our district.

This October, you'll get to vote for the Mayor and Councillors who best reflect your values and priorities for Whakatāne District. Your voice matters – whether you're voting or thinking about standing as a candidate.

The decisions made by the Council affect all of us — from community facilities and services to the environment, infrastructure, and how land is used.

This Pre-Election Report gives voters and potential candidates useful information about Whakatāne District Council ahead of the 2025 local elections.

It explains what the Council does, outlines some of the key challenges we face now and into the future, and includes details about our finances and major projects.

This report has been prepared by the Chief Executive under the Local Government Act 2002. It is politically neutral and was developed independently of the Mayor and Councillors.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

He kupu nā te Toihautū



Steven Perdia
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

E ngā hapori o te rohe nei, tēnā tātau.

If you're reading this report, you're likely considering standing for the Council. Thank you for taking the time to explore this important opportunity. Standing for the Council is a significant commitment, and the election process can be challenging. If you're successful, you'll be stepping into a complex and rewarding environment.

The Council delivers more than 30 services, serves a wide range of communities with diverse needs, and operates under nearly 100 different pieces of legislation controlling the activities. It's a big job, but one where you can make a real difference. If elected, we'll support you to settle into your role and help you become as effective as possible, as quickly as possible.

Alternatively, you may be a voter looking to better understand how the Council operates and what challenges lie ahead so you can make an informed decision at the ballot box.

This Pre-Election Report is a requirement placed on the Council Chief Executive under the Local Government Act 2002. The report outlines the Council's financial position, highlights key projects, and provides context for the decisions and issues that the next the Council will likely face.

This report includes the Council's Funding Impact Statements from each of the last three Annual Reports, a summary balance sheet, a review of the Council's performance against its financial strategy, and an overview of major projects - past, present and planned.

Much of this information is available in our Long Term Plan, Annual Plans, and Annual Reports, so it may feel familiar. In addition to the required content, I've also provided a summary of some of the key challenges currently facing the Council.

Thanks again for your interest in local democracy and in shaping the future of our district.

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, consisting of a large loop and a trailing flourish.

Ngā mihi,
Steven Perdia
Chief Executive, Whakatāne District Council

June 2025

HOW THE COUNCIL WORKS

Te mahi a te Kaunihera

Our Governance set-up

Te tātai Mana Whakahaere

Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor leads the Council in the development of Whakatāne District Council's plans, policies, and budgets.

The Council also includes 10 Councillors representing six wards across the district - three Māori Ward Councillors and seven General Ward Councillors, elected from three Māori Wards and three General Wards. Together, the Mayor and Councillors focus on big-picture decisions and strategic issues that affect the whole Whakatāne District.

In addition, we have 24 Community Board members across four boards, who focus on the local issues and priorities within their own communities.



The Council roles up for election

- **Mayor (1)**

All eligible voters within the district can vote for a Mayor.

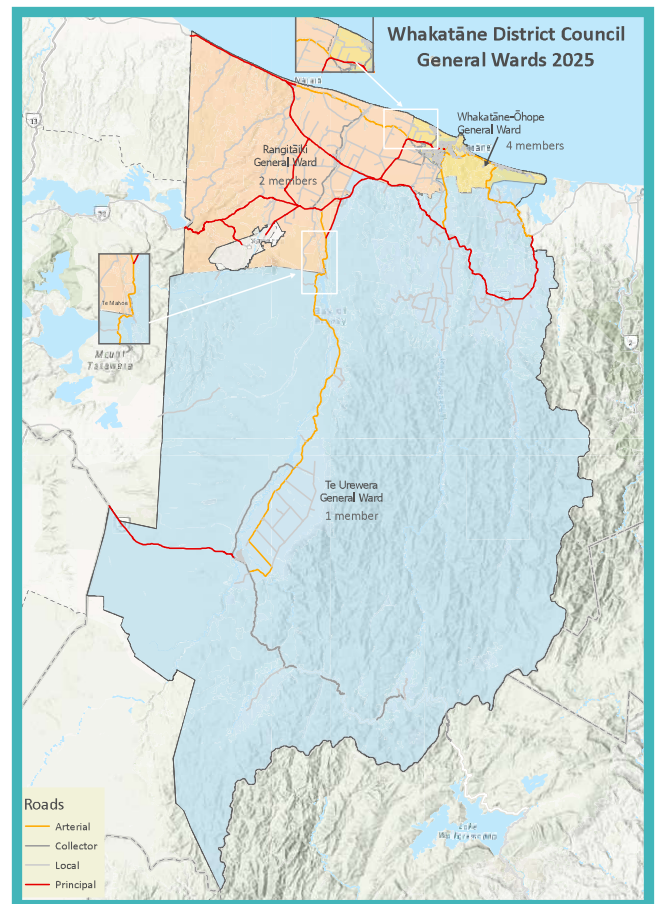
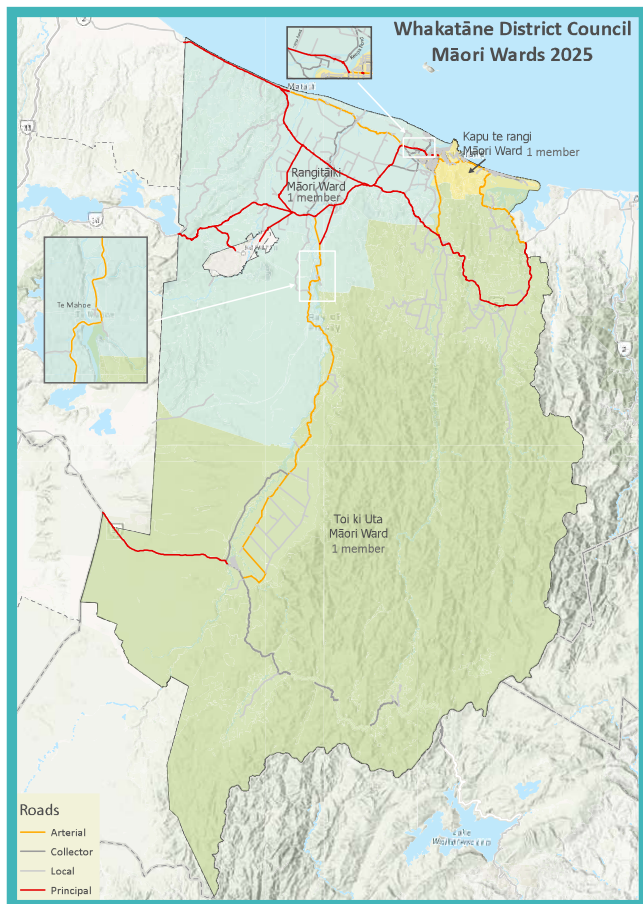
- **Councillors (10)**

General Wards

- Rangitāiki General Ward (2)
- Whakatāne-Ōhope General Ward (4)
- Te Urewera General Ward (1)

Māori Wards

- Rangitāiki Māori Ward (1)
- Kāpū-te-rangi Māori Ward (1)
- Toi ki Uta Māori Ward (1)



Māori Wards

Ngā Takiwā Māori

Māori Wards were introduced to provide stronger voice for Māori, assurance that issues of priority to Māori are brought to the Council, and to promote confidence in local government decision-making processes, particularly where there are implications for Māori.

In mid-August 2024, Whakatāne District Council unanimously decided to retain Māori Wards for the 2025 triennial elections. This year voters on the Māori Role can vote for Māori Ward candidates and all voters can have their say in a binding poll on whether to keep or remove Māori Wards for the Whakatāne District. The result will apply to the 2028 and 2031 local elections. For more on the Māori Wards referendum see page 20.

Community Boards

Our Community Boards are Murupara, Rangitāiki, Tāneatua and Whakatāne-Ōhope.

Each Board has six elected members - in addition to 6 elected members to each board, they also have two appointed (one alternative) District Councillors.

Community Boards play an important role in representing local interests. They connect with residents, community organisations, and special interest groups, and advocate to the Council on their behalf. Boards also manage local funding for specific projects in their communities.

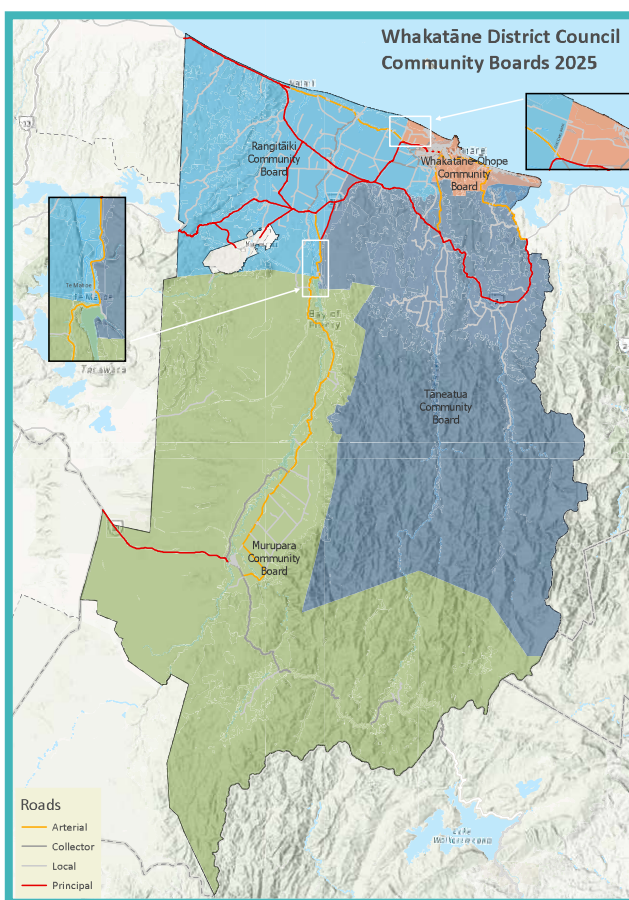
Community Board roles up for election

Community Board Members (24)

- Rangitāiki Community Board (6)
- Whakatāne-Ōhope Community Board (6)
- Tāneatua Community Board (6)
- Murupara Community Board (6)

Made up of:

- » Galatea-Waiōhau Subdivision (2)
- » Murupara Subdivision (3)
- » Te Urewera Subdivision (1)



Chief Executive and staff

The Chief Executive leads the Council's operations and the delivery of services in line with the direction set by the Mayor and Councillors. They are also responsible for all staff employed by the Whakatāne District Council.

To support effective service delivery, the organisation is structured around six portfolios:

- *Strategic Māori Partnerships* – strengthening partnerships and outcomes with Māori
- *People & Partnerships* – leading communications, digital services, people & capability, health & safety and community partnerships
- *Planning, Regulatory & Infrastructure* – managing land use planning, consents, compliance and core infrastructure
- *Community Experience* – delivering libraries, arts and heritage facilities, aquatic centres, parks and reserves, and cemetery and crematorium services
- *Finance & Commercial Services* – overseeing budgets, finance, procurement and business services
- *Strategy & Growth* – leading long-term planning, tourism & events, economic development and sustainability initiatives

OUR DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

He kōrewaha ki te rohe nei

THE POPULATION

 **37,149** 

Total estimated population (2023)



Total estimated population by 2053

 **46,020** 

51% **49%**
FEMALE MALE
AS AT JUNE 2024

EIGHT IWI

in the Whakatāne District

Ngāti Awa

Ngāti Mākinō

Ngāti Manawa

Ngāti Rangitihi

Ngāi Tūhoe

Ngāti Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau

Te Whakatōhea

Ngāti Whare

72 **81**
MARAE HAPŪ

RESIDENCY DURATION

18%

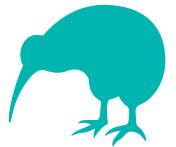
Have lived in the district
less than five years

82%

Have lived in the district
for more than five years

AS AT MARCH 2018

**KIWI
CAPITAL
OF THE WORLD**



WE'RE DIVERSE

People in the district identify themselves as*

62.3% EUROPEAN (23,145)

48.6% MĀORI (18,054)

3.85% PACIFIC PEOPLES (1,431)

4.28% ASIAN (1,590)

1.04% OTHER ETHNICITY (384)

**0.48% MIDDLE EASTERN,
LATIN AMERICAN, AFRICAN (180)**



ŌHOPE BEACH
TWICE VOTED NZ'S FAVOURITE BEACH

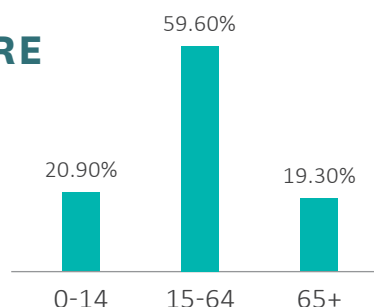
DISTRICT AREA

433,000HA

AGE STRUCTURE

MEDIAN AGE

40.2
YEARS OLD



2,332

AVERAGE ANNUAL
SUNSHINE HOURS

* 2022 PREVIOUS DATA



YOUR COUNCIL, YOUR COMMUNITY

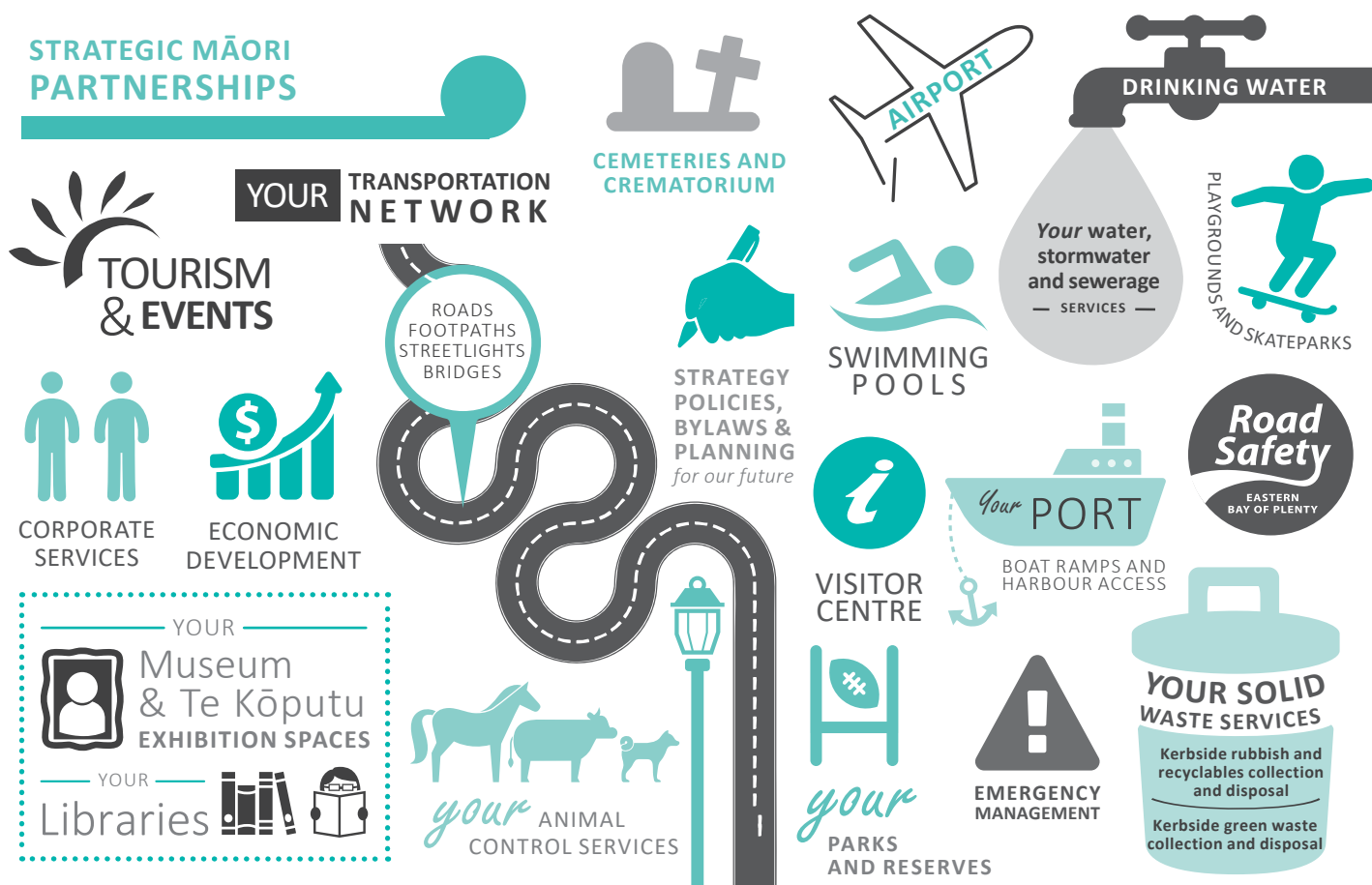
Tō Kaunihera, tō Hapori

The Council plays a vital role in supporting our everyday lives by providing and maintaining the spaces and services we all use.

The Council delivers more than 30 different services and manages around \$1.4 billion in community assets. These services include things like roads, drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater systems, rubbish and recycling, libraries, parks, aquatic centres, community halls, dog registration, events, and district planning.

Our groups of activities:

- Democracy
- Arts and Culture
- District Partnerships
- Aquatic Centres
- Events and Tourism
- Economic Development
- Climate Change and Resilience
- Stormwater
- Wastewater
- Water Supply
- Ports and Harbours
- Parks and Reserves
- Riverside Whakatāne Holiday Park
- Transport Connections
- Building and Resource Management
- Waste Management
- Community Regulation
- Community Facilities
- Corporate Services



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STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Three vertical white lines of varying lengths, positioned to the left of the text.

Ahunga Rautaki



THE COUNCIL'S VISION AND COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Tō mātau matakitenga me ngā hua hāpori

The Council's vision in the Long Term Plan of 'More life in life' is about helping our communities to flourish, fulfil their potential and live life to its fullest. It reflects our commitment to making the Whakatāne District an outstanding place to live, work, play, raise a family, and do business.

More life in life

Working together to make living better for our communities, now and in the future



About the Long Term Plan

The Long Term Plan is the Council's primary strategic document. It sets out what we plan to do over the next 10 years, why we're doing it, how much it will cost, and how it will be funded. It's a roadmap that outlines our vision, priorities, and the work programme that will guide the Council's decisions and investment over the coming decade.

The Long Term Plan plays a vital role in shaping the Whakatāne District's future. It explains how the Council will support environmental, social, cultural, and economic wellbeing, and how we'll measure progress.

Long Term Plans are required by law and updated every three years to reflect changing community needs, challenges, and opportunities. Each update includes a formal consultation process, giving the community a chance to have their say and help shape the plan.

This document refers to the Whakatāne District Council Long Term Plan 2024–34 and was adopted by Council on 5 August 2024, following consideration of public submissions and feedback.

THE COUNCIL'S FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Ngā take matua e rima

These five priorities highlight the key areas we need to focus on most to help bring our 'More life in life' vision to life. They guide our decisions and actions to create a thriving, resilient, and connected district.



Shaping a green district
Kia toitū te rohe



Facilitating economic regeneration and responding to development pressures
Me mātua whakahaere i te tipuranga o te taiōhanga me ngā tonotono whare



Building climate change and natural hazard resilience, including our infrastructure
Me mātua whakakaha i te aumangea ki te huringa āhuarangi me ngā tūraru matepā taiao tae ana ki te hangaroto



Strengthening relationships with iwi, hapū and whānau
Me mātua whakawhanake i ngā kōtuituinga ā-iwi, ā-hapū, ā-whānau anō hoki



Enhancing the safety, wellbeing and vibrancy of communities
Me mātua whakanui i te marutau, te oranga, me te wana o ngā hapori

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KEY CHALLENGES

Ngā wero matua



ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

Te Horanuku Ōhanga

The economic picture

In 2024, New Zealand's economy grew slowly, with GDP (Gross Domestic Product) increasing by just under 1%. This modest growth reflects the ongoing impact of tight financial conditions, like high interest rates and inflation.

GDP is an important measure because it influences employment and income. When the economy grows, it usually means more jobs and better wages. In the Whakatāne District, sectors like tourism (hospitality, retail, events, and recreation), agriculture, horticulture, and commercial services all depend on a strong economy.

At the moment, unemployment is sitting at the highest level we've seen in 10 years, but we expect things to improve as inflation and interest rates begin to ease. Like many councils across Aotearoa New Zealand, Whakatāne District Council is facing ongoing financial pressures. While the economy is slowly starting to recover after a period of high inflation and interest rates, the impacts are still being felt. Most councils have had to increase rates between 10-20% just to keep up with rising costs while delivering the same services.

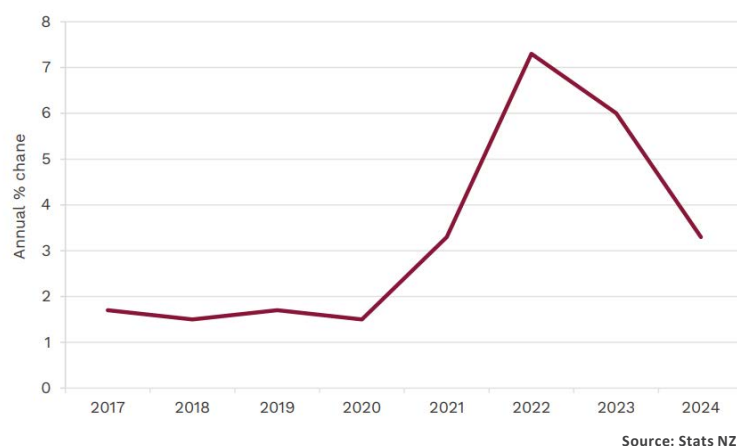
Unlike household inflation (measured by the Consumer Price Index or CPI), councils are more affected by infrastructure inflation, which is usually higher. That's because most of what we do, like roads, water systems, and community facilities, involve materials and services that are heavily impacted by rising construction and maintenance costs.

How does the economy affect the Council?

- Economic growth (GDP) affects the prices of goods and services and interest rates on debt.
- GDP influences jobs, income, and affordability.
- Key local sectors like tourism, agriculture, and services are all impacted by changes in GDP.

What's happening with inflation?

Figure 1. Annual inflation rate, June years (%)



- Inflation has eased to around 4%, down from a peak of 7.3% in mid-2022.
- This drop is due to more stable global supply chains, falling fuel and food prices, and the Reserve Bank's efforts to reduce spending by keeping the Official Cash Rate (OCR) high.
- As of May 2025, the OCR sits at 3.25%, but it's expected to fall further. Lower interest rates help reduce the cost of the Council's debt repayments, just like mortgage interest for households.

Unemployment

New Zealand vs. Whakatāne District

The unemployment rate measures the proportion of the workforce that is not in employment. It is measured as an average over the four quarters of each year.

Data for Whakatāne District, 2024

The annual average unemployment rate in Whakatāne District was 6.8% in the year to March 2024, up from 5.4% in the previous 12 months. In the year to March 2024, the annual average unemployment rate in Whakatāne District was higher than in New Zealand (4.0%). The unemployment rate in Whakatāne District reached a peak of 10.6% in the year to March 2002 and a low of 4.7% in the year to March 2008.

What this means for the Council

While things are slowly improving since COVID-19 and we are seeing early signs of recovery, uncertainty remains high, especially due to global economic risks. That's why the Council is taking a careful and balanced approach to its work.

We're still investing in the facilities and services our community needs, but we're doing it prudently, keeping an eye on affordability and focusing on what matters most as we recover from this challenging period.

As inflation stabilises and interest rates return to pre-Covid levels we expect unemployment to reduce and employment in our core sectors of agriculture, horticulture, tourism and forestry to improve.

Unemployment rate

% of workforce unemployed, March years



Unemployment rate, 2024

% of workforce unemployed, year to March 2024



OPERATING DEFICIT AND RATES

Te Tarepa Mahi me ngā Tāke Kaunihera

Like many councils across Aotearoa New Zealand, we are addressing an operating deficit. This means our annual costs are higher than our income from rates, fees and other sources. This financial challenge occurred for the right reasons at the time. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council chose to delay rates increases to ease pressure on households. Those deferred increases now need to be gradually made up. On top of that, unexpected inflation and interest rates - much higher than anyone predicted - added more cost pressure to the Council's finances accelerating the operating deficit.

What are we doing about it?

Through our Long Term Plan, we've developed a six-year strategy to return to a balanced budget by 2030. This includes:

- Structured rates increases, averaging around 4% each year, to ensure we're collecting enough revenue to cover the cost of services.
- Applying savings directly to reduce the operating deficit and minimise the need for future rates increases (refer to below table).

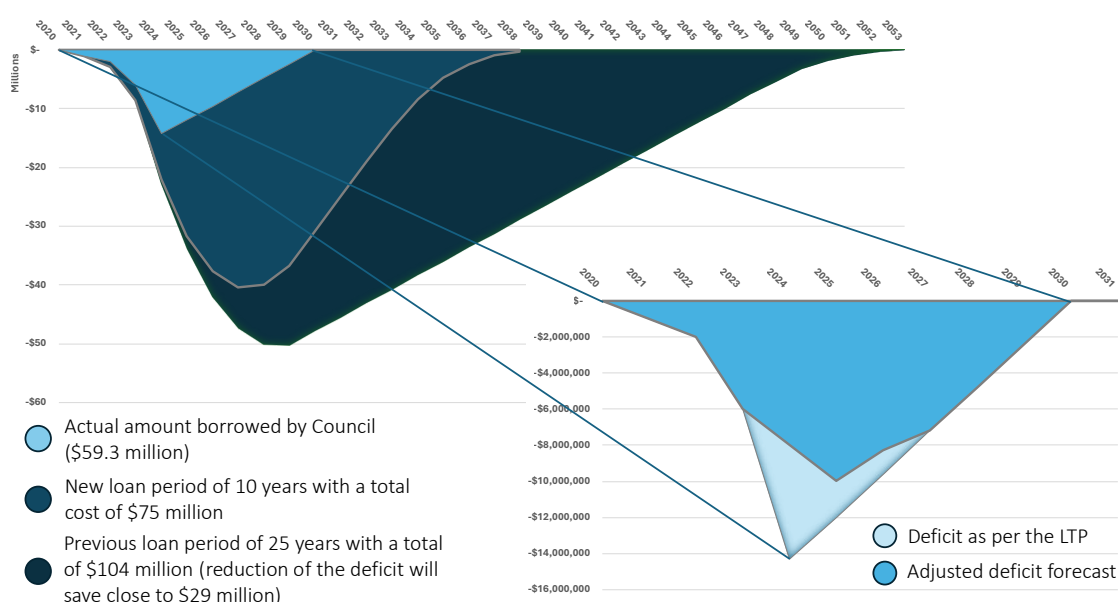
For example, in this year's Annual Plan, we identified around 2.2% in operational savings. We planned to use part of this to reduce the forecast rates increase from 12.7% to 11.7%, and the rest went toward reducing the deficit.

Are we closing the gap?

We originally planned to pay off the deficit over the next 25 years. With changes to the Annual Plan, we can do it in 10 years, saving around \$24 million in interest. We've also reduced the amount we need to borrow – the 'Fund the Gap' loans are now almost \$10 million lower than expected.

The 'Fund the Gap' loan totals \$59.3 million, which includes the \$50 million set out on the Long Term Plan. Repayment costs over 25 years at an interest rate of 5% would be \$104 million. Shortening this term to 10 years reduces the total cost of the loan to \$75 million, saving around \$29 million in interest payments.

Savings made on reducing total lending term



Our Plan (2024–2030)

Goal:

Return to a balanced budget
in six years

2025/26

Average rates increase 11.7%

Reduced from 12.7% thanks to savings

Where do the savings come from?

- Inflation and interest rates dropped
- We’ve paused hiring some new roles
- Some transport projects are on hold – a big chunk of our transport budget was going to be funded by subsidies from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi. In October 2024, central government withdrew this funding. Without that support, some projects in our 2024-27 plan aren’t currently affordable.

What do these savings mean for us?

- Rates rise is less than expected
- Services stay the same
- We’ll pay the debt faster – helping future ratepayers too

2027/34

Average rate increases: as per the Long Term Plan

What does this mean for rates?

The last Long Term Plan included some of the highest rates increases in decades, which was a common story across New Zealand. The first three years of the plan includes rates increases over 9%, followed by smaller increases the next four years of between 4 - 7% before dropping back down to pre-COVID levels.

We know these increases are tough, especially in a district like Whakatāne, where many households face financial hardship. That’s why we’re focussed on delivering services as efficiently as possible while actively looking for savings wherever we can.

The average rate increase

Year	Weekly \$ Increase	% Increase (Net of Growth)
2025	\$12.30	15.0%
2026	\$11.42	11.7%
2027	\$9.92	9.4%
2028	\$7.07	6.0%
2029	\$7.81	6.0%
2030	\$9.06	6.9%
2031	\$5.99	4.3%
2032	\$5.33	3.7%
2033	\$3.54	3.7%
2034	\$2.83	1.8%

** GST Inclusive - The Council's average total rating income increase percentage considers overall revenue including additional rates from new properties (growth), while the average (net of growth) is the average increase year on year for existing rateable properties across all the properties in the district that existed last year.*

Are services being cut?

The Council has explored the option of reducing services to cut costs, but this is a complex and challenging conversation. Many of the services we provide, like parks, libraries, community halls and waste collection, are important to the people and groups who use them.

NAVIGATING GOVERNMENT REFORM

Te whakaterenga whakahou a te Kāwanatanga

Central government is currently working through a wide range of reforms that will impact how councils across New Zealand operate. These changes are happening quickly and often require local councils, like ours, to take on new work without additional funding and to advocate strongly to ensure the best outcomes for our communities.

Successive central governments continue to explore future direction for the local government sector, however actual changes have tended to be incremental and focusing on specific responsibilities and functions. A broader review of the future of local government may be forthcoming in the near future acknowledging that numerous reforms underway (in particular three waters and RMA) will have a significant cumulative impact on the local government sector. As these reforms make progress it is expected that broader structural reform may need to be explored.

Over the next three years, we need to make some big decisions in response to these reforms. Some changes are already well underway, while others are still being developed and debated. These reforms are an opportunity for councils to adapt, evolve and improve how we serve our communities, making sure we're prepared for the future.

What reforms are happening?

- **Three Waters (drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater)**
The government's new 'Local Water Done Well' legislation requires every council to develop a Water Services Delivery Plan that outlines their future water services delivery approach and how the new water service entity will meet stricter quality, infrastructure and financial sustainability standards by 2028.
- **Resource Management Reform (RMA)**
The current RMA is being replaced, which will change how councils manage environmental planning and development rules.
- **Other reform areas**
These include transport, climate change, waste management, emergency management, local governance arrangements, and parliamentary terms, to name a few.

What's the Council's role in the next three years?

- Understand the changes and how they affect our district
- Speak up and advocate for what's best for our communities
- Prepare for and manage any new ways of working that result from the reforms

Let's take a closer look at some of the key reforms currently being worked on by central government

Māori Wards referendum

What are Māori Wards?

Māori Wards were introduced to Whakatāne District Council in 2022 to give Māori a stronger voice at the Council table. They help ensure that matters important to Māori are heard and considered, and they aim to build confidence in local decision-making - especially when decisions affect Māori communities.

What's changing with the law?

The government has recently passed a law that requires a binding public vote (poll) to decide whether Māori Wards will continue beyond 2025. This vote will happen at the same time as the 2025 local elections, with voting closing on Saturday, 11 October 2025.

What will the vote mean?



If the majority vote 'yes', Māori Wards in the Whakatāne District will remain in place for the 2028 and 2031 elections.



If the majority vote 'no', Māori Wards in the Whakatāne District will be removed and cannot be reintroduced for the 2028 and 2031 elections.

Fast Track Consenting



Fast-track consenting was introduced during COVID-19 to accelerate approvals for significant infrastructure and development projects. In 2024, it was made permanent through the Fast-Track Approvals Act. Amendments were made in response to public feedback, such as extending consultation timeframes and requiring expert panel members with environmental and Māori development expertise - addressing concerns (including those raised in the Council's submission) about the Act's scope, environmental safeguards, Treaty obligations, and limited public engagement.

The goal is to fast-track projects that bring regional or national benefits, like housing, transport or energy, but the process is different from the usual way councils assess developments. Under the new Act, decisions are made by central government with less involvement from local councils and limited opportunities for the public to have their say. There are also no appeal rights, unless it's a matter of law.

What does this mean for the Council?

This approach could mean that some fast-tracked projects don't fully align with our local development plans or environmental priorities.



Local Water Done Well

The Government is making major changes to how drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater services are managed across the country. These changes come under a new programme called 'Local Water Done Well', which replaces the previous government's Three Waters reform. While the structure has changed, the goals remain the same: to ensure water services are safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable into the future. A key focus of the reforms is encouraging councils to deliver water services through shared, multi-council organisations known as Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs).

What's changing?

Under the new Water Services Act, all councils must, at a minimum:

- Keep water services financially separate from other council activities (ring-fencing)
- Meet more robust planning and reporting requirements
- Operate under stronger oversight from government agencies:
 - » Taumata Arowai - the water services regulator
 - » The Commerce Commission - monitoring performance and price-setting
 - » The Department of Internal Affairs - overseeing progress and compliance

Key new requirements include:

- A Water Services Delivery Plan, with consultation on service delivery options
- A Water Services Strategy (with community input)
- Separate, audited budgets and annual reports for water services
- Half-yearly reporting on water service performance
- Reporting to the economic regulator
- Development of drinking water catchment plans
- Development of Trade waste plans
- Development of Stormwater network risk management plans
- Public access to water network maps
- Payment of levies to fund central oversight

All councils must submit their first Water Services Delivery Plan to the Department of Internal Affairs by 3 September 2025. These plans must demonstrate how councils will meet regulatory standards, support growth, and ensure financial sustainability.

The future direction for Whakatāne District

To prepare for these reforms and meet the September deadline, the Council has reviewed its planned investment in three waters infrastructure. Some projects have been brought forward to prioritise compliance with new regulations. Others have been deferred or scaled back to keep overall costs manageable without compromising service quality. This revised work programme results in an additional \$25 million investment over the next ten years - rising from \$190 million to \$215 million. Over a 30-year horizon, this allows for a steadier capital investment of around \$21 million per year, helping balance affordability with regulatory compliance.

What the Council has decided

Following public consultation in April-May 2025, the Council resolved on 26 June 2025 to deliver water services through a stand-alone, ring-fenced business unit within the Council. The Council also agreed to work with neighbouring councils to explore forming a Multi Council-Controlled-Organisation (Multi-CCO) as a longer-term option. Initial discussions are already underway with Kawerau, Ōpōtiki, and Rotorua Lakes Councils to assess the benefits of jointly managing water services through a new regional entity.



Changes to the Building Act

The government's proposed changes to the Building Act aim to make building consent processes more consistent and efficient across the country. These changes are likely to have a meaningful impact on how councils operate as a Building Consent Authority (BCA).

For us, the reforms could result in changes to how we assess building risks, process applications, and demonstrate compliance - especially if a more risk-based consenting model is introduced. If adopted, we may need to invest in staff training, system upgrades, and updates to our quality management systems to align with revised national standards.

For our communities, the changes could lead to faster, more predictable consent processing, especially for low-risk or standardised building work. This could benefit local builders, developers, and homeowners by reducing delays, compliance costs and uncertainty in the building process. Enhanced oversight and stronger consumer protections may also help to build trust in the regulatory system.



Replacing the Resource Management Act

The government is moving ahead with its plans to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) - a law that for over 30 years has shaped how land use and the environment are managed in New Zealand.

Two new pieces of legislation will take its place:

- **The Natural Environment Act** - focussed on managing the natural environment
- **The Planning Act** - focussed on enabling development and infrastructure

Together, these new laws aim to simplify the system, speed up development, and place more emphasis on property rights. They will narrow the range of environmental effects that councils can consider, meaning only more significant adverse impacts will need to be managed. This marks a shift from a precautionary approach to a more enabling one for development, setting a higher bar for when restrictions can be applied.

The new laws will also introduce a more centralised planning system. Local district plans will be combined into regional-level plans, developed collaboratively across councils. This is similar to the direction being taken with water reforms. The proposed amendments reduce opportunities for Māori participation in resource management processes and weaken established commitments to partnership and protection. These changes also pose a risk to the integrity of relationships between iwi and their respective local authorities.

The new legislation is expected to be in place by June 2026, with a transition period to allow councils time to adapt to the new planning framework.

KEY INITIATIVES & PROJECTS

Ngā Kaupapa me ngā Waitara matua

The next few pages provide a snapshot of the major projects which are planned for the next three years, running from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2028.

These projects aim to maintain and improve the essential services and infrastructure we need for a good quality of life



STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH IWI, HAPŪ AND WHĀNAU

Me matua whakawhanake i ngā kōtuituinga
ā-iwi, ā-hapū, ā-whānau anō hoki

Relationships with iwi, hapū and whānau

Nearly 50% of the Whakatāne District population identify as Māori. The Council recognises iwi as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners and acknowledges the deep whakapapa, mātauranga, and enduring responsibilities that iwi, hapū and whānau hold as tangata whenua and mana whenua. Our relationships are with Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Māhino, Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Rangitihī, Ngāi Tūhoe, Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau, Te Whakatōhea and Ngāti Whare. Their perspectives, lived experiences, and aspirations are central to advancing the collective wellbeing and future of our district.

The Council's work is guided by the strategic priority of 'Strengthening relationships with iwi, hapū and whānau', our Long Term Plan, Māori Relationships Strategy 'Te Toi Waka Whakarei', legislative obligations under the Local Government Act and Resource Management Act, and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We are developing a partnership model with collective leadership, mutual respect, and shared aspirations - working together to achieve better outcomes for all our hapori.

Over the past three years, we have made progress in developing a more responsive, respectful, and enduring approach to working together.

We are committed to developing trusted, enduring relationships that reflect the unique and diverse communities we have across our rohe.

Key Progress (2022–2025):

Establishment of Toi Kōtuia

Toi Kōtuia is a dedicated internal team created to lead the implementation of *Te Toi Waka Whakarei*.

Toi Kōtuia focusses on building internal cultural capability, facilitating engagement and aligning the Council activity with iwi/hapū priorities.

Te Toi Waka Whakarei – Māori Relationship Strategy

Adopted in 2022, the strategy sets out the principles and approach for engaging with iwi, hapū and whānau. It is supported by a practical 'Relationship Work Plan', which guides staff in engaging meaningfully and appropriately.

Te Kahupapa - Cultural Competency Programme

A framework for building internal cultural awareness and capability, including:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi training
- Tikanga workshops
- Te Reo Māori learning opportunities
- Noho marae experiences
- Regular waiata practice

These experiences support staff in gaining a deeper understanding of te ao Māori and strengthen our organisational culture.

Strengthening engagement channels:

- Dedicated iwi relationship leads play a key role in maintaining strong connections with iwi, ensuring robust, consistent, and culturally appropriate engagement between the Council and iwi.
- Relationship development opportunities including:
 - » The Iwi Chairs Forum
 - » Spatial Planning
 - » Local Growth Strategy
 - » The Tarawera Awa Restoration Governance Group
- Joint project delivery using co-design principles, including:
 - » Matatā Wastewater Project – where Mana Whenua have guided the cultural design context

Collaborative environmental work

- Joint approaches to planning, climate resilience, spatial planning, and environmental protection



CLIMATE CHANGE & NATURAL HAZARDS

Huringa Āhuarangi me ngā matepā taiao

The challenge of managing climate change and natural hazard management lies in the uncertainty involved. We know we need to prepare and respond, but when, what, and how much it will cost us is unclear. This makes planning and investment decisions complex, but essential. We respond to this challenge through our strategic approach, *Our Climate Pathway*.

We are prepared

- We have an Emergency Operations Centre, supported by trained staff under the national Emergency Management system.
- Evacuation and response plans are in place for key risk areas.
- We are working with communities to build emergency response capability, including establishing resilience hubs with essential supplies, power, and communications infrastructure.

We are informed

- A district wide risk assessment will be completed.
- We have adopted a Climate Change Policy to guide decision-making.
- We monitor our own emissions and complete annual emissions audits to track progress and drive change.

We are lowering emissions

- Our energy reduction programme is delivering operational savings and environmental benefits.
- We are moving away from harmful refrigerants and are rolling out an Electric Vehicles (EV) Transition Plan.
- We are installing Solar Panels on Council Facilities

We are building resilience

- Climate change adaption and risk reduction are beginning to be embedded into our infrastructure design, renewal and maintenance.
- We are strengthening our services and assets to reduce disruption impacts and support faster, more effective recovery.

We are taking an integrated approach

- Recognising the interconnectedness of emergency management, climate action, resilience, and adaptation, we have recently merged these portfolios into a single, unified team. This integrated structure improves efficiency, scale, and strategic impact across all areas of climate and hazard preparedness.

In the next three years we will deliver:

- Community-focused resilience planning
- Enhanced scenario-based emergency planning, tailored to local risks
- Targeted infrastructure investments based on risk modelling
- Lower emissions and energy costs
- Upgrades to Emergency Operations Centre functionality and resilience
- Expanded community readiness initiatives

This unified approach to deliver *Our Climate Pathway* strengthens our ability to face the unknown. We're not just reacting to change, we're proactively preparing for it.

GROWTH STRATEGY

Rautaki Whakatipu

This year we completed the Eastern Bay Spatial Plan and Eastern Bay Economic Strategy, which together provide a long-term blueprint for how our region can grow in a coordinated, sustainable way. These documents describe the Eastern Bay as a connected system, linking housing, employment, infrastructure and natural resources – and identified key areas for housing, commercial services, industrial development, and marine and aquaculture growth. The Spatial Plan was developed in anticipation of new requirements under central government’s proposed Spatial Planning Act, which will require all regions to develop formal Spatial Plans to guide integrated land use and infrastructure development.

Our role in regional growth

Under the Spatial Plan and Eastern Bay Economic, Whakatāne has an amplified role as a hub for housing and commercial services, while continuing to support key industries such as agriculture, dairy, tourism, and forestry. However, local businesses are telling us they are ready to grow and have jobs available, but face barriers – particularly a lack of housing that makes it hard to attract and retain skilled workers.

To address this, we are advancing a *Local Growth Strategy* to guide how and where our district should grow over the coming decades. The strategy focuses on unlocking land for new housing and business development while ensuring that growth occurs in a coordinated way with our neighbouring councils in Ōpōtiki and Kawerau.

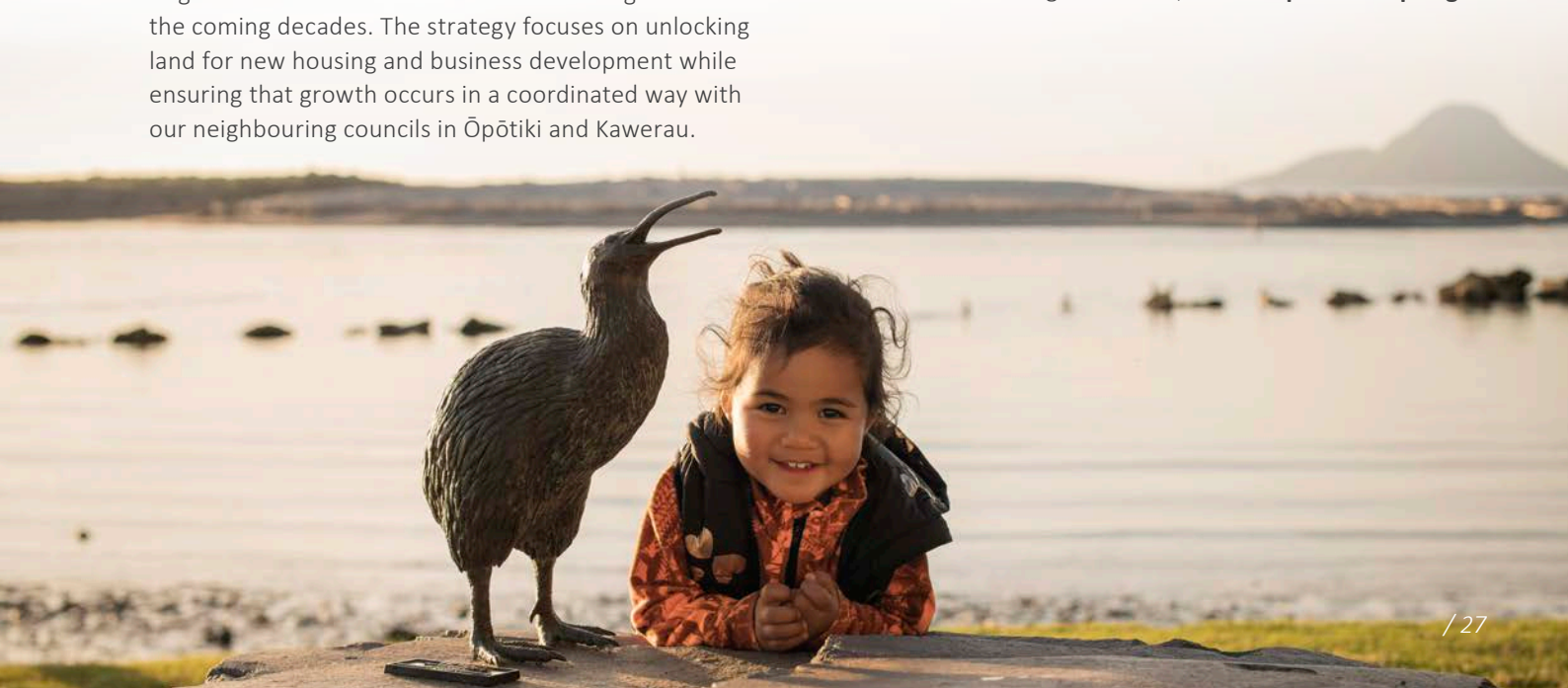
What’s next for the Whakatāne District

Over the next three years, we will:

- Engage with communities across the district to shape a new Local Growth Strategy
- Adopt the Local Growth Strategy and begin making District Plan changes to support new growth
- Review development zones in the District Plan for greenfield growth areas
- Finalise supporting strategies for transport and three waters infrastructure to inform the next Long Term Plan
- Ensure future development reflects local identity, supports economic opportunity, and meets housing needs

This localised approach will provide meaningful opportunities for residents and tangata whenua to influence how growth unfolds, ensuring that housing, business land, and infrastructure are delivered in a way that is balanced, sustainable, and reflective of our district’s unique character.

To learn more or get involved, visit: ourplacesebop.org.nz



Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub

The Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub - comprising the Whakatāne War Memorial Hall, Rex Morpeth Park, Rugby Park, the Whakatāne Aquatic and Fitness Centre, and the Whakatāne Arts and Craft Centre - is one of the district's most loved and heavily used community assets. It's a place where lifelong memories are made, friendships are forged, and skills are developed.

While the Hub has served Whakatāne well, significant upgrades, expansion, and maintenance are now urgently needed to meet modern challenges, evolving community needs, and health and safety standards.

The redevelopment of the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub has been included in the Council's planning for more than a decade.

A key decision on the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub made through the Long Term Plan 2024-34 has enabled a programme of work that will:

- Prioritise health and safety, making the building watertight, and functionality-focused improvement works during the first four years of the Long Term Plan, up to \$7.8 million.
- Advance discussions with potential partners for the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub redevelopment.
- Retain budget allocation for co-funding the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub project.
- Finalise the master plan for the Hub and explore the feasibility of a separate indoor court facility.
- Develop an external funding plan before the next Long Term Plan.
- Integrate a stop/go decision-making point into the 2027/28 Long Term Plan regarding the Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub's redevelopment budget.

Total Budget in LTP	Budget 2025-28
\$107,477,296	\$6,644,613





Te Ara Hou – riverfront revitalisation

In 2020, the Council received funding approval from the Provincial Growth Fund to progress the Te Ara Hou project – a riverfront revitalisation initiative.

The original scope included:

- A world-class riverfront promenade
- The redevelopment of the Kakahoroa carpark into a vibrant public realm, edged by private development.

However, significant community feedback opposing the Kakahoroa carpark development prompted the Council to revisit this component of the project. At the same time Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Project Futureproof – a large-scale upgrade of the riverfront floodwall - introduced significant complexity, impacting both the timing and integration of the original vision of Te Ara Hou.

Request to change project scope

Given Project Futureproof does not include any 'make good' or amenity restoration obligations, we recognised the need to protect public access after floodwall heights are increased to around 1.8m high and amenity along the riverfront. In response to this, we submitted a variation request to Kānoa (previously Provincial Growth Fund), proposing to:

- Redirect unspent funds of approximately \$7.5million of the original PGF funding (previously allocated to the Kakahoroa component) toward the riverfront promenade
- Align this with the \$7.5 million approved by Council in the 2024–2034 Long Term Plan for floodwall integration works.
- Together, this funding would retain the amenity and destination value of the public space along the riverfront, responding to both the community's vision and the changes imposed by floodwall construction.
- Upon receiving Cabinet's decision regarding the Council's request to vary the original Te Ara Hou contract (expected shortly), staff will proceed with planning the floodwall integration work.

Local Water Done Well

See page 21 for more information.

Three waters consent replacement programme

We own, operate and maintain wastewater and drinking water infrastructure that services our urban areas across the Whakatāne District. This includes six wastewater treatment plants, ten water supply schemes and an extensive network of pipes.

These essential services protect public health, support the environment, enable growth and build resilience in our communities.

Many of our current resource consents, originally issued under earlier legislation and later transitioning to the Resource Management Act 1991, are due to expire on 1 October 2026. This includes consents for four wastewater treatment plants and eight water takes with reticulation to our communities. To meet future consent requirements and community expectations, we are progressing our Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme. This work involves securing new consents and planning potential infrastructure upgrades for water and wastewater to ensure our systems remain compliant, reliable, affordable and aligned with modern environmental, health and cultural standards.

All eight water take consents now have planners assigned, with technical work underway to support applications. Work on the wastewater consents is in the early stages, with co-design groups being established to help guide future treatment approaches.

Although the government’s Local Water Done Well reforms may change who owns or manages water infrastructure in the future, the Council remains responsible today and is committed to ensuring our assets are compliant and in good condition for whatever comes next.

Total Budget in LTP	Budget 2025-28
\$7,725,463	\$5,380,726

Harbour endowment land

The Council owns a significant amount of land within the Whakatāne Town Centre, much of it made up of former Harbour Board leasehold properties. These properties are low-risk so generate a lower return compared with the same private market.

The Council is currently reviewing the best future use of these properties. In the coming triennium, a decision will be made on whether to retain the current low-risk, low-return model or shift to a higher-risk investment approach aimed at generating better returns for the community.

Ōpihi development (77 Bunyan Road)

In 2017, following an expressions of interest process, the Council entered into a legally binding Agreement for Sale and Purchase to sell the 26.9 hectare block of land at 77 Bunyan Road. The purchasers intend to develop the land for residential housing and a retirement village and have been progressing through the consenting process.

The Council is not the developer and has no direct role in the project beyond processing relevant building consent applications. While there is no project budget for the Council, the anticipated sale proceeds are reflected in the Council’s financial statements.

Improving our health and safety system

Some of our staff work in high-risk environments - operating heavy machinery, working on roads, managing waters treatment plants, entering pipes and other confined spaces, managing swimming pools and handling dangerous chemicals. Our staff have a great attitude towards Health & Safety, and no one wants to see a colleague or contractor harmed at work.

An independent review of our Health & Safety system in late 2024 found areas we needed to improve upon. Our current system is outdated and may be putting staff at risk.

We are now working to build a modern Health & Safety system that not only meets our legal obligations but supports a safer workplace. Combined with our strong safety culture, this new system will help ensure everyone goes home safe at the end of the day.

Internal ERP system replacement

An enterprise resource planning (‘ERP’) system is software that integrates and manages key Council functions such as finance and accounting, customer relationship management and rating and regulatory services.

Our current ERP system, ‘OZONE’ was implemented 18 years ago and has now reached the end of its life. In December 2024, after a robust procurement process, the Council approved a Business Case to implement a new ERP system, ‘Datascape’.

The two-year rollout of Datascape will be staged to minimise disruption. Once complete, the new system will support more efficient operations, enhance data reporting for decision-making, provide a more secure and stable platform for core council functions, reduce organisational risk, and improve the customer experience for our communities.

Total Budget in LTP	Budget 2025-28
\$4,251,216	\$4,251,216

Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō te Arawa Matatā Wastewater

Finding a sustainable and effective wastewater solution for Matatā has been a key priority for the Council over the past three years. Following extensive technical investigation, research and community collaboration, work is now underway to identify a preferred solution for Matatā and the wider district.

Matatā does not have a reticulated wastewater system, with most properties relying on on-site septic tanks. Despite ongoing efforts over several decades to establish a centralised solution, the town continues to face serious wastewater management challenges. High groundwater levels and the area’s proximity to waterways make septic tanks ineffective and unsuitable for the local environment.

As a result, effluent from ageing systems is seeping into the land and waterways, posing risks to public health and the environment. This contamination is not only affecting community wellbeing but also the deep cultural connection mana whenua have with their rohe.

The project is being guided by a genuine co-design approach, with a dedicated Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō Te Arawa Co-Design Group and Project Technical Team ensuring cultural values and environmental outcomes are central to the final decision.

Total Budget in LTP	Budget 2025-28
\$42,400,743	\$24,134,754



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OUR FINANCES

Ā mātau pūtea



EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE

Te whakapaunga utu me te pūtea whiwhi

The following section includes a mix of audited and unaudited financial information. The retrospective financial data for the first two years has been extracted directly from the Council's audited Annual Reports. Similarly, the prospective financial information for the next three years is drawn from the Council's audited Long Term Plan, including the list of major projects, which formed a key part of the Long Term Plan audit process.

However, some information presented in this report has not been audited. This includes:

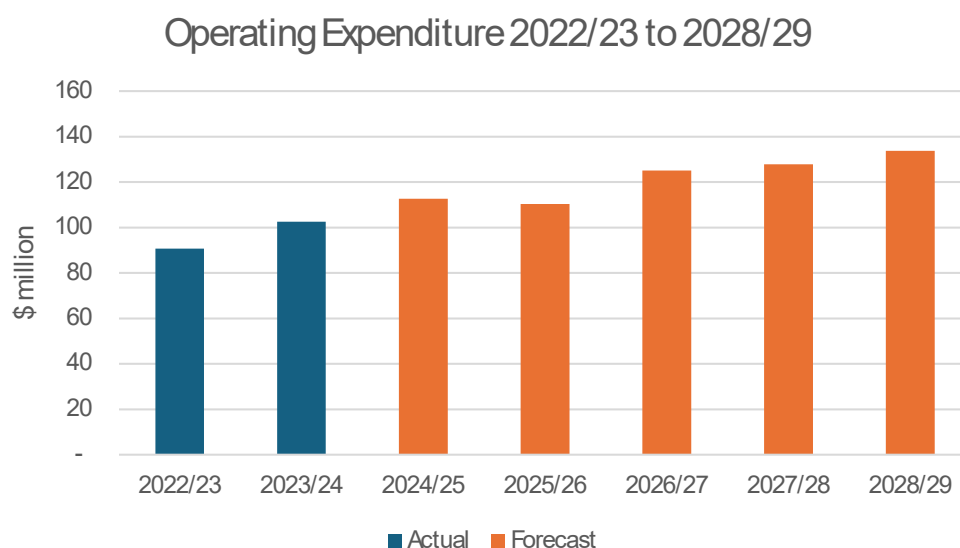
- Estimated 2025 and Annual Plan 2026 financial data, which are both unaudited
- Any additional prospective financial information that extends beyond the scope of the Long Term Plan and has been included for context or completeness.

Operating expenditure

Operating expenditure pays for the day-to-day costs of running council services and maintaining existing assets. It includes staff costs, service delivery, interest repayments on loans, and depreciation. This type of spending does not fund the purchase or construction of new assets - that's covered under capital expenditure (see next page).

The graph below shows the Council's operating expenditure over the three years prior to the 2025 local elections and what is currently planned for the three years following the elections, based on the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan forecasts.

The largest areas of operating expenditure are the Council's four core network infrastructure services: roads and footpaths, water supply, stormwater drainage, and wastewater treatment and disposal. Together, these account for 28 percent of total operating expenditure for the 10-year Long Term Plan period.



How the Council is funded

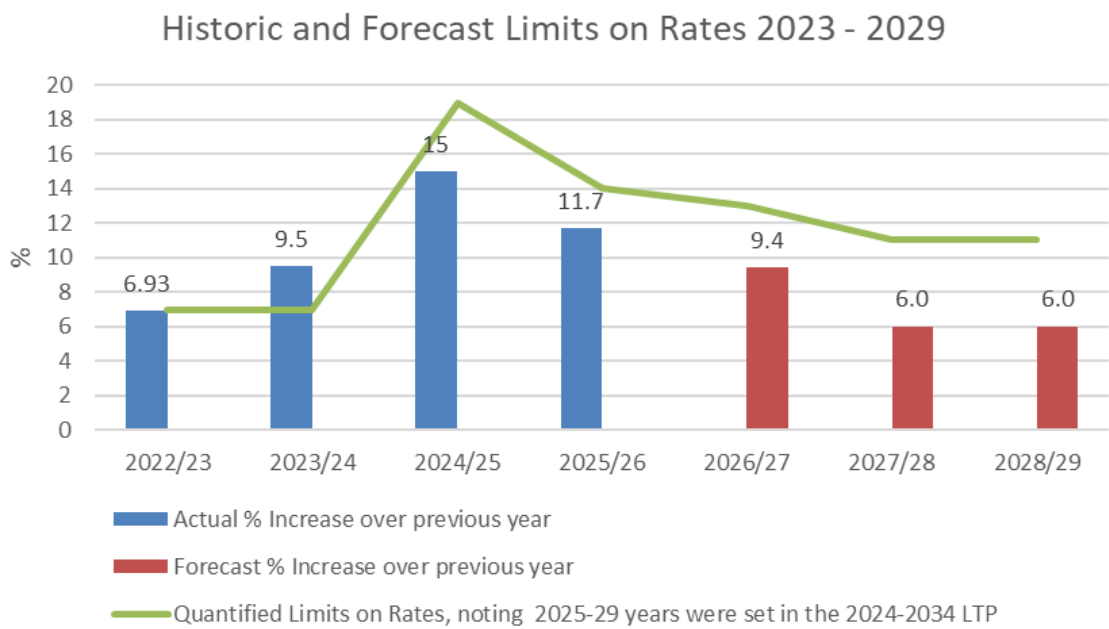
Rates income has been, and will continue to be, the main source of funding for the Council between 2022/23 and 2028/29. Rates typically account for between 58 percent and 75 percent of our total income each year.

Rates as a Proportion of Operating Revenue	
2022/23	64%
2023/24	58%
2024/25	75%

Other key sources of income are fees and charges, and external subsidies and grants. Wherever possible, the Council seeks funding from external sources like The Ministry of Health, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, the Lotteries Commission, and key partners like Bay Trust, Lion Foundation, Trust Horizon, and other funding agencies. These partnerships help reduce the burden on ratepayers and help to make our services and facilities more affordable. Detailed information about budgets can be found in the latest Long Term Plan 2024-34.

Limits on rates increases

The Council has set a limit on annual rates increases in its Financial Strategy included in the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. The limit was assessed and set by the Council on an annual basis taking into account factors such as the balancing of the Council’s financial position, together with assumed annual inflation as per Local Government Cost Index provided for in the Business and Economic Research Ltd (BERL) Local Government Cost Adjustor Forecasts. This limit applies to the average rates increase across the district, meaning some individual properties may experience higher or lower changes in any given year. The graph below shows the actual limits that apply for the years until 30 June 2025. It also shows the forecast average rates increases over the three financial years following the 2025 local elections, based on Long Term Plan forecasts.



About the LGCI

The costs of running your household go up every year due to inflation, the cost of providing Council services also rises each year. This is because prices for things like energy, labour and construction generally increase, which affects how much it costs to deliver services to you.

The Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) measures how these price changes affect the cost of delivering services. So, even if the Council provides the same services year after year, an increase in the LGCI means it will likely cost more to do so.

CAPITAL COSTS AND BORROWING

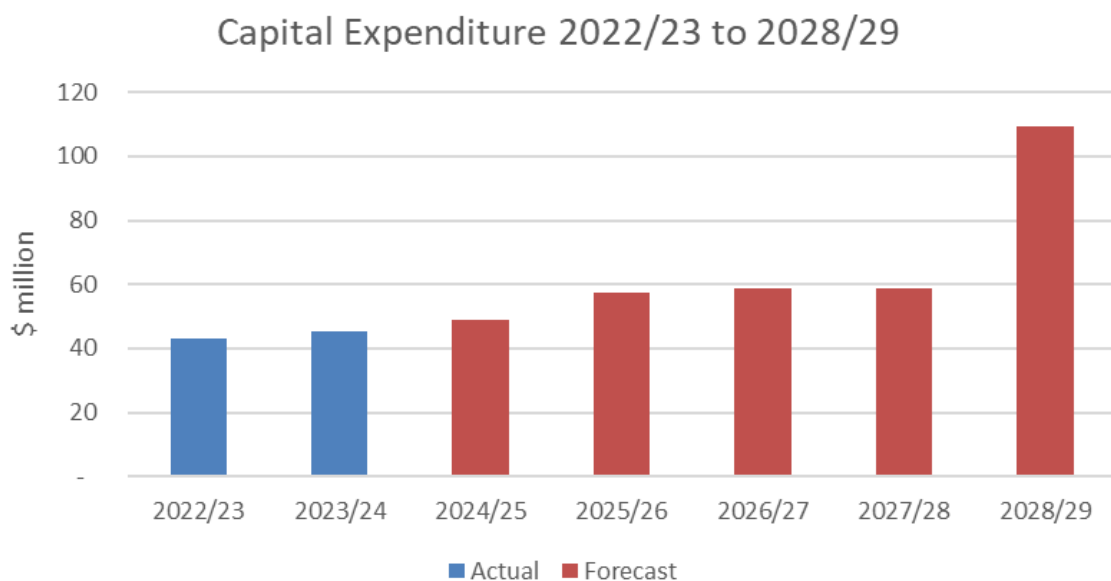
Ngā utu rawa me ngā tono pūtea

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure pays for buying or building new assets, renewing existing ones, or improving them to deliver a better service. The graph below shows the Council's capital expenditure over the three years prior to the 2025 local elections and what is currently planned for the three years following the elections, based on the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan forecasts. The biggest areas of capital spending are the four key infrastructure activities: roads and footpaths, stormwater drainage, water supply, and wastewater treatment and disposal.

Funding of capital expenditure

Most of the Council's capital expenditure is funded by loans, depreciation reserves, and some support from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi transport projects. Usually, new assets are paid for with loans, which spreads the cost over time so future ratepayers are contributing to the assets they will benefit from. Depreciation reserves are funds that are built up during the life of existing assets, so they can be renewed when needed.

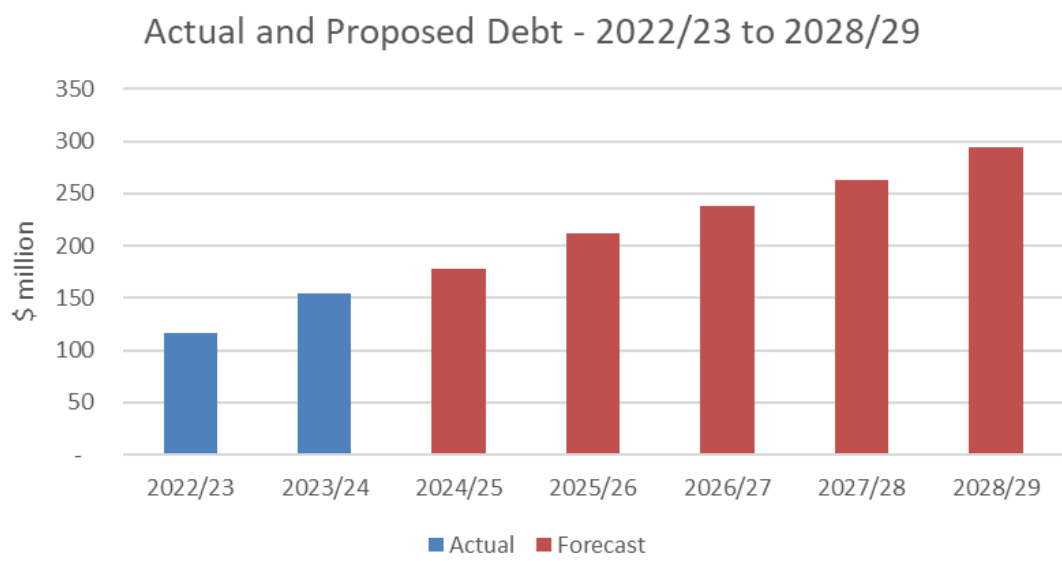


Current debt level

As of 30 June 2025, the Council’s total debt is about \$177.5 million. This includes loans from banks and the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA). Based on borrower schedules listed in the LGFA 2021 Annual Report, our debt levels are considered mid to low compared to similar government or commercial organisations.

Limits on debt

In the 2024-34 Long Term Plan, the Council agreed to increase its debt limit from 150% to 175% of total revenue. This means the debt limit is projected to be around \$211.5 million in 2025/26 and \$238.3 million in the following year. The graph below shows Council’s debt over the three years before the 2025 local elections and what is currently planned for the three years after, based on the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan forecasts.



The Council’s planned borrowing costs are equal or are less than 8% of its planned revenue (excluding development contributions, financial contributions, vested assets, gains on derivative financial instruments and revaluations of property plant and equipment) as per the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (Vol 3. page 42).

Year	Interest repayments as a % of rates income
2021/22	3%
2022/23	6%
2023/24	8%

Indicative funding impact statement

He tūtohu o te tirohanga whānui ki ngā utu

	ACTUAL 2023 \$000	ACTUAL 2024 \$000	ESTIMATED 2025 \$000	ANNUAL PLAN 2026 \$000	LTP 2027 \$000	LTP 2028 \$000	LTP 2029 \$000
OPERATIONAL							
Sources of operating funding							
General rates, uniform and general charges, rates penalties	27,252	30,013	33,543	37,742	40,294	42,840	45,845
Targeted rates (other than a targeted rate for water supply)	28,480	29,036	37,113	42,156	48,823	52,623	56,311
Subsidies and grants for operating purposes	8,220	9,448	8,569	6,340	7,657	7,554	7,716
Fees, charges and targeted rates for water supply	9,569	8,969	9,501	11,029	11,865	12,160	12,296
Interest and dividends from investments	499	1,134	1,367	60	62	64	65
Local authorities fuel tax, fines, infringement fees, and other receipts	2,436	3,675	2,758	2,828	2,714	2,772	2,829
Total operating funding (A)	76,455	82,275	92,851	100,154	111,416	118,013	125,063
Applications for operating funding							
Payment to staff and suppliers	65,154	67,551	74,572	80,002	83,870	84,204	86,454
Finance costs	4,918	7,798	9,112	8,667	10,886	12,454	14,567
Other operating funding applications	1,422	801	1,757	1,830	2,339	2,430	2,522
Total applications of operating funding (B)	71,494	76,149	85,441	90,498	97,094	99,089	103,543
Surplus (deficit) of operating funding (A-B)	4,961	6,126	7,410	9,656	14,321	18,925	21,520
CAPITAL							
Sources of capital funding							
Subsidies and grants	8,880	18,534	10,115	10,282	10,572	12,868	52,205
Development and financial contributions	131	198	172	691	1,494	1,525	1,557
Increase (decrease) in debt	29,800	37,700	24,000	38,700	23,500	24,000	32,000
Gross proceeds from sale of assets	-	-	-	1,065	9,393	1,174	1,233
Total sources of capital funding (C)	38,811	56,432	34,287	50,738	44,959	39,568	86,995
Applications of capital funding and capital expenditure							
- to meet additional demand	8,168	766	1,438	1,832	915	1,572	1,300
- to improve level of service	19,114	22,852	22,354	29,221	30,062	26,934	79,197
- to replace existing assets	15,916	21,858	25,078	26,322	27,956	30,324	28,897
Increase (decrease) of investments	5,488	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase (decrease) in reserves	(4,915)	17,082	(7,174)	3,019	347	(338)	(880)
Total application of capital funding (D)	43,772	62,558	41,697	60,394	59,280	58,492	108,515
Surplus (deficit) of capital funding (C-D)	(4,961)	(6,126)	(7,410)	(9,656)	(14,321)	(18,925)	(21,520)
Funding Balance ((A-B)+(C-D))	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary statement of financial position

Whakarāpopototanga whakapuakanga tūnga ahumoni

	ACTUAL 2023 \$000	ACTUAL 2024 \$000	ESTIMATED 2025 \$000	ANNUAL PLAN 2026 \$000	LTP 2027 \$000	LTP 2028 \$000	LTP 2029 \$000
EQUITY							
Accumulated funds	447,522	442,241	432,086	417,652	428,315	436,153	490,138
Council created operating reserves	2,300	2,172	2,972	5,105	5,060	(1,044)	(6,287)
Restricted equity	15,074	15,188	14,388	12,301	13,919	15,161	10,090
Asset revaluation reserves	728,546	740,866	777,033	1,026,482	880,472	915,543	951,608
TOTAL EQUITY	1,193,442	1,200,467	1,226,479	1,461,540	1,327,766	1,365,814	1,445,550
ASSETS							
Current assets							
Cash and cash equivalents	3,815	17,623	521	241	3,761	2,291	2,356
Trade and other receivables	17,445	20,296	18,296	23,314	19,367	19,853	22,618
Other current assets	313	427	427	427	316	322	328
Derivative financial instruments	134	35	35	35	-	-	-
Total current assets	21,707	38,381	19,279	24,017	23,444	22,467	25,302
Non-current assets							
Property, plant and equipment	1,256,611	1,286,431	1,356,350	1,630,741	1,503,927	1,564,708	1,675,485
Derivative financial instruments	2,164	1,652	1,652	1,652	1,763	1,799	1,833
Investment in CCOs and other similar entities	15,256	16,315	17,924	14,862	18,967	18,994	19,023
Investment property	44,043	43,226	44,609	45,992	55,378	57,623	59,951
Total non-current assets	1,318,074	1,347,624	1,420,535	1,693,247	1,580,035	1,643,124	1,756,291
TOTAL ASSETS	1,339,781	1,386,003	1,439,814	1,717,264	1,603,480	1,665,590	1,781,594
LIABILITIES							
Current liabilities							
Trade and other payables	20,467	20,499	23,928	31,935	28,522	28,475	32,634
Derivative financial instruments	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowings and other financial liabilities	12,300	22,000	32,000	32,500	37,000	26,000	33,000
Provisions	4,131	5,000	5,175	5,356	3,868	3,894	3,920
Total current liabilities	36,899	47,499	61,103	69,791	69,390	58,369	69,554
Non-current liabilities							
Derivative financial instruments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowings and other financial liabilities LT	104,500	132,500	146,500	180,000	202,300	237,300	262,300
Provisions LT	4,941	5,538	5,732	5,933	4,023	4,107	4,190
Total non-current liabilities	109,441	138,038	152,232	185,933	206,324	241,408	266,490
TOTAL LIABILITIES	146,340	185,537	213,335	255,724	275,713	299,776	336,044
NET ASSETS (assets minus liabilities)	1,193,441	1,200,468	1,226,479	1,461,540	1,327,766	1,365,814	1,445,550

Statement of cashflows

Whakapuakanga kapewhiti

	ACTUAL 2023 \$000	ACTUAL 2024 \$000	ESTIMATED 2025 \$000	ANNUAL PLAN 2026 \$000	LTP 2027 \$000	LTP 2028 \$000	LTP 2029 \$000
EQUITY							
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES							
Receipts from rates revenue	54,061	56,782	68,456	79,144	86,355	92,559	99,050
Subsidies and grants received	16,456	26,202	18,464	17,345	19,002	20,806	57,706
Fees and charges and other revenue received	11,048	12,916	15,749	13,142	15,719	15,723	16,277
Interest received	499	1,176	1,402	57	53	54	55
Payments to suppliers and employees	(59,912)	(67,363)	(74,477)	(89,849)	(83,452)	(83,826)	(85,820)
Payments to agencies	(2,279)	(132)	-	-	-	-	-
Interest paid	(4,917)	(7,518)	(9,596)	(8,667)	(10,886)	(12,454)	(14,567)
GST (Net)	(602)	(580)	(600)	(600)	-	-	-
Net cash flow from operating activities	14,354	21,483	19,398	10,572	26,791	32,861	72,699
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES							
Receipts from sale of property, plant and equipment	1,041	1,270	1,500	1,500	9,393	1,174	1,233
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(43,383)	(45,257)	(46,000)	(46,352)	(59,420)	(58,838)	(105,350)
Acquisition of investments	115	(1,388)	(16,000)	-	(501)	(667)	(518)
Net cash flow from investing activities	(42,227)	(45,375)	(60,500)	(44,852)	(50,527)	(58,331)	(104,635)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES							
Proceeds from borrowings	38,800	50,000	46,000	66,000	56,000	62,000	58,000
Repayment of borrowings	(9,000)	(12,300)	(22,000)	(32,000)	(32,500)	(38,000)	(26,000)
Net cash flow from financing activities	29,800	37,700	24,000	34,000	23,500	24,000	32,000
Net increase / decrease in cash	1,927	13,808	(17,102)	(280)	(236)	(1,470)	65
Cash at beginning of year	1,888	3,815	17,623	521	3,997	3,761	2,291
Cash, cash equivalents and bank overdrafts at the end of the year	3,815	17,623	521	241	3,761	2,291	2,356
Represented by:							
Cash, cash equivalents and bank overdrafts at the end of the year	3,815	17,623	521	241	3,761	2,291	2,356

HELPFUL INFORMATION

He pārongo āwhina



OUR PLANNING CYCLE

Te mahi whakamahere

Long Term Plan

Te Mahere Pae Tawhiti

In August 2024, we adopted our current Long Term Plan. This plan sets out the Council's strategic direction, priorities, and work programme for the 10 years. It outlines the services we will provide, the projects we will deliver, what they will cost, how they will be paid for, and how we will measure our performance. The Long Term Plan also includes a number of key documents that guide the delivery of Council services including:

- Significance and Engagement Policy
- Revenue and Financing Policy



Annual Plan

Te Mahere ā-Tau

In each of the years between Long Term Plans, we produce an Annual Plan. This reviews and updates the budget and work programme for the coming year, based on the intentions set out in the Long Term Plan.

Our next Annual Plan is scheduled for adoption in June 2025.

Annual Report

Te Pūrongo ā-Tau

At the end of each financial year, we publish an Annual Report. This details what we delivered, compared to what we said we would do, how we managed our budgets and if we achieved our performance targets. The Annual Report also includes results from our Annual Residents Perception Survey.

This year's statutory deadline for adoption is 31 of October 2025. Adopting the Annual Report will be one of the first actions a newly elected Council will do.

Other important documents

We're also guided by a range of other strategies, plans and policies that outline Council's position, direction and priorities and support specific aspects of our work. Some examples are:

- Asset Management Plans
- District Plan
- Infrastructure Strategy
- Waste Management and Minimisation Plan
- Whakatāne Town Vision Plan
- Climate Change Strategy and Action Plans

All these documents are available online, visit whakatane.govt.nz/documents

STAFF YOU'LL WORK CLOSELY WITH

Ka mahi tahi ki te taha o ēnei kaimahi

Executive team



Steven Perdia

Chief Executive

Leads the Council's operations and the delivery of services in line with the direction set by the Mayor and Councillors.

E Steven.Perdia@whakatane.govt.nz



Alexandra Pickles

Community Experience

Delivering libraries, arts and heritage facilities, aquatic centres, parks and reserves, and cemetery and crematorium services

E Alexandra.Pickles@whakatane.govt.nz



Bevan Gray

Finance & Commercial Services

Overseeing budgets, finance, procurement, and business services

E Bevan.Gray@whakatane.govt.nz

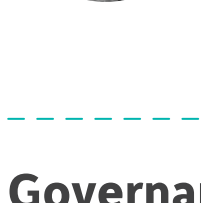


Emlyn Hatch

People & Partnerships

Leading communications, digital services, people & capability, health & safety and community partnerships

E Emlyn.Hatch@whakatane.govt.nz



Leny Woolsey

Strategy & Growth

Leading long-term planning, economic development, and sustainability initiatives, tourism & events

E Leny.Woolsey@whakatane.govt.nz

Governance services



Chirese Viljoen

Manager Governance Services

E Chirese.Viljoen@whakatane.govt.nz



David Bewley

Planning, Regulatory & Infrastructure

Managing land use planning, consents, compliance, and core infrastructure

E David.Bewley@whakatane.govt.nz

ENROL

Whakaurunga

Enrol today to decide tomorrow

Your voice matters in shaping the future of Whakatāne District but first you need to be enrolled to vote. Enrolling makes voting easy and means you're ready to have your say.

Before you can vote in a local election, you need to enrol. If you received your enrolment pack in the mail, you are ready to vote. If you did not receive an enrolment pack in the mail, it means that you are not enrolled to vote, or your details are not up to date.

Not sure if you're enrolled?

Visit **vote.nz/enrolling** to check your details online.

The council will send your voting papers to you in the mail when it is time to vote, so it is important that you're enrolled at the right address. If you're enrolled to vote for the parliamentary elections, then you're automatically enrolled for local elections too.

If you're not enrolled, you can:



Enrol online, visit vote.nz/enrolling



Phone 0800 36 76 56

(ask for a form to be sent to you)

To be able to enrol, you need to:



Be 18 years or older on Election Day (11 October)



Be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident



Lived in New Zealand for at least one year continuously at some point

The electoral roll closes on Friday, 1 August

Enrolling on the General or Māori electoral roll

Visit **vote.nz**, email **enrol@vote.nz**, call **0800 36 76 56**, or free text your name and address to **3676** to enrol to vote or to update your enrolment details.

If you are of New Zealand Māori descent, you can choose to enrol on the Māori roll or the general roll. The roll you choose affects who you can vote for at local elections. If you choose the Māori roll, you'll vote for candidates in Māori Wards. If you choose the general roll, you'll vote for candidates in the General Wards. No matter which roll you are on, you'll choose from the same candidates when voting for Mayor.

Want to change your roll?

You need to decide by midnight, Thursday, 10 July 2025.

You can't change rolls in the three months before local elections. You can change your roll:

- Online vote.nz/enrolling
- By completing the form in your enrolment update pack
- By completing and returning a printed enrolment form

How to enrol if you are a ratepayer for the Whakatāne District but you don't live here

If you own property in the district but live elsewhere you may be able to enrol as a non-resident ratepayer elector and vote in both areas. Simply download an Enrolment Form for Ratepayer Electors, fill it in and email it to **ratepayer@electionservices.co.nz** or post it to Electoral Officer, PO Box 5135, Victoria Street West, Auckland 1142.

VOTE

Pōti

Your voice matters and your vote counts

There is no place like home and no voice like yours to shape it. By voting in a local election, you are electing members from our community to represent your voice and make decisions that shape the way the Council delivers its services.

Who can vote?

Those eligible to vote are all resident electors and non-resident ratepayer electors whose names appear on the electoral roll when it closes on Friday, 1 August 2025.

The Preliminary Electoral Roll will be available for public inspection from Friday, 4 July 2025 to Friday, 1 August 2025 at these locations:

- **Whakatāne District Council**
14 Commerce Street, Whakatāne
- **Murupara Library and Service Centre**
Civic Square, 48 Pine Drive, Murupara
- **Edgumbe Library**
38 College Road, Edgumbe
- **Ōhope Library**
4 Harbour Road, Ōhope
- **Whakatāne Library & Exhibition Centre**
Te Kōputu a te Whanga a Toi
49 Kākahoroa Drive, Whakatāne
- Online at whakatane.govt.nz

Resident roll

All parliamentary electors, including those on the Māori Electoral Roll, are automatically enrolled on the Resident Roll, at the address where they live. Any alterations to the Resident Roll (e.g. change of address details, including new postal addresses) should be made by:



Completing the appropriate form
(available from the Electoral Commission or Council offices and libraries)



Phone 0800 36 76 56



Online, visit vote.nz
(Electoral Commission website)

Ratepayer roll

If a person is on the parliamentary roll in one area and pays rates on a property in another area, this person may be eligible to be enrolled on the non-resident Ratepayer Roll. A firm, company, corporation or society paying rates on a property may nominate one of its members or officers as a ratepayer elector (provided the nominated person resides outside the area).

To check if you may be eligible, or to obtain an enrolment form, go to ratepayer.co.nz or whakatane.govt.nz

All electors will be able to vote for the mayor and respective community board members. Those electors on the general electoral roll will be able to vote for respective General Ward councillors and those electors on the Māori electoral roll will be able to vote for the respective Māori Ward councillors.

How to vote?

Vote and be counted – voting is simple, the impact is significant. Your voting pack will arrive in your mailbox between Tuesday, 9 September and Monday, 22 September 2025. The voting period runs until noon on Saturday, 11 October 2025.

When your pack arrives, take time to read through the candidate information and make your selection.

All electors will be able to vote for the mayor and respective community board members. Those electors on the general electoral roll will be able to vote for respective general ward councillors and those electors on the Māori electoral roll will be able to vote for the respective Māori ward councillors.

Your voting pack comes with clear instructions and includes a return envelope – simply seal your completed voting document inside.

Then it's time to get your vote back to us!

You have several convenient options:

- **Drop it in any postal box**
(we recommend doing this by 7 October to ensure it arrives on time), or
- **Use one of our mobile voting bins or ballot boxes around the district.**

Check out all the drop-off locations at whakatane.govt.nz/standforsomething.

Special vote

Can't get to a mobile voting box or didn't receive your voting pack? Special votes ensure no eligible voter is left out. You may need a special vote if you didn't receive your voting documents by 22 September, you're away during the voting period, you need to update your enrolment details, or you have accessibility requirements.

Special votes are available from Tuesday, 9 September until noon on Saturday, 11 October 2025 at:

- **Whakatāne District Council's service centre**
(14 Commerce Street)
- **Murupara Library and Service Centre**
(48 Pine Drive)
- **Calling the electoral office on 0800 922 822.**
You'll need to complete a statutory declaration and provide proof of identity and address.

Māori wards poll

Stand informed, stand decided. A binding poll about Māori Wards will be held alongside the election. This poll gives you a voice on representation structures for future elections.

The poll will ask voters whether they support keeping Māori Wards for the Council. The government has made this poll compulsory for councils that established Māori Wards after 2020, giving the community the final say on this representation structure.

While you'll vote in 2025, the poll result won't be actioned until 2028. This means:

- If the majority vote yes, Māori Wards will continue for the 2028 and 2031 local elections.
- If the majority vote no, there will be no Māori Ward elections in 2028 or 2031.

Māori Wards will remain in place for the 2025 election regardless of the poll outcome. You'll still vote for Māori Ward councillors in this election and the poll result will only affect future elections.

RESULTS

Ngā Hua

Progress results will be known early afternoon on election day, and preliminary results will be announced on Sunday, 12 October 2025. Final results will be announced by Friday, 17 October 2025 and all results will be accessible on Council's website: whakatane.govt.nz

STAND

E tū

Empty seats don't speak. Fill them with passion, purpose and perspective.

Standing for the Council is your opportunity to lead where you live, bringing your voice to the decisions that shape the community. When you stand for the Council, your passion finds its purpose and your perspective becomes part of the path forward for the Whakatāne District.

Some things are worth standing for, your community is one of them. Our community succeeds when we have diverse representatives with positive vision, great ideas, and a commitment to care for their community.

From resident to representative - representation means acting in the best interests of the district and making decisions that impact our present and our future. As an elected member, you will make decisions that help define the future for our communities, help the Whakatāne District grow and prosper, and decide how to meet current and future needs for infrastructure, public services, and regulations.

Lead where you live. To do this you will need to build relationships with the community, local iwi and hapu, community organisations and groups and make sure that all voices in our district are heard. Know your community? Represent it. Local knowledge is local voice.

Take your place at the table. Are you or someone you know up for the challenge to stand and lead our district to a positive future? Your stand starts here.

Take your stand

Candidate nominations are open from Friday, 4 July 2025 until 12 noon Friday, 1 August 2025.

To stand for the election, you must:

- ✓ Complete an official nomination form and send to the council's electoral officer
- ✓ Be nominated by two people that are over the age of 18 and are enrolled in the same ward the candidate is planning to stand for
- ✓ Consent to their nomination
- ✓ Pay a \$200 deposit, which may be refunded depending on election results
- ✓ Be a New Zealand citizen

STAND for
SOMETHING

TŪ TŪTURU

Who can stand for election in a Māori Ward?

To be eligible to stand for election, a candidate must be:

- ✓ **A New Zealand citizen**
(by birth or citizenship ceremony)
- ✓ **Enrolled as a Parliamentary elector**
(anywhere in New Zealand)
- ✓ **Nominated by two electors whose names appear on the electoral roll within the respective area that a candidate is standing.**
Candidates in Māori Wards do not have to be of Māori descent.
- ✓ **Candidates cannot stand for General and Māori Wards at the same time.**

Who can vote for Māori Ward candidates in an election?

- ✓ **Voters on the Māori electoral roll will vote for and be represented by candidates contesting a Māori Ward rather than candidates contesting a General Ward.**
- ✓ **Voters on the general electoral roll will continue to vote for candidates contesting general wards.**
- ✓ **Everyone will vote for the Mayor, at-large councillors (if any), and community board members.**
- ✓ **Voters on the Māori electoral roll will continue to vote for the Māori constituencies in the Bay of Plenty Regional Council election and the voters on the general electoral roll will continue to vote for the candidates contesting the general constituencies.**

KEY DATES

Ngā rangi matua

Nominations open

Friday, 4 July

Nominations close

12 noon Friday, 1 August

Delivery of Voting Packs begins

Tuesday, 9 September

Close of voting

**12 noon Saturday,
11 October**

Official results announced

Friday, 17 October

Visit

whakatane.govt.nz/standforsomething
for more election information

**Whakatāne District
Elections 2025**

For more election information

ELECTORAL OFFICER

Dale Ofoske | 09 973 5212
dale.ofoske@electionservices.co.nz

DEPUTY ELECTORAL OFFICER

Chirese Viljoen | 07 306 0500
Chirese.Viljoen@whakatane.govt.nz

WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Commerce Street, Private Bag 1002,
Whakatāne 3158, New Zealand
P 07 306 0500

MURUPARA SERVICE CENTRE

Civic Square, Pine Drive,
Murupara, New Zealand
P 07 366 5896

info@whakatane.govt.nz
whakatane.govt.nz

f whakatanedistrictcouncil
in whakatane-district-council
@ whkdc

STAND for
SOMETHING

TŪ TŪTURU

**Whakatāne District
Elections 2025**

 **WHAKATĀNE**
District Council
Kia Whakatāne au i ahau

whakatane.govt.nz/standforsomething