AGENDA

Infrastructure and Planning Committee

Te Komiti Whakarite Mahere

Thursday, 4 September 2025

Tāite, 4 Mahuru 2025

Tōtara Room, Whakatāne District Council
14 Commerce Street, Whakatāne
Commencing at 9:00 am

Chief Executive: Steven Perdia | Publication Date: 29 August 2025

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WHAKATĀNE District Council
Kia Whakatāne au i ahau

Live Streaming the Meeting - *Ka whakapāho mataora te hui*

PLEASE NOTE
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All care will be taken to maintain your privacy however, as a visitor in the public gallery, your presence may be recorded. By remaining in the public gallery, it is understood your consent is given if your image is inadvertently broadcast.
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A Membership - *Mematanga*

Mayor Dr Victor Luca
Councillor John Pullar - Chairperson
Deputy Mayor Lesley Immink
Councillor Andrew Iles - Deputy Chairperson
Councillor Toni Boynton
Councillor Julie Jukes
Councillor Gavin Dennis
Councillor Wilson James
Councillor Tu O'Brien
Councillor Ngapera Rangiaho
Councillor Nándor Tánczos

B Delegations to the Infrastructure and Planning Standing Committee - *Tuku Mahi ki te Komiti*

To monitor and advise on the implementation of Council's Infrastructure Strategy, capital works programme, operational service delivery, and related policy and bylaws.

Specific functions and delegations:

a. Monitor the operational performance of Council's activities and services against approved levels of service.
b. To monitor the progress of projects in Council's capital works programme and have input into and make decisions on the development of proposals, options and costs of projects.
c. Approval of tenders and contracts that exceed the level of staff delegations.
d. Consider and approve changes to service delivery arrangements arising from the service delivery reviews required under section 17A LGA 2002 that are referred to the Committee by the Chief Executive.
e. Monitor the development and implementation of associated Central Government Reform programmes including the transition programme for Three Waters reform.
f. Develop and review associated bylaws (Note: the Council cannot delegate to a Committee to "make" (adopt) a bylaw).
g. Develop, review and approve strategies, policies and plans on matters related to the activities of this Committee (Note: the Council cannot delegate to a Committee the adoption of policies associated with the Long-term Plan).
h. Approve Council submissions to Central Government, Councils and other organisations including submissions to any plan changes or policy statements on matters related to the activities of this Committee.

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1 Prayer - *Karakia*

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2 Meeting Notices - *Ngā Pānui o te hui*

1. Live Streaming

The Whakatāne District Council livestreams Council and Standing Committee meetings held in Tōtara Room, within the Council building. The webcast will live stream directly to Council's YouTube channel in real time. The purpose of streaming meetings live is to encourage transparency of Council meetings.

Welcome to members of the public who have joined online and to those within the public gallery.

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2. Health and Safety

In case of an emergency, please follow the building wardens or make your way to the nearest exit. The meeting point is located at Peace Park on Boon Street.

Bathroom facilities are located opposite the Chambers Foyer entrance (the entrance off Margaret Mahy Court).

3. Other

3 Apologies - *Te hunga kāore i tae*

No apologies were recorded at the time of compiling the agenda.

4 Acknowledgements / Tributes - *Ngā mihimihi*

An opportunity for members to recognise achievements, to notify of events, or to pay tribute to an occasion of importance.

5 Conflicts of Interest - *Ngākau kōnatunatu*

Members are reminded of the need to stand aside from decision making when a conflict arises between their role as an elected member and any private or other external interests they might have. Elected Members are also reminded to update their register of interests when changes occur.

The register of interest can be viewed on the Council website.

1. Financial Conflict

- Members present must declare any direct or indirect financial interest that they hold in any matter being discussed at the meeting, other than an interest that they hold in common with the public.
- Members cannot take part in the discussion, nor can they vote on any matter in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest, unless with an approved exception.
- Members with a financial interest should physically withdraw themselves from the table. If the meeting is public excluded, members should leave the room.

2. Non-Financial Conflict

- If a member considers that they have a non-financial conflict of interest in a matter they must not take part in the discussions about that matter or any subsequent vote.
- Members with a non-financial interest must leave the table when the matter is considered but are not required to leave the room.

6 Public Participation - *Wānanga Tūmatanui*

6.1 Public Forum - *Wānanga Tūmatanui*

The Council has set aside time for members of the public to speak in the public forum at the commencement of each meeting. Each speaker during the forum may speak for five minutes. Permission of the Chairperson is required for any person wishing to speak during the public forum.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Elected members may ask questions of speakers. Questions are to be confined to obtaining information or clarification on matters raised by a speaker.

6.2 Deputations - *Ngā Whakapuaki Whaitake*

A deputation enables a person, group or organisation to make a presentation to Community Board on a matter or matters covered by their terms of reference. Deputations should be approved by the Chairperson, or an official with delegated authority, five working days before the meeting. Deputations may be heard at the commencement of the meeting or at the time that the relevant agenda item is being considered. No more than two speakers can speak on behalf of an organisation's deputation. Speakers can speak for up to 5 minutes, or with the permission of the Chairperson, a longer timeframe may be allocated.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Elected members may ask questions of speakers. Questions are to be confined to obtaining information or clarification on matters raised by the deputation.

7 Confirmation of Minutes - *Te whakaaetanga o ngā meneti o te hui*

The minutes from the Infrastructure and Planning Committee meeting held Thursday, 14 November 2024 can be viewed via the Council website.

Click on the link below in order to view the 'unconfirmed minutes'.

- Unconfirmed Minutes - Infrastructure and Planning Committee 24 July 2025

8 Reports - *Ngā Pūrongo*

8.1 Matatā Wastewater – Mayor's Taskforce for Waters

To:	**Infrastructure and Planning Committee Meeting**
Meeting Date:	**Thursday, 4 September 2025**
Author:	**Dr V. Luca / Mayor - Koromatua**
Reference:	**A2951779**

1. Reason for the report - *Te Take mō tēnei rīpoata*

The purpose of the report is to provide an assessment from the Mayor's Taskforce for Waters (MTFW) of the baseline environmental monitoring programme and the public health risks.

2. Recommendations - *Tohutohu akiaki*

THAT the Matatā Wastewater – Mayor's Taskforce for Waters report be **received**.

3. Background - *He tirohanga whakamuri*

The MTFW was initiated by me and formalised by Council resolution on 1 April 2025. The composition of the group has been given in my latest Mayoral Report. The group for the most part comprises members with significant chemical engineering backgrounds. Three have PhDs in the discipline.

The meeting to address the Matatā baseline monitoring that is the main subject of this report was attended by WDC staff - General Manager Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure David Bewley, Consultant Policy Planning and Consent Compliance Glenn Cooper, Team Leader Three Waters Asset Management Michael Van Tilburg, Senior Water Consents Programme Planner Jessica Sinclair and Manager Policy Planning and Consents Nicholas Woodley. The meetings thus far have been characterised by free and forthright conversation. All participants have indicated that they very much enjoy participating.

The first MTFW meeting to address Matatā wastewater was held on 22 July 2025, and the focus was to evaluate the baseline environmental monitoring programme results and focus on assessing the potential for adverse health effects. The group was provided all reports and data necessary to come to conclusions.

Here I will provide a consolidated view of the assessment by the group. The consensus that has emerged is that based on the data obtained to date there is little risk to human health from bacterial contamination around the Matatā Village.

3.1. Mayor's Taskforce for Water

It is expected that the MTFW will eventually address the following three questions:

1. Is there a significant human health risk that needs to be addressed? If there is, then what is the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to deal with it?
2. Is Matatā village a suitable place for infill development? If so, how is the increased wastewater generation to be handled?
3. Is Matatā a suitable place for green-fields development? That development would occur to the east of the main settlement, on or close to where there are four active faults.

Due to time constraints, the meeting on 22 July 2025 focused on question 1.

It was emphasised that I applauded the fact that Whakatāne District Council took the approach to establishing the baseline environmental state of the Matatā village zone. This is because it is a fundamental prerequisite to making a robust public health assessment and the need case.

I informed the meeting that I became aware early during the programme that there were certain inconsistencies in the interpretation of results between staff and consultants and my interpretations.

Results of the monitoring programme were reported to elected members as they came in over the course of the triennium. In order to review the data, I felt it was necessary to piece these results together in one report in order to get a complete picture. I produced a review of the data in July 2024 (my review is available on request) and shared it with the Environmental Science team leader at ESR, Dr Brent Gilpin, for comment.

Gilpin is an internationally recognised expert in environmental microbiology. His research profile, and list of peer-reviewed publications can be viewed here . Gilpin in turn shared with me an ESR report entitled Matata Public Health Risk Assessment (Report CSC12009, June 2012) which I had not previously seen. The report had been commissioned by the Council and made conclusions such as the following:

'The overall conclusion of this report is ***that there is not a compelling case for the introduction of a reticulated sewage disposal system in Matata on the basis of risks to human health****.'*

This result was largely consistent with my own assessment of new data obtained more than a decade after this ESR report was written. Gilpin acknowledged the alignment by e-mail and in phone conversations.

At my initial request, and following endorsement by the Council, a Request For Proposal (RFP) was prepared for the peer review of my monitoring data review. ESR turned out to be the chosen reviewers.

The technical reviewers were: Dr Brent Gilpin (Senior Science Leader), Dr Louise Weaver (Science Leader), Dr Sarah Coxon (Scientist) and Bronwyn Humphries (Senior Groundwater Scientist).

As part of the review ESR was provided the following reports that were still in preparation at the time the RFP was issued:

[1] Stewart, M. Update of surface water quality state (Nov 21 to May 24) for Matatā WWTP project and comparison to guidelines. 87 pp, Report WKD2301, September 2024. Streamlined Environmental Ltd .

[2] Stott, R. Matatā assessment of environmental effects: Findings from Faecal source tracking. Aquatic Pollution Group, NIWA, Hamilton. 5 September 2024.

[3] Boam, E., Pattle, A. Matatā assessment of environmental effects: Findings from Faecal source tracking. Pattle-Delamore Partners Ltd., August 2024.

The 24-page ESR peer review was issued in October 2024. Only the first paragraph was shared with the Council in the Matatā Wastewater Project Update report (page 64) presented at the Infrastructure & Planning Committee report of Thursday, 14 November 2024.

'ESR are in agreement with the overall conclusions made in the following reports: Stewart (2024), Boam and Pattle (2024) and Stott (2024). Further analysis of existing data, or additional monitoring could better characterise and quantify the contaminants present in Matatā and their impact. However, ESR states that additional monitoring and analysis would not materially change the overall conclusions.'

The nuance is clear from statements such as the following that appear toward the end of the review:

'*We also note that many communities with reticulated sewage networks, continue to have human faecal contamination of surface water bodies, and increases in nutrients. Within these reticulated communities the environmental impacts can be reduced, but they will not be eliminated*.'

Rather than pass my review onto the MTFW, a summary of results was initially provided in PowerPoint format. This was done in order not to bias views and give the group the best chance of making its own objective assessments. Subsequently, my review and the ESR peer review and all of the above reports were provided.

The peer review and the 2012 ESR review clearly noted that the Matatā Hotel was the focus of human faecal contamination.

It is critical to note that after the peer-review was completed it came to light that the Matatā Hotel OSET system was replaced in May 2023, well after commencement of the monitoring programme. This strongly influences the interpretation of results. I stress that the peer review is fairly nuanced.

Following careful consideration, the view of the MTFW has converged on there not being a serious human health risk in the Matatā village based on the results to date. The views of members addressing question 1 are contained in Appendix A.

It is well appreciated in scientific literature that Faecal Indicator Bacteria (FIB) counting via culturing methods is non-specific. Also, since it is well known that bacteria such as E. coli can grow in the natural environment, I believe these traditional counting methods to be of limited value. Steve Nothrop has put some additional context around that and how environmental conditions can strongly influence upstream and downstream FIB counts.

In my opinion a more accurate picture of contamination in the area is contained in the Microbial Source Tracking (MST) (also known as Faecal Source Tracking, FST) data obtained through modern Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) techniques. In layman's terms PCR amplifies DNA making a sample easier to analyse, and identification of the source of the bacteria possible. That is, whether the bacteria are of human or animal origin, and what animal. My assessment is that PCR techniques are revolutionising this field of environmental microbiology.

The data obtained as part of the environmental baseline monitoring programme that WDC has been running clearly shows that there are modest levels of FIB in the three streams (Awatarariki, Waimea and Waitepuru). However, most of the time the levels upstream of the Matatā village are significantly higher than downstream. There seems to be some seasonal dependence with higher upstream FIB counts compared to downstream during the summer months and the inverse during winter.

The early FIB monitoring that was initiated in spring 2021 clearly showed that most bacterial contamination was focused around the Matatā Hotel. That includes the downstream Waimea and the drains that run along the Western boundary of the Hotel's drainage field.

As mentioned, what was never revealed to the ESR peer reviewers was that the Hotel's OSET system was replaced in the latter half of the monitoring programme around May 2023. Subsequent to that MST shows a clear reduction in human bacterial load down to the Limit of Detection (LOD) or near LOD.

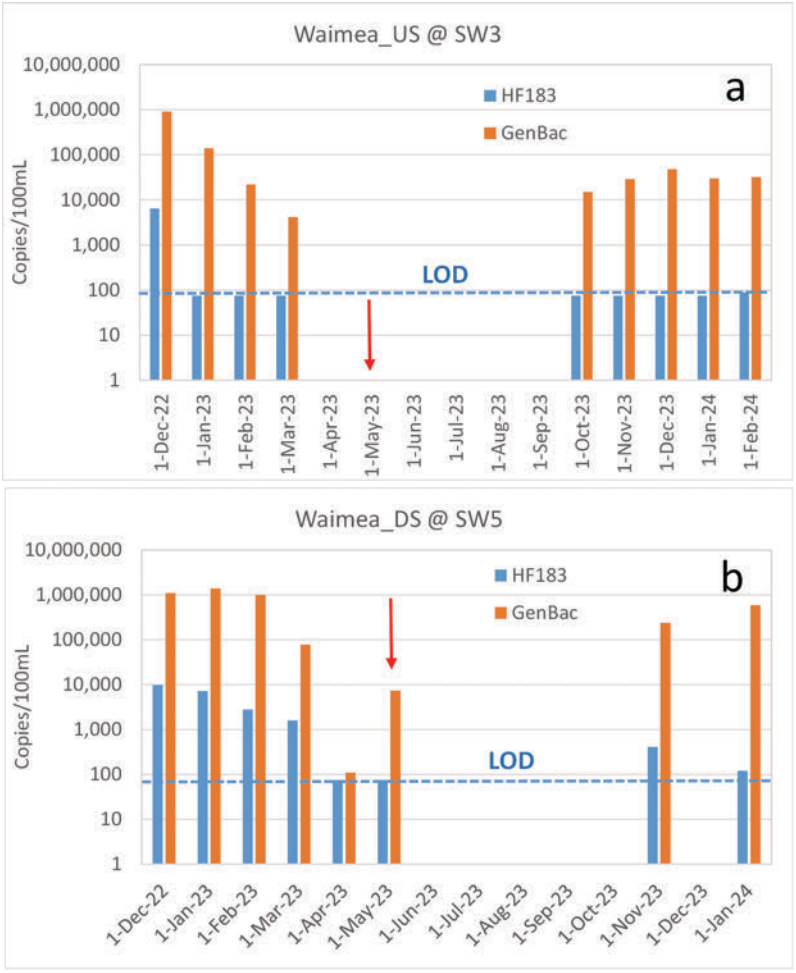


Figure 1. Marker concentrations in copies/100mL for general bacteriodales and human marker HF183 over the monitoring period. Note the log scale. Values on the LOD line are insignificant.

Figure 1 shows that the general bacterial marker (GenBac) is often 2-3 orders of magnitude higher in concentration than human markers over the measurement period. **This means that animal-derived bacteria are far more dominant in the Matatā stream environment than human-derived bacteria.**

I shared my thoughts about the MST data, in particular Figure 1 relating to the Waimea Stream monitoring, with Gilpin on 10 March 2025 and below is how he responded. Gilpin was unable to say that I am wrong.

"The shortcomings of using FIB counts to infer human source-term are well known and are mainly associated with the non-specific nature of these counts. That is, cultivation and counting methods do not discriminate human from animal contamination. Although FIB counting has traditionally been

used to infer the degree of human contamination in a water shed I consider it dangerous to infer too much from FIB counts. Relatively new PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) techniques can nowadays be used for FST and represent a significant advance. The technique is the same as is used for detecting COVID-19 virus and is now revolutionizing Environmental Microbiology. In the case of Matatā the results are clear. After replacement of the Matatā Hotel OSET system, contamination problems have largely disappeared."

Dr Steve Nothrop has rightly pointed out that stream ecology is important in determining bacterial populations. Streams running through the urban environment are subject to different nutrient fluxes compared to upstream of the village. For instance, Nitrogen (N) and Phosphate (P) can enter streams in the urban zone through fertiliser use, weed spraying and so on. The most common herbicide, Glyphosate, is an amino-phosphate compound so although it kills weeds in the short-term, it is adding N and P. Therefore, its use, especially along stream banks could promote plant growth long-term. Plants are providing the sugars that feed bacteria.

Nothrop has pointed out that bacterial ecology in the streams is very complex and that little or no consideration has been given to this in the reports or peer review. Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) has been measured and was generally below detection limit. When BOD is this low it should be used with caution. Dissolved Organic Carbon (DOC) is an important energy and nutrient source for stream ecosystems and has not been measured. DOC captures grass sugars that provide food to bacteria and drives microbial populations that support the entire aquatic food web.

Nothrop, an expert in wastewater treatment, has pointed out that a properly operating OSET system comprising the tank/s and any associated tertiary treatment, together with associated drainage field can remove 99.99% of E. coli via the action of soil aerobes and worms in unsaturated soil.

According to the US EPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual (2002) [1]. 'The construction and maintenance costs of onsite/decentralized systems can be significantly lower, especially in low-density residential areas, making them an attractive alternative for small towns, suburban developments, remote school and institutional facilities, and rural regions. Onsite/decentralized wastewater treatment systems also avoid potentially large transfers of water from one watershed to another via centralized collection and treatment (USEPA, 1997)'.

The manual also suggested - and I totally agree - that performance-based management approaches are superior to prescriptive requirements for system design, siting, and operation [1].

Regarding what is done in regard to the potential for densification of the village (question 2) or green-fields development to the east of the village (question 3), it needs to be pointed out that the OSET field has advanced a lot in the past few decades. More sophisticated OSET systems can require smaller drain fields. Nothrop's commentary around this is of course highly relevant.

[1] US EPA, Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual. 2002.

4. Conclusion

The three streams and drains (53 Arawa Street) around Matatā village and the lagoon show signs of animal-derived bacterial contamination, especially at certain times of the year. Prior to the replacement of the Matatā Hotel OSET system there was signs of human faecal contamination at the lower Waimea and associated drains.

Usually, it is the human marker HF183 (most commonly used in the literature) that shows the highest concentration but this is always many orders of magnitude lower than the GenBac marker. This suggests that even if all human contamination is removed there will always be significant concentrations of FIB in the area.

After replacement of the Hotel OSET system the concentration of the HF183 marker (copies/100mL) effectively drops close to or below the Limit of Detection (LOD). At the 53 Arawa Street drain all markers remain below the HF183 marker concentration.

All members of the MTFW group agree that current contamination at the Matatā village is not serious.

The question of what needs to be done with wastewater systems in the Matatā village should a decision be made to rezone to permit densification remains a matter for consideration. There are certainly advanced OSET systems that can cope with additional dwellings being added to existing 1000 m2 blocks and yield good performance. Some state-of-the-art OSET systems require smaller drainage fields.

Decisions regarding how to proceed in the event that densification of the village is considered viable, and the best options to consider, need to be taken carefully and not rushed. This will be considered at a forthcoming meeting of the MTFW.

Attached to this report:

- Appendix A - MTFW feedback on Tuesday 22 July 2025 meeting

8.1.1 MTFW Report Appendix A

Appendix A: MTFW feedback on Tuesday 22 July 2025 meeting

1. Feedback from Derek Caudwell

[redacted]

Morning Victor,

I am still not clear what you are asking from the Group in relation to Matatā, here is my summary of the information received (in the various reports and verbally) in case it is of use:

- I agree that the sampling/analysis does not show statistical evidence of the township being a significant contributor to the pollution markers tested in the downstream receiving environments
- Hence, I would conclude there is no strong macro environmental driver to warrant a switch in treatment systems
- Economic drivers discussed for shifting away from septic tanks include intensification (ie smaller plot sizes c. 400m2) or scale from more houses (unclear at what point this might occur and requires costing of the system proposed and an NPV analysis of the different systems to determine where the economic cutover may occur). There does not appear to be community support or Council support at this time for either growth approach with the priority growth area being Awakeri.
- There appears to be sufficient anecdotal and location specific evidence of problems (from multiple sources) with the performance of septic systems creating localised pollution to warrant taking an enhanced asset management wastewater approach to the township, this may include:
    - Formalising a regular environmental monitoring and testing regime
    - Establishing a maintenance zone
    - Remedial actions and protection measures on both private and public land to minimise ingress into groundwater systems (eg buffer zones with suitable planting and soil/sand/pumice etc)
    - Considering whether there are ways Council can support to improve landowner compliance (eg targeted rate for town-wide septic waste services or replacement systems, providing plants etc)
    - Monitor growth indicators such as consents/population for signs the township is becoming a satellite/commuter location

Kind regards
Derek

2. Feedback from Steve Nothrop

[redacted]

[redacted]

Thanks Victor,

Agree with insignificant difference between upstream and downstream e.coli. Some contributions to stream e.coli are likely:

- stream/runoff sediment is an active medium for e.coli growth, and transports e.coli through the waterway - just like in figures 4 and 6 of your report
- As discussed, deeper stream water increases the thickness of the biologically active bottom sediment layer which can reduce stream dissolved oxygen due to the action of aerobic bacteria, particularly in summer.
- stream bank grasses contribute significant sugars for primary production including algae and e.coli growth. Dissolved organic carbon mg/l could provide some insight i.e. filtered through 0.22 micron filter.
- DRP of >0.01mg/l supports algae, bacteria, and e.coli growth - streams are generally above this level

Properly designed septic tanks provide sufficient primary solids, grease, and fat removals to enable secondary biological treatment; the 2 meter thick unsaturated aerobic soil drainage trench is the secondary biological treatment system.

- It's unlikely that effluent via a properly operating drainage trench contains e.coli i.e., e.coli removals are generally 99.99% via the action of soil aerobes and worms in unsaturated soil. Refer to tables 3.18 & 3.19 in the USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems manual provides some guidance: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-06/documents/2004_07_07_septics_septic_2002_osdm_all.pdf
- The BOPRC OSET plan section 5.2 rule 1 e iii requires greater than 2 meters between drainage trench and seasonal high groundwater mark https://www.boprc.govt.nz/media/424961/operative-oset-plan-2006-clear-copy-incorporating-pc2-permanent-version-small-website-no-maps-pdf-updated-22-04-15.pdf

We discussed the possibility of improving current septic systems where seeps/perched groundwater are within the drainage field. The USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems manual provides some guidance: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-06/documents/2004_07_07_septics_septic_2002_osdm_all.pdf

- Section 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 provide simple design options to manage perched water tables - mounds or curtain drains(a good use of local pumice)
- Clogged drainage trenches may be too wide i.e. effluent velocity keeps trenches from blocking

Cheers,
Steve

3. Feedback from Tyrone Newson

[redacted]

8.1.1 MTFW Report Appendix A(Cont.)

[redacted]

Kia ora all,

Apologies for my delay in reply/summation. I am of the view that a targeted solution for Matata is warranted based on the risk profile presented in the reports to date, and that the spatial plan could/should allow growth in Matata but at a density/intensification level where land based disposal systems can still be implemented.

I consider the above approach has several advantages:

1. Existing ratepayers in the identified risk areas pay for the risk associated with their properties only.
2. Current/existing ratepayers are not subsiding future ratepayers systems/connections which may or may not occur in eth foreseeable future.
3. Allows Council to target growth areas with proximity to existing systems which are also scalable and connectable scale in the future such as Awakeri.

I am open to having another session to agree on what this could look like in practice.

Naku noa, na

4. Feedback from Peter Minten

[redacted]

Morning Victor

Waste water treatment is not an expertise of mine. In the nineties of the last century I was limited involved with establishing an anaerobic WTP for the papermill I worked for at that time. Due to the very limited footprint of anaerobic plant that was (is) the main choice in a country like The Netherlands for waste water treatment. But with listening to the others and asking for some clarification my comments are:

- The data, information and reports presented to me doesn't convince me that we have a serious enough problem in Matata which warrants a significant investment in a reticulated wastewater treatment.

- I agree with Tyrone's verbal statement that it is a local problem to be solved locally. My suggestion would be establishing an OSET maintenance zone and implementing actions at the (district;regional) council to oversee it.
- My reasoning is that the co-designed proposed solution means a new or modified septic tank as a primary solids clarifier should be installed but we haven't been dealing with the old problem: poor maintenance of it. In my opinion the maintenance of that tank remains the responsibility of the property owner and the role of the council is only to enforce compliance.
- But with saying that, for more than 2 decades the political narrative has been about a reticulated ww treatment so it is difficult to change that, but that requires political courage. A hidden motive could be that with maintaining the status quo of OSET several property owners can't subdivide if that was one of their motivations behind pushing for a reticulated system. Also it looked to me that not enough research has gone into whether the geology and soil structure in Matata as a condition for a proper functioning of a primary solids clarifier in regardless whether the liquid is concentrated to pump it out for 2nd stage treatment offsite or is discharged on the land.

Peter Minten

5. Feedback from Graeme Weston

[redacted]

Subject: No compelling case for proceeding with the Matatā wastewater reticulation project

Only one drain (near Matatā Hotel) showed evidence of untreated human waste - has work been done in this area?
Do I need to seek OIA request to WDC?
“Please provide records, email correspondence, inspection reports, or water quality data regarding any work undertaken since 2024 on the Clarke Street (SW13) drain area, including septic tank interventions, drain maintenance, and water sampling results.”

Based on the evidence presented in the two documents provided by Dr. Victor Luca and the ESR 2012 Public Health Risk Assessment, there is **no compelling case for proceeding with the Matatā wastewater reticulation project** purely on the grounds of **public health risk**.
Key Points from the ESR 2012 Report:

- **Low disease burden**: No outbreaks and a low rate of notifiable waterborne diseases over 10 years.
- **Stream contamination**: Some elevated E. coli levels were found, particularly in the Clarke Street drain and near the Matatā Hotel, but faecal source tracking suggests most contaminants are not from raw human sewage.
- **Lagoon contamination**: Predominantly from wildfowl, not septic tanks.
- **Groundwater**: Very low E. coli levels; no evidence of contamination.
- **Residents’ survey**: A minority report problems with their systems, and there is no community consensus on the need for reticulation.

8.1.1 MTFW Report Appendix A(Cont.)

Dr. Luca's 2024 Review:

- Reinforces the above findings.
- Emphasizes that the scientific evidence presented to date does not support a significant health or environmental crisis justifying the high capital cost of full reticulation.
- Suggests that maintenance, upgrades, and monitoring of existing onsite systems may be a more proportionate response.

Conclusion:
The proposed project should **not proceed** unless driven by:

- **Non-health-related objectives** (e.g. land development, economic strategy).
- **Demonstrated local community support** with a willingness to bear increased costs.
- **Evidence of widespread system failure**, which is not currently available.

Instead, the focus should be on:

- Site-specific assessments.
- Remediation of problematic systems (e.g. near Clarke Street).
- Education and monitoring to maintain system performance.

This aligns with best-practice environmental health policy: interventions should be **evidence-based**, **proportionate**, and **cost-effective**.

What are the project Drivers:

Driver	Details	Justification
Public Health	Initially a driver in 2004–2005; used to apply for SWSS funding.	**Undermined** by ESR and Luca findings.
Environmental Concerns	E. coli found in some waterways.	Mostly non-human origin; isolated hotspots not systemic.
Iwi/Cultural Values	Iwi co-design group (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Rangitihi, Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau) emphasizes mauri protection.	**Important driver**, but needs to be balanced with scientific evidence.
Land Development and Economic Aspirations	Some see reticulation as enabling subdivision and intensification.	A legitimate planning goal—but not a public health necessity.

However, there is an alternative benefiting the wider community, refer document attached.

[redacted]

8.2 Matatā Wastewater Project Update – August 2025

To:	**Infrastructure and Planning Committee**
Date:	**Thursday, 4 September 2025**
Author:	**N Woodley / Manager Policy Planning and Consents** **J Joyce / Project Manager**
Authoriser:	**D Bewley / GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure**
Reference:	**A2934767**

1. Reason for the report - *Te Take mō tēnei rīpoata*

The purpose of this report is to outline key wastewater system options for the Matatā Wastewater Project.

2. Recommendations - *Tohutohu akiaki*

1. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **receive** the Matatā Wastewater Project update August 2025 report; and
2. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **notes** the recommended wastewater system option for Matatā from the Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō Te Arawa Co-design Group is Option 3 Moderate/Intermediate scale; and
3. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **endorses** a preferred wastewater system option for Matatā being either:

    a. Option 1: Maintenance zone and advising the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, and informing our partners, that a reticulated wastewater system for Matatā will not be pursued.

    b. Option 2: Large/Advanced scale and endorse the Matatā Wastewater Project moving to the consenting strategy development phase with this preferred option.

    c. Option 3: Moderate/Intermediate scale and endorse the Matatā Wastewater Project moving to the consenting strategy development phase with this preferred option.

3. Background - *He tirohanga whakamuri*

Matatā currently does not have a reticulated wastewater scheme, which means that individual landowners are reliant on their existing on-site septic tank system arrangements. The Council, supported by the Ministry of Health and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, has a long history of attempts to implement a reticulated wastewater system. The community is currently serviced by individual septic tanks, which are causing a number of issues

Since 2021, a co-design led project has been underway, supported by Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō Te Arawa Co-design Group and a project technical team, tasked with determining a recommended solution for issues associated with the current wastewater system (septic tanks).

Through the Council's 2021-31 Long Term Plan (LTP) and 2024-24 LTP, Council has committed to a project to deliver a wastewater solution for Matatā as a matter of priority and implementing the solution as soon as practicably feasible, recognising community, legislative and funding requirements.

3.1. History of Decisions

2004 - 2011 **Early Funding & Proposals**	• Ministry of Health 'Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme' $6.7M funding approved in 2004 due to health risks posed by septic tank use in Matatā.
2013 **Council Decision**	• Full reticulation confirmed (84% community support).
2014 - 2015 **Consenting and Appeals**	• Council proposed wastewater treatment plant and land application field (LAF) on Māori land and a council reserve in Matatā to replace standalone septic tank treatment. • Consent granted and then appealed. • Environment Court partially granted the appeal, revoking designations and resource consents for the Plant and postponing decisions on the LAF.
2015–2017 **Integrated Project**	• Following the Environment Court decision, Council agreed to explore alternative wastewater solutions for Matatā and developed the Integrated Wastewater Project (pipe to Whakatāne). • BOPRC confirmed contamination and supported the need for reticulation. • The Project was developed with limited input from tangata whenua. • Funding and consenting issues stalled progress. • The Edgecumbe flood caused further delays.
2018 **Maintenance Zone & Bay of Plenty OSET Plan Change**	• Toi Te Ora Public Health requested Matatā be recognised as a Maintenance Zone to provide for greater maintenance and inspection requirements • BOPRC drafted Plan Change 14. However, this was later deferred due to a desire to integrate changes required to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management. • BOPRC and Ministry of Health indicated to Council that a solution needs to be decided.
2020 – Present **Co-Design Approach**	• Recognition in the 2021-31 and 2024-34 LTPs as a Council high priority project. • Council agreed to commence a new co-design project in 2021.

	• Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō Te Arawa Co-Design Group established. • Technical work completed to support option analysis.

4. Discussion – Kōrerorero

4.1. Project Outcomes and Principles

The project has been guided by a number of overarching project outcomes and principles including:

4.1.1. Environmental and public health outcomes

The environment plays a big part in people's health and well-being. An improved system will improve water quality and ecology in local rivers, drains, Te Awa o Te Atua (Matatā lagoon), and the Tarawera Awa. It will also contribute to restoring ground and surface water impacts caused by people's wastewater septic tanks and high groundwater.

In 2021, the Council commissioned an Environmental Monitoring Programme ("EMP") to characterise the existing environment and establish a baseline for assessing effects on receiving environments (current and future). The programme involved monthly monitoring of Matatā streams (upstream and downstream), the lagoon, town drains, seeps, the Tarawera River, and other sites within the Awakaponga catchment, spanning 26 surface water sites. Groundwater monitoring began with seven deep bores, with five additional shallow bores later installed to improve understanding of groundwater quality and flow. This represents the most comprehensive EMP the Council has undertaken to date and the results has been reviewed by highly regarded scientists actively involved in wastewater projects nationally, including those with particular expertise in microbiology and public health risks from wastewater disposal.

Their reports have found that surface waters, particularly in downstream stream reaches and drains, are affected by elevated nutrients and microbiological contamination, including confirmed human faecal markers. Groundwater investigations suggest that perched and shallow groundwater pathways may facilitate contaminant transport to surface water, although deeper groundwater sites appear less affected. The detection of human-sourced contamination at several monitoring locations, alongside indications of general faecal pollution in shallow groundwater, suggests that on-site wastewater systems are contributing to localised environmental effects.

A subsequent peer review by Environmental Science and Research (ESR) supported the overall conclusions of these reports and noted that growth in Matatā would require a reticulated wastewater system. This peer review supersedes an earlier 2012 review by ESR, which was based on a much more limited programme of environmental monitoring and concluded at the time that there was not a compelling case for a wastewater scheme.

For brevity, a summary of the environmental monitoring reports and peer review which was prepared in July 2025 for the Mayor's Taskforce for Waters, is attached to this report (Appendix A).

4.1.2. Cultural outcomes and consistency with Te Ao Māori principles

Ngāti Awa, Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau and Ngāti Rangitihi all share the aspiration of safeguarding the taiao within the Matatā rohe. Priority is given to Tarawera Awa ki te awa o te Atua when considering restoration and protection. The implementation of a reticulated wastewater system in Matatā would facilitate the restoration of the mauri of Tarawera Awa and, furthermore, protect the cultural landscape, which is of the utmost importance to iwi.

The restoration of the Mauri of Tarawera Awa ki Te Awa o Te Atua is at the heart of Ngāti Rangitihi's 2022 Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlement with the Crown. The Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group, has been established to support, co-ordinate and promote the integrated restoration of the mauri of the catchment. The creation and execution of the Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Document (the Strategy Document) is their primary focus.

4.1.3. Supporting Whakatane District's and Mana Whenua growth aspirations

Matatā is identified as a 'Priority Growth Area' in the Our Places - Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan 2025. The Spital Plan notes the close proximity of Matatā to other growth areas such as Pūtauaki Trust Industrial Area in Kawerau, business development at Rangiuru, and continued growth within Whakatāne township, making Matatā a likely place for people to want to live, work and play. Through the development of the Matatā Wastewater Project, the three local iwi and hapū have also indicated their aspirations for papakāinga development on their land, to support bringing whānau home to Matatā, as well as encourage future economic development opportunities.

4.1.4. Sustainable and resilient outcomes

Central to managing hazard risks and building resilience is ensuring we have the right infrastructure in place, which is safe, supports community wellbeing and can respond to emerging risks such as climate change. By making sure investment is made up front with a short, medium and long-term view in mind, assets will be built that can support future generations.

4.1.5. Long term growth and futureproofing outcomes

The Whakatāne District and Eastern Bay of Plenty are growing, and with an increase in residents wanting to live here, we need to ensure we have the right infrastructure in place to support growth. Council must start laying the foundations now but also look to the future and prepare and plan for the next 20, 50 and even 100 years, to ensure future generations have a place they are proud to call home, with appropriate infrastructure supporting them.

4.2. Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy

The restoration of the Mauri of Tarawera Awa ki Te Awa o Te Atua is at the heart of Ngāti Rangitihi's 2022 Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlement with the Crown. The Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy Group (TARSG), which was established as part of Ngāti Rangitihi's historical claims, is comprised of one representative from each of the four iwi with an interest in the awa (Ngāti Rangitihi, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Mākino and Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau), and one representative from each of the three relevant local authorities, and Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

They exist to support, coordinate and promote the integrated restoration of the mauri of the Tarawera awa catchment. The creation and execution of the TARSG Strategy Document is their primary focus.

The strategy focuses on three core themes that inform a series of strategic objectives:

- **Resilient Taiao** — restoring healthy water flows and biodiversity and embedding mātauranga Māori alongside conventional science in decision-making.
- **Strong Relationships** — honouring cultural connection, fostering collective purpose, and deepening relationships with the awa.
- **Thriving Ecosystems and Communities** — supporting sustainable kai gathering, clean and safe waterways, vibrant local economies, and recognition of the awa as a valued visitor destination – for all.

Ngāti Rangitihi, Ngāti Mākino, Ngāti Awa and Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau take seriously the promise and commitment to the Tarawera awa and Te Awa o Te Atua reflected in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. However, as identified in the Strategy, the Crown is considered to be failing to live up to that promise through ongoing breaches that allow the continued degradation of the Tarawera Awa and Te Awa o te Atua. An example of this is the long-standing concern of septic tank failure in Matatā which contributes to declining water quality and ecology, elevating the urgency to develop a reticulated wastewater treatment system for Matatā.

TARSG supports the need to find an enduring solution to the wastewater issues in Matatā, and the co-design approach used to identify it, recognising the robust cultural and environmental lens that has been applied to every step of the process.

4.3. Our Places - Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan 2025

The Our Places – Eastern Bay Spatial Plan was adopted in 2025, as a collaborative, long-term vision guiding future growth across Whakatāne, Kawerau, and Ōpōtiki districts. Developed with iwi, hapū, local councils, regional authorities, and central government agencies, it provides a roadmap for accommodating approximately 12,000 additional residents, equating to about 5,500 new homes, over the next 30 years (to approx. 2055).

The plan addresses how towns might expand or intensify, where to facilitate housing (including papakāinga), where to restrict development (e.g. coastal or hazard-prone areas), and what infrastructure investments, such as roads, waters, and energy systems, are essential to support future communities while respecting natural and cultural assets.

4.3.1. Matatā

Matatā is identified as a 'Priority Growth Area' in the Spatial Plan.

The Spatial Plan notes *"Matatā's future will be influenced by population growth driven by nearby employment hubs. Increased activity in the Pūtauaki Trust Industrial Area in Kawerau, business development at Rangiuru (east of Pāpāmoa), and continued growth within Whakatāne township are expected to create new employment opportunities within a reasonable commuting distance (approximately 25 minutes). This will likely attract new residents to Matatā, requiring a coordinated and sustainable approach to township development. As a gateway to the Eastern Bay, the community has strong ambitions for local economic development and the development of eco-tourism opportunities."*

The Spatial Plan also identifies the need for a centralised wastewater treatment to enable growth aspirations as outlined in the following.

"The residential zone in the Whakatāne District Plan for Matatā is larger than the current developed urban footprint. Subject to the development of a reticulated wastewater system, the town is anticipated to grow from approximately 260 homes to 600 - 700 homes. The growth is expected to happen through a mixture of infill and subdivision of existing residential properties over the long term of 10 - 30 years."

Priority Growth Areas in the Urban Central Corridor

Area	Timing	Notes
Awakeri	Short to medium term	Develop into an urban township of more than 2,000 dwelling units.
Whenua Māori west of Coastlands	Medium term	Explore opportunities based on Māori Land Trust and hapū interests, with substantial potential for the development of 190 ha.
Matatā	Medium to long term (Infill)	There is existing zoned capacity requiring centralised wastewater treatment to be realised and a long-term opportunity to expand eastward.
Putauaki Industrial Growth Area	Ongoing	Continued ongoing development.
Hukutaia	Ongoing	Develop into an urban community of 2,000 dwellings.
Whakatāne (Kopeopeo infill)	Ongoing	Ongoing infill of Whakatāne township in locations safe from natural hazards.

Note: Long term (10-30 years), Medium term (3-10 years), Short term (0-3 years)

Figure 1: Priority Growth Areas in the Urban Central Corridor (Part 3 Our Growth Plan, pg. 11, EBoP Spatial Plan)

4.3.2. Matatā Natural Hazard Risk

In assessing its suitability as a priority growth area, consideration was given to Matatā's exposure to natural hazards. Maps of key hazards are included in Appendix B to this report.

Debris flow risk has previously been addressed through Plan Change 1 to the Whakatāne District Plan, which introduced the Awatarariki Debris Flow Policy Area. This prevents residential development in the areas of high natural hazard risk on the Awatarariki Fanhead. Almost all of the current residential zone in Matatā is low/no risk from debris flows and landslides.

While there are some active faults within the general vicinity of Matatā, there are none within the residential zone where development could occur. There is a long-term opportunity for the town to expand eastwards beyond the current residential zone, but a full hazard assessment would be a prerequisite for any growth here, including consideration of the active faults in this area.

There is no flood risk from the Tarawera River and the forthcoming revised tsunami modelling shows large parts of Matatā outside of the evacuation area, including all of the undeveloped, residentially zoned land east of Pollen Street.

Overall, further development within the General Residential Zone in Matatā is appropriate from a natural hazards' perspective, subject to the existing controls of the Whakatāne District Plan.

5. Options analysis - *Ngā Kōwhiringa*

5.1. Phase 3 Technical Work

All Project Phase 3 technical workstreams are now complete. These include:

- Cultural Narrative.
- Environmental Monitoring Programme.
- Wastewater System Options Analysis.
- Land Options Analysis.

5.2. Options analysis and assessment

Comprehensive options analysis was undertaken throughout the technical workstreams, that assessed both non-reticulation and reticulation options against the agreed project objectives.

The co-design group worked closely together to ensure a collaborative partnership approach was applied to develop, consider, and assess Matatā wastewater options.

Relevant options were assessed against key project objectives and technical criteria including:

5.2.1. Project objectives

- Consistency with Te Ao Māori principles.
- Protect public health.
- Protect the local Matatā and receiving environment.
- Support Whakatane District's and mana whenua growth aspirations.

5.2.2. Technical Criteria

- Alignment with statutory planning frameworks and documents.
- Exposure to natural hazards.
- Greenhouse gas emissions.
- Climate change adaptability.
- Operability.
- Odour and septicity.

On 25 July 2024, the Infrastructure and Planning Committee received a detailed report, in confidence, which outlined the options analysis work undertaken to that point. This September 2025 report does not repeat this information but builds on this robust technical work.

Options assessment ruled out upgrading current individual septic tanks, including upgrading these to new modern technologies. There are many different types of aerated wastewater systems available in New Zealand, however treated wastewater from such aerated systems, or existing septic tanks, still requires an associated land application i.e. disposal fields, which are subject to planning rules and regulations. Analysis determined a number of current properties in Matatā do not have sufficient land size or are too close to existing waterways to meet planning regulations, as well as ground conditions being unsuitable for wastewater land application.

Costs to individual landowners of upgrading to new compliant systems, as per the BoP Regional Council's Onsite Effluent Treatment (OSET) Plan, would be significant. These options would also limit and constrain any future growth opportunities.

Alternative systems, such as regular tank emptying and natural alternatives i.e. composting toilets, were also assessed to not be suitable, due to land size requirements, operation issues, and costs to individual homeowners.

Reticulation was determined as the most effective and sustainable solution to achieve the project objectives.

5.3. Changes in project assumptions

Following the July 2024 report to Council, several key project assumptions have been refined due to completion of the EBoP Spatial Plan and emerging national waters legislation, to further inform the Project. These include:

	Key Changes	Implications
Spatial Plan	• Lowered growth scenario for Matatā: ~600–700 total homes within existing residential zone (10 - 30 year horizon). • Potential for further greenfield growth east of town.	• Infrastructure must be right-sized, phased, and affordable. • Growth assumptions impact funding, design, and scale. • Remains a high-priority, funded project in the LTP.
Wastewater Standards	• Sets a (draft) nutrient standard and loading rate for land application based on land class.	• Less influential as proposed discharge to land standards are similar to existing processes.
Waters Strategy	• Assesses broader opportunities to integrate and provide size or scale with other schemes.	• Edgecumbe treatment remains standalone with potential option to share land for application of treated wastewater.

5.3.1. Refined Matatā Wastewater Option (June 2025)

Due to the change in growth assumptions in late 2024, from a scenario of 1,500 homes in the draft Spatial Plan to 600 - 700 homes in the final Spatial Plan, the co-design group and project technical team undertook further options analysis work, to determine a refined option that is right sized for the community, aligned with approved growth assumptions, and meets affordability principles.

In June 2025, the Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō Te Arawa Co-design Group confirmed the refined option as the recommended option for the Matatā Wastewater Project. This option is outlined in this report as 'Option 3: Moderate / Intermediate scale'.

5.4. Council briefing July 2025

A technical briefing was undertaken with Council on 30 July 2025, where three main options were presented. Direction from the briefing was to bring the options to the next Infrastructure and Planning Committee on 4 September 2025.

5.5. Infrastructure and Planning Committee September 2025

The following sections focus on the following three options:

- Option 1: Maintenance Zone.
- Option 2: Large / advanced scale.
- Option 3: Moderate / intermediate scale.

5.6. Option 1: Maintenance Zone

5.6.1. Option 1 - Maintenance zone: Summary outline

If reticulation is not implemented, Matatā would be re-zoned as a 'Maintenance Zone' under the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's On-Site Effluent Treatment (OSET) Plan.

Under this Plan, a Maintenance Zone requires:

- Regular inspections and pump-out of all septic tanks.
- Ongoing compliance monitoring to ensure environmental standards are met.

If maintenance alone does not achieve the required improvements, property owners would likely, individually, be required to:

- Upgrade to aerated wastewater treatment systems (advanced on-site systems).
- Install compliant land application areas sized between 336–560 m² per dwelling (based on typical flows and soil type).
- Maintain minimum setbacks:
    - ≥20 m from any drinking water bore.
    - ≥20 m from surface water.

5.6.2. Option 1 - Maintenance zone: Summary pros and cons

- Due to small lot sizes and proximity to waterways, many sections in Matatā do not have sufficient space for compliant disposal areas.
- This means upgrading to aerated systems is not a viable long-term solution for many properties.
- As a result, the Maintenance Zone option is considered high risk and unlikely to meet regulatory requirements over the medium to long term.

Opportunities	Obstacles
• Improve environmental impacts if all OSET systems were made to be compliant. • Less cost to Council (if costs of upgrades sit with homeowners only).	• Significant costs to homeowners and/or Councils to comply with OSET standards. • Potentially significant consequences for an estimated 95 properties that do not meet the AS/NZS 1547:2012 requirements (OSET standards). • Growth is constrained by OSET rules. • Wouldn't meet requirements for the MoH subsidy of $6.7M which is required to be uplifted in the short term. • Does not meet iwi/hapū aspirations for economic development nor Tarawera Awa restoration as per Ngāti Rangitihi Deed of Settlement 2022. • Does not meet community expectations of having a reticulated system i.e., identified as a Council high priority project in LTPs.

5.6.3. Option 1 - Maintenance zone: Summary costs

Costs associated with this option would be subject to compliance and possible enforcement options via the Regional Council. These could be substantive for individual landowners.

Capital Costs	Operational Costs	Funding options
• Replacement septic tank systems with more advanced systems, estimated at $20,000 - $30,000 per household, plus consent fees. • New builds would require a compliant wastewater system. • Failure to meet new standards may include enforcement options by BOPRC.	• Ongoing costs to maintain compliant septic tank systems. • Failure to meet new standards may include enforcement options by BOPRC.	• Depending on the implementation process for a maintenance zone, costs would presumably remain the responsibility of individual homeowners. • Failure to meet new standards may include enforcement options by BOPRC.

5.7. Option 2: Large / advanced scale

5.7.1. Option 2 - Large / advanced scale: Summary outline

- Wastewater is treated centrally via an advanced biological treatment plant.
- The sludge requires further treatment/disposal.
- The liquid effluent is suitable for land-based disposal methods.

The large / advanced scale option (which was presented to the Council in July 2024) includes:

Reticulation	**Pressurised System**
Household Collection	STEP system
Treatment	Activated sludge and disinfection
Disposal	Low-rate land disposal
Key Assumptions • Based on a 1,200+ home high growth scenario. • Activated sludge and disinfectant treatment through an advanced scale plant and buildings on Tahi Hill Farm. • Requires purchase of additional land for disposal in the long term for a high growth scenario. Tahi Hill Farm, if optimised, could cater for approx. 700 homes.	

Example photo of large / advanced scale treatment plant (Rotoiti / Rotomā – Rotorua Lakes Council):

Option 2 - Large / advanced scale: Summary pros and cons

Opportunities	Obstacles
• Removes septic tank issues in Matatā.	• Significant project costs (capex and opex).

Opportunities	Obstacles
• High quality system including treatment and disposal methods. • Futureproofed for 1,500+ homes (high growth scenario over the long-term 30+ years). • Meet requirements to uplift MoH subsidy of $6.7M (required to be uplifted in the short term). • Supports iwi/hapū aspirations and Tarawera Awa restoration as per Ngāti Rangitihi Deed of Settlement 2022. • Aligns with community expectations (LTP priority).	• Complex operation requiring specialised staff. • Requires high growth scenario to meet funding affordability principles i.e., development contributions. • Requires a high level of external funding i.e. approx. $15M. • Development contributions recoverable over the long term, but only at the rate of growth which may be moderate.

5.7.2. Option 2 - Large / advanced scale: Summary costs

Capital Costs	Operational Costs
$32.5M (for 400 households). ***$42.2M (incl. 30% contingency).*** • $31M wastewater system. • $1.5M drainage to optimise Tahi Hil Farm. • There could be some additional optimisation for the total capex costs with technical work undertaken between 2023-2025.	**$640,000p.a.** (for 400 households).
Key Assumptions • Concept phase – high level costs only. • $2025 dollars (using 3% CCI compounding for two years on $2023). • Professional services included. • Does not include inflation nor servicing of debt which is contingent on project timing of implementation. • No contingency or unscheduled item allowance included. • Cost of land not included as already purchased.	

5.8. Option 3: Moderate / Intermediate scale

5.8.1. Option 3 - Moderate / intermediate scale: Summary outline

- Wastewater is treated centrally via a packaged medium technology, modular treatment plant.

- Low sludge.
- The liquid effluent is suitable for land-based disposal methods.

This option (presented to the Council workshop on 30 July 2025) includes:

Reticulation	**Pressurised System (same as option 2)**
Household Collection	STEP system (same as option 2)
Treatment	Packed bed bioreactor
Disposal	Low-rate land disposal (same as option 2)
Key Assumptions • Based on a 600-700 home moderate growth scenario. • Packed bed bioreactor treatment through modular inground built pods on Tahi Hill Farm. • Includes drainage and recontouring of Tahi Hill Farm to maximise area available for land application, avoiding the need for additional land.	

Example photos of moderate / intermediate scale modular treatment plant (Jacks Point, Queenstown):

5.8.2. Option 3 - Moderate / intermediate scale: Summary pros and cons

Opportunities	Obstacles
• Removes septic tank issues in Matatā. • High quality system including treatment and disposal methods. • Non-intrusive, easy to operate plant with majority buried below the ground. • Scalable for up to 700-home growth scenario over the long term, higher growth requires an additional system. • Meets requirements to uplift MoH subsidy of $6.7M (required to be uplifted in the short term). • More affordable capital and operational costs due to a simplified treatment system. • Co-investment opportunity with BoPRC at a smaller scale than previously requested. • Supports iwi/hapū aspirations and Tarawera Awa restoration as per Ngāti Rangitihi Deed of Settlement 2022. • Meets community expectations of having an affordable reticulated system (LTP priority).	• Large capital cost to implement in short term (although consistent with costs to build new wastewater systems in NZ).

5.8.3. Option 3 - Moderate / intermediate scale: Summary costs

Due to this option being modular in design, you can construct the treatment element in stages, aligned with growth. The below table outlines two different costing options - 400 homes or a Stage 1 construction scenario for 300 homes.

Capital Costs	Operational Costs
$27.5M (for 400 homes). ***$35.7M*** *(incl. 30% contingency).* • $26M wastewater system. • $1.5M drainage to optimise Tahi Hil Farm. **$22.0M** (for 300 homes – stage 1). ***$28.6M*** *(incl. 30% contingency).* • $20.5M wastewater system. • $1.5M drainage to optimise Tahi Hil Farm.	**$254,000p.a.** (for 400 homes). **$223,000p.a.** (for 300 homes).
Key Assumptions • Concept phase – high level costs only. • $2025 dollars. • Professional services included. • Does not include inflation nor servicing of debt which is contingent on project timing of implementation. • No contingency or unscheduled item allowance included. • Cost of land not included as already purchased. • Construction is modular so some capital costs will be recoverable through development contributions on new builds i.e., 260 current to 400 homes. *Note: Stage 1 total homes differs from the Council briefing information on 25 July, which was 260 homes, to include moderate growth and capacity from day one.*	

5.9. Optimise Tahi Hill Farm

In 2024, Council purchased Tahi Hill Farm, a 56-hectare dairy farm, for the site of a new treatment plant and application of treated wastewater to land. Due to high ground water levels, around 20% of the farm is currently suitable for year-round irrigation (including winter) which would only service approximately 150 homes.

Optimisation work has been undertaken by the project technical team to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the farm to be used all year round by:

- Increasing area of useable land by raising above winter ground level i.e., land reprofiling.
- Lowering ground water levels by improving site drainage.

Optimisation of the farm could achieve:

- Providing sufficient irrigable land for 400 homes, with options to further expand to accommodate 700 homes in the future.

- Reducing the need for extensive storage that would otherwise be required.
- Using the land to share the treatment load with the treatment plant.

5.9.1. Summary costs

Capital Costs	Operational Costs
$1.45M for drainage works to accommodate 400 homes (stage 1). ***$1.9M (incl. 30% contingency).*** Further earthworks and drainage would be required for 700 homes.	Any ongoing operational costs to service the drains would be determined through detailed design phase.
Key Assumptions • Concept phase – high level costs only. • $2025 dollars. • Professional services included. • Does not include inflation nor servicing of debt which is contingent on project timing of implementation. • No contingency or unscheduled item allowance included.	

5.10. Tahi Hill Farm natural hazards

Part of the Tahi Hill Farm initial technical investigations also looked at current natural hazards that may affect the project. To date, no significant hazards have been identified. Maps of key hazards pertaining to Tahi Hill Farm are included in Appendix C to this report.

If the Project was to move to the consenting strategy development phase, further investigations would be undertaken to ascertain any levels of risk and identify future mitigation steps if required.

6. Funding options

6.1. Ministry of Health Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme

The Ministry of Health subsidy of $6.7M must be used for capital costs associated with the construction of a consented reticulated wastewater system for Matatā. The Ministry of Health has indicated that this subsidy will need to be uplifted in the short term, due to the longevity of the subsidy being approved since 2004.

6.2. Summary of option costs

Reticulation option	Capex ($2025 dollars)	Opex ($2025 dollars)	Minus MoH subsidy of $6.7M ($2025 dollars)
Option 1 **Maintenance Zone**	**$20,000 - $30,000** per household, plus consent fees. Failure to meet new standards may include additional enforcement options by BOPRC.	Ongoing maintenance costs. Failure to meet new standards may include additional enforcement options by BOPRC.	**No subsidy.** **$20,000 - $30,000** per household plus consent fees. Failure to meet new standards may include additional enforcement options by BOPRC.
Option 2 **Large / advanced scale** 400 homes	**$32.5M** $31M + $1.5M drainage THF	$640,000 p.a.	**$25.8M**
Option 3 **Moderate / intermediate scale** 400 homes	**$27.5M** $26M + $1.5M drainage THF	$254,000 p.a.	**$20.8M**
Option 3 (Stage 1) **Moderate / intermediate scale** 300 homes	**$22M** $20.5 + $1.5M drainage THF	$223,000 p.a.	**$15.3M**

6.3. Funding and financing a preferred option

If (and when) the Council endorses a recommended option, further funding and financing work will be undertaken on this option. This would include more detailed costs for each of the key project components, as well as multiple sessions with elected members to determine the most appropriate mix of funding sources and tools to deliver and operate the project over time. This would then form part of a future Long Term Plan/Annual Plan development and consultation.

6.4. Funding and financing tools and levers

There are a number of different funding tools and levers local government can use to fund community and growth-related infrastructure.

For the Matatā wastewater project this could include:

Funding tools / levers	Possible use
Equalised wastewater rates	Council has been working through how best to fund three waters infrastructure over the long term, alongside Local Water Done Well (LWDW) implementation and emerging legislation. Most wastewater schemes in the district are funded through equalised rates. Equalised rates spread the cost of new infrastructure evenly across all ratepayers, ensuring everyone contributes fairly. While still subject to a Council decision, it is assumed that this approach would mean that all households connecting to a new wastewater system in Matatā would come under the Council's equalised scheme.
Connection fee	A one-off connection fee could be applied to all current and future properties serviced by the new wastewater infrastructure. This could be a moderate or more substantive amount. Affordability principles for the Matatā community would need to be considered if this funding source formed part of the projects future funding and financing plan.
Targeted rates	Targeted rates can be applied to properties that directly benefit from an infrastructure upgrade. This approach ensures that the cost of the project is shared equitably among those who receive the service, rather than being distributed across all ratepayers. The revenue collected is used to plan, construct, and maintain the new infrastructure. This method is often used where user-pays principles are agreed. Affordability principles for the Matatā community would need to be considered if this funding source formed part of the projects future funding and financing plan.
Development contributions / levies	A development contribution or levy could be applied to any new build that would be serviced by the new wastewater infrastructure.

Funding tools / levers	Possible use
	Development contributions are a fair and transparent way to ensure that the cost of growth (as a component of new infrastructure) is paid by those who create the demand. The project's future funding and financing plan would need to determine how much of the project will be attributed to growth, and from that, an appropriate fee or levy could be applied. As an example, a development levy of $30,000 being applied to an additional 400 homes (approximate total growth scenario of 680 homes) would equate to $12M over the long term.
Land value uptake / capture	Land value uptake (or land value capture) recognises that public investment in infrastructure can increase the value of nearby land, particularly where it enables more intensive development or improves overall service levels. Council could apply a levy i.e. targeted rate or development contribution/levy, to capture a portion of this value uplift from those landowners or developers who benefit from the increased land value.
External co-investment partners	Government co-investment allows local councils to leverage regional and national funding sources, such as grants or strategic partnerships, to reduce the financial burden on local ratepayers and accelerate project delivery. This approach recognises that well-functioning wastewater infrastructure provides wider public benefits that other government agencies are responsible for. Council could look to work in partnership with local and central government agencies and funding bodies, to secure capital contributions. This funding would directly support project design, and construction phases and could support the project being delivered in the short term.

7. Next Steps

If a reticulation option was endorsed by the Council (Options 2 or 3), the following key actions would be undertaken to support the resource consent development phase. Council would be regularly updated on progress and actions at each Infrastructure and Planning Committee.

Workstream	Next Steps
Costing and Funding	• Undertake further detailed costing on the preferred option to support future Long Term Plan and Infrastructure Strategy decision making and development. • Work with elected members on the different tools and levers that could be used to fund and finance the project over time to ensure delivery and affordability principles are appropriate.
Cultural Narrative	• Develop archaeological report (underway) and Cultural Impact Assessment for Tahi Hill Farm.
Wastewater System Analysis	• Determine treated effluent quality requirements for irrigation to Tahi Hill Farm.
Land Analysis	• Determine land requirements to support both treatment and irrigation including future drainage and/or earthworks.
Environment Monitoring	• Complete Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) for Tahi Hill Farm and overall project.
Resource consent	• Develop consenting strategy to determine the appropriate process and deliverables. • Engage a stakeholder liaison role to support future community engagement including with neighbours of Tahi Hill Farm.
Business case	• Update business case to include additional information on options analysis and preferred option. • Seek co-investment support from key government partners including from MoH (subsidy) and BoPRC.

8. Pāhekoheko

8.1. Assessment of Significance

The decisions and matters of this specific report are assessed to be of medium significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. However, this report is part of a broader process that is, or may be in future, assessed to be of high significance.

The following criteria are of particular relevance in determining the future level of significance.

- **Level of community interest:** the expected level of community interest, opposition or controversy involved. Medium for most Whakatāne ratepayers because of the impact on the equalised rating model, but High within the Matatā community.
- **Level of impact on current and future wellbeing:** the expected level of adverse impact on the current and future wellbeing of our communities or District Medium - The project is intended to have a positive impact on resident's wellbeing through environmental improvement, growth

opportunities and certainty around this project. Potential negative impacts relate to the degree of change that a wastewater scheme may elicit.

- **Rating impact:** the expected costs to the community, or sectors within the community, in terms of rates. Medium to High.
- **Financial impact:** the expected financial impact on Council, including on budgets, reserves, debt levels, overall rates, and limits within the Council's Financial Strategy. Medium to High.
- **Consistency:** the extent to which a proposal or decision is consistent with the Council's strategic direction, policies and significant decisions already made. Low, in the sense that this project is consistent with Councils strategic direction and policies having been on the books for many years now.
- **Reversibility:** the expected level of difficulty to reverse the proposal or decision, once committed to. Low, the recommendations in this report do not prevent a future Council from reversing its decision.
- **Impact on Māori:** the expected level of impact on Māori, taking into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga. Medium – the recommended decision is consistent with the co-design teams direction, which included iwi representation.
- **Impact on levels of service:** the expected degree to which the Council's levels of service will be impacted. Medium – not affected by a decision in this report, but the delivery of a wastewater scheme would increase levels of service for the Matatā.
- **Impact on strategic assets:** the expected impact on the performance or intended performance of Council's Strategic Assets, for the purpose for which they are held. Low.

8.2. Engagement and Community Views

Community engagement with residents and wider stakeholders will continue on the project, following Council direction on next steps, including with direct neighbours of Tahi Hill Farm.

9. Considerations - *Whai Whakaaro*

9.1. Strategic Alignment

Providing a wastewater solution for the Matatā Community has been identified as a key strategic project for Council.

The Council has initiated a project to align several workstreams in a Local Growth Strategy. This will also start to implement the direction laid out in the EBOP Spatial Plan but also align work underway on a waters strategy and transport planning. The funding and financing tools associated with delivering the required infrastructure to support growth will be planned, for inclusion in future LTPs.

No inconsistencies with any of the Council's policies or plans have been identified in relation to this report.

9.2. Legal

Meeting the Resource Management Act requirements for the Matatā Wastewater Project is a legal requirement.

The service delivery of our waters (through the Local Waters Done Well project) may also influence the delivery of this project.

9.3. Financial/Budget Considerations

Project costs are being funded out of the budget for the Matatā Wastewater Project and are included in the 2024-34 LTP.

There is no budget considerations associated with the recommendations of this report.

9.4. Climate Change Assessment

There are no significant or notable impacts associated with the matters of this report.

9.5. Risks

Risk	Description and/or Mitigation
Project costs have been estimated by Council staff based on a stand-alone wastewater treatment plant discharging to land.	Cost estimates will continue to be refined, using expert technical advice, as options are further developed.
Obtaining the necessary resource consents.	The most effective way of mitigating that risk is through the co-design and partnership approach process with iwi and hapū that is being implemented as part of this project. Ongoing communications and engagement with affected neighbours and the community forms part of the Phase 3 workstreams.

10. Next Steps – *E whai ake nei*

Take into account any relevant direction from national and local legislation and strategy.

Continue to support the Co-design Group on the collaborative co-design approach for the Project.

Continue wider community engagement, in partnership with the Co-design Group, following direction from Council.

Attached to this Report:

- Appendix A - Matatā Wastewater Project Summary of Environmental Reports and Peer Review (part of Matatā Wastewater Project Report dated 18 July 2025).
- Apendix B – Matatā Natural Hazard maps.
- Appendix C – Tahi Hill Farm Natural Hazard Maps.

8.2.1 Appendix A - Matatā Wastewater Project Summary of Environmental Reports and Peer Review (part of Matatā Wastewater Project Report dated 18 July 2025)

Appendix A

Matatā Wastewater Project

To:	**Mayor's Taskforce for Waters**
Date:	**18 July 2025**
Author:	**J Sinclair – Senior Water Consents Project Planner**
Authoriser:	**D Bewley / GM Planning, Regulatory & Infrastructure**
Reference:	**A2925957**

1 Reason for the report

This report has been prepared for the Whakatāne District Mayor's Task Force for Waters ("**MTFW**") ahead of its meeting on 22 July 2025. It provides information on the Matatā Wastewater Project and the identified need for reticulation, in response to environmental contamination, public health risks associated with failing septic tanks, and other identified benefits.

2 Background

Matatā's current wastewater management consists of individual on-site effluent treatment systems ("**OSET**"), typically comprising septic tanks discharging to land-based disposal fields on each property. However, due to high groundwater levels and unsuitable soil conditions across much of the township, these systems are not functioning as intended. Effluent is not being adequately treated through soil absorption or natural disinfection processes before entering the wider environment.

Environmental monitoring has confirmed elevated levels of contaminants in receiving environments downstream of Matatā, including human faecal sources, indicating that partially treated wastewater is entering surface and groundwater systems. These discharges are contributing to the degradation of the Matatā taiao (environment), posing public health risks and constraining future development.

Whakatāne District Council ("**The Council"**) has been working to address these issues for more than two decades. The following timeline outlines key historical milestones:

- **2002**: Residents raise concerns about odour and surface water contamination from septic systems.
- **2004**: OPUS completes a Health Impact Assessment identifying five public health exposure pathways from septic tank discharges, all of which would be eliminated by a reticulated system.
- **2004**: The Minister of Health approves $2.24M in Sanitary Works Subsidy Scheme (SWSS) funding for a reticulated system initially proposed to discharge to the coastal dunes west of the township.
- **2005**: The Awatarariki debris flow disaster delays progress and necessitates a redesign of the scheme.
- **2009**: Council proposes a new scheme connecting Matatā to the Edgecumbe WWTP for treatment and disposal.
- **2011**: Revised proposal receives 83% SWSS funding approval.

- **2012**: Based on the information available at the time, Beca and ESR find no compelling public health case for full reticulation. The council opts to focus on septic tank improvements and considers establishing a maintenance zone under the OSET Plan.
- **2012**: The Ministry of Health raises concerns about inadequate inspection information and maintenance of septic tanks, requesting a full audit.
- **2013**: Council consults the community on three options: no reticulation, partial reticulation, or full reticulation.
    - 84% of Matatā respondents and 69% of district-wide respondents support full reticulation.
    - Council formally endorses full reticulation in May 2013.
- **2014**: Resource consent is granted.
- **2015**: Environment Court partially revokes the consent due to concerns about site selection and potential environmental impacts.
- **2015–2018**: Council explores an integrated scheme but faces funding and consenting challenges.
- **2016**: BOPRC publishes "The Need for Reticulation in Matatā," citing long-term monitoring and microbial source tracking results.
- **2018:** Draft OSET Plan Change proposes a maintenance zone for Matatā, later deferred to align with the Essential Freshwater Policy Programme.
- **2020**: Council initiates a formal co-design process with iwi and hapū to develop a durable and culturally appropriate solution.

The current project builds on this work, informed by robust monitoring, technical advice, and a long history of attempts to resolve the issues in Matata.

3 OSET Regulatory Framework

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council's On-site Effluent Treatment Regional Plan (OSET Plan) provides the regulatory framework for managing such domestic wastewater discharges. The Plan identifies Maintenance Zones as areas where underperforming OSET systems pose a high risk to community or environmental health.

If Matatā is reclassified as a Maintenance Zone, the following regulatory requirements would apply:

Routine Inspection and Monitoring

All OSET systems in Maintenance Zones must undergo regular inspections by an Approved OSET Service Provider or Inspector. Each system is assessed using a demerit point system, which considers factors such as:

- Age, design, and maintenance history of the system;
- Observed operational faults or non-compliance.

If a system accumulates the threshold demerit points, the property owner is required to undertake remedial action, such as system repair, upgrade, or replacement.

8.2.1 Appendix A - Matatā Wastewater Project Summary of Environmental Reports and Peer Review (part of Matatā Wastewater Project Report dated 18 July 2025)(Cont.)

Compliance Pathways

All systems must comply with one of the following pathways:

a) Permitted Activity (Rule 1)

Systems must comply with design, location, and performance standards outlined in Rule 1 of the OSET Plan, including:

- Separation distances from property boundaries and waterbodies;
- Minimum land application area sized according to AS/NZS 1547:2012;
- Discharge quality and volume thresholds.

b) Resource Consent (Rule 5)

Where compliance with Rule 1 is not achievable due to site constraints or system condition, the discharge becomes a discretionary activity and must be authorised under Rule 5.

Consent conditions may include:

- Installation of an Aerated Wastewater Treatment System (AWTS);
- Ongoing system monitoring and maintenance;

In some cases, a financial contribution is required to offset nutrient discharges, particularly in sensitive catchments.

This regulatory approach has already been implemented in other high-risk areas such as Lake Rotoiti/ Rotomā (now reticulated), Ongare Point (now reticulated), Rotoehu, and Lake Tarawera, where mandatory upgrade deadlines and inspection regimes have been enforced. Matatā is currently identified as a Confirmed Reticulation Zone under the OSET Plan, reflecting the Council's longstanding intent to implement a community-scale wastewater system. This means all properties must connect once a reticulated system becomes available.

However, if reticulation is not delivered, Matatā may default to a Maintenance Zone classification. This would trigger compliance obligations under the OSET Plan, including the demerit point system, system upgrades, and potential consenting requirements. Based on site constraints across Matatā, many properties, estimated at over 95, are unlikely to meet Rule 1 standards due to insufficient lot sizes, shallow groundwater, and proximity to waterways. Other households would face substantial costs associated with system upgrades and ongoing compliance inspections. In cases of persistent non-compliance, dwellings may be deemed insanitary under the Building Act 2004, creating significant social and financial hardship.

In response, the Council is working in partnership with mana whenua and the Matatā community to progress a fit-for-purpose reticulated wastewater solution. The objective is to reduce environmental and public health risks, uphold cultural values, and support future development, particularly papakāinga housing and strategic growth identified in the Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan.

4 Te Niaotanga ō Mataatua ō Te Arawa – Matata Wastewater Project

In 2020, the Council reset the project, establishing a dedicated technical team and structured workstreams to reassess the issues and identify a sustainable solution for Matatā's wastewater. The project has continued under a Co-Design approach (Te Niaotanga o Mataatua o Te Arawa), partnering with iwi and hapū representatives. This includes Ngāti Rangitihi, whose 2022 Treaty Settlement recognises their interests in Matatā and establishes a legislatively supported Tarawera Awa Restoration Strategy. The current situation of ongoing contamination from failing onsite systems does not align with this strategy, which was developed in response to the Crown's apology for the historical degradation of the Tarawera awa.

Together, the project team has worked to reach consensus on:

a) The effects of the existing wastewater systems in Matatā as they relate to all four well-beings (cultural, social, environmental, and economic).

b) Identification of a preferred option for managing Matatā wastewater in a manner that appropriately considers all four well-beings.

c) Development of applications for any resource consents or other necessary approvals, if required, to implement the preferred option identified in b. above.

The key supporting technical workstreams are:

- Environmental Monitoring
- Wastewater System Options
    - Land Analysis
- Legal and Consenting
- Cultural Narrative

For the purposes of this report, the Environmental Monitoring workstream is outlined, noting that the MTFW is receiving only a snapshot of the substantial technical work undertaken over the past four years.

5 Environmental Monitoring Programme

In 2021, the Council commissioned an Environmental Monitoring Programme ("**EMP"**) to characterise the existing environment and establish a baseline for assessing effects on receiving environments (current and future). The programme involved monthly monitoring of Matatā streams (upstream and downstream), the lagoon, town drains, seeps, the Tarawera River, and other sites within the Awakaponga catchment, spanning 26 surface water sites. Groundwater monitoring began with seven deep bores, with five additional shallow bores later installed to improve understanding of groundwater quality and flow. This represents the most comprehensive EMP the Council has undertaken to date and has been supported by several highly regarded freshwater ecologists and groundwater scientists actively involved in wastewater projects nationally, including:

- **Freshwater Ecology**: Dr Ngaire Phillips and Dr Mike Stewart – Streamline Limited and Dr Mark James – Aquatic Environmental Sciences Limited (now retired)
- **Groundwater**: Alan Pattle and Ella Boam – Pattle Delamore Partners Limited
- **Microbial Source Tracking**: Dr Rebecca Stott – National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)

6 Key Findings from the Environmental Monitoring Programme

Three summary technical reports were commissioned by the project to assess the effects of on-site wastewater discharges in Matatā. These include a surface water quality assessment by Streamline Environmental, a groundwater impact evaluation by Pattle Delamore Partners (PDP), and a faecal source tracking investigation by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA). Collectively, these reports form a robust technical evidence base, indicating that discharges from septic tank systems are contributing to environmental contamination. When considered alongside the broader public health, cultural, and development benefits, the evidence provides a compelling case for progressing with reticulation. The reports are included in the appendices, and their key findings are outlined below.

6.1 Stewart, M. (2024). Update of Surface Water Quality State (Nov 21 to July 24) for Matatā WWTP Project and Comparison to Guidelines.

This report analyses surface water quality data from November 2021 to May 2024 for sites in and around Matatā, including streams, lagoons, drains, seeps, and nearby rivers. Results are compared to national and regional ecological and human health guidelines and thresholds (e.g., NPS-FM 2020, ANZG 2018, BOPRC RNRP). Faecal source tracking (FST) was conducted to help identify human vs non-human contamination sources. Key conclusions are:

- Waimea Stream downstream (SW5) had higher median concentrations of ammoniacal-N and TP compared to the upstream site (SW3). Human sources were detected on 7 of 10 sampling occasions (70%) at SW5 and on 1 of 11 occasions (9%) at SW3.
- Waitepuru Stream downstream (SW7) had higher TP and nitrate-N concentrations than upstream (SW6). Human sources were detected on 2 of 11 occasions (18%) at SW7 and not detected on any of 10 sampling occasions (0%) at SW6.
- At Matatā Lagoon West (SW23) human sources were detected on 2 of 3 sampling occasions (67%).
- At the Unnamed Drain (SW13) with human sources were detected on all 10 occasions (100%).
- Faecal source tracking confirmed the presence of human faecal markers in multiple locations, which are most likely as a result of septic tanks.

- The results suggest a consistent signal of water quality degradation from urban Matatā, with multiple indicators pointing to on-site wastewater system failure contributing to faecal contamination of surface waters.

6.2 Boam, E., & Pattle, A. (2024). Matatā Wastewater Project – Existing Groundwater Environment. PDP.

This report characterises the existing groundwater environment in Matatā. It includes data from groundwater bores, piezometers, and seeps collected between 2022 and 2024, alongside earlier investigations. The report updates the hydrogeological conceptual model, evaluates contaminant pathways from septic tank discharge, and compares observed groundwater quality to expected nutrient loads from on-site wastewater systems. A high-level mass balance assessment was also undertaken. Key conclusions are:

- Groundwater investigations suggest a complex hydrogeological environment in Matatā, likely consisting of localised perched groundwater zones rather than a single aquifer system.
- Perched groundwater could discharge to the regional groundwater system, directly to local streams or daylight through seeps along the terrace edge.
- A nutrient mass balance analysis indicates that substantial nutrient attenuation may occur within the unsaturated zone before reaching deeper groundwater. Alternatively, contaminants from on-site systems may bypass groundwater and enter surface water via perched zones.
- Evidence from surface water monitoring confirms that human wastewater contaminants are reaching surface water via a subsurface pathway (i.e. perched groundwater, seeps).
- Water quality near the edge and base of the terrace is degraded compared to deeper groundwater, with elevated concentrations of organic nitrogen, ammoniacal nitrogen, and phosphorus pointing to wastewater as a likely primary source.
- Other potential sources such as the township fertiliser load is at least an order of magnitude less than the soakage field load; overall, the load from septic tanks is expected to dominate the N load to the subsurface beneath the township.
- While high groundwater levels are unlikely to compromise disposal field function on the alluvial terrace, disposal fields should be located further from stream banks to protect water quality.
- In low-lying coastal and lagoon-adjacent areas, groundwater is close to the surface and soils are fine-textured, which impedes infiltration. This creates a heightened risk of ponding or overland flow in wet weather. These conditions may render conventional on-site disposal unfeasible, especially on 1,000 m² lots
- At least 95 properties in Matatā do not meet the design and siting standards of AS/NZS 1547:2012, including setbacks of 15 metres from watercourses and 0.6 metres vertical separation to groundwater. Many of these sites also lack the 300–400 m² land area required for compliant irrigation fields.

8.2.1 Appendix A - Matatā Wastewater Project Summary of Environmental Reports and Peer Review (part of Matatā Wastewater Project Report dated 18 July 2025)(Cont.)

6.3 Stott, R. (2024). Review of Microbiological and Physico-Chemical Monitoring in Matatā Township, including Analysis of Faecal Source Tracking Data.

This report presents the findings of faecal source tracking (FST) undertaken in Matatā between 2020 and 2024 as part of the Environmental Monitoring Programme (EMP). In 2012, an earlier assessment was carried out to evaluate the health risks associated with septic systems in Matatā (Gilpin and Lake, 2012). That assessment, based on a single round of monitoring using faecal indicator bacteria (FIB) and faecal source tracking analysis, concluded that there was no compelling evidence at the time to warrant the introduction of a centralised sewage disposal system, although it acknowledged that some on-site systems were not functioning adequately.

Since then, further monitoring has expanded both the spatial coverage of FIB sampling in surface and subsurface waters and the spatio-temporal analysis of FST. This report includes an analysis of surface water, the lagoon, shallow groundwater seeps, and deeper bores to identify sources of faecal contamination and assess potential health risks. The focus is on detecting microbial markers associated with humans, ruminants, birds, and dogs, with particular attention to contamination likely to be linked to on-site wastewater systems. Key conclusions are:

- The 2012 ESR study concluded that reticulation was not warranted at that time. However, recent FST data shows contamination is now more widespread and at higher levels than previously detected.
- FST results show widespread human faecal contamination in waters around Matatā and confirm inputs of contamination within the township, causing elevated concentrations of faecal source tracking (FST) markers.
- Statistically significant increases in nutrients and faecal contamination were observed at the Waimea Stream downstream site (SW5) compared to upstream (SW3). Over 70% of samples at SW5 tested positive for human faecal contamination, compared to just 9% at SW3. These results indicate a persistent issue of human-sourced contamination within the township.
- In Waitepuru Stream, human contamination was absent at the upstream site (SW6) but confirmed at the downstream site (SW7) in 18% of samples. Multiple sources were detected at SW7, including ruminant, avian, dog, and human.
- The drain at 53 Arawa Street (SW13) consistently showed high levels of human faecal contamination, with every sample testing positive. Levels of the human marker crAssphage at this site were similar to those found in raw wastewater, suggesting inputs of inadequately treated sewage.
- Human faecal markers were detected at three of four lagoon shoreline sites, SW23 (lagoon west), SW24 (mid), and SW25 (lagoon drain), with a 67% incidence at SW23.
- Very high concentrations of the general faecal PCR marker were detected in shallow groundwater seeps (e.g., S1), but no human, ruminant, or avian markers were detected. This suggests contamination may reflect multiple flow paths or untested sources such as domestic pets.

- In deeper groundwater (e.g., GW2), faecal indicator bacteria were not detected, but a slight signal for the general faecal marker was present. This suggests the water quality may be slightly compromised, although deeper groundwater microbiology did not reflect the contamination seen in shallow groundwater.

The findings from the three technical reports provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of the environment in Matatā. While each report focuses on different parameters and methods, the results should be considered collectively. Taken together, they show that surface waters, particularly in downstream stream reaches and drains, are affected by elevated nutrients and microbiological contamination, including confirmed human faecal markers. Groundwater investigations suggest that perched and shallow groundwater pathways may facilitate contaminant transport to surface water, although deeper groundwater sites appear less affected. The detection of human-sourced contamination at several monitoring locations, alongside indications of general faecal pollution in shallow groundwater, suggests that on-site wastewater systems are contributing to localised environmental effects.

7 Independent Peer Review – Environmental Science and Research

At the request of His Worship the Mayor, an independent peer review was commissioned to assess the technical validity of the reports prepared for the Matatā Wastewater Project. The review panel comprised Dr Brent Gilpin, Dr Louise Weaver, Dr Sarah Coxon, and Bronwyn Humphries. Dr Gilpin had previously authored a report assessing the need for wastewater reticulation in Matatā, which concluded that, based on the limited data available at the time, there was insufficient evidence to justify reticulation solely on public health grounds. His involvement in the current review provides valuable continuity, while also recognising that public health is only one of several important considerations informing the decision to reticulate.

The scope of the independent peer review is as follows:

1. Review of Data and Findings:

Assess the reasonableness of the conclusions drawn in these final technical reports outlined above.

2. Areas of Focus:

- Freshwater Ecology: Review the conclusions regarding the effects of septic tank discharge on local freshwater ecosystems.
- Wastewater Management: Review the conclusions about the effectiveness of septic tanks and disposal methods, and potential alternatives.
- Hydrogeology: Review the conclusions related to the effects of septic tank discharge on groundwater, including the movement and fate of contaminants.
- Microbiology (Public Health): Review the conclusions about public health risks associated with microbial contamination and pathogens in water.

8.2.1 Appendix A - Matatā Wastewater Project Summary of Environmental Reports and Peer Review (part of Matatā Wastewater Project Report dated 18 July 2025)(Cont.)

Overall, the report concludes:

- ESR is "*in agreement with the overall conclusions made in the following reports: Stewart (2024), Boam and Pattle (2024) and Stott (2024).*" While "*further analysis or additional monitoring could better characterise contaminants*," ESR considers it unlikely that this would "*materially change the overall conclusions*."
- If Matatā expands from ~250 to up to 1,200 properties, "*intensification of existing OWMS would most likely result in significant environmental degradation,*" and "*some form of reticulated wastewater management system would need to be developed.*"
- If no further development occurs, "*the decision on reticulation vs upgrades... does not need additional science.*" Instead, it should focus on "*the relative costs and effectiveness of wastewater management options.*"
- ESR emphasises that "*science cannot make, nor force this decision*"; it is "*an economic cost-benefit analysis*" combined with "*community decisions on how best to handle risks.*"

Summary analytical findings of the peer review include:

- Faecal source tracking (FST) confirms human sewage contamination at multiple sites, attributed to septic tank systems.
- Two sites (Waitepuru downstream and one lagoon site) initially classified as showing human contamination should be considered "possible human" due to potential cross-reaction with wildfowl or ruminant markers. This reclassification does not change the overall conclusions.
- Onsite wastewater systems are contributing to nutrient and microbial contamination in surface waters, posing environmental risks and likely risks to human health (not quantified).
- Matatā's coastal and hydrogeological setting presents challenges, with contamination pathways influenced by perched groundwater and heterogeneous substrates.
- Many properties lack sufficient area for compliant onsite wastewater disposal. Without intervention environmental degradation is likely to continue.

Summary of the recommendations include:

- Integrate E. coli and other faecal indicator data with FST to improve interpretation of contamination sources.
- Test specific sites (e.g., SW23 and SW24) for ruminant or wildfowl markers, but this may not change the overall conclusions.
- Explore the hydraulic connection between groundwater and surface water in Matatā, particularly in areas near wastewater systems, to better understand contamination pathways and the impact of onsite systems.

8.2.1 Appendix A - Matatā Wastewater Project Summary of Environmental Reports and Peer Review (part of Matatā Wastewater Project Report dated 18 July 2025)(Cont.)

- Future monitoring could include testing for emerging organic contaminants (EOCs), such as sucralose and caffeine, which could provide further insight into wastewater impacts on surface water.
- ESR recommends assessing the fate and transport of viral contaminants, such as bacteriophages, which could have greater mobility than bacteria and pose higher health risks.
- Analyse the effect of heavy rainfall on contaminant pathways, particularly in shallow groundwater and surface waters, to understand how rainfall influences the spread of contaminants from septic tanks.
- Conduct a detailed review of the age and design of onsite wastewater systems in Matatā, focusing on older systems that may contribute more significantly to contamination, and explore upgrades or replacements as necessary.

Attached to this Report:

- Stewart, M. (2024). Update of Surface Water Quality State (Nov 21 to July 24) for Matatā WWTP Project and Comparison to Guidelines.
- Boam, E., & Pattle, A. (2024). Matatā Wastewater Project – Existing Groundwater Environment. PDP.
- Stott, R. (2024). Review of Microbiological and Physico-Chemical Monitoring in Matatā Township, including Analysis of Faecal Source Tracking Data

8.2.2 Appendix B – Matatā Natural Hazard maps.

8.2.2 Appendix B – Matatā Natural Hazard maps.(Cont.)

Appendix B - Matatā Natural Hazard Maps

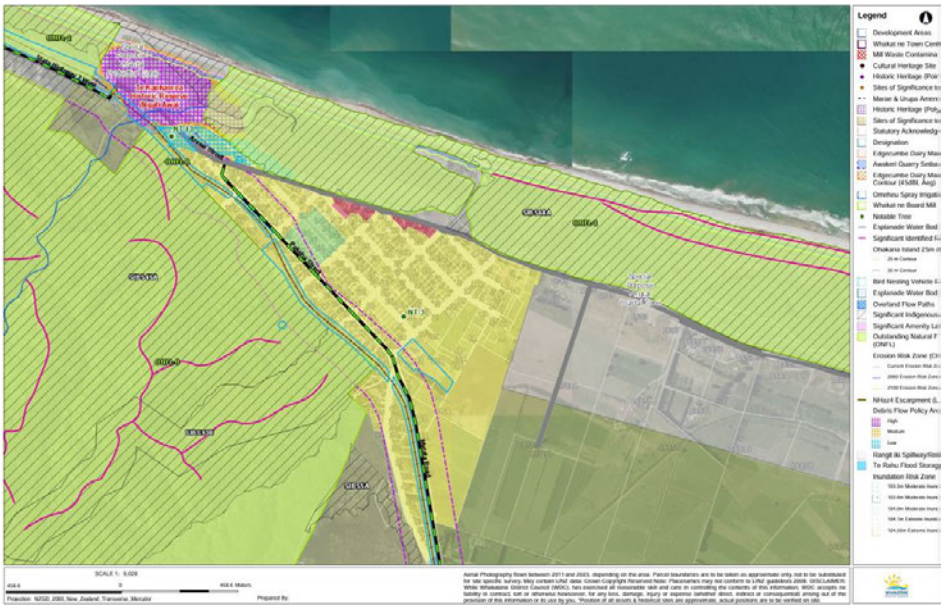


Figure 1: Matatā and surrounds with District Plan controls shown - the General Residential Zone is in yellow. Accessed from Whakatāne District Council GIS system.

8.2.2 Appendix B – Matatā Natural Hazard maps.(Cont.)

Figure 2: Red dotted lines represent active faults within the vicinity of Matatā

https://maps.boprc.govt.nz/apps/95e1cfa7733b46a7b85179556e1937c3/explore

8.2.2 Appendix B – Matatā Natural Hazard maps.(Cont.)

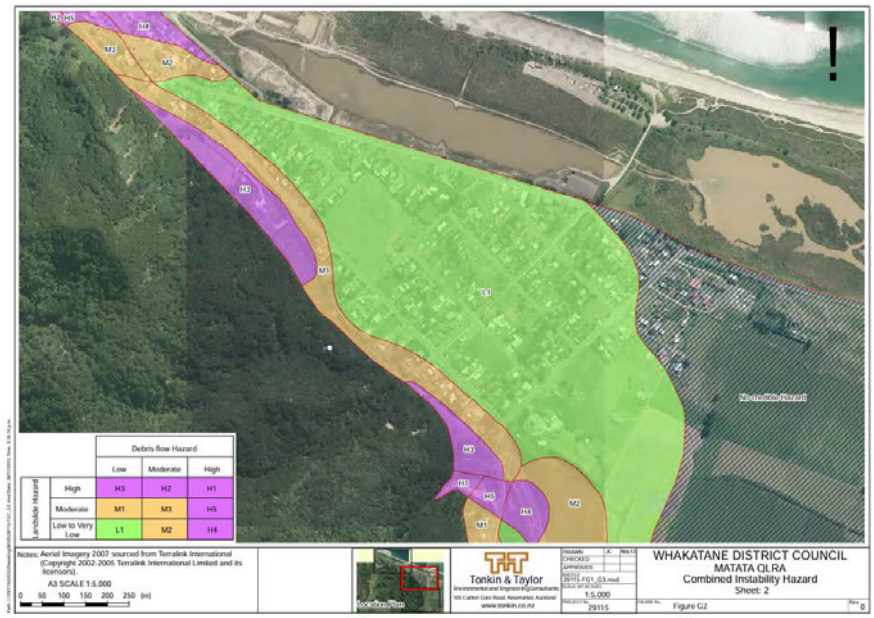


Figure 3: Combined instability hazards at Matatā, from Quantitative Landslide and Debris Flow Hazard Assessment – Matatā Escarpment, Tonkin & Taylor Ltd, 2013

8.2.2 Appendix B – Matatā Natural Hazard maps.(Cont.)

Figure 4: Draft tsunami evacuation areas for Matatā, revised modelling (maps forthcoming)

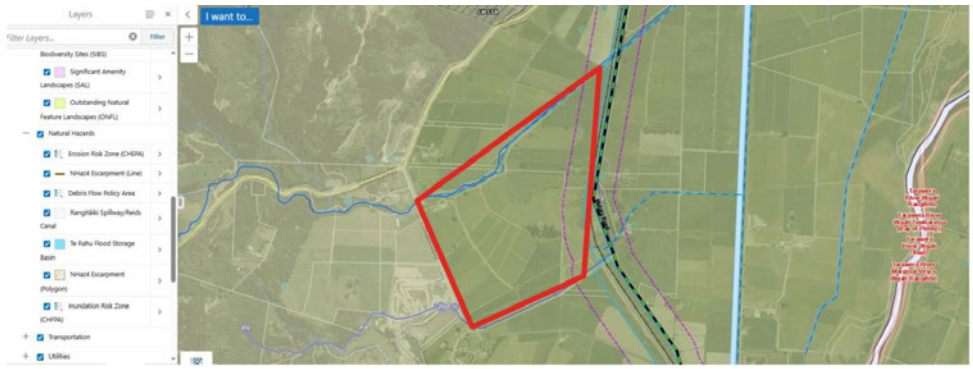
8.2.3 Appendix C – Tahi Hill Farm Natural Hazard Maps

8.2.3 Appendix C – Tahi Hill Farm Natural Hazard Maps(Cont.)

Appendix C - Tahi Hill Farm Natural Hazards Maps

Natural Hazards

Whakatāne District Council maps show no natural hazards located on the site. Map below showing Tahi Hill Farm boundary in red.



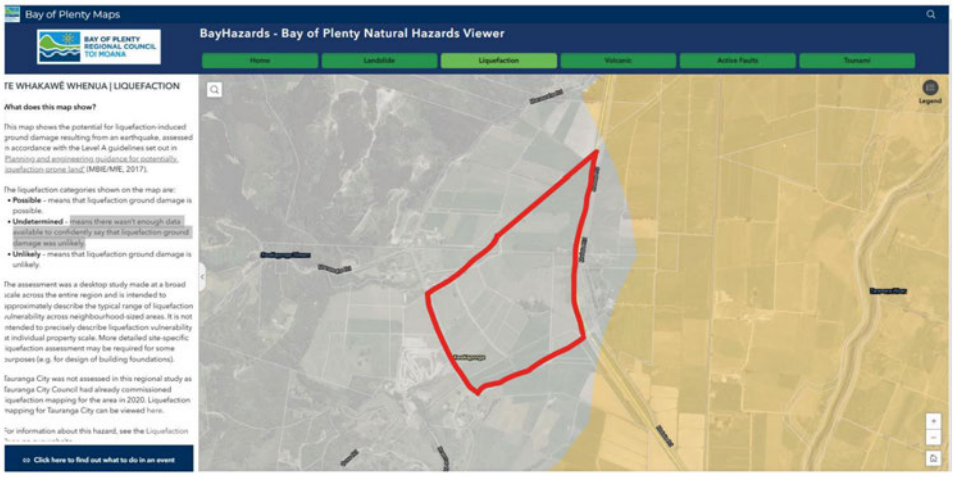
Fault lines

The Regional Council BayHazard Fault Line maps show an active fault line (red dotted line on map below), running along the southern boundary of the site.

8.2.3 Appendix C – Tahi Hill Farm Natural Hazard Maps(Cont.)

Liquefaction

The Regional Council BayHazard Fault Line maps show the 'Undetermined' liquefaction area (orange area on map on map below), is away from the site.



Flooding

Bay of Plenty regional Council flood maps were also assessed with only a small area of possible ponding identified at the northern end of the property.

8.3 Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme Update Report – September 2025

To:	**Infrastructure and Planning Committee**
Date:	**Thursday, 4 September 2025**
Authors:	**N Woodley / Manager Policy Planning and Consents** **J Sinclair / Senior Three Waters Project Planner**
Authoriser:	**D Bewley / GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure**
Reference:	**A2942210**

1. Reason for the report - Te Take mō tēnei rīpoata

The purpose of this report is to update the Infrastructure and Planning Committee on the Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme ("the Programme").

2. Recommendation - *Tohutohu akiaki*

THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **receive** the Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme Update Report - September 2025.

3. Background - *He tirohanga whakamuri*

Whakatāne District Council (the Council) owns, operates, and maintains three waters infrastructure: stormwater, wastewater, and municipal water supply, across the Whakatāne District. This infrastructure comprises six wastewater treatment plants and their reticulation networks, with plans for an additional wastewater scheme underway. The Council's municipal water supply infrastructure includes ten water supply schemes that draw from several water sources before treatment. Furthermore, stormwater networks exist within major urban areas to manage rainfall runoff and mitigate flooding risks.

The impending expiration of resource consents issued under the Resource Management Act 1991 will likely necessitate a number of phased upgrades within the Whakatāne District. For the Council, this includes replacing consents associated with four wastewater treatment plants and seven water supply schemes, as well as irrigation for Rugby Park. These upgrades are anticipated to come with a cost to the community with the scale of investment dependant on the specific requirements of each scheme and applicable regulatory standards.

4. Discussion – Kōrerorero

4.1. Three Waters Programme Steering Group

The Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme Steering Group (Steering Group) last met on Monday, 24 June 2025. A comprehensive report was then presented to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee on 24 July 2025, where both the Programme (Project) Plan and the Communications and Engagement Strategy were endorsed.

As no further direction was required, an August Steering Group meeting was not held. Instead, a written update was circulated. This Council report draws on that August Steering Group update, with minor amendments to reflect subsequent developments.

4.2. Local Government Water Services Bill

At the time of writing, the Local Government (Water Services) Bill is at its third reading and is expected to receive Royal assent (pass into law) before the end of August. During the committee of the whole House stage, the Bill was divided into two: the Local Government (Water Services) Bill (clauses 1–2, Parts 1–4 and 6, and Schedules 1–4) and the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Bill (Part 5 and Schedules 5–12).

The Finance and Expenditure Committee has recommended more than 360 amendments to the Bill. While most are technical, only a small number directly affect the resource consent replacement process. Of particular relevance to the programme is a significant amendment relating to the expiry of extant wastewater consents, outlined below.

4.2.1. Extant Wastewater Consents

The definition of an extant wastewater consent is proposed to be broadened to include any current resource consent for activities involving the construction or operation of a wastewater network or treatment facility that, immediately before the Bill's commencement, is due to expire within **three** years (the Bill originally proposed a two-year period).

The expiry date for such consents is proposed to be automatically extended by **three** years from the commencement of the new legislation (the Bill originally proposed a two-year extension).

In exceptional circumstances, the Minister may grant a further extension of up to two additional years, either on application by the consent holder or on their own initiative. Any such applications must be made within 30 months of the legislation commencing.

4.3. Programme Progress Update

Component	Progress Update
Programme Project Plan	Programme (Project) Plan endorsed by the Infrastructure and Planning Committee on 24 July 2025.
Communications & Engagement Strategy	Communications and Engagement Strategy endorsed by the Infrastructure and Planning Committee on 24 July 2025.

8.3 Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme Update Report – September 2025(Cont.)

Consent Replacement	Approx Timing	Project status	Progress Update
WASTEWATER CONSENTS			
Whakatāne Wastewater **Edgecumbe Wastewater**	2024 - 2027	Early scoping underway.	Early project scoping underway. LWDW and wastewater standards to be enacted by the Local Government Water Services Bill will inform the scope and consenting requirements for this project along with the Whakatāne Waters Strategy. Further direction is expected later in 2025.
Murupara Wastewater	2024 - 2027	Underway	The Project, Communications and Engagement and Iwi Engagement Plans have been drafted and are with the Project Sponsor for approval. Procurement of key technical team members is underway which will then allow us to progress to a stage of options assessment. An options feasibility assessment is currently being undertaken by the Wastewater Specialists to assess viable options. Communications and Engagement plan is underway and engagement with key forums has begun.
Tāneatua Wastewater	2024 - 2027	Underway	Project manager (Glenn Cooper) is now in place. An introductory meeting was held with Te Uru Taumatua. A community information sharing evening is being arranged. The session aims to introduce the project, share information, gather early feedback, and explore ideas such as forming a community reference group.
WATER CONSENTS			
Whakatāne / Ōhope Water	2024 - 2026	Underway	A planning assessment is underway in the first instance, via a consultant, to inform the scope and consenting requirements for the project.
Tāneatua	2025-2026	Underway	Consent lodged with the BoP Regional Council in July 2025. A section 92 (request for further information) has been received around specific consent conditions and hapū engagement. The consultant planner is currently working through this.

Waimana	2025-2026	Underway	Consultant has been engaged to prepare the consent application. Currently contacting iwi/hapū to determine engagement requirements.
• **Rangitāiki Plains** • **Matatā** • **Murupara** • **Rugby Park Irrigation**	• 2025-2026 • 2025-2027 • 2025-2026 • 2025-2026	On track	These projects are currently being commenced with a mix of inhouse and consultant delivery.
Rūātoki Water	2025-2026	On track	An alternative water supply is being sought due to resilience issues. However, it has recently been determined that Council will seek a new consent for this current supply as a back-up water supply for Rūātoki, and until a new source is secured.

4.4. Stormwater Consents

The Council's stormwater consent replacements are being undertaken by the Policy, Planning and Consents Compliance team. The table below outlines a summary of progress to date on relevant consents.

Consent Replacement	Approx Timing	Project status	Progress Update
STORMWATER CONSENTS			
Whakatāne CSC (RM23-0010-AP)	TBC	Consent application on hold Remains lawful under s124 of the Resource Management Act.	On 16 January 2023, the Council lodged an application for a comprehensive stormwater consent (CSC) for the Whakatāne Township. The resource consents sought are: • To discharge stormwater to land, wetlands, and water from multiple locations within the urban areas and settlements subject to the application. • To undertake associated land disturbing activities and activities within the Coastal Marine Area (CMA) and/or watercourses. • To undertake maintenance activities on the stormwater network, including ongoing operations and upgrades (replacements, demolition and improvement works). The application was publicly notified, with six submissions received by Bay of Plenty Regional Council by the closing date of 19 June 2024. Processing of the application has been suspended at the Council's request to enable it to respond to the section 42A report and prepare evidence for the

			upcoming hearing (date to be confirmed). Upon approval of the CSC, existing individual stormwater discharge consents held by the Council for the Whakatāne urban area will be surrendered.
Ōhope CSC	TBC	Yet to commence	The Council intends to progress a CSC for Ōhope following completion of the Whakatāne CSC.

4.5. Resourcing and Recruitment

Key programme roles in place. Other roles to be further confirmed as relevant project scopes and timings are agreed, include:

1. **Project Manager Whakatāne Wastewater** - a project manager will be appointed to help scope the project and consenting requirements (procurement in development). This will also be subject to emerging national legislation and standards.
2. **Project Manager Edgecumbe Wastewater** - a project manager will be appointed to help scope the project and consenting requirements (procurement in development). This will also be subject to emerging national legislation and standards.
3. **Project Manager Whakatāne / Ōhope Water** – consultant currently undertaking an initial planning assessment to determine consenting requirements. A project manager will be appointed once the scope of consent requirements is known.

4.6. Budget Spend to Date

The budget will be regularly assessed to ensure appropriate allocation, including when further detail on the proposed wastewater environmental performance standards is received, and how these will impact relevant consenting processes.

Activity	**LTP Budget** (2024-2028)	**Spend to date up to** (31 July 2025)	**Remaining** (2024-2028)
WATER			
410031 - All Equalised Schemes Replacement of Water Take Consents	$608,206	$3,092	$605,113
410118 - Rangitāiki Plains Replacement of Water Take Consents	$283,264	$0	$283,264
412556 - Murupara Replacement of Water Take Consents	$88,112	$372	$87,740
WASTEWATER			
510062 - Whakatāne Equalised across District Wastewater Discharge Resource Consents (Whakatāne, Edgecumbe, Tāneatua)	$4,439,865	$13,633	$4,426,232
512504 - Murupara Wastewater Discharge Resource Consents	$1,377,757	$1,117	$1,376,640
511016 - Murupara Wastewater Discharge monitoring	$113,069	$675	$112,394
TOTALS	**$6,910,273**	**$18,889**	**$6,891,383**

Notes to Table

1. The total programme budget within the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 (LTP) is $7,227,356.

2. The above table outlines the first four years of the LTP (2024-2028) where the majority of the budget is included.
3. Cost code 511016 covers monitoring for the Murupara scheme. Costs associated with wastewater monitoring for Whakatāne, Edgecumbe, and Tāneatua are covered by 510062.

5. Options Analysis - *Ngā Kōwhiringa*

No options have been identified at this time, relating to the matters of this report.

6. Significance and Engagement Assessment - *Aromatawai Pāhekoheko*

6.1. Assessment of Significance

The decisions and matters of this specific report are assessed to be of low significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. However, this report is part of a broader process that is, or may be in future, assessed to be of moderate significance.

The following criteria are of particular relevance in determining the future level of significance.

- **Level of community interest:** The Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme is expected to generate a moderate level of community interest. A communications and engagement plan will be developed for each of the significant projects, which will include engagement with the wider community.
- **Rating / Financial impact:** The financial costs associated with the Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme are included in the Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-34. However, this does not include the costs of the subsequent infrastructure upgrades that will be required due to the new consents.
- **Impact on Māori:** The consent replacement programme has a notable impact on Māori, given the strong cultural connections to land, water, and other taonga. The co-design approach with iwi and hapū is intended to ensure that the concerns and aspirations of Māori are integral to the programme's planning and execution.

6.2. Engagement and Community Views

Resourcing is in place to support Council's ongoing communications and engagement on the programme. This includes the programme-level Communications and Engagement Strategy and project-level C&E Plans for those projects that require them.

7. Considerations - *Whai Whakaaro*

7.1. Strategic Alignment

No inconsistencies with any of the Council's policies or plans have been identified in relation to this report.

7.2. Legal

Meeting the Resource Management Act requirements of replacing expiring consents for water and wastewater has been identified as a strategic project for the Council and is a legal requirement.

7.3. Financial / Budget Considerations

Project costs are being funded out of the budget for the Three Waters Consent Replacement Programme and are included in the Long Term Plan (LTP) 2024-34.

There is no budget considerations associated with the recommendations of this report.

7.4. Climate Change Assessment

There are no significant or notable impacts associated with the matters of this report.

7.5. Risks

Risk	Description and/or Mitigation
The current 2026 timeframe for replacing the majority of the identified consents will be very challenging to meet, especially for consents associated with the four wastewater treatment plants, given the amount of technical work, partnerships, and community engagement required.	The programme team will keep across the new Draft Local Water Services Bill, which currently proposes a three-year extension for extant wastewater consents. Each project will develop a project plan and include adequate planning for any interim approach that may need to be taken if the timeframe(s) cannot be realistically met.
Obtaining the necessary resource consents will be challenging due to the complex nature of the projects, especially wastewater consents.	The most effective way of mitigating this risk is through the partnership and collaborative approach process with iwi and hapū that is being implemented as part of the relevant projects.
Recruiting the right level of skills and experience into the approved roles may prove challenging, given the current demand for three waters expertise and support across local government in New Zealand.	The programme team are using all recruitment methods and staff advice available to help mitigate this risk.

8. Next Steps – E whai ake nei

- Continue to engage with central government on three waters including the proposed wastewater environmental performance standards.
- Continue to manage the Programme Steering Group as per agreed Terms of Reference.
- Continue recruitment processes for relevant roles where and when appropriate.

8.4 Keepa Road Shared Use Path Options Report

To:	**Infrastructure and Planning Committee**
Date:	**Thursday, 4 September 2025**
Author:	**A Reynolds / Manager Transportation**
Authoriser:	**D Bewley / GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure**
Reference:	**A2942104**

1. Reason for the report - *Te Take mō tēnei rīpoata*

The purpose of this paper is to provide options to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee for remediation and upgrade of the Keepa Road Shared Use Path.

2. Recommendations - *Tohutohu akiaki*

1. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **receive** the Keepa Road Shared Use Path Options Report; and
2. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **approve** Option 1: Reactive Maintenance Only for the Keepa Road Shared Use Path; and
3. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **notes** that the further upgrade of the Keepa Road Shared Use Pathway will be considered during the development of the 2027-2037 LTP and guided by funding decisions from New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA).

3. Background - *He tirohanga whakamuri*

A renewal and/or upgrade of the Keepa Road Shared Use Path has been considered regularly by Council over the past few years and was planned for Year 4 of the 2018 LTP. For various reasons, the project was not implemented. The series of events that have occurred, resulting in the project being on and now off Council's current 2024-27 delivery programme include:

- Due to current and planned growth in the Coastlands/Piripai area, an upgrade to Keepa Road, was anticipated in late 2020's/early 2030's.
- Development of the Boat Harbour project brought forward Stage 1 (SH30 to Kope Canal) of the Keepa Road upgrade project. This included an upgrade of the full length of the Shared Use Path.
- A business case for the Keepa Road and path upgrade project was developed through 2021 and 2022. This secured NZTA co-funding for design works that commenced in 2023 but slowed as the boat harbour project encountered delays.
- As part of the 2024-27 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP), funding for the implementation of the Stage 1 Keepa Road and Shared Use Path upgrade project was not approved by NZTA. As part of the same NLTP, only one third of Council's planned footpath and cycle path maintenance and renewal programme received NZTA funding.

- In 2025 when the boat harbour was announced as no longer proceeding, the prior approved design co-funding for the Stage 1 Keepa Road and Shared Use Path upgrade project was rescinded by NZTA.
- Various options to upgrade the Keepa Road Shared Use Path as a stand-alone project were put forward to Council as part of a 2026 Annual Plan development briefing. The reactive maintenance only option was agreed to when balancing priorities in a tight economy.
- The Coastlands/Piripai residents association presented to the Living Together Committee at the 19 June 2025 meeting, highlighting their desire to see the upgrade of the Keepa Road Shared Use Path. As a result of this presentation, the Infrastructure and Planning Committee requested staff provide an options report for consideration.

4. Discussion – Kōrerorero

The Keepa Road Shared Use Path has a current average of 117 users per day. Of these users, 73% are cyclists and 27% are pedestrians (or other active mode). Keepa Road has an annual average traffic volume of 4,068 vehicles per day.

The Keepa Road Shared Use Path is due for renewal. It is 27 years old, and the current sealed surface is deteriorating. In many places the Shared Use Path is below the road surface. This results in a build-up of loose chip/detritus from the road and unsealed shoulder.

The middle section of the path which runs adjacent to the Kope Canal is subject to subsidence and results in the surface being particularly bumpy. To properly fix this section would require extensive retaining structures along the edge of the Kope Canal, or consideration to install a new footbridge to move the path to the opposite side of the canal, and the path to connect back to Keepa Road along the Bay of Plenty Regional Council entranceway – refer map below – the pink line shows the potential location to divert the path to the other side of the canal. Alternatively, this section of the path would likely need extensive retaining, if kept in its current location. Each of these options come at a significant cost.

The current 2024-27 period has seen a significant reduction in NZTA funding for road improvement projects compared to previous years. This is particularly evident for walking and cycling improvement projects, and their maintenance and renewal activities. The Whakatāne District Council's funding assistance rate from NZTA is 65%, meaning we receive this percentage subsidy towards the total cost of the project. Without NZTA funding, the cost to our rate payers is effectively three times as much.

In response to the reduced NZTA funding for improvement projects and footpath/cycle path maintenance/renewal, Council agreed to pause the majority of our planned improvement projects and reduce our footpath/cycle path maintenance/renewal programme to match our Long-Term Plan (LTP) local share spend.

While we have since received additional NZTA funding for resilience related improvement projects and for the installation of the mandatory school speed zone signage, no additional funding has or will be obtained for walking and cycling or road safety improvement projects in the foreseeable future. The current Government Policy Statement (GPS) for Land Transport focuses spend on road maintenance and resilience activities.

As we move into the phase of developing our 2027-2030 LTP, the Transport Team will undertake a thorough process of reviewing, updating and re-prioritising all transport improvement projects, and our maintenance and renewal programmes. A series of options evaluating needs, benefits, costs and affordability, will be presented to Council for consideration and direction as to what is included in the next LTP.

It was intended that the Keepa Road Shared Use Path upgrade will be one of the many transport improvement projects that will be considered through this process.

5. Options Analysis - *Ngā Kōwhiringa*

The series of options previously presented during the 2026 Annual Plan briefing session, are detailed below, with further analysis provided:

5.1. Option 1: Reactive Maintenance Only – Recommended option

This option would see the status quo continuing for the remainder of the 2024-27 period. Reactive maintenance would be undertaken on the path as required, in the same manner as all our other footpaths and cycle paths across the district.

Of note there was maintenance planned for July 2025. This has been delayed due to the significant heavy rain events we have experienced through June/July. These works are being finalised with the contractor and are expected to commence in the coming months. These works include:

- Working with BOPRC to tidy up and seal their entranceway adjacent to Kope Canal,
- Sweeping and removal of loose chip/detritus from the path and shoulders
- Repair of edge break, low shoulder and sealing in the worst places along the path.

If one of the other upgrade options is agreed to by the Committee, these planned works will still be required as part of the preparation works, so the cost of this option is additional to any other option selected.

Cost of this option is approximately $50,000 and will be managed within approved maintenance and renewal budgets.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Stays aligned with direction taken for all other improvements and walking and cycling works that did not obtain NZTA funding. • Stays aligned with 2026 Annual Plan decision and allocated budgets. • Allows the upgrade/renewal options to be considered during the 2027 AP and/or 2027-37 LTP.	• It further delays a recognised need to upgrade the Keepa Road path. • Provides a low level of service (LoS) for one of the key Shared Use Path commuter routes. • Could deter some users encouraging them to drive instead, further adding to the pressure on our key arterial urban route.

5.2. Option 2: Reseal Existing Path

This option would see a full reseal of the existing path, but no additional upgrades to drainage, lighting, width, location, or the subsidence occurring along the canal.

Cost of this option is approximately $280,000.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Improved LoS for a key commuter path. • Provides some improvement for minimal additional cost. • Extends the life of the current path asset, buying time to potentially combine a more significant upgrade of the path, with a wider Keepa Road upgrade project. • Provides some additional work to local contractors where the planned roading programme was reduced through a reduction in funding. • Can be completed in sections to spread costs over multiple years if required.	• Cost is unbudgeted. • Funding this project would be against the previous direction for other roading improvement plans with reduced NZTA funding. • Does not address many of the current concerns with the path: • Poor lighting, • Safety concerns with proximity to traffic lane, • No kerb or height separation between path and traffic lane • Bumpy section along canal. • Investment now means a future upgrade would need to be at least 5-10 years away to gain sufficient return on this interim investment, meaning addressing the above concerns is further delayed. • Progressing the project in 2024-27, means not utilising NZTA funding, tripling the cost of delivery. However future GPS direction is unknown so future NZTA funding for this activity may or may not be available next round.

5.3. Option 3: Reconstruct path with unsealed surface

This option would see a full reconstruction of the existing path but would leave the surface unsealed. This would provide a similar level of service to some of our other cycle paths in the district, such as Whakatāne River – Ferry Road to Landing Road, Edgecumbe/Thornton stop bank paths, sections of Ōhope Road path. This will allow for some minor improvements to width, location, drainage and the bumpy section adjacent to the canal, but it would not deliver upgrades to lighting or a long-term fix for the subsidence occurring along the canal.

This option would allow for a staged approach to the upgrade, effectively undertaking the formation works now, and being able to upgrade the surface and added features at a later stage. To be able to capitalise on this work at a later stage, careful consideration of the location and height will be required, to tie into future improvements to Keepa Road and/or the path.

Cost of this option is approximately $270,000 for 2m wide or $310,000 for 3m wide; excluding any retaining of the pathway that may be required on the section running adjacent to the Kope Canal. The current path is nominally 2.0m wide. However, the effective width is typically narrower due to damage to path edges and gravel/vegetation encroachment.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Improved LoS in terms of the base of the pathway, but possibly a reduced LoS for the nature of the surface. • Provides some improvement at a reduced cost compared to a full upgrade. • Allows for a staged approach to future upgrades. • Provides some additional work to local contractors where the planned roading programme was reduced through a reduction in funding.	• Cost is unbudgeted. • Funding this project would be against the previous direction for other roading improvement plans with reduced NZTA funding. • Does not address some of the current concerns with the path: • Poor lighting, • No kerb or height separation between path and traffic lane. • Does not provide a long-term solution for the subsiding section by the canal. • Some users will see the surface as a lesser LoS than the current path. • Progressing the project in 2024-27, means not utilising NZTA funding, tripling the cost of delivery. However future GPS direction is unknown so future NZTA funding for this activity may or may not be available next round.

5.4. Option 4: Reconstruct Existing Path with Concrete Surface

This option would see a full reconstruction of the existing path and would provide a concrete surface. This will allow for some minor improvements to width, location, drainage and the bumpy section adjacent to the canal, but no additional upgrades to lighting or a long-term solution for the subsidence occurring by the canal.

To minimise the risk of future rework when growth in the Coastlands/Piripai area triggers the need to upgrade Keepa Road, careful consideration of the location and height will be required, to tie into future improvements.

Cost of this option is approximately $860,000 for 2m wide or $1,200,000 for 3m wide; excluding any retaining that may be required on the section running adjacent to the Kope Canal.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Improved LoS for a key commuter path. • Improved safety for users, some of whom currently use the road shoulder instead of the path due to the condition. • Could lead to increased users, in turn reducing the pressure from vehicles on our key urban arterial route. • Provides some additional work to local contractors.	• Cost is unbudgeted. • Funding this project would be against the previous direction for other roading improvement plans with reduced NZTA funding. • Does not address some of the current concerns with the path: • Poor lighting, • No kerb or height separation between path and traffic lane. • Does not provide a long-term solution for the subsiding section by the canal. • Requires careful consideration of location and height to minimise risk of rework for future upgrades to Keepa Road. • Progressing the project in 2024-27, means not utilising NZTA funding, tripling the cost of delivery. However future GPS direction is unknown so future NZTA funding for this activity may or may not be available next round.

5.5. Option 5: Full Path Upgrade with Concrete Surface

This option would see a full reconstruction of the path and would provide a concrete surface. This would address all current concerns with the path, providing upgrades to drainage, lighting, width, location, and a long-term solution for the subsidence occurring along the canal (likely significant retaining structures or footbridge and relocation).

To minimise the risk of future rework when growth in the Coastlands/Piripai area triggers the need to upgrade Keepa Road, careful consideration of the location and height will be required, to tie into future road improvements.

Cost of this option is approximately $2,400,000 for 2m wide or $2,800,000 for 3m wide; This includes an allowance of $600k for lighting of the full pathway.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Improved LoS for a key commuter path.	• Significant high cost.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Improved safety for users, some of whom currently use the road shoulder instead of the path due to the condition. • Could lead to increased users, in turn reducing the pressure from vehicles on our key urban arterial route. • Significant upgrade would require full survey and design, providing additional work to local consultants and contractors.	• Cost is unbudgeted. • Funding this project would be against the previous direction for other roading improvement plans with reduced NZTA funding. • Requires careful consideration of location and height to minimise risk of rework for future upgrades to Keepa Road. • Progressing the project in 2024-27, means not utilising NZTA funding, tripling the cost of delivery. However future GPS direction is unknown so future NZTA funding for this activity may or may not be available next round.

5.6. Option 6: Separation Add-on for Options 1 - 4

This option is for an additional add-on that could be included if progressing options 1 - 4. This involves the installation of a form of physical separation between the path and the road, using safe hit posts (see image below). This add-on is not needed if progressing option 5, as this option will address the separation aspect as part of the upgrade.

Cost of this option is approximately $120,000 for posts only and $390,000 for posts in kerb blocks, providing separation where the path is adjacent to the road for a length of approx. 1385m.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Improved safety perception for some users, providing separation between the path and the high-speed road environment. • Stops vehicles being able to travel or park on the path, which would accelerate deterioration of the path. • Relatively low up-front cost to provide physical separation.	• Will have a minor negative safety impact for users that choose to use the road shoulder instead of the path as the posts will reduce the available shoulder width. • Cost is unbudgeted. • Funding this addition would be against the previous direction for other roading improvement plans with reduced NZTA funding. • Requires on-going maintenance when posts need replacing. • Will impact some maintenance operations, particularly for sweeping detritus from the road shoulder.

6. Significance and Engagement Assessment - *Aromatawai Pāhekoheko*

6.1. Assessment of Significance

The decisions and matters of this report are assessed to be of moderate significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. The criteria in the table are of relevance in determining the level of significance.

Significance Criteria	Comments	Impact Assessment
Level of community interest: Expected level of community interest, opposition or controversy involved.	There is high level of support from the Coastlands/Piripai community, and others in Whakatāne to see improvements progress. There may be opposition from other areas of the community that have missed out from reduced NZTA funding (e.g. Te Teko Road path, speed humps and traffic calming etc)	Moderate
Level of impact on current and future wellbeing: Expected level of adverse impact on the current and future wellbeing of our communities or District.	Progressing the improvements would have a positive impact for users.	Moderate
Rating impact: Expected costs to the community, or sectors of the community, in terms of rates.	Progressing the improvements would require significant additional unbudgeted cost. Need to further investigate sources other than rates to support an option. For example, development contributions or future NZTA funding	Moderate to high
Financial impact: Expected financial impact on the Council, including on budgets, reserves, debt levels, overall rates, and limits in the Financial Strategy.	Progressing the improvements would require additional unbudgeted cost.	Moderate to high
Consistency: Extent to which a proposal or decision is consistent with the Council's strategic direction, policies and significant decisions already made.	Option 1 is consistent with the direction taken by Council in general response to the reduced NZTA funding.	Moderate
Reversibility: Expected level of difficulty to reverse the proposal or decision, once committed to.	Option 1 is easy to reverse in that the improvement options can easily be progressed at a later	Moderate

Significance Criteria	Comments	Impact Assessment
	date. The improvement options would be difficult (and costly) to reverse.	
Impact on Māori: Expected level of impact on Māori, considering the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.	This path is located in close proximity to Te Hokowhitu a Tu Marae. Progressing any significant works needs to involve engagement with this hapū. Engagement with Te Runanga Ngāti Awa would also be initiated.	Moderate
Impact on levels of service: Expected degree to which the Council's levels of service will be impacted.	Option 1 has negligible impact on LoS. The improvement options improve the LoS,	Moderate
Impact on strategic assets: Expected impact on the performance or intended performance of the Council's Strategic Assets, for the purpose for which they are held.	Option 1 has negligible impact on the Strategic Asset (the roading network as a whole). The improvement options will improve this strategic asset.	Moderate

6.2. Engagement and Community Views

Various engagement has occurred as part of previous LTPs, the development of the Keepa Road upgrade project, and engagements with the Coastlands/Piripai Collective.

Public views are also well understood regarding the benefit to the local community of upgrading this pathway.

If one of the improvement options were approved to progress, as part of the delivery, the transport team would engage further with Te Hokowhitu a Tu Marae, Te Runanga of Ngāti Awa and the Coastlands/Piripai Collective to ensure their particular views were understood and considered.

7. Considerations - *Whai Whakaaro*

7.1. Strategic Alignment

Option 1 in this report is consistent with previous Council direction regarding transport improvement projects that have not received funding from NZTA, and aligns with the 2026 AP. The improvement options are inconsistent with this direction and not included in the current 2026 AP.

7.2. Legal

There are no legal considerations associated with the recommendations of this report.

7.3. Financial/Budget Considerations

The cost of option 1 would be managed within existing maintenance and renewal budgets. The costs of options 2 - 5 are all unbudgeted expenditure.

The costs associated with options 2 - 5 are currently not eligible for NZTA funding and must be 100% funded from local share.

The Keepa Road upgrade project which included the Shared Use Path, was identified as a growth project in the LTP. Some of the local share was to be funded from development contributions. If councillors wish to proceed with one of the options 2 - 5, consideration can be given to utilising development contributions, to fund some or all of the cost. This would reduce the impact on the wider rate payers if progressing this unbudgeted expenditure.

This mechanism of funding would go some way toward offsetting the inequality of progressing these works, when the majority of all other unsubsidised road improvement projects have been paused. This would also have the added benefit that if NZTA funding becomes available in the future for walking and cycling improvements, this key project would be completed, and the NZTA funding could then be used for other key walking and cycling projects that would not be able to utilise development contributions.

The approximate costs and rating impacts of the various options are summarised in the table below:

Option	**Cost ($000)**	**% Rates Increase (total)**	**% Rates Increase (with 250K funded from DC)**
1 – Reactive maintenance	$50	None – within existing budgets	None – within existing budgets
2 – Reseal existing path	$280	0%*	0%*
3 – Reconstruct existing path (unsealed)	$270 to $310	0%*	0%*
4 – Reconstruct existing path (concrete)	$860 to $1,200	0.02% Yr 1* 0.06% Yr 2*	0.01% Yr 1* 0.04% Yr 2*
5 – Full path upgrade with concrete surface	$2,400 to $2,800	0.08% Yr 1 0.22% Yr 2	0.07% Yr 1 0.20% Yr 2
6 – Separation Add-on for options 1-4	$120 to $390	0.01% Yr 1 0.03% Yr 2	0.00% Yr 1 0.01% Yr 2

*Note: Options 2, 3 and 4 all include a renewals component. The renewals component is proposed to be funded as per other renewals, being a drawn down in the depreciation reserve. This means there is no immediate impact on rates shown in the above figures, for the renewals component. However, during the next LTP update, this may result in the need to increase the contributions to the depreciation reserve, which could result in future rates increases.

Further general financial notes:

- **Additional Interest Repayments:** Any additional interest repayments in Year One will need to be accommodated within existing budgets, which may require reprioritisation of other expenditure. As rates have already been struck, if reprioritisation is not feasible, the additional repayment amounts would need to be funded via loan—this is not the preferred approach.
- **Rates Impact:** The estimated impact on rates is based on the Long-Term Plan (LTP) rates budgets for 2027.
- **Interest Rate Forecasts:** PwC has provided interest rate forecasts of 4.26% for 2026 and 4.55% for 2027.
- **Cycleways Renewals:** Cycleways are currently not included in the renewals budget within the 2024–2034 LTP. Should options 2 - 4 be pursued, the inclusion of renewals funding would need to be considered in the next LTP update.

7.4. Climate Change Assessment

The improvement options of this report, align with Council's Climate Change goals, in that providing quality walking and cycling facilities, particularly on this key commuter route, encourages more people to travel by active modes, rather than by vehicle.

Goal	Matters to consider	Comments	Impact Assessment
1	The likely impacts (flood, drought, storms, sea level rise, etc.) of climate change in the Eastern Bay of Plenty on the matters of this report.	N/a	Nil
	The matters of this report's reduction on the effect of climate related impacts (flood, drought, storm, sea level etc.).	Contributes to lower emissions	Low
2	Options for lowering greenhouse gas emissions have been specifically considered in relation to the matters of the report, including: • Energy efficiency / renewable energy, • Resource usage, • Waste/Whole of Life, and • Fossil fuel usage.	Contributes to lower emissions	Low

Goal	Matters to consider	Comments	Impact Assessment
	Key emission sources, and (if possible) calculation of the greenhouse gas emissions for matters of report/project.	Contributes to lower emissions	Low
	Opportunities to address inequities or disadvantages due to climate change considered in relation to the matters of the report.	N/a	Nil
3	Impacts upon the district's biodiversity.	N/a	Nil
	Matters that increase resilience to climate change for Council and/or our communities.	N/a	Nil
Overall Analysis: The decisions and matters in this report are assessed for their impact on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change effects, which are categorised as low but positive.			

7.5. Risks

Risk	Description and/or Mitigation
Perception of inequality	If progressing one of options 2 - 5, there may be a perception in parts of the community of inequality when a project is being progressed when the majority of other road improvement projects have been paused. The mitigation of this risk is to clearly communicate the reasons, which are to provide a LoS commensurate with the level of growth at Coastlands/Piripai, and to encourage further use of the pathway to reduce reliance on vehicles, promote health outcomes in a safer travel environment. There is also the ability to explore the use of development contributions to fund some or all of the works, lessening any rates burden.
Actual costs exceed estimate	Costings are based on recent contract prices and have been prepared by experienced engineers however there remains some risk that the estimated prices will be exceeded. This risk can largely be mitigated through the design and procurement process.

Risk	Description and/or Mitigation
Design Risks	Proceeding with option 1 - 5 carries some design risk due to the slumping that is occurring along Kope Canal. Further investigations are required to assess feasible design solutions and may result in additional costs. Other sections of path have sound pavement conditions and risks are much lower as a result.
Safety – Cyclists on Road	Current path conditions mean that some cyclists are choosing to ride on the road. Shoulders and bridge widths are narrow forcing cyclists into the live traffic. With an 80kph speed environment here is potential for fatal/serious crashes to occur as a result. To date there have been no reported cycle crashes on Keepa Road. Options 4 - 5 should largely mitigate this risk. Option 1 - 3 will partially mitigate these risks however option 1 will take longer for path quality to improve and hence risk will remain in place for longer.
Safety – Lighting	Only option 5 has provision for the inclusion of path lighting. Other options have no lighting and there is some risk of cycle crashes occurring as a result of unseen obstacles or other users on the path. Many riders will also feel unsafe using the unlit path at night for fear of being a victim of crime. The number of users on the cycle path at night will be a relatively small proportion of users and it is a legal requirement for cyclists to use lights during nighttime hours which mitigates the risks to a degree however cycle lights only provide a very narrow pool of light so risks will largely remain.
Future funding availability	There is a risk that future NLTF rounds will provide funding subsidy for cycle path improvements. If this is the case, then delaying the project by 2 – 3 years could reduce the cost to Council by 65%.

Risk	Description and/or Mitigation
	Alternately, if no future subsidy is available then improvements would be delayed with no benefit. Future subsidies would potentially shift to other cycleway projects resulting in no net loss of subsidy.
Possibility of Rework	Some sections of the path may need to be reworked should Keepa Rd be upgraded in the future, particularly if the road level is raised to reduce flooding risks. This would result in additional costs with little benefit. Current pavement is not showing significant signs of deterioration, and it is unlikely that maintenance requirements will trigger major works in the next 10 - 15 years.

8. Next Steps – E whai ake nei

Council staff will work towards delivering the option approved by the Infrastructure and Planning Committee.

Attached to this Report:

- There are no appendices attached to this report.

8.5 Battery Town Rally, Christmas Parade and Atea Block Party Event Road Closures

To:	**Infrastructure and Planning Committee**
Date:	**Thursday, 4 September 2025**
Author:	**W Bryenton / Technical Administrator Transportation**
Authoriser:	**D Bewley / GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure**
Reference:	**A2925937**

1. Reason for the report - *Te Take mō tēnei rīpoata*

To request approval for three temporary road closures to enable the safe and successful operation of the Battery Town Rally Event, the Christmas Parade and the Atea Block Party Events.

2. Recommendations - *Tohutohu akiaki*

1. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **receives** the Battery Town Rally, Christmas Parade and Atea Block Party Event Road Closures report; and
2. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **recommends** that Council **approve** a temporary road closure on Rendall Road (full length), Manawahe Road (from WDC District Boundary to Rendall Road), Herepuru Road (from 400m prior to Gate 290 to gate 1096A), Cambell Road (from Pikowai Road to WDC District Boundary), on Saturday, 11 October 2025, between 05:40am to 6:00pm, to accommodate the Battery Town Rally event; and
3. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **recommends** that Council **approve** a temporary rolling road closure for the Christmas Parade event, departing from St Joseph's School, King Street, and proceeding along King Street (St Joseph's School to Haig Street), Haig Street (King Street to Russell Street), Russell Street (Haig Street to Domain Road), Domain Road (Russell Street to McGarvey Road), McGarvey Road (Domain Road to Peace Street), Peace Street (McGarvey Road to The Strand), and The Strand (Peace Street to Kakahoroa Drive), on Saturday, 20 December 2025, between 11:00am and 1:00pm; and
4. THAT the Infrastructure and Planning Committee **recommends** that Council **approve** a temporary road closure on The Strand Service Lane (halfway between The Strand and Bracken Street), on Friday 19 to Sunday 21 December 2025, between 12pm (Friday) to 5pm (Sunday), to accommodate the Atea Block Party; and

3. Background - *He tirohanga whakamuri*

Under the Local Government Act 1974, schedule 10, clause 11(e), Council approval is required for temporary road closures for events. The Council may impose conditions and must consult with the Police and the NZ Transport Agency.

The temporary road closures sought in this paper have been assessed by the Transport Team as unlikely to impede traffic unreasonably for the duration of the events.

4. Discussion – *Kōrerorero*

4.1. Battery Town Rally Event

Rally Bay of Plenty (BOP) has made an Application for Temporary Road Closure to hold the Battery Town Rally for round five of the New Zealand Rally Championship on Saturday, 11 October 2025. The safe and successful operation of this event requires the temporary closure of four local roads at specific time periods. The event is proposed to run as follows:

- Rendall Road (full length) – 1pm to 5pm
- Manawahe Road (WDC District Boundary to Rendall Road) – 1pm to 5pm
- Herepuru Road (from 400m prior to Gate 290 to gate 1096A) – 1.30pm to 5.30pm
- Campbell Road (from Pikowai Road to WDC District Boundary) – 05.40am to 9am **and** 2pm to 6pm.

The Rally also includes roads in the Rotorua and Western Bay of Plenty districts, for which Rally BOP is seeking the required approvals.

4.2. Christmas Parade Event

The Whakatāne Rotary Club has made an Application for a Temporary Road Closure for the annual Christmas Parade Event to be held on Saturday, 20 December 2025. The Parade will be run with rolling road closure traffic management, which means the roads will be closed just prior and during the parade, and re-opened once the parade passes through. The route for the parade is:

- Starting location to be either Stewart Street/ King Street intersection or St Joseph's School,
- King Street through to Haig Street,
- Haig Street through to Russell Street,
- Russell Street through to Domain Road,
- Domain Road through to McGarvey Road and through to Peace Street,
- Peace Street through to The Strand Roundabout,
- The Strand CBD through to George Street / The Strand Roundabout into Kakahoroa Drive,
- Finishing at the Kakahoroa Drive Carpark.

4.3. The Atea Block Party Event

Te Ahitahutahu Charitable Trust has made an application to hold a Block Party Event on Saturday, 20 December 2025 at Atea (Wally Sutherland building and carpark, 266 The Strand) with expected ticket sales to be approx. 1500-2000 attendees. This is a family friendly event designed to activate the central Strand area with live music, food and community gathering. The event requires the temporary closure of the service lane from The Strand through to Bracken Street, from midday Friday 19 December through to 5pm Sunday 21 December to allow for the safe set up and close down period, as well as the event.

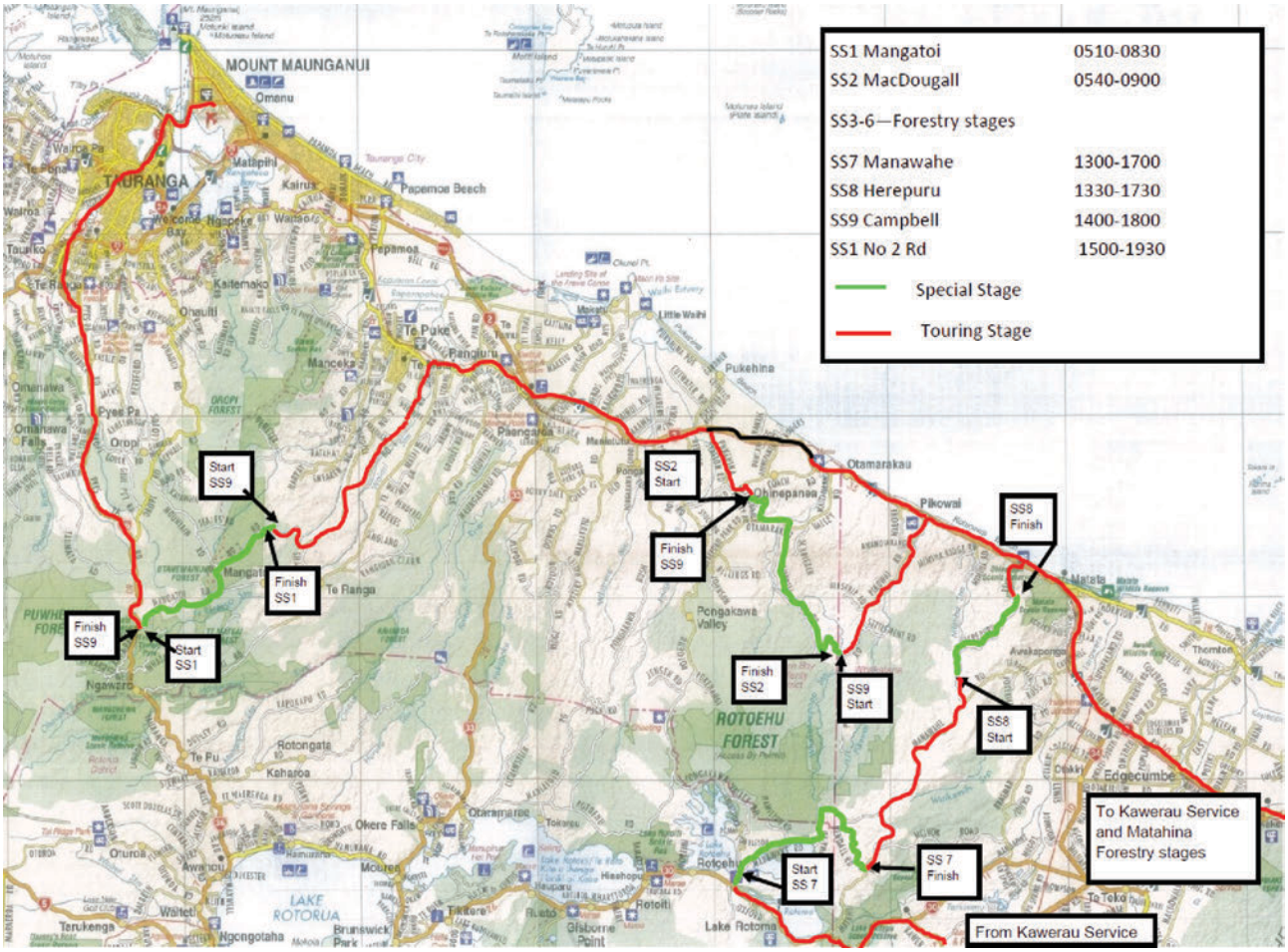
4.4. Event Maps

All events will have appropriate traffic management in place to advise road users of the road closure restricting all public access to the closure area. The temporary road closures and traffic routes for these events are shown on the maps below.

8.5 Battery Town Rally, Christmas Parade and Atea Block Party Event Road Closures(Cont.)

Battery Town Rally

Rally stage in green / Touring route in red



8.5 Battery Town Rally, Christmas Parade and Atea Block Party Event Road Closures(Cont.)

Christmas Parade

Rolling Closure Route shown in yellow.

The Atea Block Party

Area displayed in pink.

5. Options Analysis - *Ngā Kōwhiringa*

There are two options available:

5.1. Option 1: Approve the temporary road closures – Recommended option

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Allows all three events to proceed. • These events typically have high levels of attendance. • Events typically bring economic benefit to the district. • Positive outcomes from this event road closure application, will encourage further event considerations in our district. • The closures have been assessed as unlikely to unreasonably impede traffic.	• Temporarily restricts traffic movements on these sections of road for the duration of the events. • Inconvenience to residents. • Damage to road (rally event).

5.2. Option 2: Do not approve the temporary road closures

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Does not inconvenience residents or visitors.	• The events will not be permitted to proceed as planned. • Deters other event organisers from holding events in our district. • Loss of potential economic benefits that stem from the events. • A risk to Council's reputation and public dissatisfaction.

6. Significance and Engagement Assessment - Aromatawai Pāhekoheko

6.1. Assessment of Significance

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

6.2. Engagement and Community Views

Public notices are placed advertising these road closures and the public are encouraged to make submissions. Legislation requires public submissions to be open until 28 days prior to the event, which falls after this Councils recommendation has been made. In the unlikely event we receive a justifiable submission that cannot be resolved directly with the event organiser, a further report will be presented to Council to confirm the decision for the event road closure.

Council staff have consulted with local Police and New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) regarding the proposed road closures for these events. Both NZTA and the Police have confirmed their approval for the Battery Town Rally and the Christmas Parade. Police and NZTA have been contacted for their approval of the Atea Block Party. It is likely we will receive their feedback after this Committee meeting.

The Rally BOP event organisers are working closely with residents located within the road closures to advise details of the event and contact details should any issues arise. A residents' letter is hand delivered twice prior to the event and includes an 0800 phone number for emergencies. If on both occasions, no one is home, the letter is left in the letterbox. The event organisers do make specific plans with residents within the closure who might need access during the closure period, ahead of the event. An example of this was in last year's Rally where a farmers' contractor needed access at a specific time to do inseminations at the start of McIvor Road. The organisers were able to arrange this prior to the safety car starting that stage of the rally.

Rally BOP has proactively sent Fonterra and the milk companies notification including the route map, and both companies have responded in support of the event. The organisers will supply Council with a copy of the resident's letter along with their traffic management plan, once the residents' visits are all completed, and the traffic management plan has been submitted for approval.

The Whakatāne Rotary Club will be delivering leaflets to business owners in the vicinity of the Christmas Parade Route rolling closures. As per previous years, as soon as the parade has passed through a location, the road is reopened, minimising disruption.

On investigating the impact of a rolling road closure on businesses, the Council Events Team provided data for visitor spend on Saturdays in November and December 2024, and confirm there was no discernible difference in visitor spend on Saturday 14 December 2024 (last year's parade), compared to other Saturdays.

The Atea Block Party organisers intend to contact all nearby businesses to advise of the event and provide Council with a list of signatures in support. They will be utilising the carparks on both sides of the service lane for food vendors, children's activities and a licenced bar area with the stage to be in the middle of the service lane. The area will have security fencing surrounding the event. Note the event organisers will still need to obtain all other Council approvals to run the proposed event. This approval is for the event road closure only.

7. Considerations - *Whai Whakaaro*

7.1. Strategic Alignment

Approving these temporary road closures, to allow the safe and successful operation of these events, is consistent with Council's Strategic Priority: *Enhancing the safety, wellbeing and vibrancy of communities*.

7.2. Legal

The power to temporarily close roads for events is found in the Local Government Act 1974, schedule 10 which states:

Section 11 – The council may, subject to such conditions as it thinks fit (including the imposition of a reasonable bond), and after consultation with the Police and the NZ Transport Agency, close any road or part of a road to all traffic or any specified type of traffic (including pedestrian traffic) –

(e) for a period or periods not exceeding in aggregate 31 days in any year for any exhibition, fair, show, market, concert, filmmaking, race or other sporting event, or public function:

provided that no road may be closed for any purpose specified in paragraph (e) if that closure would, in the opinion of the council, be likely to impede traffic unreasonably.

7.3. Financial/Budget Considerations

There is no budget considerations associated with the recommendations of this report. All advertising costs associated with this event, including the publishing of Public Notices, is borne by the event organisers.

The Rally Events can cause damage to the roads. The cost of this damage is mitigated by timing routine maintenance to occur after the events, the transport team carry out pre and post rally inspections, and a bond is retained as part of the corridor access approval permit, to cover additional remedial costs.

7.4. Climate Change Assessment

There are no significant or notable impacts associated with the matters of this report.

7.5. Risks

There are no significant or notable risks associated with the matters of this report.

8. Next Steps – E whai ake nei

If an approval recommendation is received from the Infrastructure and Planning Committee, this recommendation will then be passed on to the Council for formal approval.

If formal approval for the Temporary Road Closures is received from the Council for these events, the Transportation Team will work with the event organisers to ensure an appropriate traffic management plan is approved, and necessary public notification is undertaken.

Attached to this Report:

- There are no appendices attached to this report.