


Minutes Whakatāne District Ordinary Council Meeting – 26 June 2025

	Details of Meeting:	WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN ROOM TŌTARA, COMMERCE STREET, WHAKATĀNE, ON THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025, COMMENCING AT 9:00 AM.
	Present:	His Worship the Mayor Dr V Luca, Deputy Mayor L Immink, Councillors T Boynton, G Dennis, A Iles, W James, J Jukes, T O’Brien, J Pullar, N Rangiaho and N Tanczos
	In Attendance:	S Perdia (Chief Executive), D Bewley (GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure), E Hatch (GM People and Partnerships), B Gray (GM Finance and Commercial Services), L Woolsey (GM Strategy and Growth), E Fenton (Senior Strategic Policy Analyst), M Van Tilberg (Team Leader Three Waters Asset Management & Planning, Regulatory & Infrastructure), I Moloney (Manager Open Spaces Operations), V Fergusson (Manager Strategic Property), and S Duffy (Senior Governance Support Advisor) <i>Via Teams:</i> S Ellis (Team Leader Strategy) and S Stewart (Manager Strategy and Performance)
	Visitors:	Whakatāne Tourism Collective representatives: (Wini Geddes, Nadine Toe Toe, Larni Hepi and Kenny McCracken), NZ Transport Authority Waka Kotahi (Andrew Corkill and Sandra King), Port Ōhope Lions Club representatives (Linda Husband, Dave Howard, Pete Busby and Paul Husband)
	Apologies:	

1 KARAKIA

Mayor Luca opened the meeting at 9:00 am. Councillor O’Brien gave an opening Karakia and welcomed the public attending the meeting.

2 MEETING NOTICES

Mayor Luca shared meeting notices on health and safety and live streaming.

3 APOLOGIES

Nil.

4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / TRIBUTES

Nil.

5 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6.1 Whakatāne Tourism Collective

Representatives of the Whakatāne Tourism Collective delivered impassioned and informative oral presentations concerning the decision made by Council to withdraw the \$85,000 contribution to Tourism Bay of Plenty (TBOP). During the presentations from Ms Gedes and Ms Toe Toe, the following points were noted:

- Collective operators would be removing their advertising collateral from the Whakatāne I-site and participation in council-led tourism initiatives.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of consultation, engagement, communication and transparency, and the commercial sensitivity was questioned.
- The importance of connection with TBOP and the flow-on benefits for local businesses.
- Multiple decision rationales outlined in the report obtained under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act were contested.
- Concerns were raised of allegations regarding tourism operator leases.
- Reference was made to support for the Regional Transport Organisations (RTO) relationships being preserved via a letter to the Mayor from the CEO of Tourism Industry Aotearoa and support from MP for East Coast Dana Kirkpatrick.
- Representatives requested:
 - a full and independent audit of the Whakatāne I-site
 - immediate release of documents relating to the December hui at which the decision was made
 - formal review of the decision, with involvement of operators and Iwi
 - reinstatement of TBOP relationship funding in the interim while engagement occurs.

Questions were asked and answered and Elected Members clarified some statements contained in the oral presentations. Collective representatives reiterated the issue regarding the lack of engagement, lack of consultation, and lack of opportunity for korero.

Attendance: The Whakatāne Tourism Collective representatives left the meeting at 9:44 am.

6.2 New Zealand Transport Authority Waka Kotahi (NZTA)

Refer to pages 11 a-b of the tabled items.

Representatives from NZTA spoke to a PowerPoint presentation about the Pekatahi bridge. Mr Corkill acknowledged the bridge did not meet expectations, and noted the bridge had significant coverage in the media recently.

NZTA were in a constrained funding environment and Mr Corkill said the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) was fully subscribed over the next three years. He reported a positive outcome - a media release would be forthcoming from the Transport Ministers Office (Hon Chris Bishop) for \$14M for the deck replacement (and associated work) to commence in 2026. In conclusion Mr Corkill acknowledged the advocacy of the Council and community to help achieve this outcome.

Ms King referenced the bridge's history, affirmed that although the bridge was structurally safe it did not provide a great-ride experience, and noted there were issues within the current maintenance

programme. She spoke about the proposed deck replacement work and informed members that the bridge would remain a single-lane bridge, and that the traffic-light phasing had been improved.

Attendance: NZTA representatives, GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure, GM Finance and Business Partnering, and GM Strategy and Growth left the meeting at 10:11 am.

6.3 Port Ōhope Lions Club

Mrs Husband said the Port Ōhope Lions Club's had considerable presence in the community and wanted to ensure the club's longevity. The Club were looking at a new build and were seeking a letter of commitment of Council's intention to grant a new ground lease to the Port Ōhope Lions Club, which would aid with funding applications.

Attendance:

GM Strategy and Growth re-entered the meeting at 10:14 am.

GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure re-entered the meeting at 10:14 am.

GM People and Partnerships left the meeting at 10:15 am.

GM Finance and Business Partnering re-entered the meeting at 10:16 am.

Port Ōhope Lions Club representatives left the meeting at 10:20 am.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:21 am and reconvened at 10:35 am.

7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Refer to page 12 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor Pullar / Seconded Councillor Boynton

It was requested the business schedule, relating to the expression of interest, clarify the return routes from Whakatāne, to Auckland and to Wellington.

Clarification:

THAT the Council direct staff to **prepare** an Expression of Interest to the market for a *Whakatāne-Auckland and Whakatāne-Wellington* business schedule service offering for consideration.

RESOLVED:

THAT, subject to the above clarification, the minutes of the Whakatāne District Council meeting held on 8 May 2025 be **confirmed** as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

8 STANDING AND JOINT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND MINUTES

8.1 Minutes of Standing Committees

Refer to page 12 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor James / Seconded Deputy Mayor Immink

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes from the following Whakatāne District Council Standing Committees be **received**:

- Infrastructure and Planning Committee –10 April 2025
- Chief Executive Performance and Support Committee – 15 April 2025
- Environment, Energy and Resilience Committee Meeting – 22 May 2025

CARRIED

8.2 Recommendation from Environment, Energy and Resilience Committee

Refer to pages 13-14 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor Iles / Seconded Councillor James

RESOLVED:

THAT the Whakatāne District Council **adopt** the Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan.

CARRIED

8.3 Recommendation from Infrastructure and Planning Committee

Refer to page 15 of the agenda.

Clarification was sought to ensure emergency services and business operators would have access on the service lane if necessary.

Administrative note: Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, the GM Strategy and Growth confirmed to Elected Members this access would be available.

Moved Councillor Iles / Seconded Councillor Pullar

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Council **approve** a temporary road closure on Matahī Road, from 551 Matahī Road to the Whakatāne District boundary, on Sunday, 6 July 2025, between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, to accommodate the Motorsport Hill Climb event; and
2. THAT the Council **approve** a temporary road closure on Saturday, 5 July 2025, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, to accommodate the Light Up Whakatāne event, affecting The Strand (between Kakahoroa Drive and Wharaurangi), Kakahoroa Drive (between The Strand and Kakahoroa Drive Service Lane #1), the full length of Kakahoroa Drive Service Lane #1, and the full length of Kakahoroa Drive Service Lane.

CARRIED

9 MAYORAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

9.1 Mayoral Report – June 2025

Refer to pages 16-25 of the agenda.

Moved Deputy Mayor Immink / Seconded Councillor Boynton

RESOLVED:

THAT the Whakatāne District Council **receives** the Mayoral Report – June 2025.

CARRIED

Attendance: GM Strategy and Growth left the meeting at 10:48 am.

9.2 Chief Executive Report – June 2025

Refer to pages 26-28 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor Iles / Seconded Councillor Pullar

RESOLVED:

THAT the Whakatāne District Council **receives** the Chief Executive Report – June 2025.

CARRIED

10 REPORTS

10.1 Local Water Done Well – June 2025

Refer to pages 29-50 of the agenda.

Attendance: GM Strategy and Growth re-entered the meeting at 10:53 am.

Mayor Luca noted the fast-moving pace resulting from the new Water Services Act and advised of proposed minor changes to the recommendations within the agenda report. These changes were not considered to be substantive in nature; however, they recognised a change in emphasis.

GM Planning, Regulatory and Infrastructure introduced the report, highlighting that the Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) must be delivered to the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) by 3 September 2025, and he summarised the results of the consultation process. The WSDP would be prepared based on a standalone business unit. The Implementation Plan would also show the plan to further consider the benefits of a Joint CCO with partner Councils in the Eastern Bay and Rotorua, to be established by 1 July 2028.

Moved Councillor James / Seconded Councillor Iles

RESOLVED:

THAT the Whakatāne District Council:

1. **Receives** the “Local Water Done Well – Deciding the model for future delivery of water services” report; and,
2. **Agrees** that water services should be delivered by a stand-alone ring-fenced water services business unit until such time as the work can be done and it can be validated that a multi-CCO will deliver lower cost services over the long-term to users of water services.
3. **Agrees** to undertake the work necessary in the interim to ring-fence the water service business unit from other Council activities to meet the legislative requirements and timeframes that will be set by the enactment of the Local Government (Water Services) Bill expected later this year; and,
4. **Agrees** that its work also be undertaken to develop a multi-Council waters entity with Kawerau District Council, Ōpōtiki District Council and Rotorua Lakes Council (and other likeminded Councils wanting to join this group) noting these Councils are at a similar development stage and are more closely aligned on an achievable development timeline; and,
5. **Notes** that the ring-fenced waters business unit will be integrated into a multi-Council waters services entity by 1 July 2028 based on early timeline discussions with the Councils described in recommendation 3; and,
6. **Approves** the reprofiled expenditure and work programme for three waters at an average of \$21million (plus inflation) per annum for the Long Term Plan 10-year capex programme as the basis for developing the Water Services Delivery Plan; and,
7. **Notes** that the reprofiled expenditure and three waters work programme is inconsistent with Council’s existing Long Term Plan and Infrastructure Strategy, and that these inconsistencies will be resolved through Council’s next Long Term Plan process; and
8. **Directs** Council officers prepare the Council’s Water Services Delivery Plan on the above basis for Council’s approval on 14 August 2025 prior to submission to the Secretary of Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs) by 3 September 2025.

Attendance: The Senior Strategic Policy Analyst entered the meeting at 11:08 am.

10.2 Whakatāne District Council Proposed Fees and Charges Schedule 2025/2026 for Adoption

Refer to pages 51-119 of the agenda.

Attendance: The Team Leader Strategy and the Manager Strategy and Performance joined the meeting online at 11:09 am.

GM Strategy and Growth explained the connection between the three reports within the agenda: Fees and Charges adoption, Annual Plan adoption and Rates Resolution. She noted the exceptions to those

- *Action*
Usage and cost benefit analysis of the Boat wash facility to be presented at a later meeting.
- Team Leader Strategy advised members of an error within the draft schedule; the correct charge for the Aquatic Centre shower was \$2.00.
- Warren Park Ground Rent; narrative to include 'Central BOP Hockey Trust'.

Moved Deputy Mayor Immink / Seconded Councillor Pullar

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Proposed Adoption of the Whakatāne District Council Fees and Charges Schedule 2025/26 report be **received**; and
2. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **adopt** the Fees and Charges Schedule for 2025/26 (as per Appendix 1 of the agenda report); and
3. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **note** that the Fees and Charges Schedule for 2025/26 has been prepared as follows:
 - (a) adjusted for inflation using the BERL adjustor rates where possible
 - (b) addition of boat wash charges to the schedule
 - (c) increases to bonds for community hall hire
 - (d) new/increased costs for building consents that will come into effect from 9 November 2025
 - (e) changes to the airport fees for 2025/26 following Ministerial approval in May 2024 (Appendix 2)

CARRIED

10.3 Annual Plan 2025/26 Adoption

Refer to pages 120-221 of the agenda.

The Senior Strategic Policy Analyst introduced the paper. During discussions the following points were noted:

- GM Finance and Business Partnering explained the operating deficit level.
- The deferred Keepa Road improvement works was a different project to that the Piripai-Coastland Resident Association presented to the June 2025 Living Together Committee. Council staff had met with Association representatives and a communication had been sent.
Action – Additional communication to advise the Association, although not in the Annual Plan, acknowledgement of a pathway forward.

Attendance: Manager Strategic Property entered the meeting at 11:25 am.

- Incremental reductions could be made to the operating deficit, but it could not be forecast over the next five years as there were too many assumptions.

- *Action* – Members to be advised of the status of the Bennett Block.
- GM Finance and Business Partnering explained the issue of revaluations and the associated depreciation, and their impact on the operating deficit. He reported that work would be carried out in the new triennium to ensure consistency across Councils when quantifying the operating deficit.
- *Action* – It was requested a statement of the external assessor (Fitch) credit worthiness be included within the Annual Plan document.
- *Action* – It was requested the Annual Plan document include an explanation of the period covered within a financial year.

Attendance: Team Leader Three Waters Asset Management & Planning, Regulatory & Infrastructure left the meeting at 11:51 am.

Moved Councillor Pullar / Seconded Councillor Tánczos

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **receives** the Annual Plan 2025/26; and
2. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **adopts** the Annual Plan 2025/26 in accordance with section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002, with a rates increase of 11.7% (Option 1); and,
3. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **agrees** to not fund the local share of the depreciation for the recent revaluation of the roading assets in the next financial year (25/26); and,
4. THAT that Whakatāne District Council **delegates** the Chief Executive to make minor editorial changes to the Annual Plan 2025/26, including design changes, prior to its finalisation and publication on the Council website.

CARRIED

Councillor Dennis and Councillor Iles requested their vote against the motion be recorded.

Attendance: The Senior Strategic Policy Analyst left the meeting at 11:56 am.

10.4 Rates Resolution for the Period – 1 July 2025 and Ending 30 June 2026

Refer to pages 222-233 of the agenda.

Moved Deputy Mayor Immink / Seconded Councillor O'Brien

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Rates Resolution for the Period Commencing 1 July 2025 and ending 30 June 2026 report be **received**; and
2. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **sets** the rates as per sections 4.1 to 4.9 of Appendix 1 attached to these meeting minutes, under the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, on rating units in the District for the financial year commencing on 1 July 2025 and ending on 30 June 2026, based on the Annual Plan rating requirement within the funding impact statement of a 11.7% net of growth increase to the rates requirement in comparison with the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (12.7% net of growth); and
3. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **sets** the due dates for the payment of the rates and the penalties for unpaid rates as per sections 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 of Appendix 1 attached to these meeting minutes; and

4. THAT the Whakatāne District Council **sets** the discount for prompt payment as per section 4.13 of Appendix 1 attached to these meeting minutes.

CARRIED

Councillor Dennis and Councillor Iles requested their vote against the motions be recorded.

10.5 Property Delegation Process

Refer to pages 234-239 of the agenda.

Moved Councillor James / Seconded Councillor Jukes

RESOLVED:

1. THAT the Council **receive** the Delegation Process report; and,
2. THAT the Council **delegate** to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Mayor, the ability to approve urgent property purchases using the Acquisitions Fund; and,
3. THAT Council **instructs** staff to update the Staff Delegations Register (2023) to include a delegation to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Mayor, to approve urgent property purchases using the Acquisitions Fund; and,
4. THAT Council **instructs** staff to amend the Governance Delegations Register (2022-2025) section 1.2.2 (k) to add the wording in bold as follows;

“Except to the extent set out [in section xxx] of the staff delegations register 2023, approve the purchase, sale and disposal of Council property”

5. THAT Council **agrees** for this delegation to remain in effect until formally rescinded by Council; and,
6. THAT Council **notes** that this delegation is intended solely for time sensitive purchases where there is a significant risk that the opportunity to acquire a property could be lost if the standard approval process is followed; and,
7. THAT Council **notes** that all decisions made under this delegation be formally reported to Council, accompanied by a paper outlining the details of the property purchased and the justification for using the acquisitions fund.

CARRIED

11 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Refer to pages 240-241 of the agenda.

Moved Mayor Luca / Seconded Councillor Iles

RESOLVED:

THAT the Whakatāne District Council **agree** to exclude the public from the following part(s) of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

1. Chief Executive Performance and Support Committee minutes 15 April 2025
2. Community Ground Rental Proposal

This resolution is made in accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act (or sections 6, 7 or 9 of the Official Information Act 1982, as the case may be).

Item number and General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under section 48 for excluding the public	Plain English reason for passing this resolution
Item 1: Chief Executive Performance and Support Committee minutes 5 April 2025	Section 7(2)(a) To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons;	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7	It is necessary to exclude the public to protect the Chief Executive's privacy.
Item 2: Community Ground Rental Proposal	Section 7(2)(h) Enable any Council holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities Section 7(2)(c)(i) To protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where making the information available would be likely to: - prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.	s48(1)(a) The public conduct of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 6 or section 7	The report contains details about rentals charged which are commercial sensitive. It also contains information about other Councils and their community lease charges which were provided in confidence.

CARRIED

The meeting moved into Public-Excluded session at 12:05 pm.

The meeting returned to the Public session at 1:12 pm.

Mayor Luca restated the following resolutions from the Public Excluded session of the meeting:

1. THAT Council **receive** the Community Ground Rental Proposal report; and
2. THAT Council **confirms** the report can be released to the public on the Chief Executive's approval once the lease agreements have been executed by all parties.

The meeting closed at 1:14 pm with a Karakia by Councillor O'Brien.

Confirmed at the meeting dated:
CHAIRPERSON

[You Tube link to Council meeting 26 June 2025](#)