

### **How has the Better off Funding come about?**

The Government has mandated changes to the way drinking water, wastewater and storm water are delivered in our communities. With major challenges ahead for the three water services (collectively known as Three Waters), the changes aim to ensure all New Zealanders have access to safe, reliable and affordable water services, while taking better care of our environment.

### **What is this funding?**

In July 2021 Government announced a \$2.5 billion package to support councils transition through the Three Waters Reform. The money is split between a 'no worse off' allocation of \$500 million towards costs of transition, and \$2 billion in 'better off' funding for councils to use on community wellbeing projects.

### **What is the benefit to the District?**

This funding provides huge opportunity for Council to progress and accelerate projects while ensuring minimal impact to ratepayers.

The seven projects will have District-wide benefit, bring additional people into the area, support business and support employment

### **How much funding did Council get?**

The Whakatāne District has been allocated \$22.66 million, with the first tranche of funding (\$5.66 million) available now and the remaining portion (\$16.99 million) becoming available in 2024.

### **How did you determine what projects would get the funding?**

Council followed a robust process to identify project options and finalise a short list of successful projects.

Key considerations included equity, inclusiveness, outcomes for Māori, alignment with community aspirations and District priorities, value for money and whether projects can be delivered within the time limits of the fund.

### **How was the funding allocated?**

The funding has been pre-allocated to councils based on a nationally consistent formula that considers population, the deprivation index and land area.

### **What projects is the funding being used for?**

The seven projects and the amounts allocated to them are:

- planning for Murupara and Minginui regeneration, and amenity projects (\$700K)
- developing shared use cycle trail from Edgecumbe to Thornton (\$900K)
- enhancing Civil Defence preparedness and strengthening Waimana and Te Teko community halls (\$1.36M)
- commencing a two-year trial for a collective Iwi policy hub (\$1M)
- Delivering Hono Hapori - mobile community outreach for Council services (\$500K)
- providing for a CCTV upgrade and expansion (\$1M)
- accelerating the Whakatāne-Kawerau Spatial Plan (\$200K).

### **How were community views considered in the decision process**

Given the timeframes associated with the application process Council did not undertake a formal public consultation. This being said, short listing of projects was informed by existing feedback received from the community through past consultation such as annual plans and long term plans to provide insight to community priorities. In numerous instances Council has also sought to apply funding to existing projects that have of themselves come through processes of engagement and prioritisation to arrive at the stage that they are.

### **What happens if a new government comes in, will the funding still be available?**

The second tranche of funding is only guaranteed if there is no change in political leadership at the next election. If there is a change in government, there may or may not be a change to the availability of this funding.