

**FUTURE
IN FOCUS**
Arotahi ki
Anamata



WHAKATĀNE
District Council
Kia Whakatāne au i ahau

Pohewatia anō
tō tātou rohe
**REIMAGINE
OUR DISTRICT**

We need your input to prioritise the right things for our future

FUTURE IN FOCUS

Arotahi ki Anamata



OUR DISTRICT FACES BIG CHALLENGES AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES

Our District and communities will face some big challenges and opportunities over the coming ten years and beyond. Despite the challenges and adversity in our immediate future, we have an exciting opportunity to 'Reimagine' what the future of our District can be. Here at Whakatāne District Council we feel a great sense of responsibility to ensure that our District continues to be a great place to live, work, play, raise a family and do business.

Right now much of our focus is on supporting our community and economy as we navigate through the impacts of not only COVID-19, but also the December 2019 Whakaari eruption. As we recover from these events, we are looking to the future, ensuring that we can build back better and work towards the kind of future that is important to all of us. This conversation will help determine what those 'important' things are.

The whakatauki for this conversation is '*Ko te ao o te kōwhai*' - **the budding of the kowhai**. This symbolises a new season – an opportunity for growth, while acknowledging the past.

HELP US TO PRIORITISE THE RIGHT THINGS

We want to start an early conversation with you, to make sure we are prioritising the right things. Your feedback will help 'Reimagine' the vision for the future of the Whakatāne District.

- Do you agree with the key challenges and opportunities we have identified?
- Which do you think should be the highest priority?
- Do you have thoughts and ideas about how the Council should be responding to the key challenges and opportunities?
- Are there other challenges and opportunities you think we have missed?

THIS IS THE START OF A CONVERSATION AS WE WORK TOWARDS OUR LONG TERM PLAN 2021-31

We are in the early stages of developing our Long Term Plan for the 2021-31 term. Once finalised, this Plan will set the Council's strategic direction, priorities and work programme for the following ten years. To help develop this plan, over the coming year we will continue to seek your feedback and thoughts on priorities for our District and on specific strategies and projects.

The information set out here does not cover all aspects of the Council's business. The Council remains committed to providing a wide range of services and facilities that families, households and businesses rely on and use every day.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

As well as inviting the general public to be part of this conversation, we continue to build our partnerships and work closely with Iwi, Central Government, community groups, neighbouring Councils, and other stakeholders on specific opportunities. Working together helps us keep in touch with the priorities of our communities and to achieve better outcomes for our District.

Whakatāne Boat Harbour Project
(Artist Impression)



1

Uplifting our economy

E whakapiki ana te taiōhanga

Our District offers many opportunities for economic development and job creation. The opportunity, working alongside Iwi, Central Government, Eastern Bay of Plenty Councils, and other partners, is to find ways to unlock our potential and support much needed economic and social uplift. The impact of COVID-19 on our economy increases the urgency to focus on this priority for both the immediate and longer term future.

Our District offers many opportunities for business and industry development, and job creation, and we know that economic and social uplift is very much needed. This priority recognises that we generally trend below the national average for many socio-economic indicators and continue to have higher levels of socio-economic deprivation compared to the New Zealand average. The impact that COVID-19 has had on the global economy further reinforces the need to prioritise economic development and job creation. Because wealth is a catalyst for enhancing social outcomes, economic uplift also needs to ensure benefits support our community where it is most needed. This priority is regularly reinforced through feedback from our community.

A strong focus of Council continues to be to work with Iwi, Central Government, our neighbouring Councils in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and other key stakeholders towards a District where our people and businesses thrive. Over the past 18 months, we have been able to significantly accelerate a number of exciting economic growth work streams through Central Government's Provincial Growth Fund partnership. There is significant investment into the future of the Eastern Bay with \$205m of Central Government funding secured for projects, in addition to the contribution from local partners. The initial focus of Council's work is in the Whakatāne CBD, Council is looking to unlock the potential of significant harbour assets in Whakatāne – maximizing these assets as a catalyst for private sector led investment. Growing the return of these assets to the community then allows us to reinvest further in our other smaller centres outside of Whakatāne.

Further opportunities for acceleration are being explored at this very time recognising the need to support our economy post-Whakaari and COVID-19. On 30 April 2020, the Council approved a 13 step plan to responding to COVID-19. These phases are managing the immediate economic impact, understanding longer-term consequences, transitioning to recovery, and recovery itself. Our success will be determined by how well we work together with Toi EDA, the EBOP Chamber of Commerce, the business sector, Iwi and Central Government partners. Together we will demonstrate decisive leadership and strength for our communities in this challenging time.



2

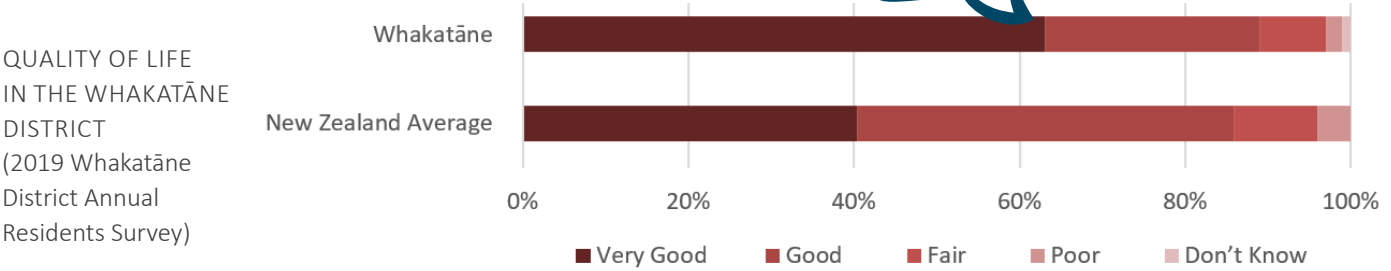
Supporting community development E tautoko ana te whakawhanake hapori

Our communities consistently report that they have a very good quality of life overall. At the same time, for a number of social wellbeing indicators, our District continues to track behind the national average. Alongside partners, the Council is well placed to support the specific community development aspirations of communities in our District.

In each of the past five years our Annual Residents Survey has indicated that the ‘quality of life’ results for our District are much higher than other parts of the country. At the same time, for a number of social wellbeing indicators our District continues to track behind the national average. Although levels of deprivation will vary very much from household to household, the New Zealand deprivation index illustrates elevated levels of deprivation for the Whakatāne District compared to New Zealand as a whole. Aside from employment and income, this reflects a need to uplift outcomes related to education, health, housing quality and crime, for example. Reflecting this context, there is demand from advocacy groups within our District to uplift social wellbeing and progress a range of outcomes for the community. These are often related to specific communities and/or to specific themes of focus.

Many agencies, community groups, Iwi, and other stakeholders are doing great work within communities to uplift social wellbeing and therefore, much of the Council’s work needs to be, and is, in partnership with others. The Council’s strong focus on economic development is in large part in recognition of the close correlation between economic and social outcomes. We also advocate for and work directly to support safe, active, healthy and inclusive communities. Over the coming year we intend to develop a Community Development Strategy to guide Council’s role in continuing to support and enhance social wellbeing in our communities.

63% of Whakatāne District residents rank their quality of life as "very good" compared to a national average of 40%.



3



Building natural hazards resilience

E whakakaha ana ki ngā matepā taiao

Our District is at risk from a range of natural hazards. In recent history we have needed to respond to and recover from a number of events. There is more we can do to minimise our vulnerability - we must all be prepared, resilient, and ready to respond when needed.

Our District is at risk from a range of natural hazards such as flooding, storm surges, earthquakes, volcanic activity, land slips and tropical cyclones. Some events, flooding in particular, have a higher likelihood of occurring, while others events, like earthquakes, have a lower likelihood of occurring but potential to cause significant damage. There are some characteristics of our District that increase our vulnerability. This includes road access restricted by bridge crossing points, a single line electricity network, remoteness of some communities, and vulnerability of some (historically) settled areas.

When events happen, the Whakatāne District Council (alongside other organisations) has a crucial role in the direct response efforts and in the longer-term recovery. Over the coming years, the impacts of the current COVID-19 crisis, White Island Whakaari eruption in December 2019, Edgecumbe floods in 2017, and the Matatā debris flow in 2005 will continue to have significant implications for our community and for the Council's work programme as we recover from these events.

Continuing to support and enhance the resilience of our communities will help to minimise our vulnerability and the intensity of the impacts. A number of Council projects have commenced to address this challenge like programmes of work to enhance our stormwater systems, upgrading public buildings to meet earthquake strengthening requirements, and specific infrastructure projects to help protect them from the impact of events for example.



4

Taking action on climate change

E urupare ana ki ngā take Huringa Āhuarangi

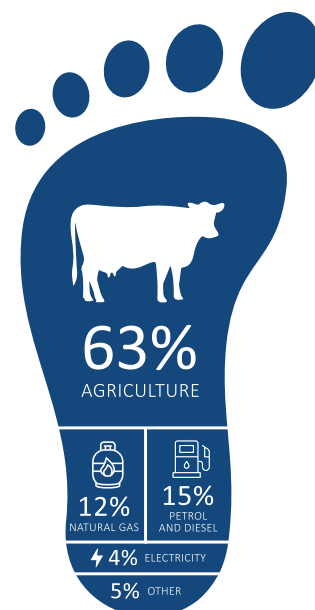
Forecasts for climate change have some serious implications for our District. We are challenged to take action now, to reduce risks for future communities, foster climate resilience and work towards a new low carbon economy.

Forecasts for climate change raise very serious implications for the Whakatāne District and the Council. Examples include increased risk to existing settlements and infrastructure in low lying coastal areas; consideration for location of future growth areas and infrastructure solutions; economic impact on horticulture and agriculture sector from a changing climate; levels of service implications for water supply, storm water systems and flood protection. All of the communities in our District will be affected by these implications, but some might be more directly, or heavily affected than others. The differences in how our communities will be affected prompts questions around how the burden of climate change will be shared.

At all levels of society the focus on Climate Change is intensifying, with local government expected to provide a key leadership role on this issue in terms of both mitigation and adaptation. Climate change is increasingly a community priority reflected through feedback to Council. There is strong local interest, including but not only, from youth wanting to see further leadership and progress on this issue.

The Council initiated a Climate Change Project in 2018 with a multidisciplinary project team and a focus on meaningful and sustainable action. Over the past year, the Council developed a set of Climate Change Principles and launched an energy management programme to reduce Council’s carbon emissions. We are currently in the process of developing a Climate Change Strategy to guide a broader response to this challenge. This will guide a range of actions for all levels of society, including changes that individuals and households can make.

CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR THE WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT.



5

Proactively managing population growth E aro ana ki te tipu o te taupori

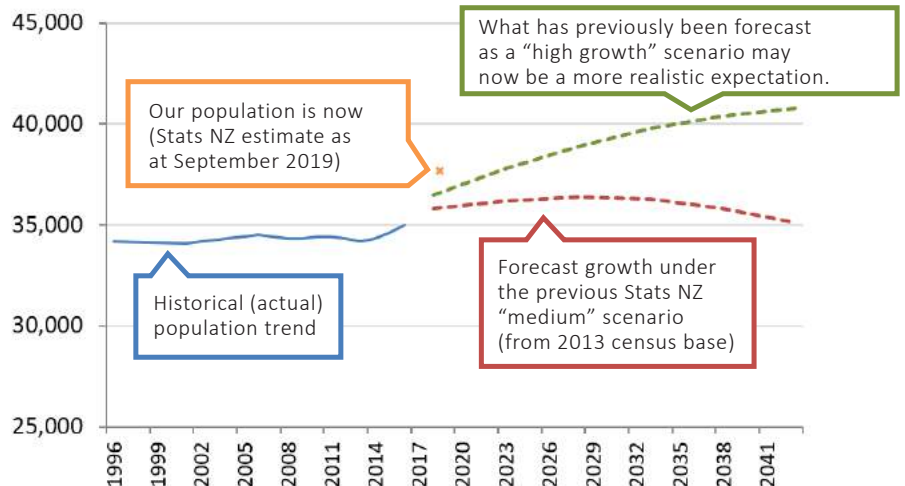
Our population has been growing much faster than previously expected and there is good reason to expect this trend will continue over a longer time period. We want to ensure growth is accommodated in a way that ensures positive outcomes are maximised and that reinforces the things we love about our corner of the world.

Like many parts of New Zealand, our District has experienced unanticipated levels of population growth. As at September 2019, the population of our District was 37,100, already exceeding previous forecasts which expected our population to peak at 36,400 in 2028.

Although COVID-19 is currently limiting the movement of people, we expect New Zealand and specifically the Whakatāne District will continue to be an attractive place where people want to make their lives. The very significant economic development initiatives being progressed for Whakatāne, alongside the lifestyle, climate and recreational opportunities our District offers will continue to drive growth.

Population growth can bring many benefits but can also create new challenges like housing pressure and traffic congestion. As our population grows we must manage it proactively in a way to ensure the positive outcomes are maximised and that we reinforce the things we love about the places where we live. We need to make sure that the demand for housing is met, and that our infrastructure and services are able to scale at the right time and at the right level to meet the needs of our communities.

WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT POPULATION GROWTH PROFILE





6

Supporting a vibrant and creative District

E tautoko ana i he rohe whitawhita me he rohe auaha

There is regular demand from our community to continue to enhance and diversify the opportunities that our District has to offer for recreation and arts. Finding co-funding opportunities and working in partnership with the community offers much opportunity to progress projects.

We are privileged to live in an area of such natural beauty and rich cultural diversity. Feedback from the community identifies the lifestyle offerings of our District based on natural environment and climate, as well as the sense of community connectedness and cohesion, as key contributing factors to a great quality of life. Numerous services and facilities provided by the Council also make a substantial contribution to quality of life like parks, reserves, playgrounds, aquatic centres, libraries, events programmes, our gallery, museum and research facilities for example.

The feedback also continues to show demand from our community to continue to enhance and diversify the opportunities that our District has to offer for recreation and the arts. This has been a clear message through the substantial engagement on the Whakatāne Ki Mua project – particularly, but not only, from youth. It is also a recurring message through other Council engagement forums like our submission processes and surveys for example.

Proactive advocacy groups in our District are looking to promote specific opportunities. Examples include improvements to our aquatic centres, projects to improve of playgrounds and skatepark facilities, upgrading of the Whakatāne District War Memorial Hall, development of mountain biking facilities, provision of local events, and growing opportunities for expression and celebration of art and culture. Working together with these groups and seeking out co-funding partnerships offers the best opportunity to progress key projects to support the vibrancy and creativity of our District.



The local wild food challenge also pictured above is a popular event held annually in Ōhope.



7

Managing waste in more sustainable ways E whakahaere toitū ana te para

New Zealand is facing a waste crisis, with too much rubbish being produced and nowhere for it to go. We must all do our part. The challenge is to change our patterns of consumption and manage waste in more sustainably.

The Ministry for the Environment reports that New Zealand lags behind countries that are leading the way in dealing with waste. Many European countries such as the Netherlands, Austria and Germany have used new technologies and approaches to increase the rates of recycling and recovery, radically reducing the amount of waste they send to landfill. On the other hand, the amount of waste that New Zealanders send to landfill is increasing (on total and per person basis). For the Whakatāne District, the amount of waste per capita being sent to landfill is significantly lower (around half) compared to the national average but there continues to be opportunities to achieve better outcomes.

Community feedback to the Council reinforces the need to focus on this challenge and we have a number of very active local waste minimisation advocacy and care groups. The need to minimise waste has also been encouraged by changes in the international recycling market, recognising that China's Green Sword Policy has reduced the volume and contamination levels of recyclable materials it imports for reprocessing.

In response, Central Government is reviewing the New Zealand Waste Strategy and Waste Minimisation Act to accommodate some key changes currently in the pipeline including; phasing out of low value and hard to recycle plastic packaging; potential introduction of a beverage container return scheme; increasing and expanding the waste disposal levy (landfill levy) to more of New Zealand's landfills; improving our data on waste; and implementing a product stewardship scheme for problematic waste stream. The local government sector continues to play a lead role in waste management and minimisation and will have responsibilities related to all the planned central government changes. Over the coming year we will be reviewing and updating our Waste Management and Minimisation Plan, which describes how we currently manage our waste in the Whakatāne District, how the Council will manage our waste in the future, and what we can all do to manage waste more sustainably.





8

Upgrading sewerage systems E whakamohoa ana ngā pūnaha parakaingaki

Deadlines are approaching for many of our sewerage systems to be substantially upgraded. A major programme of work is needed to meet modern environmental and health standards, and community expectations.

Alongside the investment needed to upgrade ‘existing’ wastewater services, a wastewater solution is required for Matatā township, which currently relies on individual septic tank systems. With the need to upgrade many of our other wastewater systems, it makes sense to look for synergies between these projects as a possible option.

Most of the sewerage systems in the District were initially built in the mid-1900s or earlier. While they have been regularly maintained and have had some upgrades over the years, they were designed according to much lower standards than we expect today.

Resource consents for the Whakatāne, Edgecumbe, Tāneatua and Murupara wastewater treatment systems all expire on 1 October 2026. To continue to deliver wastewater services, we need to apply to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council for new consents. New consents will demand much higher service standards than what our current wastewater systems are able to deliver. This is because technology, environmental and health standards, and community expectations have changed much since these systems were constructed.





9

Increasing drinking water standards

E whakapiki ana te paerewa o te kounga o te wai inu

The national focus on drinking water has increased substantially since 2016. A major programme of work is needed to upgrade our water supplies to meet enhanced standards, and new delivery models are being explored.

As part of this programme, councils throughout the country are required to explore alternative models for water delivery, which ultimately may change the current service delivery model. With a focus on economies-of-scale, a potential outcome is that local government could no longer be responsible for delivering this service.

We all have an expectation that our drinking water is safe. While Whakatāne District Council has a solid track record of providing safe water to our communities, the standards that we are required to operate to continue to be under the spotlight.

Following the Havelock North drinking water outbreak in 2016 and resulting heightened political focus on secure water, several changes to the drinking water standards and regulations are being introduced. These will demand significant upgrading of local infrastructure. The Council is assessing its current infrastructure and levels of service to ahead of these changes.

Central Governments broader 'Three Waters Review' continues to work through a longer-term programme of reform options including for water supply (alongside wastewater and stormwater).



The Otumahi water supply scheme was commissioned in 2018 improving supply to Edgecumbe, Te Teko and parts of the Rangitāiki Plains.



10

Enhancing transport efficiency, safety and alternative travel options

E whakaniko ana te pai me te haumaru o te haere, me ngā kōwhiringa haere rerekē

Transport is integral to our wellbeing and quality of life. The transportation needs and expectations of our economy and communities continues to evolve. The Council needs to ensure that we continue to meet these changing needs into the future.

The future of transportation in our District is changing and faces a number of opportunities and challenges. This includes, increased demand as our population and economy grows; the need to enhance road safety outcomes; demand for improved connections to and through remote parts of our District; increased demand for travel modes other than cars; demand for low carbon transport options; changes in transport technology; and the need to enhance resilience and protect critical infrastructure.

Feedback from the community reflects these challenges and opportunities, providing insight into local preferences and aspirations for transport. Some recurring examples include demand for better active transport and cycle networks within and between urban areas, a need to relieve peak congestion into and out of Whakatāne, including at the Bridge, demand to continue seal extensions on unsealed roads, and identification of specific road safety concerns for main arterial routes.

For some transportation services and infrastructure – like public transportation services, rail networks and state highways – the Council is not the lead agency, but we can advocate for local outcomes and work in partnership with key stakeholders towards the things our communities think are important. The Whakatāne Bridge for example is a New Zealand Transport Agency asset, and not owned by the Council. Working with interest groups and stakeholders in our community and seeking co-funding opportunities (such as those made available by Central Government) provides the opportunity to progress transportation priorities.

We look forward to working with our community and partners on a number of projects and programmes already underway. Some key examples include the Active Whakatāne Strategy, Mōtū trails western extension project and the Whakatāne Access Study.

Future in Focus - Arotahi ki Anamata

We need your input to help prioritise the right things for our future

You can also complete a survey online at
koreroMai.whakatane.govt.nz/future-in-focus

CONTACT DETAILS

NAME:

ORGANISATION (if applicable):

PHONE:

EMAIL:

WHERE DO YOU LIVE IN THE
WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT?

- Awakeri
- Coastlands
- Edgecumbe
- Galatea
- Manawahe
- Matatā
- Minginui
- Murupara
- Ōhope
- Rangitāiki
- Ruatāhuna
- Rūātōki
- Tāneatua
- Te Teko
- Waimana
- Wainui
- Whakatāne township
- Other?
Please specify:



SUBMISSIONS CLOSE:
5PM MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2020

POST OR
DELIVER TO: Whakatāne District Council
Commerce Street
Private Bag 1002
Whakatāne

Murupara Service Centre
Pine Drive, Murupara

EMAIL TO: submissions@whakatane.govt.nz

SUBMIT ONLINE: koreroMai.whakatane.govt.nz/future-in-focus

PHONE ENQUIRIES: (07) 306 0500

PERSONAL DETAILS (optional)

GENDER: Male Female Non-Binary

AGE BRACKET:
 15 or under 16 - 25 26 - 39 40 - 64 65+

ETHNICITY:
 European Māori Pacific Island Peoples Asian
 Other (please specify): _____



WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Civic Centre, Commerce Street, Whakatāne
Private Bag 1002, Whakatāne 3158

Email: info@whakatane.govt.nz

Phone: 07 306 0500

Website: whakatane.govt.nz

SERVICE CENTRE MURUPARA

Pine Drive, Murupara
Phone: 07 366 5896

 Whakatāne District Council

What priority do you think this should be given?

Thoughts and comments about this focus area:

<p>1</p>	<p>Uplifting our economy</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Supporting community development</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Building natural hazard resilience</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Taking action on climate change</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Proactively managing population growth</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Supporting a vibrant and creative district</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Managing waste in more sustainable ways</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Upgrading sewerage systems</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Increasing drinking water standards</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Enhancing transport efficiency, safety and alternative travel options</p>	<p>Low priority 1</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>2</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>3</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>High priority 4</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>5</p> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Don't Know</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>?</p>	<p>Are there any other key challenges and opportunities that you think the Council should be prioritising? If so, what is it and what do you think needs to happen?</p>							