



# **AGENDA**

## **Ordinary Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation Meeting**


**Wednesday, 18 February 2026**

**Time: 10:00 am**  
**Location: Council Chamber**  
**Memorial Ave**  
**Kaikohe**

**Membership:**

Cr Kelly Stratford - Chairperson  
Cr Ann Court  
Cr Felicity Foy  
Cr Davina Smolders  
Cr Hilda Halkyard-Harawira  
Cr Rachel Baucke  
(Ex-officio Member) Kahika - Mayor Moko Tepania



 <b>Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika</b> Far North District Council	<b>Authorising Body</b>	Mayor/Council
	<b>Status</b>	Standing Committee
<b>COUNCIL COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Title</b>	Te Kūpapa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation
	<b>Terms of Reference Adoption</b>	11 December 2025
	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	General Manager Planning and Policy

### **Kaupapa / Purpose**

Te Kūpapa – Strategy, Policy and Regulation Committee is established to provide governance oversight, leadership, and direction on the development, review, and monitoring of the Far North District Council's strategies, policies, bylaws, and regulatory frameworks. The Committee ensures that Council's strategic objectives are advanced through robust policy development and effective regulatory practice.

### **Ngā Huānga / Membership**

The Council will determine the membership of the Committee.

Te Kūpapa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation will comprise of at least six elected members (one of which will be the chairperson).

Kahika / Mayor Moko Tepania is an ex-officio member of all Committees.

### **Membership is as follows:**

- Cr Kelly Stratford - Chairperson
- Cr Ann Court - Deputy Chairperson
- Cr Felicity Foy
- Cr Davina Smolders
- Cr Hilda Halkyard Harawira
- Cr Rachel Baucke

### **Kōrama / Quorum**

The quorum at a meeting of Te Kūpapa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation is 4 members.

### **Ngā Hui / Frequency of Meetings**

The Committee shall meet 4 weekly.

### **Ngā Apatono / Power to Delegate**

The responsibilities, duties and powers of the Committee are subject to the prohibition on delegation of powers under Clause 32(1), Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002, and any other restrictions on delegation under any other relevant legislation.

Te Kūpapa Committee for Strategy Policy and Regulation may not delegate any of its responsibilities, duties or powers however it may establish working groups to consider issues within the committee's areas of responsibilities noting that working groups have no decision-making powers.

## **Ngā Herenga Paetae / Responsibilities**

The Committee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Leading the development, review, and recommendation of Council strategies, policies, and bylaws.
- Overseeing the preparation and review of the Long Term Plan, Annual Plan, and associated consultation processes.
- Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of adopted strategies and policies.
- Provide Governance level insight on Council's approach to regulatory matters - having regard to the separation of regulatory and non-regulatory decision-making functions as between the Chief Executive and Governance (section 42(3)(a) LGA02).
- Have input into submissions on central government policy, legislation, and regulatory proposals relevant to Council's functions.
- Considering and recommending to Council on matters relating to:
  - District Plan and Resource Management Act functions,
  - Environmental policy and planning,
  - Economic development strategies,
  - Social and community wellbeing policies,
  - Climate change adaptation and mitigation policy,
  - Regulatory fees and charges,
  - Other strategic or regulatory matters as delegated by Council.

The Committee has delegated authority to:

- Approve for consultation draft strategies, policies, and bylaws.
- Hear and consider submissions, including oral submissions on strategies, policies, and bylaws, and recommend adoption to Council.
- Have Governance level oversight of regulatory and policy matters as specifically delegated by Council - subject to Clause 32(1), Schedule 7, Local Government Act 2002 and section 43(3)(a) of the LGA02.
- Request reports and briefings from staff on matters within its scope.

The Committee does NOT have the authority to:

- Adopt final strategies, policies, or bylaws (unless specifically delegated by Council).
- Make decisions that are the responsibility of the full Council or another committee.

## **Ngā Ture / Rules and Procedures**

Council's Standing Orders and Elected Member Code of Conduct apply to all meetings.

## **Reporting and Review of Committee Terms of Reference**

In December of each year, the Responsible Officer alongside Democracy Services will submit a report to Council. The report will summarise the activities of the Committee and how it has contributed to the Council's governance and strategic objectives. This will look at whether the Council are meeting the full requirements of the Committee Terms of Reference and whether any amendments are required to the Committees terms of reference to increase efficient and effective decision making.

The terms of reference of the Committee will be reviewed as part of this report but can be amended by Council at any point throughout the term.

**Far North District Council**  
**Ordinary Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation**  
**Meeting**

**will be held in the Council Chamber, Memorial Ave, Kaikohe on:**  
**Wednesday 18 February 2026 at 10:00 am**

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**Te Paeroa Mahi / Order of Business**

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**1 KARAKIA TĪMATANGA / OPENING PRAYER****2 NGĀ WHAKAPĀHA ME NGĀ PĀNGA MEMA / APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members need to stand aside from decision-making when a conflict arises between their role as a Member of the Committee and any private or other external interest they might have. This note is provided as a reminder to Members to review the matters on the agenda and assess and identify where they may have a pecuniary or other conflict of interest, or where there may be a perception of a conflict of interest.

If a Member feels they do have a conflict of interest, they should publicly declare that at the start of the meeting or of the relevant item of business and refrain from participating in the discussion or voting on that item. If a Member thinks they may have a conflict of interest, they can seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager - Democracy Services (preferably before the meeting).

It is noted that while members can seek advice the final decision as to whether a conflict exists rests with the member.

**3 NGĀ TONO KŌRERO / DEPUTATION**

No requests for deputations were received at the time of the Agenda going to print.

## **4 NGĀ PŪRONGO / REPORTS**

### **4.1 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION OPTIONS**

**File Number:** A5530352

**Author:** Aya Morris, Net Zero & Sustainability Programme Lead

**Authoriser:** Roger Ackers, Group Manager - Planning & Policy

#### **TAKE PŪRONGO / PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To seek endorsement for the adoption of science-aligned emissions reduction targets to support progress toward net zero corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for Far North District Council (FNDC or council) and to recommend the allocation of resources toward emissions reduction actions through the Long Term Plan (LTP).

#### **WHAKARĀPOOTO MATUA / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Council has made a commitment through the Climate Action Policy and Climate Change Roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the government's national emissions reduction targets, achieving net zero emissions by 2050.
- Adopting science-aligned emissions reduction targets will qualify council to apply for Climate Action Loans and emissions measurement subsidies through the Local Government Funding Agency.
- If emissions reduction work is not adequately resourced, council's existing climate action goals cannot be met, and council will be vulnerable to strategic and operational risks which may lead to reputational, financial, legal and compliance impacts.
- Council must decide whether to develop an emissions reduction plan with science-aligned targets and resource emissions reduction actions toward net zero.
- It is recommended that council consult the public on emissions reduction targets and resourcing through the Long Term Plan process.

#### **TŪTOHUNGA / RECOMMENDATION**

**That Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation:**

- a) endorse Option 1, the adoption of science-aligned emissions reduction targets to support progress toward the net zero target for FNDC, and**
- b) recommend the inclusion of resources and funding for emissions reduction actions within the Long Term Plan for public consultation.**

#### **1) TĀHUHU KŌRERO / BACKGROUND**

In 2020, Council adopted a Climate Change Roadmap with two climate change mitigation goals:<sup>1</sup>

1. to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions in line with the government's national emission reduction targets or better ("walking the talk"), and
2. to promote and advise the businesses and communities of the Far North towards Carbon Zero 2050 ("reducing our carbon emissions together").

In response to the Paris Agreement, the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment

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<sup>1</sup> Council meeting 7 May 2020, Agenda item 6.6, document number A2870762.



Act 2019 set GHG emissions reduction targets for New Zealand:<sup>2</sup>

*To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (except biogenic methane) to net zero by 2050 and to reduce emissions of biogenic methane to 14-24 percent below 2017 levels by 2050, including to 10 per cent below 2017 levels by 2030.*

These targets are not mandatory for local government, and councils are not required to measure emissions. However, under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) local government is required to consider the effects of a changing climate on communities. The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) requires councils to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation into strategic planning processes and financial reporting, to ensure the resilience of infrastructure, and to consider community wellbeing.

Council's Climate Change Roadmap gives effect to these requirements. The roadmap was informed by extensive community engagement during development of the Far North 2100 strategy, adopted by Council in November 2021.<sup>3</sup> However, neither the 2021-2031 LTP nor the 2024-2027 LTP allocated sufficient resourcing to support an emissions reduction trajectory toward the achievement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The Climate Action Policy, endorsed by Council in 2023,<sup>4</sup> states that council will measure and reduce emissions, aligning targets with the national Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP).<sup>5</sup> Section 8 within the policy sets out actions to progress toward net zero emissions by 2050, including:

1. development of an operational emissions reduction plan to reduce corporate emissions,
2. annual corporate greenhouse gas emissions inventories,
3. sustainable procurement practices,
4. development of a regional emissions inventory,
5. preparation of a district-wide community emissions reduction plan, and
6. monitoring and reporting on a regional emissions reduction plan.

### **Historical support for Far North climate action goals**

In 2015, Mayors and Chairs of New Zealand declared an urgent need for responsive leadership and a holistic approach to climate change.<sup>6</sup> FNDC formally endorsed the Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration in 2017.<sup>7</sup>

Community advocacy for climate action continued to grow over subsequent years. In June 2019, a deputation from the Kaitaia College Climate Action Group, a group which included members of council's Far North Youth Council, presented a deputation to call for the declaration of a climate emergency for the Far North,<sup>8</sup> which was published on Youtube,<sup>9</sup> and subsequently reported in the Northland Age.<sup>10</sup> Two Far North Youth Councillors, including one of the students involved in this deputation, were later involved in the successful declaration of a climate emergency at the July

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<sup>2</sup> [Climate Change Response \(Zero Carbon\) Amendment Act 2019 No 61, Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Council meeting 4 November 2021, Agenda item 6.1, document number A3450795.

<sup>4</sup> Council meeting 11 December 2023, Agenda item 6.4, document number A4490032.

<sup>5</sup> Council's Climate Action Policy has not yet been updated to align with the government's second emissions reduction plan. [New Zealand's second emissions reduction plan 2026–30 | Ministry for the Environment.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration 2017 - LGNZ](#)

<sup>7</sup> Council meeting 26 October 2017, Agenda item 8.3, document number A1927453.

<sup>8</sup> Council meeting 27 June 2019, item 14, deputations.

<sup>9</sup> [Far North District Council - Youth Council - Climate Change - YouTube](#)

<sup>10</sup> [No climate emergency declaration for the Far North - NZ Herald](#)

2019 Youth Parliament.<sup>11</sup> Later in 2019, a further deputation was presented by Far North Sea Change to support the call to declare a climate emergency.<sup>12</sup>

Climate action accelerated across the Northland region as legislative support for climate action was strengthened, with Whangarei District Council declaring a climate change emergency in 2019.<sup>13</sup> Far North District joined a joint climate change adaptation committee and an intercouncil group known as Climate Adaptation Te Taitokerau,<sup>14</sup> and adopted a Climate Change Roadmap by a majority vote of nine to one.<sup>15</sup>

Community support for the Climate Change Roadmap was evident during community engagement carried out during the development of Far North 2100. Community support for climate action was further demonstrated during the consultation process for the proposed district plan, held during 2022 and 2023, which attracted over 250 submissions which mentioned climate.<sup>16</sup>

In March 2023, another community deputation in support of climate action was presented.<sup>17</sup> In December 2023, FNDC became the first local authority in Northland to endorse a climate action policy,<sup>18</sup> resolving to endorse the policy and support its early socialisation with iwi/hapu/whanau. More recently, in September 2025, a collaborative hapū-led deputation to Te Kuaka – Te Ao Māori Committee presented the Oromahoe Waitangi Kāinga Climate Adaptation Plan,<sup>19</sup> which included a focus on climate mitigation goals as well as adaptation goals.

### **GHG emissions data – what have we learned so far?**

Council has completed two corporate GHG emissions inventories, which have provided data to inform emissions reduction planning and contribute toward climate change mitigation action. A third inventory is in progress, and a fourth planned to measure emissions from the current financial year.

Emissions are categorised as Scope 1, direct emissions from fuel, fertilisers, refrigerant gases, waste, and wastewater, where emissions sources are owned or controlled by council; Scope 2, indirect emissions from purchased electricity; and Scope 3, indirect emissions from goods and services.

For FY2022-23, the base year for emissions reduction measurement, corporate emissions for FNDC were recorded as 26,435 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

For FY2023-24, total emissions were recorded as 30,787 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This represents an increase of 4,352 tCO<sub>2</sub>e from the base year.

An increase in emissions across the first two years of measurement was caused by increased spending on infrastructure, due to repairs for infrastructure damaged by major storm events in 2023.

These completed emissions inventories have been verified by Toitū Envirocare – Enviromark Solutions Ltd (Toitū), a subsidiary of Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research within the Bioeconomy Science Institute.

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<sup>11</sup> [Youth Parliament 2019 declares climate emergency | RNZ](#)

<sup>12</sup> Council meeting 19 December 2019, item 3, deputations.

<sup>13</sup> [Whangārei District Council declares climate change emergency | RNZ News](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Working together across Northland - Northland Regional Council](#)

<sup>15</sup> Council meeting 11 December 2023, Agenda item 6.4, document number A4490032.

<sup>16</sup> Summary of decisions requested tool. [Knack](#)

<sup>17</sup> Council meeting 9 March 2023, item 3, deputations.

<sup>18</sup> [Leading the way in climate action | Far North District Council](#)

<sup>19</sup> Te Kuaka – Te Ao Māori Committee meeting 23 September 2025, item 3, deputations.

As a certified Toitū Carbon Reduce organisation, council must adopt emissions reduction targets before the third emissions inventory is audited in April 2026. The existing net zero emissions target for 2050 is not sufficient to meet Toitū's carbon reduction target requirements, and Council must adopt intermediate targets for the short term and medium term.

## 2) MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA / DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS

Completed corporate emissions inventories show that the most significant emissions sources for council are from capital works, particularly for the roading network, and from wastewater and sewerage services.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, below, these three sources combined represent over 50% of the total corporate emissions for the council, offering the greatest potential for emissions reduction. To meet the net zero target, emissions from these sources must be reduced.

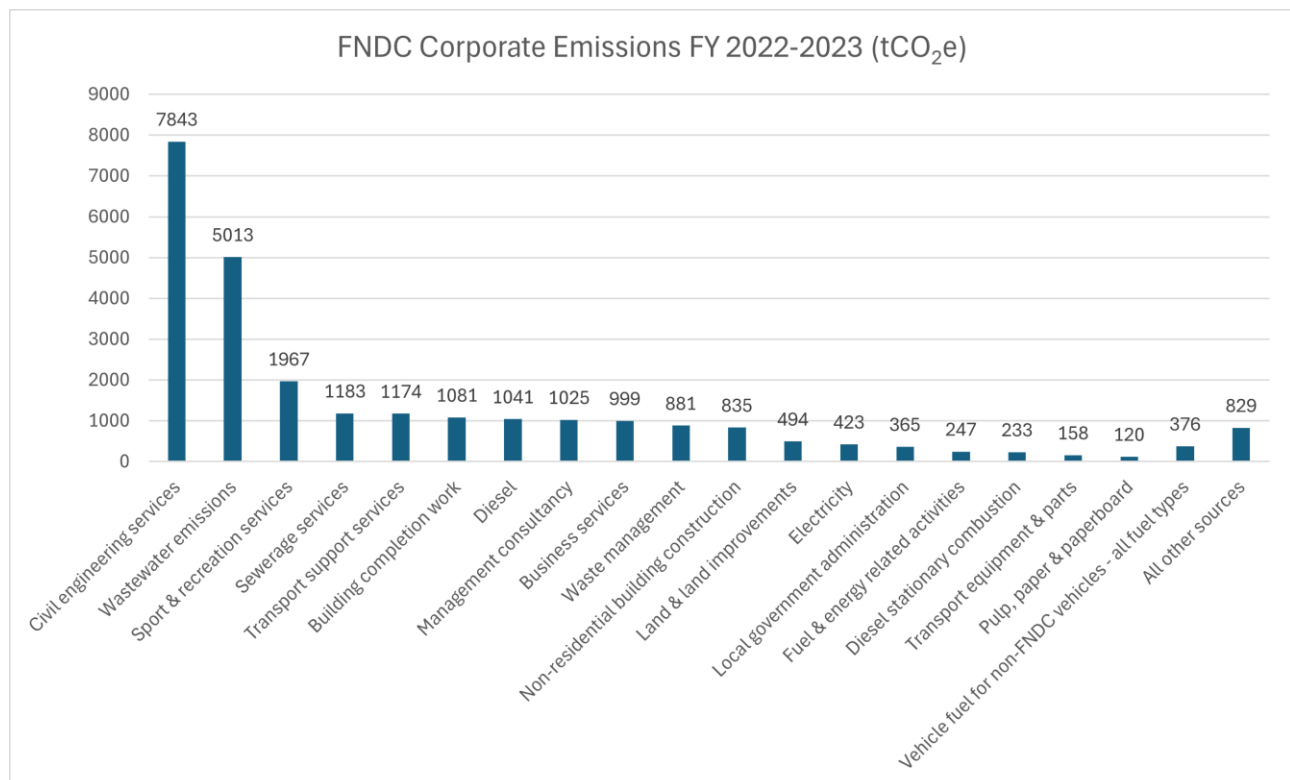


Figure 1. FNDC Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions FY22-23

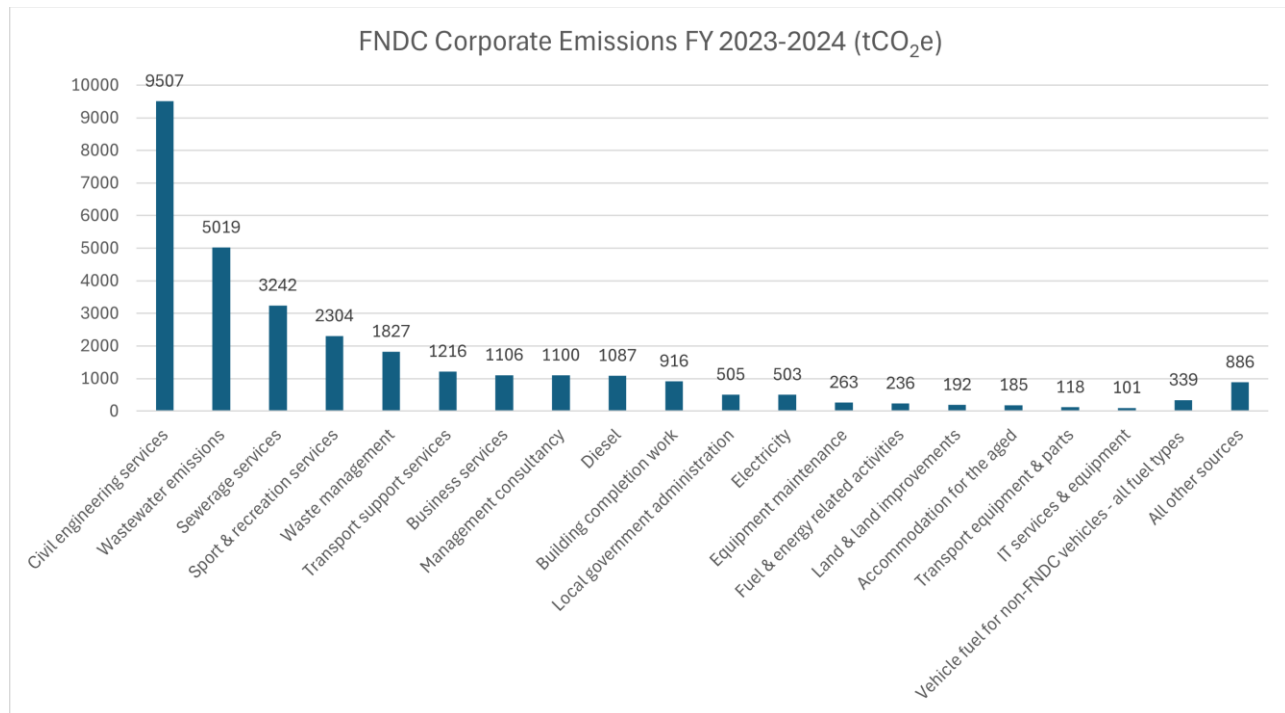


Figure 2. FNDC Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions FY23-24

Wastewater emissions fall within the biogenic methane category. A 10% methane emissions reduction is required by 2030, if FNDC aligns with the government's second national emissions reduction plan (ERP2). The transfer of waters assets to the new Northland Waters council-controlled organisation (CCO) will not remove the emissions generated by these assets from council's emissions footprint. The emissions will be transferred from scope 1 (direct emissions) to scope 3 (indirect emissions).

The most effective way to reduce indirect emissions from contractors or CCOs providing goods and services for FNDC, is through emissions reduction targets for contractors and CCOs. Sustainable procurement practices could introduce mandatory emissions reduction targets for contractors. It will be essential for emissions reduction targets to be implemented for the Northland Waters CCO if the 2030 biogenic methane target is to be met.

#### Climate Action Loans

Local government organisations working to reduce their corporate emissions become eligible for Climate Action Loans through the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA).<sup>20</sup> These are low-interest loans that are not tied to specific projects and may be used to refinance existing debt, reducing interest costs. The new Northland Waters CCO will also be eligible to apply for Climate Action Loans if LGFA criteria are met.

To qualify for Climate Action Loans, councils and CCOs must comprehensively measure emissions, have annual emissions inventories verified for assurance purposes, and approve emissions reduction plans with science-aligned emission reduction targets. Once a science-aligned emissions reduction plan is in place, councils and CCOs become eligible for LGFA subsidies toward the annual costs of emissions inventory compilation and verification.

Climate Action Loans are intended to expedite climate action spending. Earlier climate action is recommended, as the costs of climate adaptation are projected to increase exponentially with each year of delay before action is taken. Typically, emissions reduction delivers ongoing cost savings, as initial investments in energy efficiency and fuel efficiency deliver lower fuel costs and electricity

<sup>20</sup> [Climate Action Loans | New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency](#)

costs for the organisation in the longer term. These avoided costs can assist to repay the loans in future.

### **What are the benefits of measuring and reducing corporate emissions?**

Reduction of emissions by council contributes toward national and international emissions reduction efforts which aim to mitigate the severity of climate change. The communities of the Far North have shown support for council's climate action goals through the Far North 2100 engagement process and through LTP consultation on climate action spending.

Council has previously resolved to accelerate the community adaptation programme, Te Hōtaka Urutau Hapori.<sup>21</sup> Actions to support emissions reduction can also support climate adaptation. An emissions reduction plan for FNDC was produced by WSP in 2022.<sup>22</sup> The WSP recommendations focused on several major emissions sources: waters services, waste management, buildings, vehicle fleet, and staff commute.

The largest share of emissions reductions in the WSP plan related to waters infrastructure. Climate adaptation is urgently needed for Far North waters infrastructure, which is vulnerable to projected increases in flooding, coastal inundation and sea level rise, and associated groundwater changes, as well as weather events.

Emissions reduction reduces council's exposure to organisational risks. Council has formally recognised climate resilience as an organisational risk and included it on the Strategic Risk Register. Given the broad impacts associated with climate change, it is important for council to actively mitigate this risk. Failure to progress climate resilience could expose council to increased reputational, financial, legal and compliance impacts. In addition, council has identified a separate transition-to-net-zero risk on the Operational Risk Register. Continued progress toward emissions reduction is essential to managing both organisational and reputational consequences, reinforcing that climate change remains a significant and high-priority issue for council.

### **Are science-aligned corporate emissions reduction targets feasible for FNDC?**

Science-aligned emissions reduction targets are based on the international climate change research which informed the Paris Agreement and seek to reduce emissions sufficiently to limit global warming to 1.5°C-2°C, a more ambitious aspiration than that set out in the government's national ERP2. Guidance on science-based targets is provided by the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi),<sup>23</sup> and this guidance informs LGFA and Toitū practice. The achievement of science-aligned emissions reduction targets will require emissions reduction action to be resourced swiftly by contractors and CCOs as well as by council.

As climate change progresses, council will face growing costs associated with recovery from increasingly frequent severe weather events, such as the recent January 2026 storm, the 2022 and 2023 storm events, and the 2020 and 2021 droughts. Initial emissions inventories have shown that infrastructure repairs add to council's emissions footprint. Therefore, increased frequency of severe weather events may impact progress in emissions reduction.

Affordability is a key factor in emissions reduction. Council has not yet resourced implementation for the 2022 WSP recommendations. Capital works for waters infrastructure, particularly wastewater treatment infrastructure, formed the most significant share of the projected costs to implement these recommendations.

Climate Action Loans might offer an opportunity to prioritise earlier capital expenditure toward emissions reduction through the next Long Term Plan. Earlier action could reduce the impact of steeply increasing costs for infrastructure construction. If all actions recommended by WSP are

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<sup>21</sup> Council meeting 28 August 2025, agenda item 7.5, document number A5221822.

<sup>22</sup> FNDC Operational Emissions Reduction Plan, WSP (2022).

<sup>23</sup> <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>

resourced by 2030, council will be better placed to progress the proposed 2030 target.

The single area of council operations with greatest potential for corporate emissions reduction is waters services. The timeline for the transfer of council's waters assets to the new Northland Waters CCO, and the potential delays in emissions reduction actions relating to these assets in the interim, may make it unlikely that significant emissions reductions for wastewater can be delivered by 2030.

Sustainable procurement practices to introduce emissions reduction requirements for contractors will become possible as new contracts are agreed. However, some current contracts span up to ten years, which may mean delays of several years before new requirements can be introduced. These timelines reduce the likelihood that council can achieve intermediate emissions reduction targets by 2030.

To achieve the longer-term goal of net zero emissions by 2050, council will likely be required to offset emissions. Emissions offsetting through permanent forestry on council-owned lands may assist toward emissions reduction, but this pathway alone cannot achieve the net zero emissions target by 2050 without substantial land acquisition. The purchase of carbon credits will be required alongside emissions reduction investment if the net zero emissions target is to be achieved.

### Corporate emissions reduction options

In accord with the council's current Climate Action Policy and Climate Change Roadmap, continued work to measure and reduce corporate emissions is recommended. However, if an emissions reduction plan is to be adopted, council must allocate sufficient budget to resource the actions within the plan. Therefore, a decision is required regarding the level of emissions reductions council will seek to achieve.

#### Option 1 - Recommended

Option 1, the recommended option, is that the committee endorses a series of science-aligned emissions reduction targets which meet minimum LGFA requirements and will qualify council for Climate Action Loans and emissions accounting subsidies.

Table 1 proposes science-aligned emissions reduction targets for 2030, 2035 and 2050.

<b>FY2022-23 emissions (base year)</b>	<b>2030 target</b>	<b>2035 target</b>	<b>2050 target</b>
26,435 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	15,333 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	7,137 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	0 tCO <sub>2</sub> e

Table 1. Science-aligned emissions reduction targets for Far North District Council

These science-aligned targets will require emissions reductions of approximately 11,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030, a further 8,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2035, and a final reduction of 7,137 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The 2030 target must include 10% reduction in biogenic methane.

There will be significant costs to achieve the 2030 target, with additional costs to achieve further targets. If Option 1 is endorsed, it includes an expectation that council, and council's contractors and CCOs, will resource timely emissions reduction actions. The inclusion of projected costs in the next Long Term Plan consultation process will enable the council to assess the community's appetite to progress the work programme.

#### Option 2

Option 2, which is not recommended, is that the committee endorses a series of moderate emissions reduction targets, which are not designed to achieve the existing net zero emissions target by 2050, and will not qualify council to access Climate Action Loans or emissions accounting subsidies through LGFA.

Table 2 proposes moderate emissions reduction targets for 2030, 2035 and 2050.

<b>FY2022-23 emissions (base year)</b>	<b>2030 target</b>	<b>2035 target</b>	<b>2050 target</b>
26,435 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	22,435 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	18,435 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	12,435 tCO <sub>2</sub> e

Table 2. Moderate emissions reduction targets for Far North District Council

These moderate targets will require emissions reductions of approximately 4,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030, a further 4,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2035, and a further reduction of 6,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2050.

The cost to achieve these more moderate targets will be less than Option 1, and spending will be allocated across a longer timeline. If Option 2 is endorsed, council might adopt a simpler emissions inventory format, measuring and reducing emissions from only scope 1 and scope 2 sources, which council has the greatest control over, while also requiring major contractors and CCOs to measure and reduce emissions.

### Option 3

Option 3, which is not recommended, is that work toward emissions reduction is discontinued. This option will not achieve the net zero emissions target for 2050 or align with the Far North 2100 strategy. This option also requires a review of council's Climate Action Policy and Climate Change Roadmap to remove the references to climate change mitigation. This option does not assist to mitigate the climate resilience risk for council. However, if option 3 is adopted, resources currently allocated for emissions measurement might then be redirected toward other purposes, such as the previously approved acceleration of the climate adaptation work programme.

## TAKE TŪTOHUNGA / REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

The recommended option for corporate emissions reduction is Option 1, which delivers against the goals in council's Climate Action Policy and Climate Change Roadmap, and the Far North 2100 strategy. This option will also qualify council for Climate Action Loans and emissions accounting subsidies, which may be used to resource emissions reduction and climate adaptation work.

If Option 1 is not adopted and resourced, council cannot deliver on the strategic goals set out in Far North 2100, and a review for the Climate Change Roadmap and Climate Action Policy will be required. This option leaves council exposed to strategic and operational risks, which may lead to reputational, financial, legal and compliance impacts. If council progresses science-based emissions reduction planning, costs can be included into the long-term planning process and undergo public consultation to identify whether resourcing toward the net zero target is supported.

Option 2 has been proposed so that the committee can consider whether it is feasible for council to resource the level of emissions reduction necessary to achieve the existing net zero emissions target by 2050, or whether a transition toward a more moderate emissions reduction pathway is preferred.

Option 3 has been proposed so that the committee can consider whether council should entirely withdraw from the existing 2050 net zero target and cease work toward emissions reduction, redirecting resources toward the acceleration of the climate adaptation programme.

## 3) PĀNGA PŪTEA ME NGĀ WĀHANGA TAHUA / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROVISION

Detailed costings for these alternative emissions reduction targets have not been prepared, as the purpose of this paper is to seek the committee's endorsement for the proposed emissions reduction targets before a detailed emissions reduction plan is developed.

The previous LTP has not budgeted for the implementation of the WSP recommendations, which are recommended as actions through both Option 1 and Option 2.

There are significant costs to implement the 2022 WSP recommendations, which are included in

Option 1 to be delivered before 2030. If this option is to be adopted, the required infrastructure costings must be prepared for inclusion in the LTP consultation process.

Option 2 proposes extending the timeline for the implementation of the WSP recommendations out until 2035, spreading expenditure across a longer timeframe. If this option is to be adopted, the required infrastructure costings must be prepared for inclusion in the LTP consultation process.

Option 3 offers cost reallocation opportunities as the budget allocated toward emissions measurement might be repurposed toward the acceleration of the climate adaptation programme. However, Option 3 does not offer proposed cost savings through energy efficiency.

## **ĀPITI HANGA / ATTACHMENTS**

**Nil**



### Hōtaka Take Ōkawa / Compliance Schedule:

Full consideration has been given to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 S77 in relation to decision making, in particular:

1. A Local authority must, in the course of the decision-making process,
  - a) Seek to identify all reasonably practicable options for the achievement of the objective of a decision; and
  - b) Assess the options in terms of their advantages and disadvantages; and
  - c) If any of the options identified under paragraph (a) involves a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna and other taonga.
2. This section is subject to Section 79 - Compliance with procedures in relation to decisions.

He Take Ōkawa / Compliance Requirement	Aromatawai Kaimahi / Staff Assessment
State the level of significance (high or low) of the issue or proposal as determined by the <a href="#">Council's Significance and Engagement Policy</a>	The proposal has a high level of significance, as Option 1, the recommended option, has unbudgeted financial impacts. Option 2 is inconsistent with Council plans and policies and has unbudgeted financial impacts. Option 3 is inconsistent with Council plans and policies but has no unbudgeted financial impacts. It is recommended to consult communities through the next LTP process.
State the relevant Council policies (external or internal), legislation, and/or community outcomes (as stated in the LTP) that relate to this decision.	Climate Action Policy (2023) Climate Change Roadmap (2020) Far North 2100 Strategy (2021) Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act (2019) Local Government Act (2002) Resource Management Act (1991)
State whether this issue or proposal has a District wide relevance and, if not, the ways in which the appropriate Community Board's views have been sought.	The report has district-wide relevance.
State the possible implications for Māori and how Māori have been provided with an opportunity to contribute to decision making if this decision is significant and relates to land and/or any body of water.  State the possible implications and how this report aligns with Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi.	Climate change mitigation has implications for Māori as lands and waterways, as well as indigenous biodiversity, are vulnerable to climate change impacts.  District-wide Māori community engagement was carried out around Far North 2100 which informed the development of the Climate Action Policy and Climate Change Roadmap.
Identify persons likely to be affected by or have an interest in the matter, and how you have given consideration to their views or	All the groups named are affected by climate change, alongside the general population.

preferences (for example – youth, the aged and those with disabilities).	
State the financial implications and where budgetary provisions have been made to support this decision.	This has been covered in Section 3.
Chief Financial Officer review.	The CFO has not reviewed this report.

## 4.2 SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT - DRAFT FNDC SUBMISSION

**File Number:** A5559611

**Author:** Steve Rylands, Senior Policy Advisor

**Authoriser:** Roger Ackers, Group Manager - Planning & Policy

### TAKE PŪRONGO / PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval of a submission on the Government discussion document – Simplifying Local Government – A Draft Proposal.

### WHAKARĀPOOTO MATUA / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 21 November 2025, the Government released the Simplifying Local Government – a Draft Proposal for public consultation.
- The Government proposes to:
  - replace elected regional councillors with Combined Territorial Boards (CTBs)
  - require CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans within two years.
- Elected members workshopped the discussion document on 28 January 2026
- Staff have prepared a draft submission informed by the workshop discussions
- Submissions close on 20 February 2026

### TŪTOHUNGA / RECOMMENDATION

**That Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation recommend that the Chief Executive approve the submission on the Government discussion document "Simplifying Local Government – a draft proposal " at Attachment 1.**

### 1) TĀHUHU KŌRERO / BACKGROUND

On 21 November 2025, the Government released a discussion document titled "Simplifying Local Government - a draft proposal" for public consultation. The document proposes fundamental changes to the structure and operation of local government.

The Government proposes a two-step reform process:

**Step 1: Replace elected regional councillors with Combined Territorial Boards (CTBs).** CTBs will comprise the mayors from each territorial authority in the region. Variant options include appointing Crown Commissioners to the CTB (with varying levels of voting power) or replacing regional councillors entirely with Crown Commissioners.

For Northland, the CTB would comprise the mayors of Far North District Council, Whangārei District Council, and Kaipara District Council.

**Step 2: Require CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans within two years.** These plans would:

- map all council functions in the region
- recommend the best delivery model for each function (shared services, joint entities, amalgamations, etc.)
- include mandatory consultation with communities, iwi, hapū, and stakeholders
- on completion, be approved by the Minister of Local Government

The discussion document poses questions seeking feedback on the components of the proposal, including:

- whether there is a need to simplify local government
- views on replacing regional councillors with a CTB
- preferences for Crown Commissioner participation
- voting arrangements on the CTB
- content and criteria for regional reorganisation plans
- how the proposal provides for Treaty settlements

The Government argues that the current two-tier system creates:

- complexity and confusion for communities
- duplication and inefficiency
- coordination challenges
- unnecessary costs for ratepayers

The Government notes that concurrent reforms (resource management, water services, climate adaptation) create an opportune time to review local government structures.

Submissions close on 20 February 2026. The Government will consider submissions before making final decisions on the reform proposal.

## **2) MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA / DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS**

Staff have prepared a draft submission (Attachment 1) for Council's consideration. The submission was informed by the workshop held with Elected Members on 28 January 2026.

The draft submission offers support for the Government's objective of creating more efficient and effective local government.

### **The submission proposes an alternative pathway for Te Tai Tokerau.**

Rather than immediately replacing Northland Regional Councillors with a CTB that assumes full governance responsibilities, the submission proposes:

- retaining Regional Councillors Until 2028
- that a CTB be established, but with a different mandate to that proposed by the Government—to *only* develop the regional reorganisation plan over the next two years, rather than to also govern regional functions.
- that the CTB would have an observer and advisory role (without voting rights) on the Northland Regional Council:
  - this would enable the CTB to understand regional operations, access information, and build knowledge that will inform the regional reorganisation plan.

The submission identifies substantial risks in the Government's proposal to have mayors simultaneously govern regional functions and develop regional reorganisation plans:

- risk of poor service delivery:
  - regional functions are complex and require specialist knowledge. Mayors not elected for these roles may struggle to provide effective governance.
- degraded territorial authority leadership:
  - mayors have full-time responsibilities governing their own councils. Adding regional governance duties compromises their capacity to lead effectively at the local level.
- compromised planning capacity:

- developing a good regional reorganisation plan requires substantial time and attention— If mayors are simultaneously governing regional operations, the quality of the plan—which will shape Northland for decades—will suffer.

The submission supports equal voting rights for all three Northland mayors on the CTB, rather than population-weighted voting. This approach:

- is simple, transparent, and easy to understand
- prevents Whangārei (with approximately 50 percent of Northland's population) from dominating regional decisions
- protects rural and remote communities' interests
- encourages genuine collaboration and consensus-building
- recognises the equal standing of each territorial authority

The submission supports including a non-voting Crown Commissioner on the CTB to:

- ensure alignment with national priorities and policies
- facilitate two-way communication between the region and central government
- provide access to Government expertise and resources
- support quality assurance for the regional reorganisation plan

The submission emphasises that the Crown Commissioner should not have voting rights, veto power, or control over the plan's content.

The submission advocates for dedicated central government funding to support CTBs in developing robust regional reorganisation plans. For Northland, staff estimate approximately \$1 million over two years would be required for:

- expert advisory support
- secretariat staff to coordinate the process
- community and iwi engagement activities
- technical analysis and financial modelling

A critical theme throughout the submission is the requirement for regional reorganisation plans to address engagement with *all* iwi and hapū, not just those with Treaty settlements. This is particularly important for our district.

The submission proposes:

- adding an additional criterion for assessing regional reorganisation plans: *"Establishes effective arrangements for engagement with iwi and hapū on regional decision-making"*

The submission does *not* express views on the long-term structure of local government in Northland. That decision will be made through the regional reorganisation planning process over the first two years following the establishment of the CTB.

## OPTIONS

### **Option One: Approve the submission on the Simplifying Local Government Discussion Document in Attachment 1.**

The submission will be provided to the Department of Internal Affairs.

- |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advantages    | Council's submission may influence decisions on the reform.<br>Council's submission will demonstrate to the community that it is seeking local government reform best suited to the interests of the community. |
| Disadvantages | No disadvantages are identified                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### **Option Two: Do not approve the submission on the Simplifying Local Government Discussion Document in Attachment 1.**

The submission will not be provided to the Department of Internal Affairs.

- |               |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advantages    | None identified. There are no plausible advantages in not providing a submission.                                                                                |
| Disadvantages | Not providing a submission would signal to the community that the Council agrees with all the details of the proposed reform, or is ambivalent about the issues. |

## TAKE TŪTOHUNGA / REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

Drafting the submission has followed best practice. Input was provided by Elected Members.

## **3) PĀNGA PŪTEA ME NGĀ WĀHANGA TAHUA / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROVISION**

There is no cost to produce and submit this submission.

## ĀPITI HANGA / ATTACHMENTS

1. Simplifying Local Government - Far North District Council Submission - A5559950 [↓](#) 

### Hōtaka Take Ōkawa / Compliance Schedule:

Full consideration has been given to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 S77 in relation to decision making, in particular:

1. A Local authority must, in the course of the decision-making process,
  - a) Seek to identify all reasonably practicable options for the achievement of the objective of a decision; and
  - b) Assess the options in terms of their advantages and disadvantages; and
  - c) If any of the options identified under paragraph (a) involves a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna and other taonga.
2. This section is subject to Section 79 - Compliance with procedures in relation to decisions.

He Take Ōkawa / Compliance Requirement	Aromatawai Kaimahi / Staff Assessment
State the level of significance (high or low) of the issue or proposal as determined by the <a href="#">Council's Significance and Engagement Policy</a>	In line with the Significance and Engagement Policy the recommendation to approve the submission will have little effect on financial thresholds, ratepayers, specific demographics, or levels of service. Therefore, the level of significance is low, and Council is not obliged to publicly consult.
State the relevant Council policies (external or internal), legislation, and/or community outcomes (as stated in the LTP) that relate to this decision.	The following policies relate to the decision of this report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Act 2002</li> <li>• Signed memorandum of understanding with iwi and hapū</li> <li>• Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements</li> </ul>
State whether this issue or proposal has a District wide relevance and, if not, the ways in which the appropriate Community Board's views have been sought.	The submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal has district-wide relevance and is not within the delegations of Community Boards to consider.
State the possible implications for Māori and how Māori have been provided with an opportunity to contribute to decision making if this decision is significant and relates to land and/or any body of water.  State the possible implications and how this report aligns with Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi.	The decision in this report does relate to land or any body of water. The submission advocates changes to the Government's proposals to inform good decision-making under our responsibilities as a Treaty Partner under Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi.
Identify persons likely to be affected by or have an interest in the matter, and how you have given consideration to their views or preferences (for example – youth, the aged and those with disabilities).	The entire community of the district will have an interest in this matter.

State the financial implications and where budgetary provisions have been made to support this decision.	There is no cost to produce or submit this submission.
Chief Financial Officer review.	The CFO has not reviewed this report.





**HE ARA TĀMATA**  
**CREATING GREAT PLACES**  
*Supporting our people*

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20 February 2026

**To:** Chief Executive  
Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs  
45 Pipitea Street  
Wellington 6011

**RE: Submission on Simplifying Local Government**

Thank you for the opportunity for Far North District Council (FNDC) to provide a submission to the Department of Internal Affairs on the Government discussion document, *Simplifying Local Government – A draft proposal*.

Contact details:  
Steve Rylands – Senior Policy Advisor  
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Far North District Council  
Ph: 09 401 5243  
Private Bag 752.  
Kaikohe 0440.

**Executive Summary**

Far North District Council agrees that local government in New Zealand requires reform to meet future challenges. However, we do not support the Government's proposed approach to achieving this reform.

Our submission makes the following points.

1. **Support for reform objectives:** We agree with the Government's objectives of creating more efficient, effective, and cost-effective local government.
2. **Opposition to replacing Regional Councilors during the first two years ('stage one') of the reform process:** We oppose the replacement of recently elected Northland Regional Councillors with a Combined Territories Board (CTB). Regional Councillors should remain in place until the 2028 local government election.
3. **Alternative CTB role:** During stage one we propose establishing a CTB with a different mandate—to develop the regional reorganisation plan while providing advice to (but not replacing) the Northland Regional Council.

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4. **Crown Commissioner as advisor:** We support a non-voting Crown Commissioner on the CTB to facilitate communication between the region and central government and to support the CTB's work.
5. **'One Mayor, One Vote':** We support equal voting rights for all mayors on the CTB to ensure that smaller councils are not dominated by larger ones.
6. **Dual voting for resource management:** We support the proposed dual condition voting procedure for certain resource management decisions.
7. **Enhanced Regional Reorganisation Plans:** We support requiring CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans but recommend that the Government provide dedicated funding for this work.
8. **Strengthened Māori engagement requirements:** Regional reorganisation plan criteria should include requirements for establishing effective arrangements for engagement with *all* iwi, not just those with Treaty settlements.
9. **Government Review of Functions:** Parallel to the development of regional reorganisation plans, the Government should review the appropriate allocation of functions between central and local government.

The Far North District Council seeks a reform pathway that enables Northland communities to design their own future while maintaining excellent local government services with strong local voice throughout the transition period.

## Introduction

Before turning to the questions in the discussion document, we wish to set out the important and unique characteristics of the far north district. This is important context for the positions that we advance in this submission.

The far north district occupies a unique position in New Zealand's local government landscape. As the northernmost territorial authority, stretching from North Cape and Cape Reinga to the Bay of Islands and Hokianga, our district encompasses 6,686 square kilometres and serves a population of 73,700 people. FNDC is a Tier 3 Council. The district is bordered with the Whangarei and Kaipara districts

### ***Rural and Remote Character***

The Far North is predominantly rural, with approximately 60 percent of our population living in rural areas, many in remote and isolated communities. This population presents challenges for service delivery and community engagement. Our communities are spread across diverse landscapes, from coastal settlements to inland farming areas, each with their own distinct needs and characteristics.

### ***High Māori Population***

The Far North District has one of the highest proportions of Māori of any district in New Zealand, with 49.9 percent of Far North residents identify as being of Māori descent. This is not merely a demographic statistic — it reflects the deep and enduring relationship between tangata whenua and this rohe, a relationship that extends back many centuries.

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***Iwi and Hapū Presence in the Region***

The Far North is home to multiple iwi and hapū with profound historical, cultural, and spiritual connections to the land and waters of Te Tai Tokerau. The district includes:

- Nine iwi with Treaty settlements that have been legislated
- Ngāpuhi, Aotearoa's largest iwi, whose Treaty settlement negotiations are ongoing
- numerous hapū with distinct rohe and kaitiaki responsibilities
- Multiple iwi and hapū which have not yet reached Treaty settlements with the Crown

***Our Commitments to Support the Crown as a Treaty Partner***

Council acknowledges and respects the Crown's responsibility as Treaty partner and the requirement of local government to consider the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, specifically the obligations placed on the council to provide opportunities for Māori to participate in decision-making and other council processes which is meaningful to both parties. We have developed substantive frameworks with iwi and hapū, including:

- Te Pae o Uta, our comprehensive Te Ao Māori Framework, which provides strategic direction for genuine partnership with Māori across all council operations
- A Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreement with Te Rūnanga ā-Iwi o Ngāpuhi
- A Mana Ōrite (equal standing) relationship agreement with Te Rūnanga o Whaingaroa
- Te Kuaka, our Māori Standing Committee with influence over council decision-making
- Four Māori ward councillors representing the Ngā Tai o Tokerau Māori Ward

These arrangements reflect our commitment to genuine engagement with all iwi in the district, regardless of whether they have reached a Treaty settlement with the Crown. Our Te Pae o Uta framework requires that Council gives effect to Te Tiriti in all its operations and that implementation of the principles of Te Tiriti occurs in all Council decision making and operational processes.

***Socioeconomic Challenges***

The Far North faces significant socioeconomic challenges. Our district experiences:

- higher than national average unemployment rates
- significant housing deprivation and affordability challenges
- lower GDP per capita compared to national averages
- limited access to services in remote communities
- infrastructure requiring substantial investment

Despite these challenges, our communities demonstrate remarkable resilience, strong cultural identity, and commitment to the wellbeing of whānau and the environment.

***Council's Commitment to Efficiency***

The Far North District Council has worked to minimise rates increases while maintaining essential services. We understand the financial pressures facing our ratepayers and we are committed to delivering value for money. This submission reflects our intent to contribute constructively to achieving more efficient and effective local government. At the same time,

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we seek to preserve the strong local voice that is essential for our diverse and unique communities.

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**Responses to the Questions in the Discussion Document**

**1. Do you agree that there is a need to simplify local government?**

Yes

- 1.1. The Far North District Council agrees that the local government system requires simplification and reform.
- 1.2. The current two-tier system creates unnecessary complexity, duplication, and confusion for communities.
- 1.3. The Government's ambitious reforms — including resource management changes, water services reform, and climate adaptation planning — create an opportunity to consider how councils are structured and how they work together.
- 1.4. For the Far North, with our dispersed rural communities, substantial Māori population, and socioeconomic challenges, having a more streamlined and effective local government system could deliver better outcomes for our people. However, any reform must preserve strong local voice and genuine partnership with tangata whenua.
- 1.5. We are committed to being part of the solution. A single-layer local government system may indeed be the future for New Zealand. The question is not whether change is needed, but how that change should be implemented and what form it should take.

**2. What do you think of the proposed approach overall?**

**The Far North District Council agrees with the objectives that the Government is pursuing. We support the goal of efficient, effective local government that can meet future challenges. However, we do not agree with the proposed approach.**

***Our Agreement with Objectives***

- 2.1. We share the Government's vision for local government that is:
  - simpler and easier for communities to understand
  - more cost-effective and efficient in delivering services
  - better coordinated across regional and local levels
  - capable of addressing complex challenges such as climate change, housing, and infrastructure
  - accountable and responsive to local communities

Our Council has worked to minimise rates increases while maintaining service levels. We understand the need for local government to demonstrate value for money. A single-layer local government system may represent the future.

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***Our Concerns with the Proposed Approach***

- 2.2. We have significant concerns about the Government's proposed pathway to achieving its objectives.
- 2.3. The Government proposes that mayors immediately take over regional governance functions while simultaneously developing a regional reorganisation plan over the next two years. We submit that this dual mandate is problematic and creates substantial risks:

***Risk of poor service delivery***

- 2.4. The Northland Regional Council currently provides essential services such as environmental management, biosecurity, regional transport planning, and resource management. These are complex, technical functions requiring specialist knowledge and established relationships with communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Mayors who were not elected to perform these roles, and who may lack the necessary expertise, could struggle to provide effective governance during stage one of the reform process.

***Governance may be diluted***

- 2.5. The three Northland mayors have full-time responsibilities governing their respective territorial authorities. Adding comprehensive regional governance responsibilities on top of their existing workload risks compromising their ability to provide effective leadership for their own councils.

***Reduced Capacity for Regional Reorganisation Planning***

- 2.6. Developing a good regional reorganisation plan will require time, effort, community engagement, technical analysis, and strategic thinking. If mayors are simultaneously governing regional functions, their capacity to devote the necessary attention to designing the future of Northland's local government will be constrained.

***Undermining Local Democracy***

- 2.7. Northland Regional Councillors were elected in October 2025 — only months ago. These elected representatives sought office to serve their communities in regional governance roles. Immediately replacing them with mayors who did not campaign for regional responsibilities would undermine the democratic mandate that regional councillors received from voters.

***Our Alternative: Retain Regional Councillors until 2028***

- 2.8. We have concluded that the best path forward is to enable Northland to design its own solutions. If we are going to engage Northland communities over the next two years in collaborative work on a regional reorganisation plan, this engagement must occur alongside functional local government with a strong local voice.
- 2.9. We need the time and capacity to work thoughtfully with our communities, with tangata whenua, and with each other to design a future system that works for Northland's unique circumstances. Trying to simultaneously govern regional functions and plan for fundamental restructuring will compromise *both* objectives.
- 2.10. We are committed to reform, but we advocate for a reform process that:

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- maintains functional governance throughout the transition
- enables genuine community and iwi engagement in designing the future
- provides adequate time and resources for developing a good reorganisation plan
- respects recent democratic decisions
- allows mayors to focus on their primary responsibility — governing their territorial authorities — while contributing to regional planning.

2.11. We set out our proposal in detail in our response to question 3, which follows.

**3. Do you agree with replacing regional councillors with a Combined Territories Board (CTB)?**

No

3.1. We do not support the immediate replacement of Northland Regional Councillors with a CTB that assumes full regional governance responsibilities.

***Preserving the Recent Democratic Mandate***

3.2. Voters made informed choices about who should represent them on both their territorial authority and their regional council. To overturn those decisions within months, without a clear emergency justification, demonstrates disrespect for the democratic process and for the choices of voters.

***Capacity and Capability Concerns***

3.3. The three Northland mayors were elected to govern territorial authorities — the Far North District Council, Whangārei District Council, and Kaipara District Council. These roles are demanding.

3.4. It is questionable whether mayors elected to govern territorial functions have the necessary skills, knowledge, and capacity to simultaneously provide effective governance for distinct regional functions.

***The Dual Mandate Problem***

3.5. The Government's proposal asks the CTB to simultaneously:

- govern all current Northland Regional Council functions
- develop a comprehensive regional reorganisation plan within two years

3.6. This dual mandate creates unrealistic expectations and substantial risks.

- **Risk of poor regional service delivery:** If mayors are stretched between their territorial responsibilities and new regional governance duties, the quality of regional service delivery may suffer.
- **Weakened leadership:** The primary responsibility of mayors is to provide leadership for their local authorities. *If they are simultaneously managing regional governance, their capacity to effectively lead their own councils will be compromised.*

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- **Weakened regional reorganisation planning:** Developing a good regional reorganisation plan is substantial work requiring:
  - mapping all current council functions
  - analysis of service delivery models and efficiency opportunities
  - extensive community
  - engagement with iwi
  - financial modelling
  - transition planning

3.7. If the CTB is simultaneously governing regional operations, its members will not have adequate capacity for this crucial planning work. The quality of the regional reorganisation plan — which will shape Northland local government for decades — will be compromised.

***Our Alternative Proposal***

3.8. We propose a different approach that addresses these concerns while still advancing reform:

- **Retain Northland Regional Councillors Until 2028:** Regional Councillors should continue in their roles until the scheduled 2028 local government election.
- **Establish a CTB with a planning focus:** A CTB should be established, but with a different mandate from that proposed by the Government. *The CTB's primary task would be to develop the regional reorganisation plan over the next two years.*
- **CTB to be an advisor to the Regional Council:** The CTB should have an observer and advisory role on the Northland Regional Council, but without voting rights. This will enable the CTB to:
  - receive all advice and information provided to Regional Councillors
  - understand regional operations and challenges firsthand
  - build knowledge that will inform the regional reorganisation plan
  - maintain oversight without compromising operational governance
- **Future of the Regional Council to be determined by regional reorganisation plan**

***Benefits of This Approach***

3.9. This alternative approach would:

- respect the recent democratic decision of Northland voters
- maintain functional, effective regional governance throughout the transition
- allow mayors to focus primarily on their territorial authority responsibilities
- enable the CTB to devote adequate time and attention to developing a good regional reorganisation plan
- ensure the reorganisation plan is informed by direct knowledge of regional operations
- reduce risks of service delivery failures during the transition
- provide a clear pathway from current arrangements to the future system



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- 3.10. This alternative proposal is a better pathway for Northland. It balances the need for reform with the imperative to maintain effective governance and genuine democratic accountability throughout the transition period.

**4. What do you like or dislike about the proposal to replace regional councillors with a CTB?**

We have addressed this question in our response to Question 3

**5. What level of Crown participation in regional decision-making do you prefer?**

Options:

- i None – only mayors on the CTB
- ii Crown Commissioner (non-voting)
- iii Crown Commissioner (veto power)
- iv Crown Commissioner (majority vote)
- v Crown Commissioners instead of a CTB

We support Option (ii) – a non-voting Crown Commissioner on the CTB, subject to clearly specified roles.

***Rationale for Crown Commissioner Participation***

- 5.1. We support the inclusion of a Crown Commissioner on the CTB for the following reasons.

***National-Local Alignment***

- 5.2. A Crown Commissioner could help the CTB to understand and consider national priorities and policies as it develops the regional reorganisation plan. These priorities include national objectives for resource management, housing, infrastructure, and climate adaptation.

***Two-Way Communication***

- 5.3. The Crown Commissioner could serve as a conduit for communicating regional issues, opportunities, and concerns to the Government. This would enable the Government to understand Northland's unique circumstances and so adjust policy or support accordingly.

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*Technical Support and Resources*

- The Crown Commissioner should be able to facilitate access to Government expertise, data, and resources that will support the CTB's work to develop the regional reorganisation plan.

*Quality Assurance*

- An experienced Crown Commissioner can provide guidance on best practices, lessons from other regions, and frameworks for evaluating options, improving the quality of the CTB's work.

*Legitimacy and Confidence*

- A Crown commissioner can provide assurance to the Government and other stakeholders that the regional reorganisation process is going well and that national interests are being considered.

***Why non-voting?***

- 5.4. We support a *non-voting* Crown Commissioner rather than alternative options that would give the Commissioner veto power or vote rights for these reasons:
- Regional reorganisation should be led by local representatives who are accountable to local communities.
  - Mayors have intimate knowledge of their communities, existing relationships with iwi and hapū, and understanding of local circumstances.
  - Northland communities need to have confidence that reorganisation decisions are made by their elected representatives, not imposed by the Government.
  - A non-voting Commissioner will be required to *persuade* the CTB members, encouraging collaboration and shared understanding rather than top-down direction.

***Specified Roles and Accountability***

- 5.5. Our support for a Crown Commissioner is conditional on the roles being clearly specified in legislation. The Crown Commissioner's responsibilities should include:
- ensuring that the CTB is aware of relevant national policies, priorities, and legislative requirements
  - providing advice on alignment with Government reforms
  - facilitating access to Government expertise and data
  - sharing best practices and lessons from other regions
  - supporting quality assurance for the regional reorganisation plan
  - advising on financial sustainability
- 5.6. The Crown Commissioner should *not* have authority to:
- vote on CTB decisions
  - veto CTB decisions
  - direct the content of the regional reorganisation plan
  - overrule local democratic decisions

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**6. Do you agree that mayors on the CTB should have a proportional vote adjusted for effective representation?**

No

6.1. We support a simpler approach: 'one mayor, one vote'.

***The Case for Equal Voting***

6.2. Under our preferred 'one mayor, one vote' system:

- each of the three Northland mayors would have equal voting power
- decisions would require agreement by at least two of the three mayors

6.3. This system is simple, transparent, and easy to understand

6.4. Equal votes for all mayors is the clearest possible system. Communities will readily understand that their mayor has an equal voice in regional decisions. Complex weighted voting formulas — even well-intentioned ones—create opacity and reduce public confidence.

**7. Do you support:**

**EITHER**

**(i) leave it up to the Local Government Commission to determine the right balance;  
OR**

**(ii) provide the Commission with specific legal objectives and criteria to guide its decisions.**

**If the Government does not accept our preferred approach set out in our response to Question 6 (one mayor, one vote), we support Option 7 (ii) — provide the Local Government Commission with specific legal objectives and criteria to guide its decisions.**

***Support for Specified Criteria***

7.1. If weighted voting is to be used having specified criteria is preferable to giving the Commission complete discretion because:

- communities and councils will understand in advance what principles will guide the allocation
- the Commission's decisions will be more predictable and legitimate
- there will be clear grounds for evaluating whether the Commission's allocation achieves its intended purposes.

7.2. Transparency supports public confidence in the process

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**8. Do you agree with the dual condition voting proposal for certain resource management decisions?**

**Yes, If the Government does not accept our preferred approach set out in Question 6 (one mayor, one vote).**

**However, if the relevant Minister appoints one member to a CTB for decisions on spatial plans and/or natural environment plans, we submit that such appointees should not have voting rights. (see 8.3).**

- 8.1. The Government has agreed to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 with two new Acts: the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act. These Acts will require regional councils to:
- participate in the development of a region-wide **spatial plan chapter** of a combined regional plan, and
  - develop and agree a **natural environment plan chapter** of a combined regional plan.
- 8.2. Ministers have decided that CTBs, if established, should be the decision-making body for both these new planning instruments.
- 8.3. Ministers have also decided<sup>1</sup> that the relevant Minister would be able to appoint one member to a CTB for decisions on spatial plans and/or natural environment plans. *Those appointees may or may not have voting rights at the Minister's discretion.*
- 8.4. Ministers have decided that the voting arrangements CTBs use to make decisions on these new instruments would require that both:
- CTB members representing more than 50% of the population support the resolution, and
  - more than 50 percent of CTB members with a voting mandate for decisions on spatial plan chapters and/or natural environment plan chapters, to support the resolution.

***Rationale for Support***

- 8.5. We support this dual-condition voting procedure because:
- the dual condition ensures that these decisions cannot be made solely based on urban population weight without rural support.
  - the dual condition creates incentives for consultation and consensus-building across different communities and interest groups.

**9. What do you think about the ways that communities crossing regional boundaries could be represented?**

- 9.1. Northland does not have communities that cross regional boundaries, so this issue does not directly affect our district.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annexe C of the Discussion Document.

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**10. Do you support the proposal to require CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans?**

Yes

10.1. Regional reorganisation plans provide an opportunity to:

- map current council functions and identify opportunities for more efficient delivery
- design new service delivery models that provide better value for money
- clarify roles and responsibilities across councils
- improve coordination on complex challenges such as climate adaptation and housing
- design structures that are fit for purpose for the next 30-50 years

***The Need for Government Funding***

10.2. We submit that the Government should provide dedicated resources to enable CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans.

10.3. Developing a comprehensive regional reorganisation plan is complex work requiring:

***Expert Advisory Support***

10.4. CTBs will need access to expertise in:

- local government structure and operations
- public sector efficiency and shared services
- financial modelling and analysis
- treaty partnership and iwi/hapū engagement
- community consultation processes
- organisational change management

***Technical Analysis***

10.5. Plans will include analysis of:

- current functions across all councils
- service delivery costs and performance
- options for future delivery models
- financial implications and sustainability
- implementation options

***Community and Iwi Engagement***

10.6. Meaningful consultation requires:

- multiple rounds of engagement with diverse communities
- technical support for communities to understand options
- time for considered feedback

**DRAFT**

*Secretariat Support*

10.7. The CTB will need dedicated staff to:

- coordinate the planning process
- manage stakeholder relationships
- prepare technical papers and analysis
- support community engagement

***Estimated Funding Requirement***

10.8. To adequately resource regional reorganisation planning for Northland, the Far North District Council estimates funding requirements of approximately \$1 million over two financial years.

**11. Do regional reorganisation plans have the right content requirements?**

**No — the content requirements need to be augmented to provide for genuine partnership with all iwi.**

11.1. The Government proposes that regional reorganisation plans should:

- map all current functions across councils in the region
- set out options for future delivery (shared services, joint entities, amalgamations, etc.)
- consider impacts on cost, service quality, and local representation
- work with post-settlement governance entities on Treaty settlement arrangements
- set out a financial and organisational transition plan

11.2. While the Government's proposed content requirements are a good starting point, they are missing something important - *they do not adequately provide for engagement with all iwi and hapū, including those without Treaty settlements.*

***The Māori Engagement Gap***

11.3. The discussion document states that plans must "work with post-settlement governance entities in relation to any relevant Treaty settlement arrangements." This limitation to *post-settlement* entities is problematic for several reasons:

***Incomplete Coverage***

11.4. In Northland, Ngāpuhi — Aotearoa's largest iwi — has not yet reached a Treaty settlement. Limiting engagement to post-settlement entities would exclude most of the Northland's Māori population and the most significant iwi in the region.

***Barrier to Genuine Partnership***

11.5. Te Tiriti partnership is not conditional on settlement status. All tangata whenua have rights and interests that must be recognised and provided for in decisions that affect their rohe.

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*An important opportunity to improve institutional arrangements*

11.6. Regional reorganisation plans present an opportunity to design new structures that better enable partnership with Māori. This work should extend to all iwi and hapū, not just those with Treaty settlements.

***Subsidiarity***

11.7. We recommend that regional reorganisation planning be accompanied by a parallel review by central government of the appropriate allocation of functions between central and local government.

11.8. It is beyond the focus of this submission to set out this recommendation in detail. The Government should consider a parallel review covering these issues:

- The Government has transferred functions to local government without corresponding funding ("unfunded mandates")
- Some functions currently delivered centrally might be better delivered locally
- Other functions might benefit from national consistency or economies of scale

11.9. Functions that might be examined for potential devolution to local government include:

- aspects of housing policy and delivery
- economic development support
- some social service coordination
- localised public health initiatives
- community safety and crime prevention
- arts, culture, and heritage

11.10. Conversely, some regional council functions might benefit from centralisation, such as:

- biosecurity surveillance and response
- environmental monitoring standards

**12. What do you think about the criteria proposed for assessing regional reorganisation plans?**

**Yes, but with one important addition.**

12.1. The Government proposes seven criteria for assessing regional reorganisation plans:

- Big-picture fit
- Affordable now and in the future
- Better services
- Clear leadership
- Local say
- Treaty arrangements

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- Can it be implemented?

***Additional Criterion Required: Effective Māori Engagement***

12.2. consistent with our response to Question 11, we submit that an additional criterion should be added:

*"Establishes effective arrangements for engagement with iwi and hapū on regional decision-making."*

12.3. This criterion would assess whether the proposed reorganisation plans:

- provide for genuine partnership with all iwi and hapū
- establish appropriate governance mechanisms for Māori participation
- enable iwi and hapū to exercise
- provide adequate resourcing for Māori engagement
- implement iwi/hapū management plans and aspirations
- create culturally appropriate processes and relationships

***Rationale***

12.4. While the proposed "Treaty arrangements" criterion addresses Treaty settlement commitments, it is too narrow. As stated in our response to Question 11, genuine Treaty partnership extends to all tangata whenua, not just those with settlements.

**13. What do you think about how the proposal provides for iwi/Māori interests and Treaty arrangements?**

**We cover this question in our response to Question 12. The Government's reform proposal does not adequately provide for iwi and Māori interests.**

**Conclusion**

Far North District Council supports the Government's objectives of creating simpler, more efficient, and more effective local government. We agree that the current two-tier system needs reform.

However, we do not support the Government's proposed approach of immediately replacing regional councillors with a CTB that assumes full regional governance responsibilities while simultaneously developing regional reorganisation plans.

We propose an alternative pathway that:

- retains Northland Regional Councillors until 2028, respecting the recent democratic mandate
- establishes a CTB with a primary focus on developing the regional reorganisation plan
- provides the CTB with an advisory role on the Regional Council to build knowledge and maintain oversight
- includes a non-voting Crown Commissioner



**DRAFT**

- uses simple "one mayor, one vote" decision-making on the CTB
- provides dedicated Government funding for regional reorganisation planning
- requires engagement with all iwi and hapū, not just those with Treaty settlements
- enables Northland to design its own future through genuine community and tangata whenua collaboration.

We ask the Government to carefully consider the alternative pathway we have proposed and to engage constructively with Northland councils and communities as reform progresses.

Moko Tepania

**Mayor**

### 4.3 WAIPAPA STRUCTURE PLAN

**File Number:** A5581975

**Author:** Jaye Michalick, Team Leader – Growth Planning & Placemaking

**Authoriser:** Roger Ackers, Group Manager - Planning & Policy

#### TAKE PŪRONGO / PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To introduce the Waipapa Structure Plan project and, in accordance with the Bay of Islands – Whangaroa Community Board recommendation on 12 February 2026 (resolution 2026/8), seek approval from Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation to change the requirements set down in the Implementation Plan regarding the Waipapa Structure Plan, specifically the exclusion from the project scope of:

- catchment management planning; and
- masterplanning of Te Puāwaitanga

The wording in the implementation plan for the Waipapa Structure plan states: *Develop Structure Plan / Catchment Management Plan – Waipapa for Urban Intensification and Greenfield areas of Waipapa, including 'Te Puāwaitanga Stage 2 Project', and consideration of the future of Baysport.* The inclusion of catchment management planning was an error, and we have since identified a more appropriate method of management planning for Te Puāwaitanga.

The report also recommends that the establishment of an Elected Member Working Group is not required for this project.

#### WHAKARĀPOPOTO MATUA / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Waipapa Structure Plan is a key implementation action of Te Pātukurea Kerikeri-Waipapa Spatial Plan (link here: [Te Pātukurea](#)), it will be the first structure plan to be delivered as part of implementing the spatial plan.

The report:

- Outlines the Waipapa Structure Plan project (the project), which will:
  - Translate the strategic vision of Te Pātukurea into practical steps for land use and infrastructure planning.
  - Inform future district plan change(s) where necessary.
  - Provide certainty for Council, developers, and the community about how Waipapa will grow.
  - Inform investment decisions in the Long-Term Plan and Waters CCO programme.
- Seeks that Te Kūkupa Committee approves the exclusion of a catchment management plan for Waipapa and a detailed masterplan for Te Puāwaitanga from the scope of the Waipapa Structure Plan project.
- Seeks that Te Kūkupa Committee approves that an Elected Member Working Group for this project is not established for the reason that elected member involvement in this project is appropriately provided for via the Te Pātukurea Implementation Steering Group (currently being set up) and via regular reporting to the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board and Te Kūkupa Committee.

## **TŪTOHUNGA / RECOMMENDATION**

**That Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation approve:**

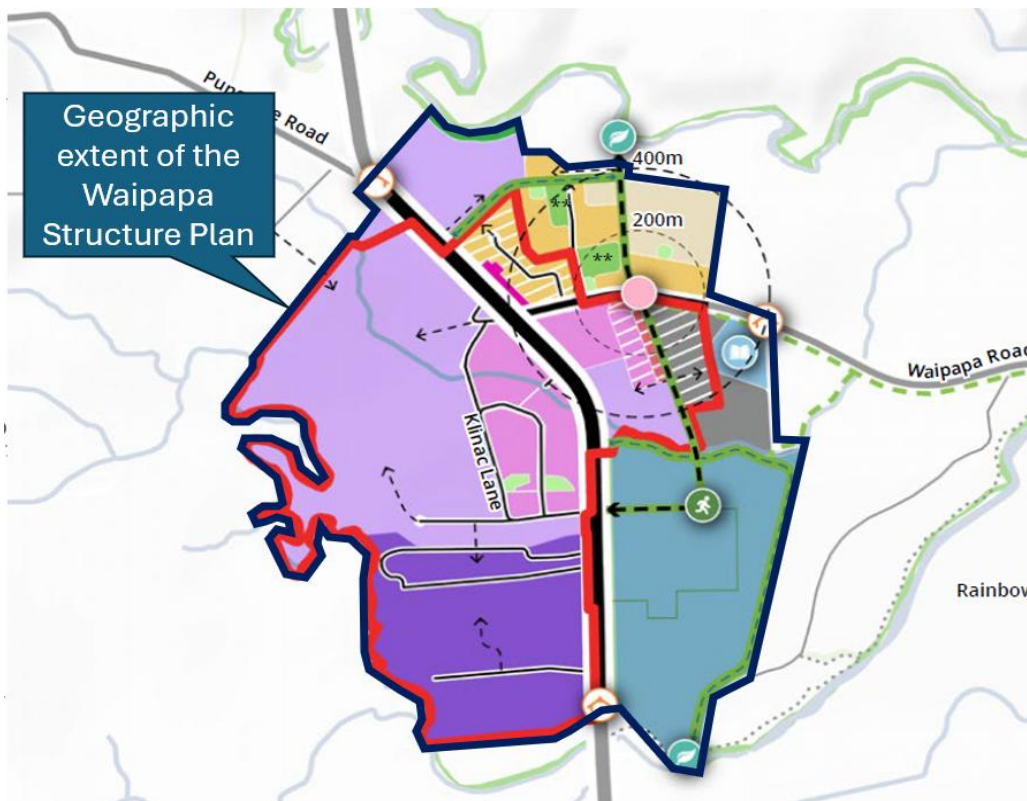
- a) Exclusion of the following from the Waipapa Structure Plan project scope:**
  - i) Preparation of a catchment management plan for Waipapa.**
  - ii) Masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga**
- b) that establishment of an Elected Member Working Group is not required for this project, instead key project milestones discussed in this report are reported on to Te Kūkupa.**

## **1) TĀHUHU KŌRERO / BACKGROUND**

Council adopted Te Pātukurea and its implementation plan on 18 June 2025. The Waipapa Structure Plan is a key short-term action directed by the implementation plan of Te Pātukurea.

The project has been designed to align with current national and regional planning frameworks, including the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD), National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Soils (NPS-HPS), and the Northland Regional Policy Statement. It also supports Council's Long-Term Plan priorities and FN2100 growth strategy by providing a clear framework for infrastructure investment and urban development. With the reform of resource management legislation and policy direction currently under way, the project has been designed with 'check ins' at critical points. This is to ensure there is alignment with the future system, particularly the lead pieces of legislation.

The Waipapa Structure Plan will cover the geographic extent of the urban development areas for Waipapa, as identified in the spatial plan (refer Figure 1 below). Further detail on the project is provided in Attachment 1.



*Figure 1: Geographic extent of the Waipapa Structure Plan study area (black outline around coloured area)*

### Te Puāwaitanga and Bay Sport

Te Puāwaitanga encompasses 44 hectares, with 12 hectares currently developed in sports fields and parking and another 12 hectares earmarked for Phase 2 sports facilities. However, significant details for Phase 2 remain undecided and unfunded, and it is yet to be determined whether all the land will be dedicated to sports or if some land can be set aside for other uses.

Staff have commissioned an updated needs assessment to assist in identifying the total land area required to meet future sport and active recreation needs for the next 30 years. To safeguard the potential future relocation of most of Baysport activities to Te Puāwaitanga, the needs assessment will factor in the relocation of all land at Baysport excluding the land occupied by the tennis courts, skating rink and associated parking areas, however further negotiations between Baysport and Council are required to confirm what, when and if relocation from Baysport to Te Puāwaitanga occurs. Once the needs assessment is completed, a report will go to Council to confirm the extent of land to be set aside for Te Puāwaitanga. If there is surplus land on the site, the future uses of this land are expected to be determined through the Waipapa Structure Plan process.

The Waipapa Structure Plan will focus on determining the overall land use framework, including any surplus land at Te Puāwaitanga along with any land to be vacated from sport and active recreation uses at BaySport. The specifics of sports and recreation management on Te Puāwaitanga are likely to be determined via a future process, likely to be a Reserve Management Plan (RMP) project, pending reserves classification.

### Resource Management Reform & Proposed District Plan Decisions

The project has built in check points following the passage of the Planning Bill through parliament, so it can be adapted to fit into the future planning system.

The project has incorporated a clear 'stop/go' decision point at the early stages of the programme when district plan decisions are known, specifically at the stage when council receives recommendations from the hearings panel. Should the proposed district plan decisions result in urban zone outcomes that are not consistent with Te Pātukurea, staff will make recommendations to the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board and Te Kūkupa on measures to address any real or perceived inconsistencies between the district plan decisions and the spatial plan.

## **2) MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA / DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS**

### Catchment Management Plan and Masterplanning Options

Te Pātukurea Implementation Plan includes an action to develop a Waipapa Structure Plan that includes development of a catchment management plan and masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga and BaySport. This report recommends excluding these items from the structure plan for the following reasons:

#### *Catchment Management Plan*

- The inclusion of a catchment management plan in this action was an error as catchment management plans cover a significantly larger land area. Waipapa is a small portion of the wider water/flood catchment area.
- The Northland Regional Council is developing a *Kerikeri-Waipapa river management plan* which informs flood hazard risk.
- FNDC Infrastructure Group is responsible for undertaking stormwater catchment management planning in relation to natural hazards and urban networks under the Water Services legislation, and as necessary to inform and obtain network discharge consent from the Northland Regional Council.

- Catchment management planning and flood modelling is underway, with the Kerikeri-Waipapa area included in the first stage of works to align with the structure plan process.
- The stormwater network and flood modelling work undertaken by FNDC Infrastructure Group will identify areas critical to management of the stormwater networks. Future development scenarios will be tested under the structure planning process, and future network requirements will be identified, including areas for stormwater management in events up to and including the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood event as required by the Council's Engineering Standards.

#### *Masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga*

- The Waipapa Structure Plan process is intended to determine the envelope of land required to meet the long-term needs for sport and active recreation (considered to be the final extent of Te Puāwaitanga), along with identifying any potentially surplus land and associated land uses
- Masterplanning of the site is best delivered through a Reserve Management Plan, pending classification of Te Puāwaitanga as a reserve, under the Reserves Act 1977, which provides the statutory framework for managing reserve land.
- If the land to be set aside to meet the long-term sport and active recreation needs does not become classified as a reserve, consideration will be given at that time as to the most appropriate method of planning for the site, e.g., masterplanning or placemaking
- Separating these processes avoids conflicts of interest and ensures clarity of project outcomes.

Project staff will collaborate with FNDC Infrastructure Group on catchment management planning for Waipapa and, in future, initiate Te Puāwaitanga Reserve Management Plan project, or similar, in accordance with statutory requirements.

#### Part a) of Recommendation: Decision Regarding Catchment Management Planning

#### **Option 1: Recommend excluding catchment management plan for Waipapa and Masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga (recommended option)**

Under this option, the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board recommends excluding both the catchment management plan and masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga from the Waipapa Structure Plan.

#### **Advantages:**

- Practical steps to give life to the spatial plan.
- FNDC Infrastructure Group continues with existing catchment management planning work already underway, which enables stormwater discharge consent to be obtained in preparation for anticipated growth under the structure plan. Other infrastructure and network planning work for wastewater, water supply, and transport can be aligned across the structure plan process and then integrated into long term planning processes.
- Enables council to comply with statutory requirements under the Water Services legislation in relation to separation of Urban Stormwater as a stand-alone business unit.
- Sports and recreation management and uses at Te Puāwaitanga will be considered via the appropriate mechanism of developing a Reserve Management Plan (pending classification of Te Puāwaitanga as a reserve).
- A separate catchment management plan project will allow for a more thorough focus on the catchment and greater process efficiency.

#### **Disadvantages**

- Some uncertainty with resource management reform.

## **Option 2: Do not recommend excluding catchment management plan for Waipapa and Masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga**

Under this option, the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board does not recommend excluding the catchment management plan and masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga from the Waipapa Structure Plan.

### **Advantages:**

- Stays true to original wording from spatial plan.

### **Disadvantages**

- Project will include scope that is in conflict with the requirements of the Water Services legislation in relation to stormwater networks, which includes piped and surface water networks including streams, overland flowpaths, and floodplains in the 1% AEP storm event).
- Integration issues with having a master plan and catchment management plan being developed under a process designed to produce a structure plan for a smaller area than the overall catchment management area.
- Including a catchment management plan duplicates existing catchment management planning work currently being done by FNDC Infrastructure Group, and crosses delegation boundaries between council activities.

### Part b) of recommendation: Decision Regarding Elected Member Participation

Staff seek to have Te Kūkupa Committee confirm their preferred level of involvement in this project, either simply through reporting across the project duration as described below, or with the formation of an Elected Member Working Group.

Councillor participation in the project is proposed to be achieved via regular reports to the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board and Te Kūkupa as follows:

Te Kūkupa:

- Information reports at key milestones through the project
- Approval of the Draft Structure for public consultation (Approval by Te Kūkupa)
- Hear and consider submissions on the Draft Structure Plan (Heard by Te Kūkupa)
- Making recommendations to Council for the adoption of the Structure Plan
- In addition, workshops can be undertaken with Te Kūkupa Committee and the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board, if requested.

## **Option 1: Do not establish an Elected Member Working Group for the project (recommended option)**

Under this option, community board participation in the project will be via regular project reports to the community board, and participation by two members of the board on the yet to be formed Implementation Steering Group. Councillor participation in this project will be via the reporting described above.

### **Advantages:**

- Achieves efficient community board member and councillor participation in this project without introducing a further level of governance into the project structure.

### **Disadvantages**

- Compared to Option 2 below, may not provide as much opportunity for one-on-one discussion about the project with councillors.

## **Option 2: Establish an Elected Member Working Group for the project.**

Under this option, in addition to the elected member participation described in Option 1, an Elected Member Working Group shall be formed and a future report to Te Kūkupa will be provided by staff to achieve establishment of this group.

**Advantages:**

- May provide greater opportunity for one-on-one discussion about the project with councillors, compared to Option 1 above.

**Disadvantages**

- Will require additional staffing resourcing and time
- Will place additional time burden on specific Councillors.

**TAKE TŪTOHUNGA / REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

Undertaking the Waipapa Structure Plan project without a catchment management plan for Waipapa and Masterplanning for Te Puāwaitanga is recommended as it delivers on Council's strategic commitments under Te Pātukurea more efficiently and avoids conflict with the requirements of the Water Services legislation.

Progressing the project without establishing an Elected Member Working Group is recommended as the establishment of the Implementation Steering Group alongside the proposed extent of reporting to Te Kūkupa across the project duration is considered sufficient to inform and gain the views of Councillors on this project.

**3) PĀNGA PŪTEA ME NGĀ WĀHANGA TAHUA / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROVISION**

The project is budgeted at \$297,000 across three financial years (2025–2028) within the Growth Planning & Placemaking cost centre. There is sufficient funding in the current financial period, however future funds will need to be confirmed through the annual plan 2026-2027 and long-term plan 2027-2028.

**ĀPITI HANGA / ATTACHMENTS**

1. **Attachment 1 - Additional Project Details - A5543589**  

### Hōtaka Take Ōkawa / Compliance Schedule:

Full consideration has been given to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 S77 in relation to decision making, in particular:

1. A Local authority must, in the course of the decision-making process,
  - a) Seek to identify all reasonably practicable options for the achievement of the objective of a decision; and
  - b) Assess the options in terms of their advantages and disadvantages; and
  - c) If any of the options identified under paragraph (a) involves a significant decision in relation to land or a body of water, take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna and other taonga.
2. This section is subject to Section 79 - Compliance with procedures in relation to decisions.

He Take Ōkawa / Compliance Requirement	Aromatawai Kaimahi / Staff Assessment
State the level of significance (high or low) of the issue or proposal as determined by the <a href="#">Council's Significance and Engagement Policy</a>	In accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, this decision is not assessed as being of high significance as it does not involve the transfer of ownership or control of a strategic asset, and it is not inconsistent with Council plans or policies.  The public will be consulted at the draft plan stage.
State the relevant Council policies (external or internal), legislation, and/or community outcomes (as stated in the LTP) that relate to this decision.	Far North 2100 Te Patukurea, Kerikeri Waipapa Spatial Plan The Resource Management Act 1991 National Policy Statement – Urban Development 2020 National Policy Statement – Highly Productive Soils 2022 Local Government Act 2002 Northland Regional Policy Statement Far North District Council Proposed District Plan
State whether this issue or proposal has a District wide relevance and, if not, the ways in which the appropriate Community Board's views have been sought.	Recommendation sought for the project relates to Waipapa and does not have a significant district wide relevance.
State the possible implications for Māori and how Māori have been provided with an opportunity to contribute to decision making if this decision is significant and relates to land and/or any body of water.  State the possible implications and how this report aligns with Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi.	The Te Patukurea Hapū Rōpū Governance Body has been reestablished with mandated representation for eight local hapū. These hapū are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ngāti Hineira</li> <li>• Ngāti Korohue</li> <li>• Ngāti Mau</li> <li>• Ngāti Rangi</li> <li>• Ngāti Rēhia</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ngāti Torehina ki Matakā</li><li>• Te Uri Taniwha</li><li>• Te Whiu</li></ul>
Identify persons likely to be affected by or have an interest in the matter, and how you have given consideration to their views or preferences (for example – youth, the aged and those with disabilities).	Community groups will be engaged via steering group. There will be multiple opportunities to community and stakeholder input into the project.
State the financial implications and where budgetary provisions have been made to support this decision.	There is no requirement for further budgetary provisions to be made as result of the recommendation in this report.
Chief Financial Officer review.	The Chief Financial Officer has not reviewed this report.

### **Attachment 1: Waipapa Structure Plan Project Details**

A structure plan is a non-statutory document. The Waipapa Structure Plan will build on the broad, strategic vision the spatial plan outlines for Waipapa, offering a detailed guide for the development, including detailed maps and plans showing indicative layout of roads, open spaces, residential and commercial areas, infrastructure required to support growth and outline the staging and implementation of development and infrastructure delivery.

The structure plan will:

- Form the basis for plan change(s) to the district plan where required.
- Provide direction for the development and funding of infrastructure to support the planned development (including the identification of critical locations and corridors).
- Support the development of Te Puāwaitanga<sup>1</sup> through the identification of, and subsequent Council approval of, the portion of Te Puāwaitanga that is to be retained for future sport and active recreation needs and any portion of spare land that can be used for other activities.
- Provide direction on the zoning of any land surplus to the needs of Te Puāwaitanga and BaySport.
- Address how urban design principles from Te Pātukurea will be achieved.
- Inform the Waipapa placemaking / neighbourhood plan<sup>2</sup>.
- Review and test the area selected for industrial expansion in Waipapa to investigate if a different land use pattern can better achieve integration with the state highway network<sup>3</sup>.

The Waipapa Structure Plan is being delivered alongside other implementation actions of Te Pātukurea, which includes the Kerikeri Urban Design Framework and the Kerikeri-Waipapa Long Term Discharge Strategy.

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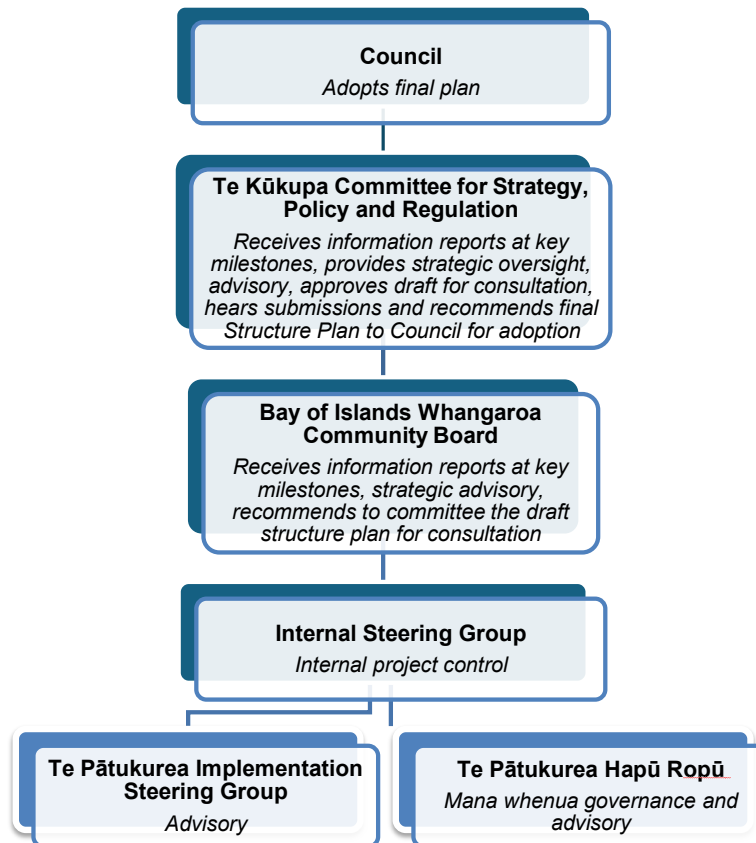
<sup>1</sup> Te Puāwaitanga is the area of land to be set aside and developed for sports and recreation. Te Puāwaitanga may not occupy all the land currently shown in Te Pātukurea as 'Te Puāwaitanga'.

<sup>2</sup> The Waipapa placemaking / neighbourhood plan is an implementation action in Te Pātukurea.

<sup>3</sup> This is a specific action in Te Pātukurea

Project Governance:

The following figure illustrates the proposed governance structure for the project:



The project will be governed by the Te Kūkupa Committee, which will provide strategic direction, approve the Draft Structure Plan for public consultation, hear and consider submissions, and make recommendation to Council regarding adoption of the Waipapa Structure Plan. The project team will report to the Bay of Islands Whangaroa Community Board to seek their recommendation to consult with the public on the Draft Structure Plan prior to reporting to the Te Kūkupa Committee.

The project team will report to the Te Kūkupa Committee at key milestones throughout the development of the Waipapa Structure Plan. These reporting points will include completion of key technical reports, stakeholder engagement summaries and draft plan preparation prior to public consultation. It is recommended that the Te Kūkupa Committee be the primary forum for elected members advisory into this project. If required, workshops can be undertaken with the Te Kūkupa Committee which can also include Bay of Islands Whangaroa Community Board.

An Internal Steering Group (consisting of project staff and senior leadership) will also be formed to:

- Oversee project delivery.
- Monitor progress, resources, risks, and mitigations in regular meetings.
- Advise on communications and engagement.
- Identify required budget and staff.
- Review outputs before external release.

#### Te Pātukurea Hapū Rōpū

The Te Pātukurea Hapū Rōpū is being reformed to provide mana whenua governance and advisory to the project. The Hapū Rōpū, representing eight local hapū, will play a central role in shaping outcomes and ensuring the Waipapa Structure Plan reflects Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles. Engagement with the Hapū Rōpū will be ongoing and embedded throughout the process. The Hapū Rōpū will also have input into other Te Pātukurea implementation projects. The Hapū Rōpū will consist of:

- Ngāti Hineira
- Ngāti Korohue
- Ngāti Mau
- Ngāti Rangi
- Ngāti Rēhia
- Ngāti Torehina ki Matakā
- Te Uri Taniwha
- Te Whiu

#### Te Pātukurea Implementation Steering Group

The Te Pātukurea Implementation Steering Group will provide a critical community voice to key projects required to deliver Te Pātukurea, including the Waipapa Structure Plan. The steering group offers guidance and suggestions; however, it does not possess decision-making authority regarding projects. The steering group is in the process of being set up, with a separate paper going up to the Bay of Islands Whangaroa Community Board for endorsement. The steering group is intended to consist of members from various backgrounds, including but not limited to Community Board representatives, Hapū representatives, Kerikeri-Waipapa community organisations and rangatahi (local young people). The steering group can choose to create a smaller dedicated sub-group which is focused on the Waipapa Structure Plan.

#### Project programme summary

The following table provides the high-level programme for the project, with adoption of the structure plan targeted for October 2027.

Phase
<b>1. Project set up</b> Setting up project team, governance, Community Steering Group and Hāpū Rōpū and the necessary council decisions for the project.
<b>2. Information collation</b> Includes analysis and synthesis of existing information and undertaking work to fill information gaps.
<b>3. Key issues engagement</b> Engagement with elected members, Community Steering Group and Hāpū Rōpū and key stakeholders on key issues including staging, the mix of land use and urban form.
<b>4. Develop concept options</b> Developing concept options for the structure plan.
<b>5. Test concept options</b> Test the concept options with the Te Kūkupa Committee/elected members, Community Steering Group and Hāpū Rōpū and key stakeholders.
<b>6. Prepare draft structure plan</b> Drafting Waipapa Structure Plan and preparing for public feedback / submissions
<b>7. Public feedback / submissions</b> Seek public feedback / submissions on the draft Waipapa Structure Plan.
<b>8. Council adoption</b> Includes updating Waipapa Structure Plan to address feedback / submissions and administrative process to prepare structure plan for adoption by Council.
<b>9. Project closure</b> Closing out project, undertaking lessons learned, handing over implementation actions to relevant departments in council.

## **5 NGĀ PŪRONGO TAIPITOPITO / INFORMATION REPORTS**

### **5.1 DISTRICT WIDE SPATIAL STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE**

**File Number:** A5543020

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#### **TAKE PŪRONGO / PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To inform Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation (Te Kūkupa) on the commencement of the District Wide Spatial Strategy (DWSS) project, including its governance structure, an outline of the project process, timing and alignment with incoming Resource Management Act (RMA) reform legislation.

#### **WHAKARĀPOPOTO MATUA / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report seeks to introduce elected members to the DWSS project, outlining key project processes for, and aspects of, this recently commenced project, including:

- Why the strategy is needed for the Far North, both generally as good planning practice and also specifically to inform the development of the first regional spatial plan that is expected to be commenced in early 2027
- The proposed approach to mitigating timing challenges for the project, resulting from the expected timeframe to commence regional spatial planning
- Outline the project governance structure, project stages, timeframes and engagement approach
- Provide more detail regarding the first stage of the project (next steps).

#### **TŪTOHUNGA / RECOMMENDATION**

**That Te Kūkupa Committee for Strategy, Policy and Regulation receive the report District Wide Spatial Strategy Project Update.**

#### **TĀHUHU KŌRERO / BACKGROUND**

The Far North district faces distinct challenges and opportunities. The combination of large, complex geography, a predominantly rural population, extensive infrastructure networks and vulnerabilities, significant long-term socio-economic issues and inequalities position the Far North as unique within New Zealand. A spatial plan or strategy is a mechanism through which long-term growth, servicing requirements, and community aspirations can be explored and understood, and a planned approach to their realisation can be developed.

At present the Far North has an adopted spatial plan for Kerikeri-Waipapa but it does not have a spatial plan for the balance of the district. The purpose of the DWSS is to identify spatially the rest of the Far North's long-term growth and community aspirations.

The District Wide Spatial Strategy project will support Council's Long-Term Plan priorities and FN2100 growth strategy by providing a clear spatial framework for growth, servicing requirements, and community aspirations. The project was approved by Council as part of the 2023-24 Planning and Policy Group Work Programme (resolution 2023/146). Due to prolonged staffing vacancies within the Growth Planning and Placemaking team which have now been addressed, there was a

delay in project commencement. Project planning and some early mana whenua engagement<sup>24</sup> commenced from mid-2025.

## **MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA / DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS**

This section outlines key aspects of the project including governance structure, project stages and timing, engagement approach, alignment with RMA reform, and discusses next steps.

Attachment 1 provides a more detailed summary of key aspects of the DWSS Project Plan, specifically, context, purpose, project stages, timing and outputs, and project governance and role descriptions.

### **Governance and Project Structure**

The DWSS governance and project structure (Figure 1) is intended to be simple, with clear roles and line-of-sight to escalation and decision-making obligations. Attachment 1 provides a summary of project role descriptions in relation to Figure 1. In accordance with the Te Kūkupa Terms of Reference, it is anticipated that Te Kūkupa will provide a strategic advisory role with decision making functions on:

- Strategy visions, principles and objectives;
- Spatial Scenarios Report;
- Draft Spatial Strategy Report for Consultation; and
- Recommendation to Council for adoption.

Information reports will also be provided to Te Kūkupa for the following project milestones: Project Steering Group Terms of Reference, Communication and Engagement Plan Summary, Foundation Report, Evidence Base Summary, Baseline Analysis and Community Profiles, Scenario Development Report, Technical Memos (typically included with above listed milestone reports), Engagement Summary.

The District Wide Kaupapa Steering Rōpū is included in the governance structure, however at time of writing, the Kaupapa Steering Rōpū is yet to re-established in this triennium. Staff will include reports on the DWSS to Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships (Te Kuaka) as appropriate across the project, with a project introduction report proposed for the first Te Kuaka meeting in late March 2026. Iwi engagement into this project is critical; the Manager of Te Hono has committed to work with the project team to plan and undertake early iwi engagement on a traditional iwi by iwi approach across February and March 2026.

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<sup>24</sup> Two meetings were held with the District Wide Kaupapa Steering Rōpū and two meetings were undertaken with Te Kautā Steering Group.

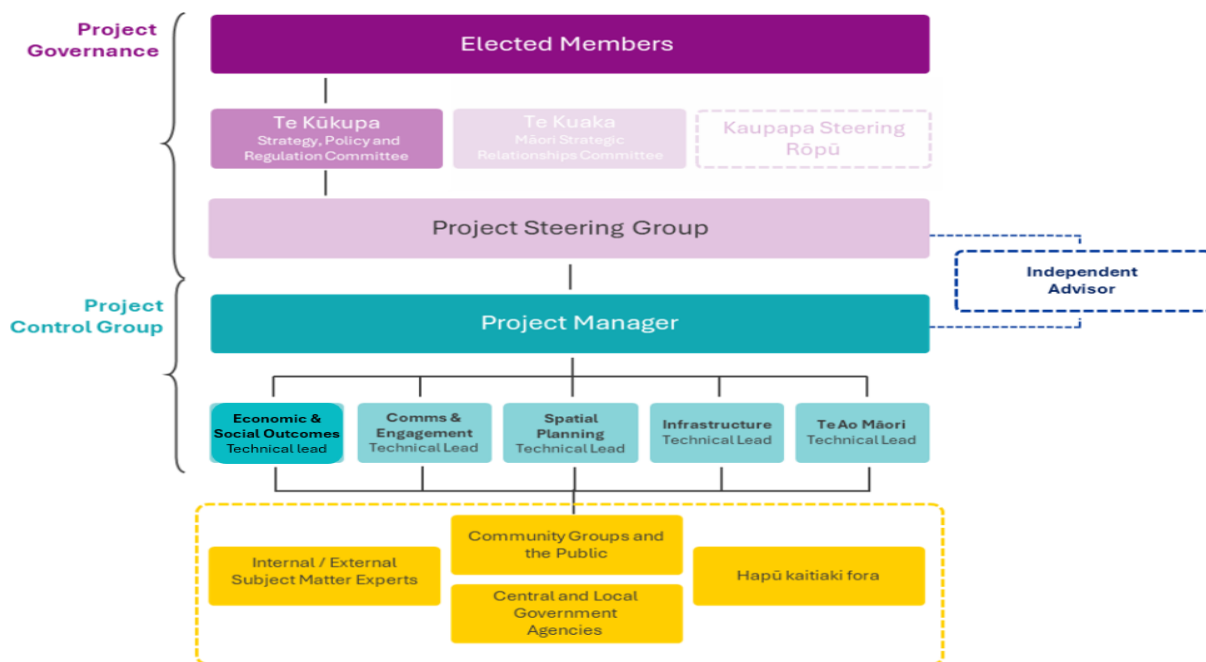


Figure 1: Proposed Governance Structure

### Project Stages and Timing

The DWSS will be developed in stages as summarised in Table 1. Attachment 1 provides a more detailed description of the project stages and associated outputs.

Table 1: Project Stages and Timing

Stage	Description	Timing
1. Project Establishment and Governance	<p>Establishing project roles and decision processes. Potential for collaboration with regional entities consistent with the new system's emphasis on joint spatial planning across councils.</p> <p>Outputs: <i>DWSS Project Plan</i>, <i>Project Steering Group Terms of Reference</i>, an internal <i>Communications &amp; Engagement Plan</i>, dedicated project website and GIS data portal.</p>	January – February 2026 (2 months)
2. Iwi, Stakeholder and Community Engagement	<p>Early engagement will allow the DWSS to understand and reflect the community's vision for the district's direction. Engaging central government agencies and regional partners early lays groundwork for the "spatial planning partnership" model anticipated under the new system.</p> <p>Outputs: By the end of the project, an <i>Engagement Summary</i>.</p>	January 2026 and Ongoing.
3. Baseline Data Collection and Context Analysis	<p>This step delivers detailed spatial data on population, infrastructure, environmental constraints, etc. This work directly contributes to the future Regional Spatial Strategy (RSP) because the new system requires a strong evidentiary foundation for these matters.</p> <p>Outputs: <i>Evidence Base Summary</i>, <i>Baseline Analysis and Community Profiles</i> report. The GIS portal is populated with these data layers to support scenario modelling.</p>	January 2026 to the end of May 2026 (5 months)



4. Vision, Principles and Objectives	Here the project's strategic direction is set. Having a clear, community created and endorsed vision for Far North ensures that when the RSP is developed, there is no ambiguity about what Far North District wants to achieve  Outputs: <i>Foundation Report</i> .	March - May 2026 (3 month)
5. Scenario Development and Analysis	This will enable FNDC to come to the table with a well-considered spatial scenario (and clear rationale) for the district, helping to streamline the decision on the preferred spatial option in the new system for the district land use plan.  Outputs: <i>Scenario Development Report, Technical Memos Spatial Scenarios Report</i> (for public consultation).	May 2026 to December 2026 (8 months)  Consultation in November 2026 (1 month)
6. Final Strategy Development and Analysis	In the final step, the preferred scenario is refined into the full spatial strategy.  Outputs: <i>Draft Spatial Strategy Report</i> (for consultation), <i>Evaluation Report</i> and the <i>Final Spatial Strategy</i> .	February 2027 to December 2027

### Engagement approach

The following key engagement principles are factored into the proposed approach for engagement, and it is acknowledged that the tight timeframes across 2026 will require significant resourcing from the project team to achieve these. Early iwi engagement at the start of 2026 is considered critical to ensure sufficient time across 2026 to achieve effective participation.

- Time and Continuity: Building trust requires early engagement and ongoing dialogue.
- Cultural competency and partnership: Engagement with mana whenua involves shared governance and tikanga and time to build in a true partnership.
- Multi-Channel approaches: Combining digital tools with in-person engagement.
- Transparency and Feedback Loops: Communities need to see how input influences outcomes.

Engagement and consultation milestones for the project are:

- Prepare Communication and Engagement Plan (January - February)
- Undertake engagement with iwi (and potentially hapū) and key stakeholders - initial feedback on challenges, vision/aspirations, objectives and principles + Project wide engagement and relationship building (February – April)
- Project wide engagement on spatial scenario options development August to December)
- Public consultation on spatial scenario options (November)
- Public consultation on draft spatial strategy, if the project continues beyond 2026 (May 2027)
- Inform the public on the final spatial strategy (August 2027).

### Alignment with Resource Management Reform

The Planning Bill, introduced in late-2025 and intended to pass into legislation mid-2026, seeks to establish a new planning hierarchy requiring a regional combined plan comprising a regional spatial plan, a natural environment plan and land use plans for each district. While the final form of the Planning Act is unknown, staff have developed the DWSS project plan to deliver critical early outputs in line with the current proposed timeframe to commence development of Northland's first regional spatial plan (RSP) (from early 2027). If the RMA reform programme timeframe is extended, the DWSS project can be continued across 2027 towards adoption of the strategy, at the future direction of Te Kūkupa.

A spatial plan can typically take 18 to 24 months to produce, depending on both the complexity of the plan and the necessary extent of partnership, engagement and consultation. The timeline for

the DWSS project contemplates the plan being adopted by Council in July/August 2027. However, to align with likely requirements of the future Planning Act, the project has been developed to enable completion of public consultation on district wide spatial scenario options by the end of 2026, enabling the Far North to have a preferred long-term spatial scenario for the district, alongside Te Pātukurea, to contribute to the development of the regional spatial plan.

The value in FNDC leading this process is that FNDC has a closer connection to the communities we are seeking to plan for. Having a clear, community created and endorsed vision for Far North ensures that when the regional spatial plan is developed, there is no ambiguity about what Far North District wants to achieve. The future regional spatial plan will require a strong evidentiary foundation, in compiling baseline data (demographics, land use, infrastructure) now as part of this project, FNDC is doing the groundwork for, and determining, what will be needed in the RSP.

### **Project next steps**

Across February and March, the project team will be focused on:

- establishing the internal steering group and ensuring support from internal subject matter experts
- engaging with mana whenua,
- developing internal project reports such as the Communication and Engagement Plan
- commencing tasks under Step 3 – baseline data collection and context analysis.

### **PĀNGA PŪTEA ME NGĀ WĀHANGA TAHUA / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROVISION**

The Growth Planning and Placemaking Team professional fees budget for this financial year is allocated predominantly to this project. Sufficient funds to continue this project across the next financial year have been forecast into the upcoming annual plan process.

### **ĀPITI HANGA / ATTACHMENTS**

1. **DWSS Project Plan Key Aspects Summary - A5545804**  

## District Wide Spatial Strategy Project Update – Attachment 1: summary of key aspects of the DWSS Project Plan

### 1. Context and Purpose of the District Wide Spatial Strategy

The Far North district faces distinct challenges and opportunities. The combination of large, complex geography, a predominantly rural population, extensive infrastructure networks and vulnerabilities, significant long-term socio-economic issues and inequalities position the Far North as unique within New Zealand. A spatial strategy is a mechanism through which long-term community aspirations can be explored and understood, and a planned approach to their realisation can be developed. Some key statistics about the wider district are shown overleaf:



**Figure 1: Statistics - Far North (various sources)**

The purpose of developing a District-Wide Spatial Strategy for the Far North district is:

*To deliver an inclusive, integrated district wide spatial plan which delivers effective growth planning, promotes community well-being, and enables structural change through policy, investment and partnership strategies, including clear, achievable shifts/directions/strategies and measurable action plan to deliver the shared vision for the district and its communities.*

Critically, this work can help to position the Far North to actively shape its voice within the impending Resource Management framework. By establishing a clear, community-informed spatial direction now, the district ensures that its unique rural context, infrastructure challenges, and aspirations for

regeneration are not only visible but influential in regional decision-making. The DWSS can serve as a key input into the development of the Regional Spatial Plans, enabling the Far North to participate proactively and assertively in the process. It also ensures that local priorities, particularly those of iwi/hapū and underserved communities, are embedded early and carried through into regional planning conversations.

## 2. Scope of the District-Wide Spatial Strategy

The DWSS will:

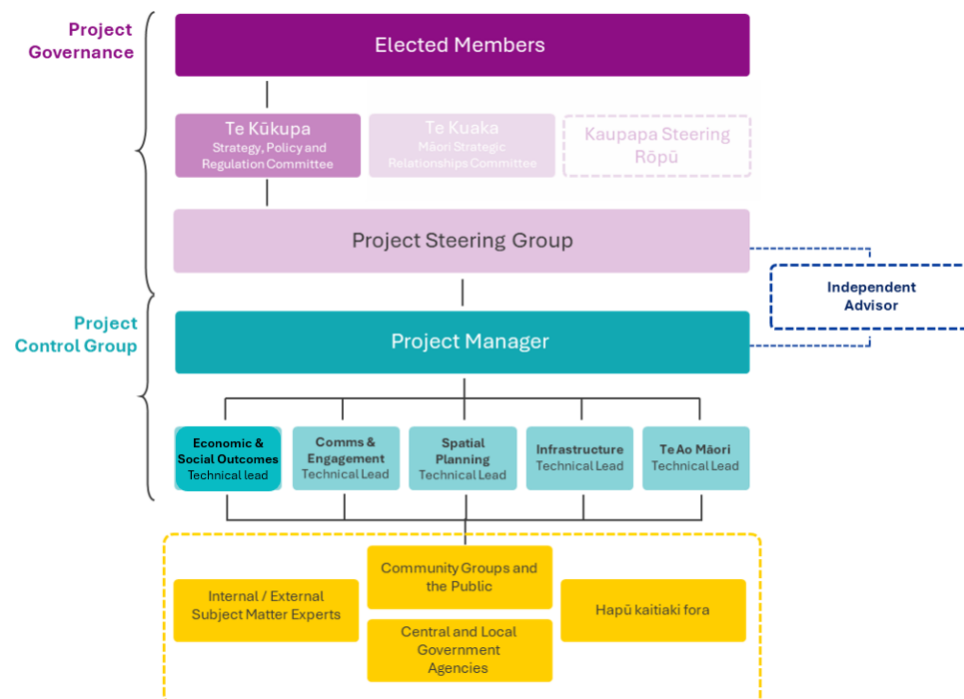
- achieve the purpose as set out above.
- keep line-of-sight to the developing requirements of the Planning Act.
- be district-wide and inclusive and provide a strategy for the diverse demographic and expansive geographic areas within the Far North District. However, because FNDC recently adopted Te Pātukurea, a sub-district spatial plan for Kerikeri and Waipapa, the DWSS will integrate and align with the outcomes, priorities, and learnings from Te Pātukurea.

The DWSS will not:

- duplicate or override the outcomes, priorities and actions identified in Te Pātukurea

## 3. Governance and Project Structure

The governance and project structure for the DWSS Project is intended to be simple, with clear roles and line-of-sight to escalation and decision-making obligations Figure 2 sets out the structure and Table 1 provides a summary of the governance and project role descriptions.



**Figure 2: Proposed Governance Structure:**

Governance or Project Role	Role Description
<b>Elected Members (Council)</b>	Adoption of the District Wide Spatial Strategy
<b>Te Kūkupa Committee</b>	<p>Strategic advisory role with decision making functions on strategy objectives and vision; Spatial Scenarios Report; Draft Spatial Strategy Report for Consultation; and recommendation to Council for adoption.</p> <p>Information reports will be provided to Te Kūkupa for the following project milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Steering Group Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Communication and Engagement Plan Summary</li> <li>• Foundation Report</li> <li>• Evidence Base Summary</li> <li>• Baseline Analysis and Community Profiles</li> <li>• Scenario Development Report</li> <li>• Technical Memos (typically included with above listed milestone reports)</li> <li>• Engagement Summary</li> </ul>
<b>Te Kauka Committee/ Kaupapa Steering Rōpū</b>	<p>The Kaupapa Steering Rōpū (KSR) has been setup to provide strategic guidance, Te ao Māori lens and iwi leadership to district-wide projects. This Rōpū consists of members from Council's Te Kuaka committee. Staff will confirm at the March 2026 Te Kuaka meeting the extent of reporting required to Te Kuaka for this project, or if the Kaupapa Steering Rōpū will provide te ao Māori strategic guidance.</p>
<b>Internal Project Steering Group</b>	<p>Monitor project progress and performance, ensuring alignment with objectives and Council priorities; track progress against project milestones, timelines, and deliverables. This group has a focus on strategic implications externally and across Council functions and meeting milestones and is responsible ensuring that the decision-making processes and draft content papers and outputs meets quality standards. Support/advise on any governance issues that arise.</p> <p>Not yet established, this group is intended to comprise senior council staff, project sponsor, project owner, project manager and relevant Senior Leadership Team members. A Terms of Reference will be created for this group.</p>
<b>Project Sponsor</b>	<p>Group Manager Planning and Policy. Ensure the project has what it needs to succeed. They are the champion and enabler for the project. Their focus is on making sure the DWSS aligns with</p>

	<p>organisational priorities, securing resources and getting executive-level support when necessary.</p> <p>The Project Sponsor will be a member of the Project Steering Group and will approve key project outputs up to Te Kūkupa.</p>
<b>Project Owner</b>	<p>Manager Integrated Planning. Accountable for making sure the Project is successful. They make sure that project outcomes meet the objectives, project timeline, and quality standards. They provide direction to the Project Manager and may chair the Steering Group or act as the key link between governance and delivery.</p>
<b>Project Manager</b>	<p>Team Leader Growth Planning and Placemaking. Responsible for tactical project delivery and control. Includes monitoring and managing the project's day-to-day execution, reviewing and endorsing changes before they go higher, and managing project-level risks and issues. The Project Manager will also be responsible for preparing council papers though initial drafting of papers will sit with technical leads</p>
<b>Independent Advisor</b>	<p>External Spatial Planning subject matter expert. Support for Project Manager / Lead as well as the Project Steering Group in dealing with technical issues that arise. Provide peer review and independent assurance on deliverables and strategic advice.</p>
<b>Technical Leads</b>	<p>2x Senior Strategic Planners supported by relevant internal and external subject matter experts. Are responsible for day-to-day project development and process, including contract management of their workstream; keeping the technical workstream scope, programme and budget under control and recommending to the project manager if any changes are required for their respective workstreams as soon as practicable; identifying and reviewing risks, producing, or monitoring and overseeing the deliverables (in instances where deliverables are wholly or partially outsourced), recommend the need for legal or further expert review and deciding when deliverables are ready for Project Managers review and sign-off. They are effectively the technical production and verification ahead of approval. They will also coordinate SME inputs, including preparation of workshop/steering group materials. Reports to Project Steering Group. Responsible for Council reporting.</p>
<b>Project Coordinator</b>	<p>Responsible for providing administrative support to the Project Manager and Team, including programme and task / action tracking, budget and risk tracking.</p>
<b>Project Administration</b>	<p>Responsible for meeting record keeping (where necessary, i.e. it is not intended to keep records of all project team meetings),</p>

	coordinating and supporting project meetings, workshops and engagement activities.
<b>Subject Matter Experts</b>	Responsible for providing technical expertise within their discipline to support the delivery of the DWSS, completing the tasks within the allocated hours and timeframes provided by the technical leads and are accountable for deciding when documents and processes are ready for the Technical Lead to review. A range of Subject Matter Experts input will be required, including (but not limited to), Te Hono, planning, economics, urban design, ecology, natural hazards, infrastructure (transport and three-waters), GIS.

**Table 1: Summary of governance and project role descriptions**

#### 4. Project Programme - key stages and timeframes

This section of the Project Plan outlines the key project steps and deliverables that will guide the development of the DWSS. It provides a staged timeline for activities from project establishment through to final strategy delivery and explains how each step contributes to future planning processes under the new legislation. The key recommendation is to proceed with multiple foundational workstreams now, such as governance setup, baseline analysis, and vision setting, while using hold points to reassess and adapt the programme as legislative requirements become clearer.

Since resource management reform is imminent, the programme assumes the following:

- (a) National Direction / Standards will be developed and in place before Regional Spatial Plans.
- (b) Regional Spatial Plans will identify future urban areas, infrastructure corridors and strategic sites, and priority areas for public investment, informed by environmental constraints mapping. The data gathered as part of this project can inform these.
- (c) Regional Spatial Plans will start to be developed in the latter half of 2026, once the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act achieve royal assent. This will continue through 2027 and 2028. The current target date of notification of draft Regional Spatial Plans is approximately October 2027 (15 months after the Planning Act becomes legislation), with adoption of the Regional Spatial Plans approximately 6 months later.
- (d) Land use plans will be developed after Regional Spatial Plans. These will be required to implement the regional spatial plan and will select from the national menu of standardised zones, and be required to apply them according to local context. The scenarios developed and decided upon as part of this project can inform the development of these.
- (e) The Planning Act will prescribe the process for developing regional spatial plans and combined district plans. This process and requirements are uncertain at this stage.
- (f) There will be no Special Consultative Procedure.

Step	Deliverable and timing	Timing	Contribution to future processes
1. Project Establishment and Governance	The initial deliverables are the DWSS Project Plan (this document itself) and a Project Steering Group Terms of Reference defining roles and governance structure. These set up the project's framework. An internal Communications & Engagement Plan is also prepared at this stage to guide how stakeholders will be engaged. A dedicated project website and GIS data portal are launched early as tools to share information and support analysis.	January – February 2026 (2 months)	Establishing project roles (Steering Group, Project Coordinator, etc.) and decision processes that keep a “line of sight” to the upcoming Planning Act requirements. Early governance also allows collaboration with regional entities (and potentially central government and iwi partners) consistent with the new system's emphasis on joint spatial planning across councils.
2. Iwi, Stakeholder and Community Engagement	During the engagement phase, the team uses the Communications and Engagement Plan to conduct outreach and gather input. While no formal report is issued solely from this stage, the ongoing feedback is captured for later reporting. By the end of the project, an Engagement Summary document will compile all community and stakeholder input received, but this is built up across stages rather than a single output from this step.	January 2026 and Ongoing.  Early engagement during the first three months of the project is critical for the development of the Vision, Principles and Objectives	Early engagement will allow the DWSS to understand and reflect the community's vision for the district's direction. Engaging central government agencies and regional partners early (as part of stakeholders) lays groundwork for the “spatial planning partnership” model anticipated under the new system.
3. Baseline Data Collection and Context Analysis	Key analytical deliverables are produced in this step. The Evidence Base Summary compiles all relevant baseline data (demographics, land use, infrastructure, etc.). Complementing it is the Baseline Analysis and Community Profiles report, which provides detailed area-by-area profiles and identifies key issues and trends. The GIS portal is populated with these data layers to support	January 2026 to the end of May 2026 (5 months)	This step delivers detailed spatial data on population, infrastructure, environmental constraints, etc. This work directly contributes to the future Regional Spatial Strategy (RSP) because the new system requires a strong evidentiary foundation for these matters. In compiling this information now at the district scale, FNDC is doing the groundwork for what will be needed in the RSP.



Step	Deliverable and timing	Timing	Contribution to future processes
	scenario modeling and to ensure the evidence is accessible.		
4. Vision, Principles and Objectives	Here the project's strategic direction is set. The principal deliverable is the Foundation Report, which establishes the agreed vision for the district, core planning principles, and strategic objectives for the DWSS. This document serves as the framework against which options will be developed and evaluated. It's an internal blueprint ensuring that the economic development and well-being goals are woven into the plan's foundation.	March - May 2026 (3 month)	Having a clear, community created and endorsed vision for Far North ensures that when the RSP is developed, there is no ambiguity about what Far North District wants to achieve.
5. Scenario Development and Analysis	This step produces several technical outputs leading into a major report for public consultation: a Scenario Development Report that details the different spatial scenarios explored. Alongside, various Technical Memos are developed to dive into specific topics that inform the scenarios. Using these inputs, the project then publishes the Spatial Scenarios Report – a comprehensive, public-facing document presenting the shortlisted scenarios (with a preferred option) for public consultation. The Spatial Scenarios Report includes appendices such as the evidence summary, technical memos, and engagement summary to provide supporting detail.	May 2026 to December 2026 (8 months)  Consultation in November 2026 (1 month)	This will enable FNDC to come to the table with a well-considered scenario (and clear rationale) for the district, helping to streamline the decision on the preferred spatial option in the new system for the district land use plan.
6. Final Strategy Development and Analysis	In the final step, the preferred scenario is refined into the full spatial strategy. First, a Draft Spatial Strategy Report is released for public consultation, outlining the proposed district-	2027 onwards (TBC pending development of the Planning Act across 2026), if this process	The future district / land use plan for Northland will be required to implement the regional spatial plan by translating identified constraints and development opportunities into appropriate

Step	Deliverable and timing	Timing	Contribution to future processes
	wide plan incorporating feedback from the scenario stage. The evaluation of scenarios and rationale for the preferred strategy are documented in an Evaluation Report (appended to the draft). After consulting on the draft, the team produces the Final Spatial Strategy Report, the version of the plan.	decouples with a RSP process, the target end date for this project is December 2027	zones and other provisions. In large part, the DWSS will identify these areas and policy intents, so when the combined plan is written, planners can directly assign the appropriate standardised zones or overlays to our district in line with what the DWSS calls for.

**Table 2: Description of DWSS Key Stages, Timing and Associated Outputs**

**6 KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA / CLOSING PRAYER**

**7 TE KAPINGA HUI / MEETING CLOSE**