Far North District Council

TŪHONOTANGA
MINITI
ATTACHMENTS
MINUTES

Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board Meeting

12 March 2026

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Attachment 3 Vicky Fraude-Overview draft RLT Habitat Resotration Srategy 2026 - Document number A5642901 refers. 52

TE TARI O TE KAHIKA O TE HIKU O TE IKA
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF THE FAR NORTH

COMMUNITY BOARD DEPUTATIONS - MARCH 2026

- Northland Mayoral Forum
- Local Government New Zealand Zone 1
- Community Board Accords
- Dog Control Update
- General Updates

Northland Mayoral Forum

- Northland Water Done Well
- Resource Management Reform
- Local Government Reform
- Dog Control Regional Collaboration

Updates will come to our Council Meeting in April.

LGNZ Zone 1

- Zone 1 Meeting - Thursday 19th March
  Host: Far North District Council
- Remits Process
- Strategic Focus Update
- Updates from National Council, Te Maruata & YEM
- CBEC Zone 1 Rep

Community Board Accords

- **Excerpt from *Better together: A framework for councils and community boards* by LGNZ's CBEC**

What this framework aims to do >

CBEC and LGNZ teamed up to create this discussion document with two key goals in mind:

01

A guide to best practice council–community board relationships

02

A set of models (voice + advice + delivery + leadership)

Model 1: voice + advice

The *foundation of strong local democracy.* This model ensures community boards are a vital conduit between communities and council. Boards bring local voices to the table, advocate for their communities, and provide advice and feedback on issues of local interest. They help the council stay connected and responsive, while remaining grounded in their representative and advisory role.

Model 2: voice + advice + delivery

Advice plus action, with community at the centre. Building on Model 1, this approach includes practical responsibilities and delivery of small-scale services and projects. Boards become partners in local service monitoring, delivery and community engagement. With delegated funding and planning input, they can directly shape outcomes in their area while still aligning with the council's strategic direction.

Model 3: voice + advice + delivery + leadership

Genuine shared governance at the local level. This model gives boards the opportunity to lead — not just advise or deliver. Boards take a front-footed role in local planning, budget setting, policy decisions, and oversight of significant community services and assets. This is a true partnership model, with councils and boards working together to co-govern on behalf of communities.

Community Board Accords

- How do we want to work together, and how much shared decision-making do we want? *(where are the spaces we don't want to work together?)*
- Who does what, and how will community voices shape decisions early? *(what are our roles, who will and won't do what?)*
- What will help us stay aligned and work well together over time? *(how will we know that we are on track? How do we measure success?)*

- Workshopping at CB level, Council level & together?
- Use *Better together: A framework for councils and community boards* by LGNZ's CBEC

Democracy Services to set workshops to enable.

Dog Control Update

- Regional collaboration through Mayoral Forum
- Dog Control Bylaw Review 2026
- Ahipara Community Petition / Report back to Council

- Establish a Mayoral Taskforce for Dog Control
  - Possible pilot communities - Ahipara & Moerewa

General Updates

- Office of the Mayor Update
- Comms / April CB Meetings
- Mayors Taskforce for Jobs
  - Community Employment Programme Update
  - Employer Appreciation & Engagement Hui / CB Apr
- Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund
  - Update on grants to date
  - Application closure / Friday 13th March
- Far North Business & Agency Leader Monthly Teams

Whakawhetai - Thanks!

- State of the Far North 2026
  - Formal feedback for SOTFN 2027
- Community Board Priorities for LTP
  - Northland Regional Council LTP Development Invitation

CBEC Community Boards Executive Committee

Better together:

A framework for councils and community boards

Foreword

Kia ora koutou

Drawing on the full potential of our communities has never been more important. Community boards are a powerful expression of local self-determination and play a vital role in building connected, responsive and resilient places.

This relationship framework represents more than just a set of guidelines. It is an invitation to reset and strengthen the relationship between councils and community boards. That means having honest conversations about trust, responsibility and opportunity. We need to recognise that councils and boards are stronger when they are aligned in purpose and when they are clear about how to work together for the people they serve.

We acknowledge that not every community has a community board – and where they do, community boards look and feel unique to their local setting as they bring local knowledge, local relationships, and a deep understanding of the lived realities of whānau, businesses and communities at place. When properly enabled and resourced, community boards bring decision-making closer to the people most affected. This supports richer discussions and stronger civic engagement.

This framework outlines three models of council-board relationships: voice + advice, voice + delivery, and voice + leadership. Each offers a different depth of engagement and responsibility, allowing councils and boards to choose the model that best fits their context and aspirations. The accompanying Accord templates support these models with clarity and structure, ensuring expectations are shared and agreed.

Good relationships don't just happen. They require investment of time, energy and care. That's why this framework emphasises whakawhanaungatanga – taking the time to build and maintain relationships of trust and understanding. It encourages joint professional development, shared access to tools and resources, and a clear kaupapa for collaboration.

This framework is written to elevate the role of community boards where they exist and to advocate for good implementation as they are set up. Place-making is not just the domain of planners or policy-makers but the work of every citizen, board member and councillor.

Ngā mihi nui,
Sarah Lucas, Chair of the Community Board Executive Committee
Mayor Sam Broughton, President of LGNZ

Community boards: **localism in action**

Community boards are where localism lives and breathes. They bring democracy closer to home and give communities a stronger voice in shaping their place.

Under the **Local Government Act 2002 (Section 52)**, the role of a community board includes:

- Representing and advocating for the interests of their community
- Considering and reporting on matters referred by council, and other issues the board identifies
- Keeping an eye on council services delivered in the area
- Making an annual submission to council on local priorities and expenditure
- Connecting with local organisations, groups, and voices
- Taking on any other responsibilities delegated by council

How these roles are understood and carried out can vary widely across Aotearoa. Some councils and boards operate as tight-knit teams; others … not so much.

That's where this guide comes in.

CBEC and LGNZ believe there's real value in building stronger, more consistent relationships between councils and community boards. Not just for harmony's sake — but because better collaboration leads to better outcomes and efficiencies for our communities.

This resource offers a practical framework to support councils and boards in deciding **how they want to work together.** It includes relationship models, ideas for reflection, and conversation starters — all designed to bring the intent of the Act to life in a way that suits your local context.

It's not a rulebook. It's a **starting point** for conversations that matter.

Keen to kōrero more?

We'd love your feedback. Drop us a line at **cbec@lgnz.co.nz** and let us know what resonates — or what could be even better.

Introduction

"Community boards are a mechanism for local government to ensure that communities are involved in decisions."

— FrankAdvice, February 2024

This **Community Board and Council Relationship Guide** is part of a wider conversation sparked by the **FrankAdvice report,** commissioned by the **Community Board Executive Committee (CBEC)** and **Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ)** in 2023.

The goal?

To find better, smarter ways to support the mahi of community boards across Aotearoa — and to strengthen the relationships that help them thrive.

How we got here >

In late 2023, FrankAdvice surveyed **community board members and mayors** across the country. A follow-up workshop in early 2024 helped test and deepen what came through in the survey.

Some key findings stood out:

- **Community boards work best** when their *delegations and capabilities match the expectations of their communities.*
- They're **less effective** when there's a mismatch — when they're either under-resourced, unclear, or both.

From that, FrankAdvice recommended:

- Creating a programme to **encourage best practice** at the council level
- Expanding **training and mentoring** to help boards grow capability
- Advocating for **formalised agreements** between councils and boards to ensure clarity of purpose and mutual expectations

The remuneration link >

Alongside this work, the CBEC has been talking with The Remuneration Authority to explore ways to better reflect the range of responsibilities held by community board members — which vary significantly across the country.

They're interested in whether a tiered delegation framework might help shape a fairer, more transparent approach to setting remuneration levels.

What this framework aims to do >

CBEC and LGNZ teamed up to create this discussion document with two key goals in mind:

01

A guide to best practice council–community board relationships

Introducing the idea of **Relationship Accords** — simple, practical agreements that define how councils and community boards will work together in good faith.

02

A set of models (voice + advice + delivery + leadership)

Offering **three scalable models** that apply the Relationship Accord principles in different ways, depending on how each council and community board interprets the legislative responsibilities in their local context.

Importantly, these two pieces are designed to work together.

It is best to choose and apply a model before agreeing on the Accord — the shared understanding that forms the foundation for the relationship. The model is simply the shape that grows from that foundation.

RELATIONSHIP ACCORD

(Defines how we work together)

Choose a model that fits

Model 1/
Voice + advice

Model 2/
Voice + advice + delivery

Model 3/
Voice + advice + delivery + leadership

Delivers clear expectations, aligned responsibilities, and better outcomes

Part one:

Best practice guide:

building strong council–community board relationships

Community boards and councils are two arms of local democracy — and when they're working well together, communities thrive.

This **best practice guide** is designed as a springboard for effective relationships. It's a living tool — something councils and community boards can shape together to reflect their shared purpose, local character, and the needs of their people.

A strong relationship is built on:

- Mutual respect
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Shared intent to add value to local decision-making
- Timely and meaningful two-way communication

At the heart of this guide is the idea of a **Council–Community Board Accord** — a relationship agreement that's drafted together early in the triennium, and forms the foundation for how both parties will work together.

We recommend:

- Drafting the Accord within three months of local body elections
- Finalising it within the following three months

Clarity: speak the same language

Even when we think we're on the same page, words can mean different things to different people. That's why clarity is key.

Before diving into decisions or plans, it's important that councils and community boards **agree on the meaning of commonly used terms** — especially those that appear in legislation or come up often in day-to-day mahi.

This can be one of the first activities during induction — a shared kōrero about language, meaning, and expectations.

Why it matters:

Shared definitions help avoid misunderstandings, reduce assumptions, and create a solid foundation for collaboration.

Recommended words to define together:

- Represent/representing
- Advocate/advocacy
- Local community/communities of interest
- Submission
- Communicate/engage/consult
- Delegations/responsibilities
- Appointment to … /liaison to …
- Meeting/hui/workshop/training
- Administrative facilities

A set of **starter definitions** can be included in the Accord template, but each council–community board pair should tweak these to reflect local context and preferences.

02

Induction: starting strong, together

The best time to set the tone for a great working relationship? Right at the start.

Induction is more than just reading the rules — it's a chance for councils and community boards to **get to know each other, build understanding, and lay the groundwork for trust.**

Joint induction is best practice

Where possible, community board members should be inducted alongside councillors. This helps reinforce the shared goals of both groups and creates space for early dialogue — including drafting the Council–Community Board Accord.

Know your people

As part of induction, councils are encouraged to run a simple **skills, interests, and community connections survey** for community board members.

Why? Because these insights can:

- Highlight untapped talents
- Inform appointments to council committees
- Help spot gaps or opportunities for local engagement
- Support deeper, more relevant community representation

Tip: This survey doesn't need to be fancy — just practical. A few good questions can go a long way.

Roles and responsibilities: who does what (and why it matters)

A good relationship works best when everyone knows their role — and respects each other's part in the bigger picture.

While legislation offers a starting point, **it's not enough to assume roles are understood just because they're written down.** Every council–community board partnership should take the time to unpack what these roles look like in practice.

Council + community board: complementary, not competing

- The **council** makes the formal decisions, as prescribed under the Local Government Act.
- The **community board** informs those decisions through advocacy, local insight, and direct connection with communities.

Within the community board:

It's also important to talk about **internal roles** — beyond just electing a chair and deputy. For example:

- Will members be **spokespersons** for specific issues?
- Will there be **liaison roles** with local schools, clubs, marae, or interest groups?
- Who represents the board when engaging with iwi, youth councils, or other networks?

Within the council organisation:

Clarity is also needed about the roles of:

- Chief executive and general managers
- Democracy/governance services team
- Iwi or community board liaison staff
- Any council staff working directly with or supporting community boards

These roles should all be captured in the **Accord** — so there's no confusion about who to go to, what's expected, and how collaboration flows.

Why it matters:

When roles are clear and well understood, things run smoother, relationships strengthen, and decisions are better informed.

Input to council decision-making: getting the right voices at the table

For councils to make decisions that truly reflect their communities, **community boards need clear pathways to provide meaningful input** — not as an afterthought, but as part of the process.

Speaking rights at the table

As a baseline best practice, **community board chairs should be granted speaking rights** at council meetings, committees, and subcommittees (under Standing Orders).

- These rights help elevate community voices into the council's formal decision-making processes.
- The board chair can choose to delegate these speaking rights to another board member when appropriate.

Voting rights? Depends on the model

Some councils may choose to give **voting rights** to community board members on certain committees, depending on the model they adopt (see Item Two of this document).

Timing matters

To ensure boards can engage with their communities before feeding into council decisions:

- Reports relevant to a community board area should be provided to the board **at least six weeks** ahead of the council meeting where a decision will be made.
- Community board meetings should be **scheduled at least three weeks prior** to the relevant council meetings.

This lead time gives boards a chance to:

- Engage meaningfully with their communities
- Develop well-informed positions
- Provide clear, collective input back to the council

It's not just consultation — it's collaboration.

This isn't about ticking a box. It's about ensuring community voices are present, valued, and actioned in a timely way.

Delegations: clarity, confidence and capability

At the heart of every strong council–community board relationship is **clarity around who does what.**

Delegations aren't just a bureaucratic necessity — they're **an expression of trust and empowerment.** The more clearly responsibilities are outlined, the more confidently everyone can get on with the job.

Set it out clearly in writing

Delegations should be:

- **Formally agreed** between council and each community board
- **Clearly expressed**, with specific responsibilities, authorities and limitation
- **Tailored** to the model your council chooses to adopt (see Item Two of this document)

What might be delegated?

This will vary, but examples include:

- Local facilities and services (e.g. halls, playgrounds, local roads)
- Community engagement or events
- Discretionary funds or grants
- Input into annual and long-term plans

Delegations can grow

Delegations don't have to be static. They can grow over time as trust builds and as boards demonstrate capability. Think of them as a framework for **growing local decision-making.**

Transparency builds trust

Clear, well-communicated delegations help avoid confusion, reduce duplicated effort, and set realistic expectations — for both councils and the communities they serve.

Agenda setting: shared ownership, better meetings

A well-planned agenda doesn't just make for a tidy meeting — it sets the tone for **genuine collaboration** and ensures everyone's time is respected.

Shared responsibility = shared direction

Agendas should reflect both council priorities and local community concerns. That means **councils and boards co-own the process.**

For community board meetings:

- The agenda is developed collaboratively between the **community board chair (or deputy chair)** and the **chief executive (or their delegate)**
- Ideally, this happens **at least two weeks before** the agenda is publicly notified
- Items provided by council for community board meetings should be approved via this process
- Board members should be kept in the loop throughout the meeting cycle

For council meetings:

- Items from community boards that are intended for the **council agenda** should be submitted through the chair to the chief executive (or their delegate)
- This ensures the community board voice is present at the table — and heard

For joint community board meetings:

- Agendas should be agreed between all participating community board chairs and the CE
- These meetings offer a great opportunity for regional collaboration or shared advocacy

A little admin goes a long way

When everyone knows the process — and that their input matters — you build a culture of respect and readiness. That's when the real magic starts to happen.

Community and board plans: the bridge between vision and action

Community boards don't just *represent* their areas — they actively shape the future through **localised plans** that reflect their people, places, and priorities.

These plans are gold. But they only create value if they're **taken seriously** in council decision-making.

What needs to happen?

- **Agreement up front:** Councils and community boards should agree on *how* community or board plans will feed into the **Annual Plan** and **Long-Term Plan** processes
- This agreement should be **written into the Accord** and embedded in planning cycles — not left to chance or personality

Why it matters

When community board plans are aligned with council strategy, it strengthens the whole system.

- It builds trust.
- It avoids duplication.
- It shows communities that their voices actually make a difference.

Without that alignment, community input can fall through the cracks. This guide is here to help seal those gaps — and build something stronger.

Operating models: the how behind the what

Every council is different. Every community board is different. That's a strength — but it also means **having a clear operating model** is essential.

An operating model is simply:
"How we agree to work together so we can get things done."

This isn't about turning boards into mini-councils. It's about creating practical, agreed processes that **support good local decision-making.**

What should the operating model cover?

Here are some key elements to agree on (a simple template can help!):

- **Meeting frequency and location**
- Whether the community board uses the **council's Code of Conduct** or has its own
- When and how **Standing Orders** apply — for example, formal decisions vs general discussion
- Council reports to community boards should include a **one-page cover summary:** what's it about, and what's needed from the board
- Which elected members and staff are expected to **attend community board meetings**
- A clear process for **questions and clarifications** from community boards to staff (e.g. via the chair, in advance of meetings)
- If council staff are presenting to a community board, they should send a quick brief beforehand — even a couple of bullet points helps:
  - What's the topic?
  - What are they asking of the board?
- **Community board communication and engagement plan:** What does the board want to achieve locally, and how will the council support that?

Built for real life

The best operating models are flexible enough to fit the flavour of each board, while structured enough to keep everyone clear and aligned. This makes space for innovation, local responsiveness — and fewer headaches for everyone.

Whakawhanaungatanga strengthening the relationship

At the heart of every great working relationship is… a relationship.

Whakawhanaungatanga is about building that connection — through shared time, open kōrero, and mutual understanding.

Councils and community boards function best when there's trust and a sense of partnership. That doesn't just happen at the formal table — it grows in the spaces where people connect, share ideas, and get to know each other's perspectives.

So here's what we propose:

- At least **two hui per year** between:
  - Community board members
  - Council elected members
  - Chief executive and senior leadership
- These hui are informal, collaborative spaces — designed to strengthen relationships and allow open discussion on shared challenges and opportunities.
- Up to **two additional hui per year** just for **all community boards within a district or city,** focused on their own priorities or shared concerns. Inviting relevant council staff should also be considered, including leadership and lead roles, to build a team ethos. Community board members could also be invited to council waiata practice sessions.

These are not decision-making meetings. They're a chance to ask questions, offer ideas, test thinking — and build the human connection that powers better governance.

Why this matters

When we make time to connect outside of the formal chamber, we create the conditions for everything else to run more smoothly. Trust. Respect. Common ground.

Whakawhanaungatanga turns "us and them" into "we."

Growing the good professional development for community board members

Strong community boards are made up of strong, confident and well-supported people.

Just like councillors and council staff, **community board members deserve training and development** that grows their skills, supports their leadership, and helps them bring the best of themselves to the table.

This isn't a "nice to have" — it's essential if we want boards that can genuinely represent their communities and contribute meaningfully to council decision-making.

What good looks like:

- **At least one fully funded leadership training session** for all community board chairs and deputy chairs — beyond the standard post-election induction — to build capability in governance, advocacy, and relationship building.
- **Tailored induction for community board chairs** at the start of each term, even for returning chairs. Every term brings new challenges, new councils, and new community priorities. Fresh induction = fresh momentum.
- **Agreed access to paid training** for individual community board members, signed off between the Chair and chief executive (or delegate), so boards can build capability where it's needed most.
- **All community board members to be offered training in Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM)** — from basic awareness to active response, as appropriate in each rohe.
- Each council should also give thought to how they ensure board members are effectively steeped in **tikanga**, and whether workshops or training would help to build trusted lasting relationships with hapu and iwi.
- Good also looks like having processes in place to identify under-performing board members — and being able to have good solid processes in place to work through any issues arising with trusted officers, chairs and members.

Why this matters:

Community board members come from all walks of life — that's their strength. But it also means people arrive with different levels of experience and confidence in governance spaces. Offering solid, respectful development shows we value their role and want them to succeed.

Tools of the trade allowances and resources

You can't do a good job with no tools, no support and no snacks.

Community board members need the right **resources, access and practical support** to carry out their roles effectively and equitably. These aren't luxuries — they're part of recognising and resourcing the work.

What councils are already required to provide:

- Reasonable expenses for community board members
- Administrative facilities and advice

But "reasonable" can vary wildly — and sometimes community board members are expected to stretch their own resources just to show up and do the mahi.

Baseline expectations for allowances and resources:

- **IT support** and council-managed email addresses
- **Accessible venues** for board meetings
- **Travel reimbursement** that matches council elected member entitlements
- **Childcare costs reimbursed** (up to an agreed amount) to allow full participation
- **Parking fees covered** for in-person meetings and hui
- **Refreshments provided** at community board meetings and workshops
- **Support staff access** for agenda coordination and follow-up

Why this matters:

If we expect community boards to contribute like pros, we need to support them like pros. Practical support enables wider participation — especially from working people, young parents, and others for whom time and money are real barriers.

Putting it into practice

Negotiating agreements between council and community boards

Constructive and well-functioning relationships require that the parties to that relationship understand each other's expectations and acknowledge their mutual obligations. To assist councils and community boards to articulate their expectations of one other, and agree mutual obligations, CBEC has developed a template for councils to use.

The matters included in the template are:

- the community board role (based on the three models outlined in this Guide)
- standards for collaboration
- how communication between the council and board(s) will occur
- responsibilities of the council and its staff
- responsibilities of community boards
- service levels for community board meetings
- how community board members will be supported
- professional development and training for community board members
- conflict resolution and review process

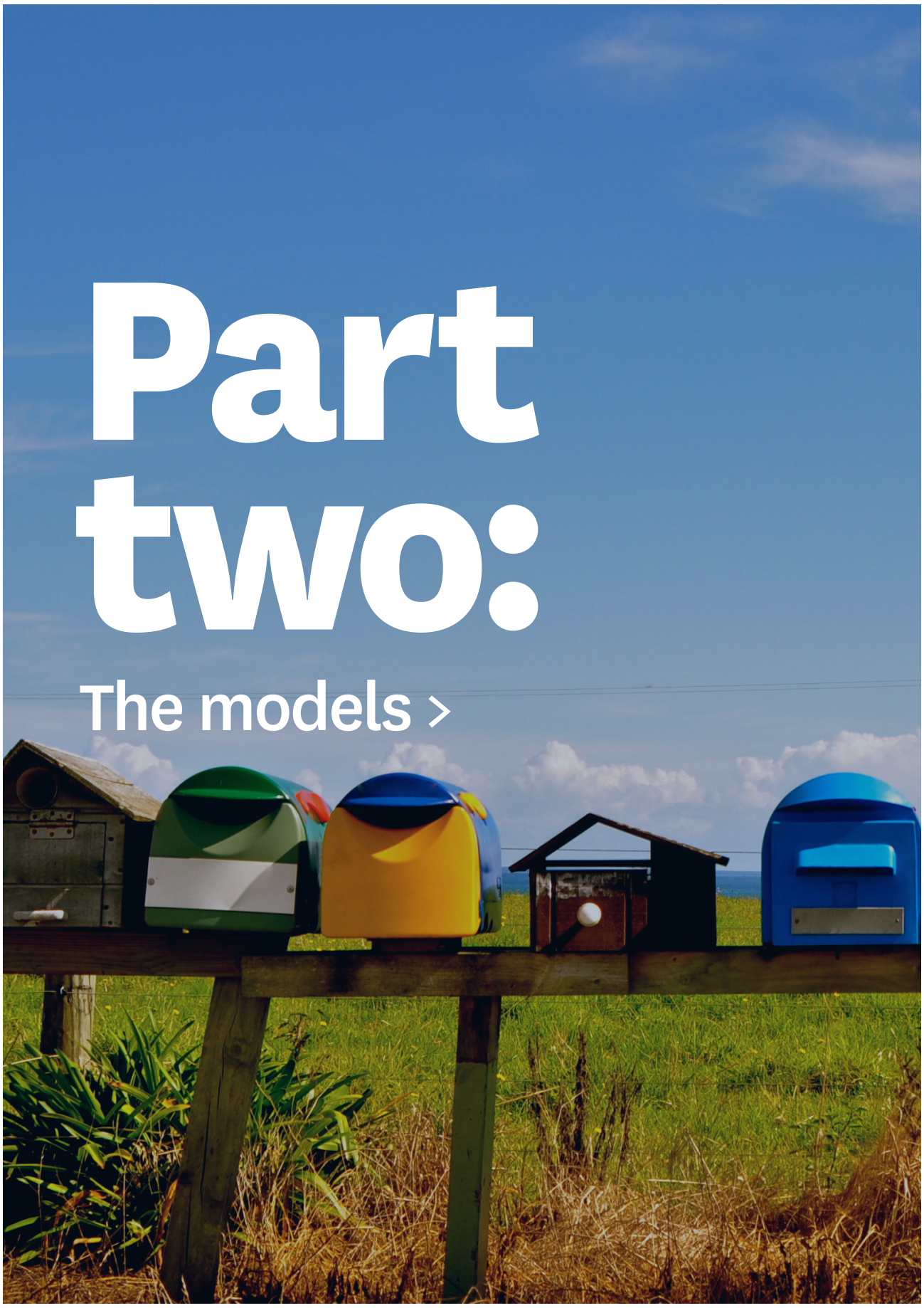
When designing the process for formalising the relationship, and signing the accord, it is important that local circumstances are taken into account, so the process may vary from council to council.

While recognising local differences, a signing process could involve the following:

- A joint workshop between the governing body (or their representatives) and members of the community board(s) (or their representatives) to brief members on the three community board models and the matters to be included within the Accord
- A process through which officials, drawing on the outcomes of the joint workshop, prepare a draft Accord for consideration by members of the governing body and community board, potentially at their first meetings in the new year
- A signing ceremony involving the board chair(s) and mayor/CEO

Where councils have multiple boards then all boards (or their representatives) should be involved in the process, together. In cases where at least some boards have unique needs, breakout sessions may be needed.

The template can be downloaded here


Part two:
The models ›

One size doesn't fit all — and that's okay.

Councils and community boards vary in size, complexity and community expectations. But what they *shouldn't* vary on is having a shared understanding of their roles, responsibilities and potential. These models provide a tiered approach to structuring the relationship between councils and community boards. They're not rigid boxes — think of them as starting points, with built-in flexibility. Councils and community boards can adapt, evolve and shift between models over time.

And importantly:

You can't pick a model without first agreeing on the relationship. That's why every model assumes an Accord is in place — clear expectations, roles, and protocols as outlined in the Best practice guide.

What these models aim to do:

- Give councils a framework for clarity in delegation
- Help community boards understand their scope and role
- Support the Remuneration Authority to better understand what community boards around the motu do
- Enable communities to have clear expectations of their local community boards

Model 1: voice + advice

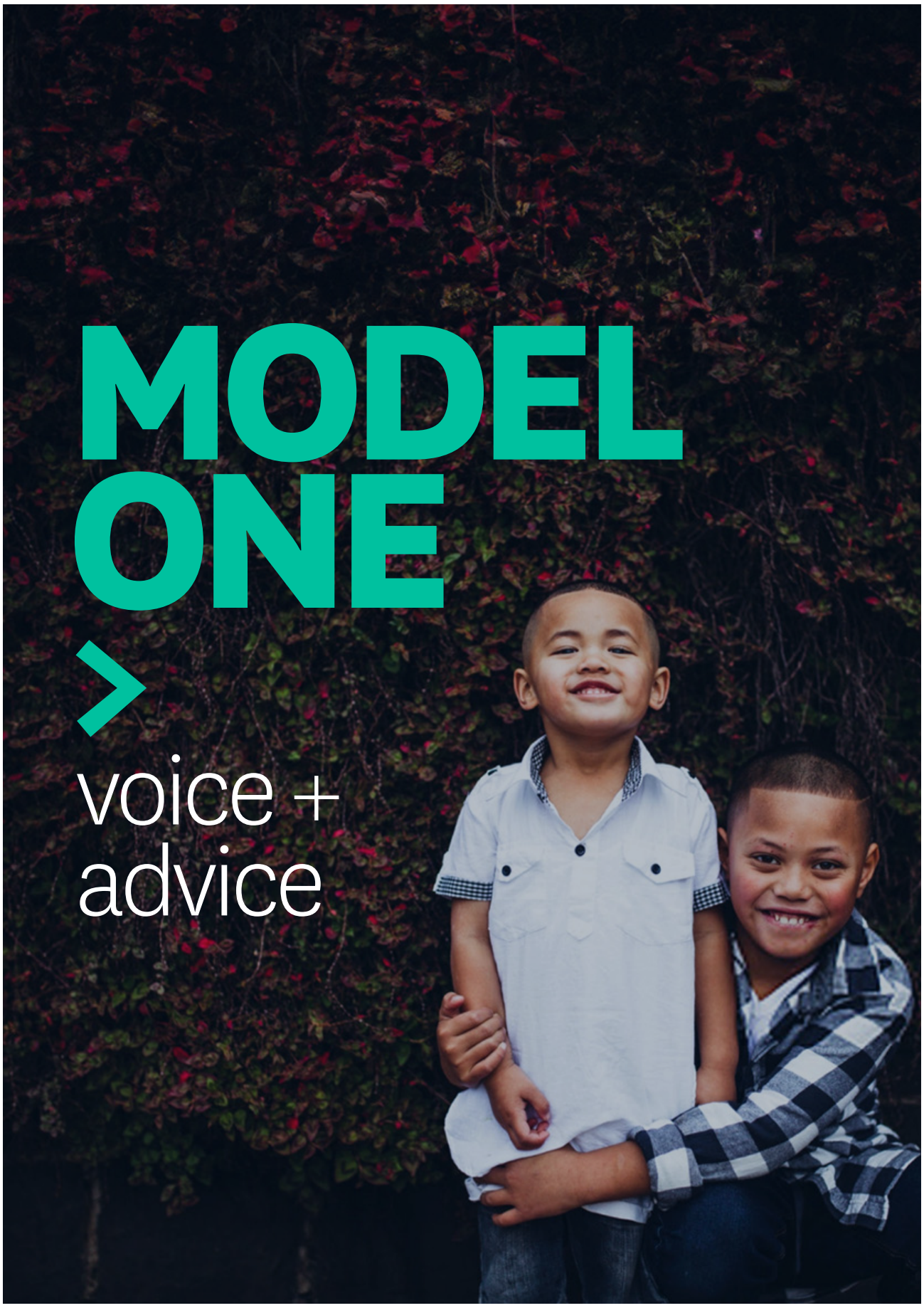
The *foundation of strong local democracy*. This model ensures community boards are a vital conduit between communities and council. Boards bring local voices to the table, advocate for their communities, and provide advice and feedback on issues of local interest. They help the council stay connected and responsive, while remaining grounded in their representative and advisory role.

Model 2: voice + advice + delivery

Advice plus action, with community at the centre. Building on Model 1, this approach includes practical responsibilities and delivery of small-scale services and projects. Boards become partners in local service monitoring, delivery and community engagement. With delegated funding and planning input, they can directly shape outcomes in their area while still aligning with the council's strategic direction.

Model 3: voice + advice + delivery + leadership

Genuine shared governance at the local level. This model gives boards the opportunity to lead — not just advise or deliver. Boards take a front-footed role in local planning, budget setting, policy decisions, and oversight of significant community services and assets. This is a true partnership model, with councils and boards working together to co-govern on behalf of communities.

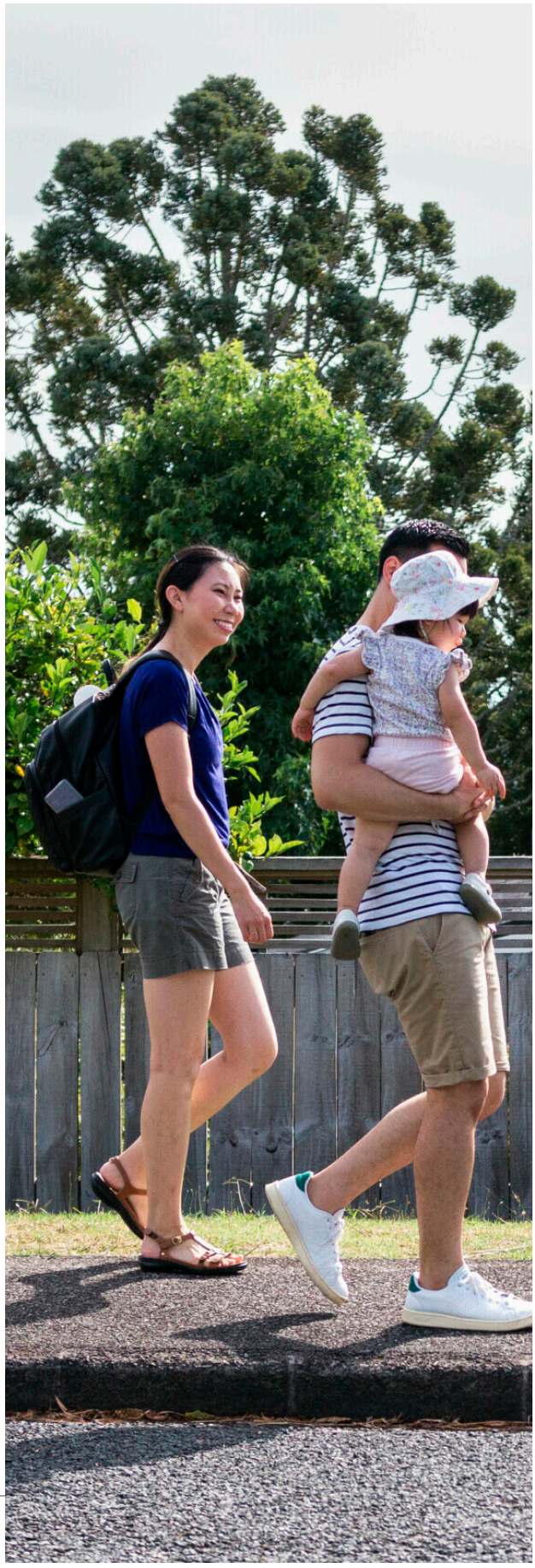

MODEL ONE
voice + advice

“We’ve got the basics right

This model reflects the **core legislative role of community boards** as outlined in **section 52 of the Local Government Act 2002.** It serves as a foundation for how boards and councils can work together effectively — with a shared understanding of expectations, responsibilities and relationships.

Boards operating in this model are active and engaged in their statutory duties. Their value to the council is recognised through consistent processes for communication, reporting and collaboration.

This is the starting point for a good council/community board relationship — where each side understands its role, trust is building, and there is room to grow.



Model One

Core functions in practice >

Representing and advocating for community interests

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL ACTIVELY:

- Hear from their local community through informal kōrero, meetings, workshops or targeted outreach.
- Represent their community's views at council and committee meetings via:
  - Public forums
  - Formal presentations
  - Submissions or letters
  - Supporting submitters to speak for themselves
- Elevate community concerns and aspirations to inform council decision-making.

Considering and reporting on matters referred to the board — and raising matters of interest

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL ACTIVELY:

- Consider and provide feedback to council reports on issues that impact their local area.
- Provide reports to council on issues they've identified as important to their community.
- Contribute local knowledge, context, and insights that shape better decisions at the council table.

Maintaining an overview of council services in the community

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL:

- Stay informed about council activities and services in their area — via updates from council staff or reports.
- Share this information with their community, helping to demystify what the council does.
- Feed back to council about:
  - Levels of community satisfaction
  - Service gaps
  - Community concerns or emerging trends
- Are routinely notified of relevant resource consent activity in their community.

Making an annual submission to the council on expenditure

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL:

- Prepare and submit feedback on:
  - Long Term Plan (LTP)
  - Annual Plan (AP)
  - District Plan changes
  - Strategies, policies, and bylaw changes
- Speak on behalf of their local area during consultation, with input from residents and community groups.

Communicating with community organisations and special interest groups

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL:

- Build and maintain relationships with local groups and networks.
- Share relevant updates through newsletters, social media, local papers or hui.
- Receive community feedback informally and pass it on to council, helping ensure community voices shape council thinking.

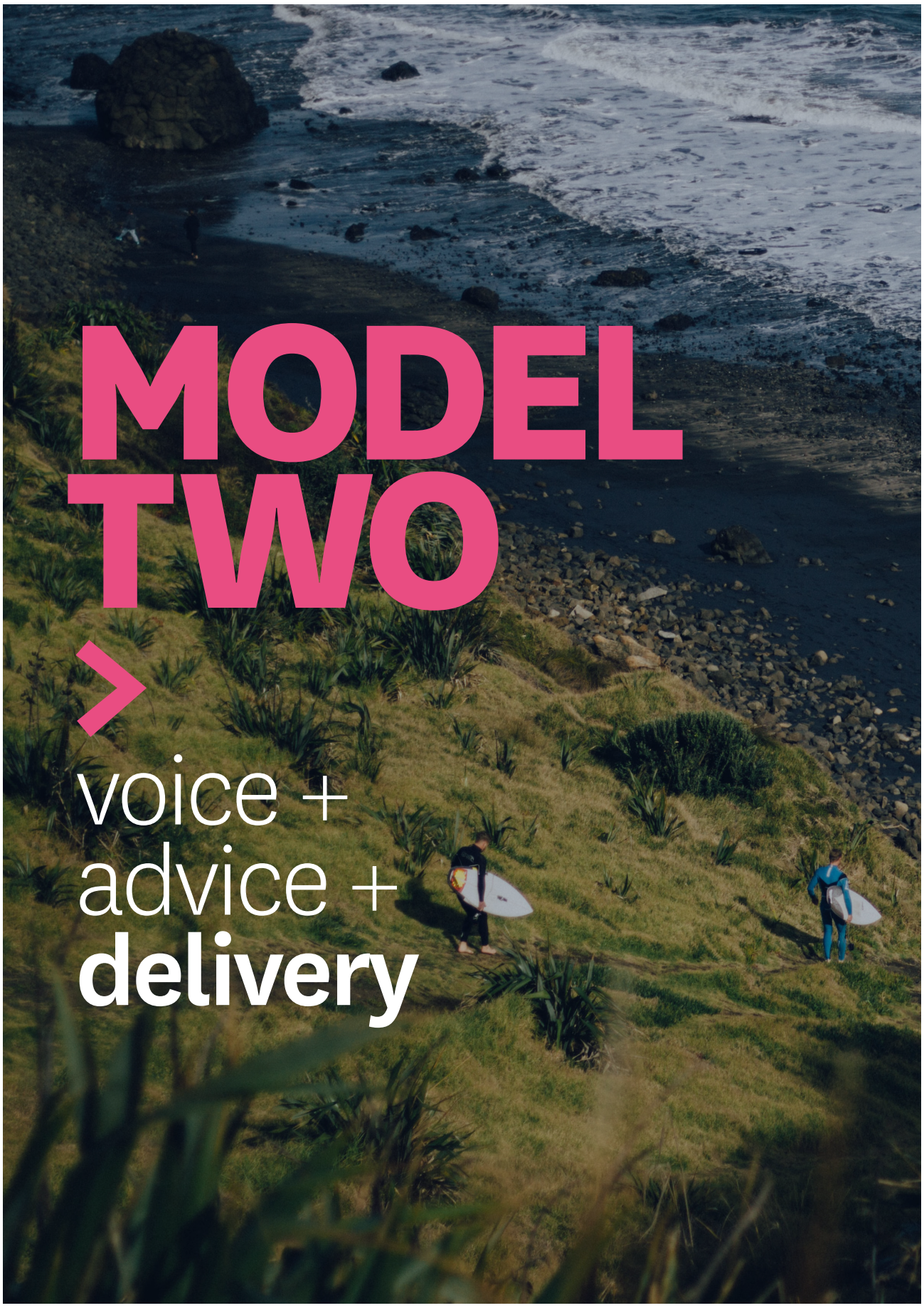
Carrying out other responsibilities delegated by the council

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL:

- Have clear and well-documented delegations from council (if any).
- Understand the boundaries of their authority and receive appropriate support from council staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Key principle

This model is about getting the foundations right. Community Boards are doing the work they were created to do — consistently and clearly — with respectful, two-way support from the council. It's not just a box-ticking exercise: it's where real, local democracy starts to take root.


MODEL TWO
voice +
advice +
delivery

“We’re in this together

Model 2 builds on the foundations of **Model 1**, strengthening the relationship between councils and community boards by adding shared delivery responsibilities and deeper community engagement.

Boards operating in this model do more than provide advice and advocacy — they **help drive the work.** They have influence over local delivery, take on extra delegated responsibilities, and are increasingly viewed as trusted local partners in decision-making.

This model suits councils and boards that have **built mutual trust,** see real value in collaboration, and are ready to work together on meaningful delivery for their communities.

Everything in Model 1, plus:

Representing and advocating with deeper insight

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL GO BEYOND SURFACE-LEVEL FEEDBACK BY:

- Gathering evidence to support their advocacy — through independent surveys, community workshops, or collation of submissions.
- Making formal submissions on behalf of their communities to any relevant organisation — not just council.
- Contributing to decisions about the allocation of funding to community groups operating within their area.

This ensures that their voice is **credible, community-informed and timely.**

Actively monitoring local service delivery

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL TAKE A **HANDS-ON ROLE** IN MONITORING COUNCIL SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITY. THIS INCLUDES:

- Receiving regular reports on service delivery performance.
- Providing **formal and structured feedback** to the council on what's working well and what needs attention — through agreed channels and timelines.

They help close the loop between council delivery and community experience.

Leading formal community connection roles

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL SERVE AS **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY CONDUITS.** THEIR MEMBERS MAY:

- Be formally appointed as representatives to local community groups, attending AGMs and providing regular liaison.
- Lead or support public information sessions hosted in their local area — ensuring messages from the council reach the community clearly and consistently.

Are routinely notified of relevant resource consent activity in their community.

Carrying out additional delegated responsibilities

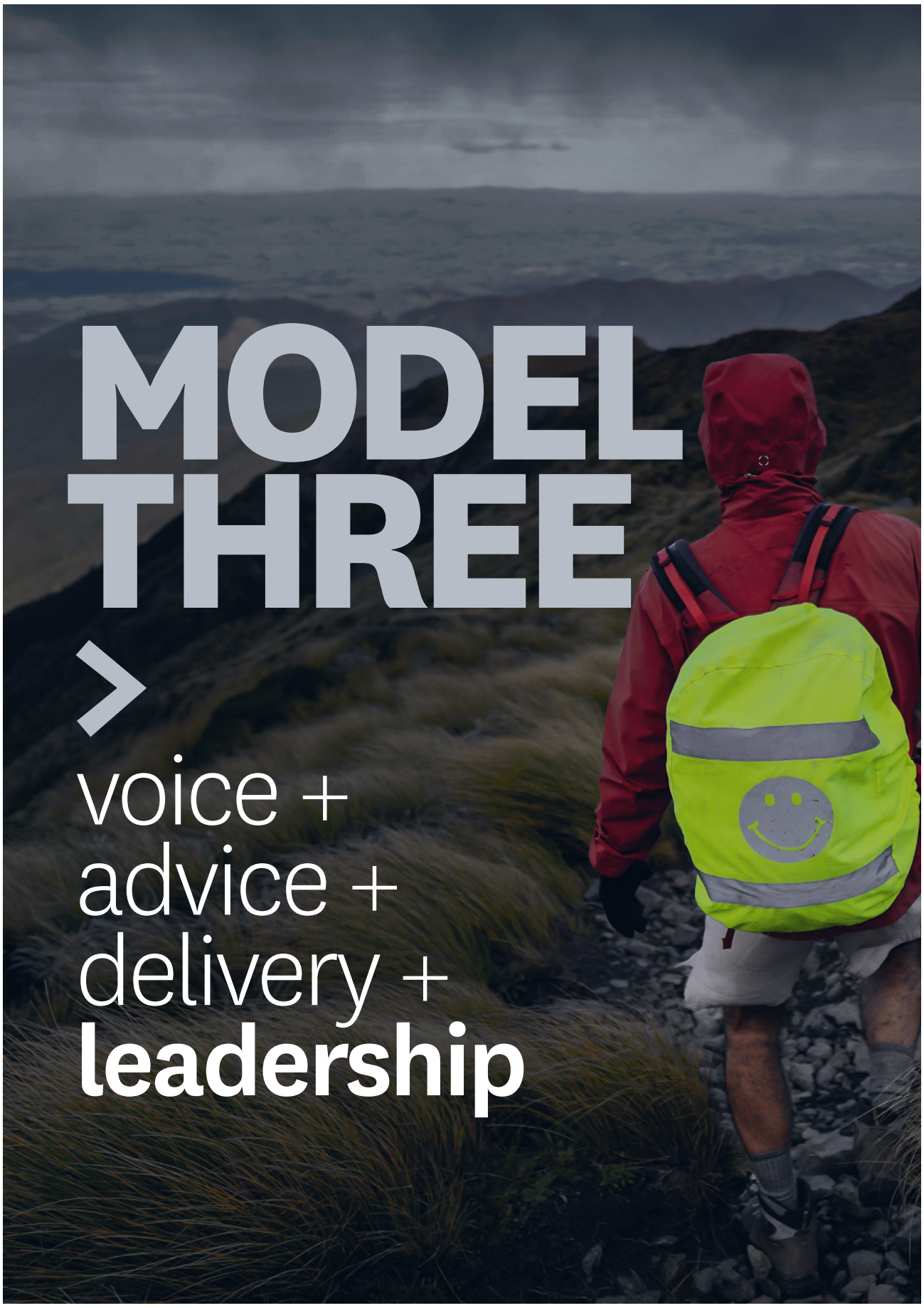
BOARDS IN THIS MODEL HAVE WELL-DEFINED, **RESOURCED RESPONSIBILITIES,** WHICH MAY INCLUDE:

- Developing a **Community Board Plan** each year — aligning with the council's LTP and setting a programme of delivery for local projects and services.
- Allocating and managing **discretionary funds** for local priorities, either as a bulk fund or on a project-by-project basis.
- Spending approved funds within specific budget areas (e.g. beautification, minor infrastructure, events).
- Participating in **co-design** of community facilities with local input — ensuring new spaces reflect the needs and aspirations of those who use them.
- Contributing advice to **Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM)** planning — with roles clearly documented in a written agreement.
- Making formal decisions such as **approving street names,** based on staff recommendations.

Boards are supported to deliver these responsibilities with the right tools, support, and accountability structures.

Key principle

This model is about **shared delivery and deeper trust.** Community Boards aren't just telling council what the community thinks — they're actively shaping and delivering on that vision. They're known, respected, and relied on as a critical part of the system that helps local democracy thrive.

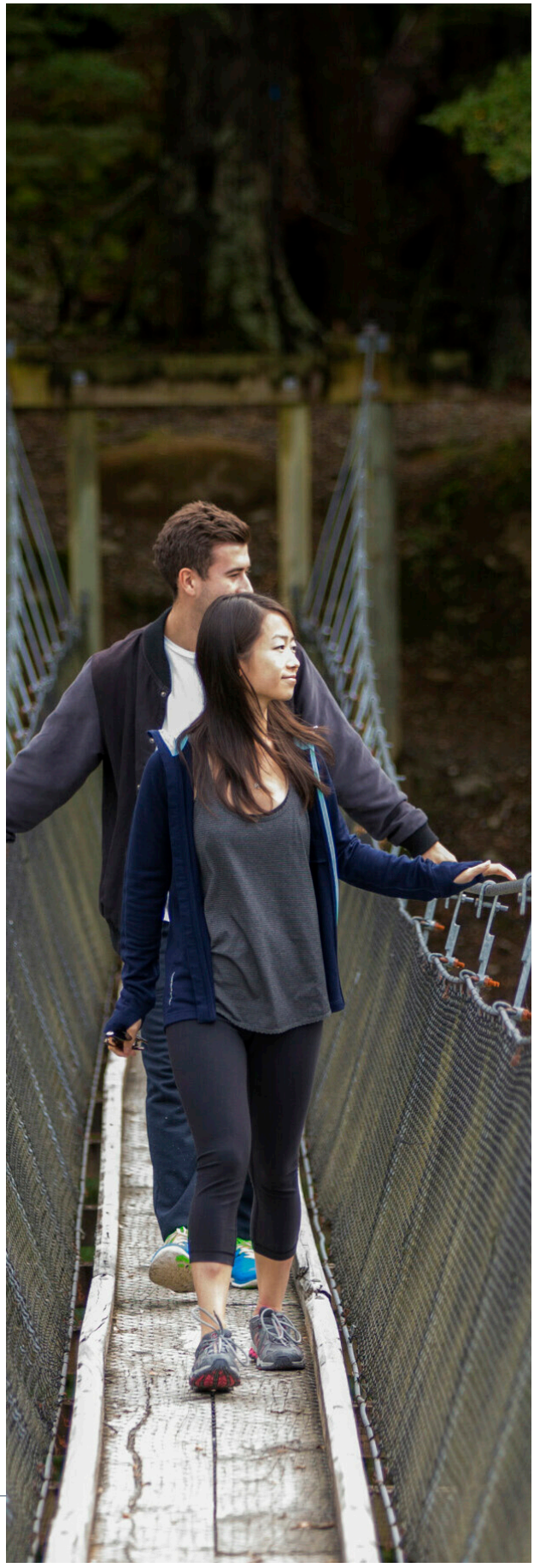

MODEL THREE
>
voice +
advice +
delivery +
leadership

“Partners in leadership

Model 3 represents the most advanced level of collaboration between councils and community boards. It goes **beyond consultation and co-delivery** — into **true decision-sharing.**

Boards operating under this model are **formal decision-makers** in local matters. They help shape not only what gets delivered in their community, but how, when and by whom. Their work is strategic, place-based and embedded in council systems. Trust, resourcing and alignment are high.

This model is best suited to councils and community boards that have invested in **strong systems, mature relationships,** and a **shared commitment to empowering local voice and action.**



Model Three

Everything in Model 2, plus:

Formal decision-making powers

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL AREN'T JUST HEARD — THEY **VOTE.** THEIR REPRESENTATIVES MAY:

- Sit as full voting members on specific council committees or subcommittees.
- Participate in formal decision-making forums with direct influence over outcomes that affect their area.

They are considered **peers and partners** in governance — helping ensure council decisions are grounded in local insight.

Strategic oversight of services and investment

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL TAKE AN **ACTIVE ROLE IN SHAPING SERVICES** AND INVESTMENT IN THEIR AREA. THIS MAY INCLUDE:

- Providing input to investment and service delivery decisions, backed by insight from the community.
- Guiding risk and resource deployment through local reporting and analysis.
- Confirming the final design of community facilities (within council-approved budget constraints).

They help ensure that every dollar spent is **place-based, purposeful, and community-aligned.**

Deep, embedded community relationships

IN THIS MODEL, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS ARE FORMALISED AND STRENGTHENED. BOARD MEMBERS:

- Are appointed as official representatives to key community groups.
- Are expected to attend all committee meetings and participate in activities run by those groups.

Boards serve as **deeply embedded connectors** between council systems and the diverse interests of their local area.

Broad, clearly delegated responsibilities

BOARDS IN THIS MODEL OPERATE WITH A **COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF DELEGATED POWERS,** ENABLING THEM TO MAKE OR INFLUENCE A WIDE RANGE OF DECISIONS. THESE MAY INCLUDE:

+ Developing a **place-based future development plan** aligned with the council's long-term and strategic goals — shaped by local aspirations and priorities.
+ Determining **policy settings** for specific local matters (e.g. street naming, notable trees).
+ Approving **site selection and final design** for specified community facilities — with local input and within council policy.
+ Setting **budgets for service delivery** in their local area, within the funding envelope allocated by council.
+ Advising on or undertaking **procurement** of local contractors to deliver specified services, within council's procurement policies.
+ Exercising specific **regulatory powers** as agreed and documented.
+ Granting **leases or licences** on local reserves (in line with policy).
+ Approving **traffic control signs.**
+ Making **appointments to external bodies.**
+ Performing **Civil Defence and Emergency Management** duties as assigned through formal agreements with the council.

Boards in this model operate like **local governance units,** managing a distinct but integrated piece of the council's work programme.

Key principle

This model is about **power-sharing, responsibility, and mutual accountability.** Community Boards are not just contributors — they are local leaders. This model works best where the council and community board are committed to joint delivery and see local governance as a powerful tool to achieve better outcomes for everyone.

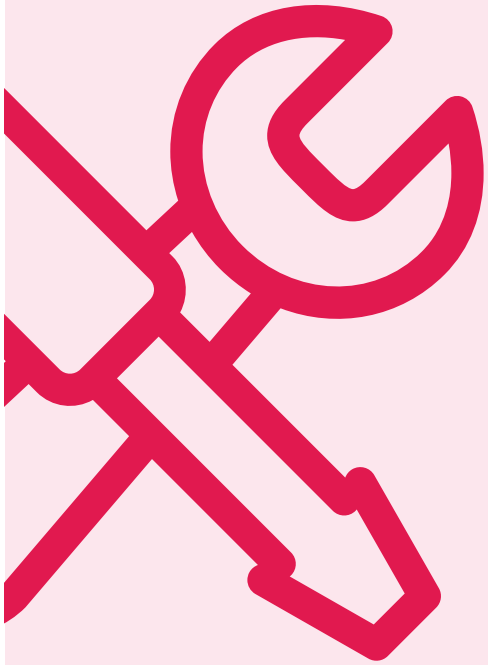
Why create an Accord?

Councils and community boards operate in different ways across Aotearoa New Zealand. While flexibility is good, *uncertainty* is not.

An Accord provides:

+ Clarity of expectations
+ A shared sense of purpose
+ A practical way to navigate tension or grey areas

Best practice: building a Relationship Accord



A Relationship Accord is not a legal contract — it's a shared understanding.

It captures how councils and community boards agree to work together, based on mutual respect, clarity of roles, and community-centred outcomes.

Key principles for partnership

We recommend grounding your Accord in these shared values:

PRINCIPLE	What it means in practice
TRUST	Information flows freely, and both parties can rely on each other to follow through
RESPECT	Roles are understood and valued — not overlapped or dismissed
MANAAKITANGA	Meetings are welcoming, inclusive and community-first
CO-DESIGN	Major local issues are tackled together from the start
TRANSPARENCY	Decisions are explained, not hidden. Board voices are acknowledged and visible.

Community board model

Community Boards' Executive Committee

VOICE + ADVICE

The community board represents local interests, advocating on behalf of the community and providing meaningful advice to council.

VOICE + DELIVERY

In addition to advising, the community board has delegated responsibilities for service delivery, budget management, monitoring and engagement.

VOICE + LEADERSHIP

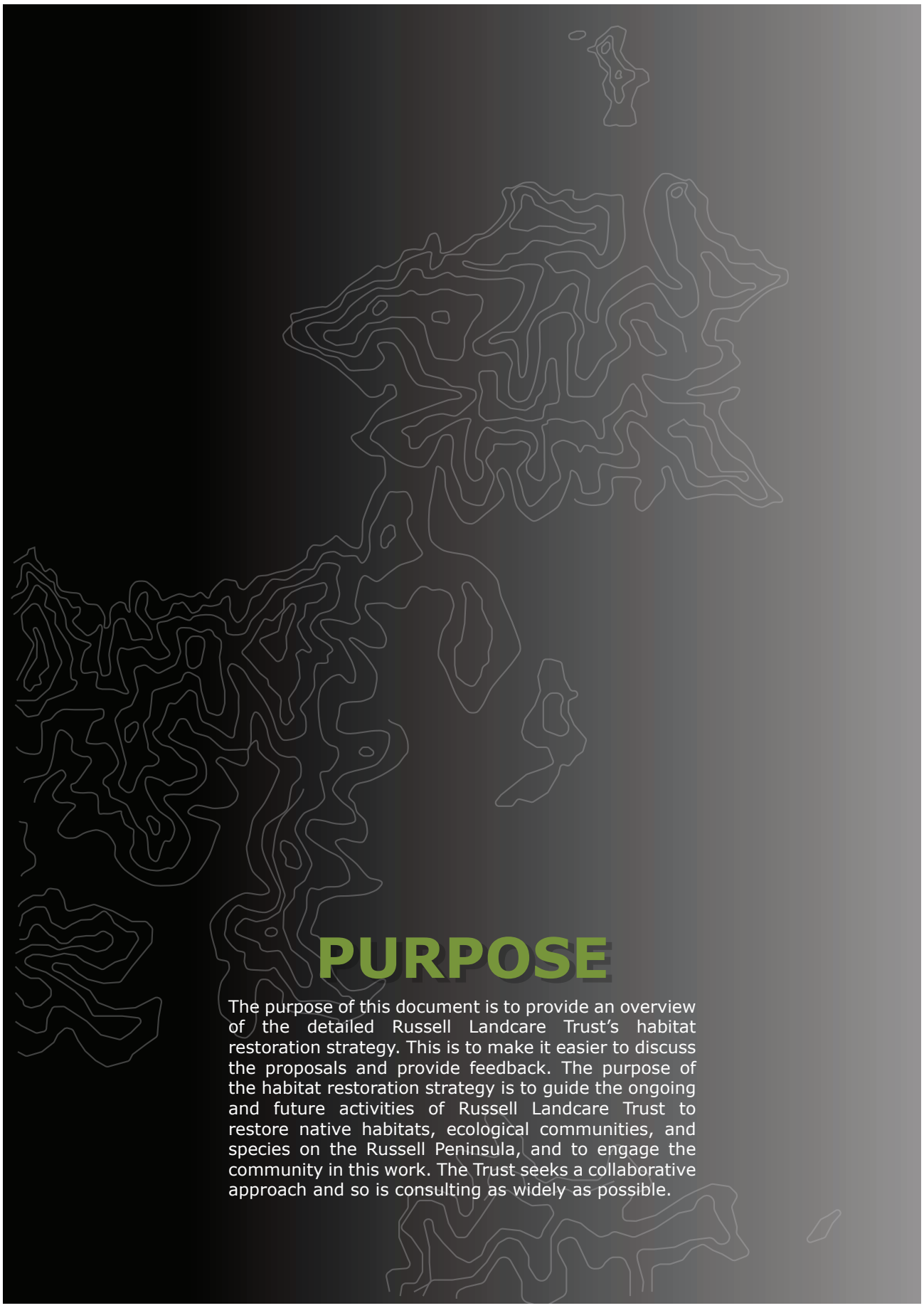
Decision-making and leadership are added, such as setting budgets, co-designing services, and developing future-focused plans.

Ko Tātou LGNZ.

We connect, champion and support local government.

BECOME A MEMBER
EMAIL
contact@russelllandcare.org.nz
POSTAL ADDRESS
43 Matauwhi Rd
Russell 0202
New Zealand
FOLLOW US
@russelllandcare
russelllandcare.org.nz

Russell Landcare Trust
DRAFT
RUSSELL LANDCARE TRUST
2026
HABITAT RESTORATION STRATEGY



PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the detailed Russell Landcare Trust's habitat restoration strategy. This is to make it easier to discuss the proposals and provide feedback. The purpose of the habitat restoration strategy is to guide the ongoing and future activities of Russell Landcare Trust to restore native habitats, ecological communities, and species on the Russell Peninsula, and to engage the community in this work. The Trust seeks a collaborative approach and so is consulting as widely as possible.

WHO ARE WE?

The Russell Landcare Trust was established in 2001 to reduce the threat posed by invasive animal pests to native wildlife, remove invasive plants, restore native vegetation, and reintroduce the endemic Weka. For the first fifteen years, the Trust successfully reintroduced the North Island weka, undertook limited control of possums, rats, and stoats (among others), and organised community planting days.

In 2016, the Trust began a programme of more intensive control of possums, mustelids, and rats. Many kilometres of pest control lines were established, and access permissions were obtained from many landowners. The initial major area of focus was the Pipiroa and Te Wahapu catchments and their buffer zones.
In October 2022, Russell Landcare Trust became one of three Bay of Islands Predator Free 2050 Peninsula Projects, coordinated by Northland Regional Council. Together, these three Bay of Islands projects are one of 18 New Zealand landscape-scale "Predator Free 2050" projects.

Since then, the Trust has made significant progress in eliminating possums, rats and stoats from the 3000ha Russell Peninsula. In early 2026, nearly 1000ha of the Peninsula are possum and rat-free, with any new incursions being quickly identified and removed. The first elimination area was the Pipiroa and Te Wahapu catchments and their buffer zones, with the adjoining Orongo Bay recently expanding it to 808ha. No possums have been detected in this area for two years.

The 225ha at Tapeka has also achieved possum- and rat-elimination status. As the last rats are being removed from Russell township, trapping efforts are shifting to Tikitikiore and Paroa Bay. These areas will provide a stronger buffer for the existing elimination areas, especially for species with large ranges (possums, stoats, and feral cats).

Russell Landcare Trust

Our Vision

Kokako are calling. Native plant and wildlife populations on the Russell Peninsula and their natural habitats are restored.

Our Mission

To lead and enable the ecological restoration of the Russell Peninsula and adjoining areas through strategic action, strong partnerships, and community empowerment. Our mahi (work) includes invasive predator elimination and control, invasive plant pest control and removal, native habitat restoration, revegetation with native species, threatened species translocations, community education, and strategic advocacy – delivering tangible conservation outcomes and opportunities for community involvement.

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PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND

While the habitat restoration strategy addresses Russell Peninsula as a unit, habitat restoration activities on private land, including pest plant and animal control, would occur only where landowners support this. Activities such as planting and species reintroductions are likely to focus on public lands and protected private lands, where work can be secured. With limited resources, the Trust needs to focus on its highest priorities. Establishing corridors between existing native forest blocks for potential kōkako reintroductions could provide great opportunities for landowner involvement in restoring kōkako to the Russell Peninsula.

HAVE YOUR SAY

You can send comments to **vicky@russelllandcare.org**

You can attend one of the **public meetings** and provide input there.

You can share your thoughts with Landcare staff and trustees at the **Wednesday morning markets.**

If you are a relevant agency, community group, or landowner, you can contact the Trust (**contact@russelllandcare.org.nz**) and arrange a meeting.

AREAS COVERED AND ACTIVITIES ADDRESSED

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Map 1

The Strategy's primary spatial focus is the 3,000 ha of land and freshwater habitats on the Russell Peninsula (see Map 1). It also addresses immediate near-shore estuarine and marine habitats, and species that utilise both land and sea, such as seabirds. Where necessary to safeguard the ecological values of the Peninsula, pest control/elimination activities for specific invasive plants and animals may extend beyond the Peninsula's boundaries.

The habitat restoration strategy promotes the restoration and improvement of habitat quality for native plant and animal species found on the Peninsula, including special species such as Mātuku (Australasian bittern), pāteke (brown teal), North Island Weka, North Island brown kiwi, Northland/Auckland green gecko and swamp maire (Syzygium maire). It also seeks to restore habitats to enable the translocation of previously present species, such as the North Island kōkako.

This strategy supports an expanding effort to eliminate invasive animal pests, such as rats and possums, and eventually stoats. It addresses the potential development of control programmes for other invasive animal species. Additionally, targeted eradication or containment programmes are proposed for specific invasive plant species that are not yet widespread. Several important areas have been identified as priorities for the comprehensive removal of invasive plants within broader ecological restoration projects. Currently, these areas primarily consist of public lands and some protected private land with the landowner's support. The strategy offers numerous opportunities for hapu and community engagement in the restoration programme. It also addresses education, community awareness and learning.

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POSSIBLE ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION OUTCOMES FOR 2036

HIGHER ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY /NATURALNESS OF THE PENINSULA'S INDIGENOUS HABITATS

PROPOSED BROAD STRATEGY OUTCOMES

1. Increased naturalness or ecological integrity for the Russell Peninsula's largely indigenous habitats.
2. Abundant native wildlife.
3. The impacts of invasive animal species are significantly reduced, including by eradicating rats, possums and eventually stoats from the Peninsula and minimising the presence of possums and stoats in an appropriately sized buffer.
4. Other invasive animal pests are controlled and, if practical, eradicated when there is suitable technology, funding and community support.
5. Identified problematic invasive plant species are constrained or eradicated from all or parts of the Russell Peninsula.
6. Invasive plant species are generally removed from identified protected areas.
7. Ecologically appropriate native plant species, including those that are rare or at-risk, are planted in identified protected areas
8. Overall reduction in invasive species and replacement by ecologically appropriate native species on the Peninsula.
9. Earthworks, stormwater, sediment and excess nutrients are appropriately managed to prevent and minimise damage to freshwater and marine habitats.

The details of these proposed outcomes are discussed in the following sections.

DEFINITION

High ecological integrity/ naturalness is an attribute of ecosystems that are close to what would be expected without human disturbance in terms of:

- The structure (e.g. forest, salt marsh) of the vegetation/ aquatic community
- The composition (species and groups of species)
- The functioning of ecological processes

Local or regional baselines or examples for assessing ecological integrity are described in the full strategy document.

CONTEXT

The Russell Peninsula has habitats with high ecological integrity and naturalness. Examples include the mature native forest in the Pipiroa and Te Wahapu catchments, as well as the associated downstream freshwater and saltwater wetlands.

However, invasive plant and animal species have adversely affected many areas and limited potential natural habitat recovery. Other human-induced impacts that reduce ecological integrity/naturalness include the clearance of native forest and other native vegetation; dumping invasive plants; fire; logging; erosion from earthworks and roading/tracking combined with heavy rain; tree felling into natural habitats; inappropriately diverted water; and excess fine sediment smothering habitats.

ABUNDANT NATIVE WILDLIFE

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The New Zealand landmass is unique in that, apart from three bat species (one of which is extinct), there are no native mammal species. Having evolved in the absence of browsing and predatory mammals, New Zealand's plants, and especially birds and other wildlife, are highly vulnerable to their impacts. The Russell Peninsula has lost many native wildlife species due to human activities. However, some wildlife species have been reintroduced, or existing remnant populations have been increasing due to recent conservation actions.

The primary threats to many native wildlife species are invasive mammalian predators[1]. Habitat loss and degradation, especially due to fire, clearance, introduced browsing animals and invasive plants, are also significant. Road kills can be significant for some species. The next sections discuss current and recently threatened wildlife species for which habitat restoration activities are intended to assist.

KEY PROPOSED OUTCOMES – ABUNDANT NATIVE WILDLIFE

1. Bittern and pāteke breeding populations increase in response to predator control and habitat enhancement.
2. The kiwi population of the Russell Peninsula continues to be maintained at a level exceeding 500 breeding pairs (2000 individual adults) to sustain the genetic integrity and viability of this genetically isolated taxon.
3. Other native birds, including tomtit, fantail, grey warbler, morepork, tui and kūkupa/ kererū, continue to flourish in a mustelid-rat-possum elimination zone.
4. A robust bird count monitoring programme detects changes and benefits resulting from the elimination of possums, feral cats, rats and stoats.
5. Kererū thrives in the absence of alien predators and distributes critical native seeds needed for the extension and development of mature podocarp/broadleaved forests (e.g., taraire, puriri, and miro).
6. Fernbird or mātātā abundance increases with the expansion of alien predator elimination and wetland habitat restoration.
7. Native wildlife species (such as pukeko) that can damage indigenous plantings, as well as human assets, are managed to reduce conflicts.
8. Monitoring of skinks, geckos, and invertebrates (including Peripatus/ ngaokeoke) determines the status of those species on the Peninsula and what further action may be needed.
9. Seabird roosting and nesting sites are recognised and safeguarded.
10. Numbers and locations of northern North Island dotterels (shore birds) on and near the Russell Peninsula are determined, and actions are taken where possible to improve their survival.
11. The Russell Peninsula owners of dogs and cats manage their pets responsibly to avoid harm to native wildlife, including kiwi (dogs), and pāteke (cats and dogs).

[1] The terms "invasive mammalian predators" and "invasive mammals" encompass species that have been introduced to New Zealand and now threaten native species and ecosystems. The predators include possums, rats, stoats, feral cats, and pigs. Browsers include deer and goats. Possums are both browsers and predators.

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Pāteke (brown teal) were once common across New Zealand's wetlands and forests. Their numbers declined sharply in the late 1800s due to habitat loss, predators, and, in some places, heavy hunting. By the late 1980s, the Northland population had shrunk to the area between Whangārei and the Russell Peninsula, and by the late 1990s, the Russell Peninsula and Rāwhiti birds were almost gone. By 2011, most of the remaining Northland pāteke were clustered around Teal Bay, Mimiwhangata, and Whananaki.

In 2022, it was estimated that there were between 2000 and 2500 pāteke in New Zealand, making them NZ's rarest waterfowl on the mainland. Pāteke were listed as "Nationally Endangered" until 2008, when their conservation status was changed to "At-risk-increasing".

Pāteke are especially vulnerable to stoats throughout their lifespan. They are also vulnerable to feral and domestic cats, as well as to wandering and unsupervised dogs. Pigs, possums, rats and hedgehogs can destroy nests and potentially compete for food. Pukeko can prey on eggs and ducklings; harriers can prey on ducklings and weakened adults; paradise shelduck and mallards can compete for nesting habitat; paradise ducks can evict broods from ponds; and eels can prey on ducklings. Pāteke can become entangled in fishing nets.

The 2026 Northland pāteke census recorded 48 pāteke on the Russell Peninsula. This notable increase demonstrates the impact of recent intensive control of invasive predators on the Peninsula.

Matuku-hūrepo (Australasian bittern) populations have declined dramatically because of wetland drainage and shooting. Their conservation status is "threatened- nationally critical," with 580-725 birds nationally. This is the most threatened bird species in Northland.

Bitterns rely on freshwater wetlands to breed and feed; 90 per cent of these habitats have been lost. Many of the remaining wetlands remain at risk. Bitterns need shallow, clear water for feeding. Activities in wetlands (drains, earthworks and runoff) can easily change this. In August 2025, a bittern was killed by a vehicle on Aucks Road.

Bitterns are ground nesters, making them highly susceptible to predation by invasive mammals. Bitterns can migrate long distances, but their general home range within a season is 15km. This means their fate on the Russell Peninsula is also affected by activities outside the Peninsula, particularly the large Taumarere-Kawakawa wetland systems.

Pārea (Grey Duck) has a conservation status of "threatened- nationally vulnerable," with about 1000-5000 individuals remaining and a 10-50% decline over three generations. They can be found on the Russell Peninsula wetlands near the Waikare Inlet, where a major risk is hybridisation with mallard ducks. This risk is reduced in less modified locations. Monitoring is suggested, although it requires considerable skill to accurately identify female pārea.

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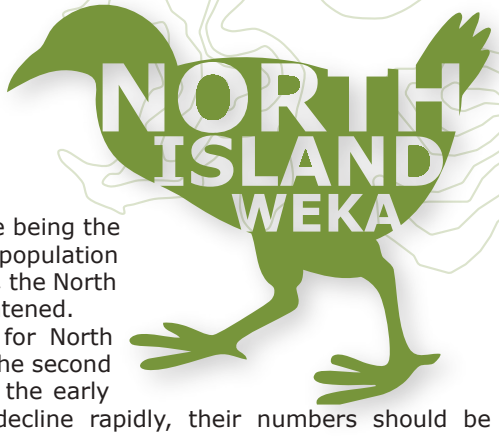
Kiwis are territorial and flightless, so they have relatively stable home ranges that they don't move far outside. The limited dispersal (even by juveniles) means that there is a limited distance that genetic material travels from one bird to mix with the genetic material of another bird. The Russell Peninsula kiwi population has been genetically isolated from other brown kiwi for hundreds of years and so may be genetically distinct. The Russell Landcare Trust's NI brown kiwi goal has been to grow and maintain a Russell Peninsula kiwi population of at least 500 pairs. This translates to about 2000 adults, including younger non-breeding kiwi. The full strategy document shows trends in the kiwi call count data.

Kiwi chicks are never fed by their parents; they leave the burrow to feed after they have finished consuming the large egg yolk sac, 5-7 days after hatching. They are highly vulnerable to predation by stoats. All kiwi are vulnerable to being killed by dogs as their rib cage can be easily squashed.

The North Island fernbird/mātātā has a conservation threat status of "at-risk-declining". They are present in wetlands and nearby scrub throughout much of the Russell Peninsula. Fernbirds eat small invertebrates. Occasionally, they eat seeds and fruit. Their main threats are loss of wetland and nearby scrub habitat, alien predators, and the burning of wetlands and scrub. Fernbirds have a gamey smell that attracts dogs trained for game hunting.



All four New Zealand subspecies of weka (one being the North Island weka) experienced a large population decline from the 1960s to the 2010s. In 2007, the North Island weka was classified as nationally threatened. The Russell Peninsula is now a stronghold for North Island weka. Numbers have increased since the second successful reintroduction to the Peninsula in the early 2000s. Given that weka populations can decline rapidly, their numbers should be monitored regularly.

There is now thought to be more than 20,000 individuals nationally, but because weka occupy less than 10% of their former range, they are ranked as "At-risk-relict".

Kererū/kukupa (wood pigeons) live in many types of forest as well as shelterbelts, parks, and gardens. They may remain in a single small area for weeks or months, but they can also fly long distances to reach seasonal food sources. Because they eat mostly fruit and can swallow large berries, they are major seed dispersers for large-seeded native trees such as tawa, taraire, pūriri, and miro. They also spread some invasive plants such as monkey apple, loquat, and bangalow palm.

Kererū eat buds, leaves, flowers, and fruit from many native and introduced species. Ripe fruit is their favourite food, but it's not available all year. Important leaf foods include kōwhai (especially the nitrogen-rich spring growth), tree lucerne, willows, and broom. They eat at least 70 fruit species, and no other common bird can swallow fruits larger than 12 mm and disperse the seeds intact. This makes kererū a keystone species essential for healthy mixed podocarp–broadleaf forests.

A 1998 report found that kererū numbers were declining rapidly in Northland, with illegal hunting contributing. Current trends are unclear, so focused monitoring is needed in invasive predator-free zones. Adult kererū are vulnerable to cats and stoats, especially when feeding on or near the ground. Eggs and chicks are taken by rats, possums, stoats, and cats, and harriers may also prey on nests. Egg predation—mainly by rats, possums, and stoats—is the most common cause of nest failure.

The Northland green gecko's southern limit is around the Bay of Islands or Whangaroa. The Auckland (elegant) green gecko reaches its northern limit just south of the Bay of Islands. The Auckland Gecko occurs on the Russell Peninsula, while the closest confirmed sighting of the Northland Green Gecko is Hatia Creek (near Waitangi). There may be hybridisation where the two species meet. Green geckos are threatened by habitat loss, introduced predators such as rats, cats, and dogs, and by wildfires.

Kauri snails were abundant in Northland before human settlement, but are now scarce. Their conservation status is "at-risk-declining". Kauri snails inhabit moist forest and native scrub and typically live in areas with high soil fertility and abundant earthworms. The primary threats include habitat destruction by humans, habitat modification by domestic and feral grazers, predation by introduced animals such as rats and pigs, and, historically, the collection of live animals for their shells. The snails can live for 20 years and are relatively mobile. Kauri snails are carnivorous and cannibalistic, eating earthworms, insects, their larvae, and other snails.

There is insufficient information about many other smaller native wildlife species (including invertebrates such as moths and other lizards) on and near the Russell Peninsula. Long-tailed bats are discussed on page 11.

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SEABIRDS

New Zealand is the seabird capital of the world, with about 10% of the world's seabird species. Many species are at risk due to human-induced changes in food availability and/or predation at land roosting and breeding sites.

Russell Peninsula, its islets and nearby lands are essential for seabird roosting and breeding. Eliminating rats helps, but other predators, such as feral cats, remain. Some of their food sources are also at risk due to human harvesting. On or adjoining the Russell Peninsula, the following seabird species can be found:

- Northern little blue penguins-kororā
- Caspian terns (conservation status "nationally vulnerable")
- Red-billed gulls breed on the islets at Tapeka
- White-fronted terns (conservation status is "at risk-declining")
- Shags and gannets

NORTHERN NEW ZEALAND DOTTEREL

Northern New Zealand dotterel/ tūturiwhatu are found on beaches north of Cape Kidnappers on the east coast. There are about 2500 dotterels nationally. Their conservation status is "at-risk-recovering". Dotterels typically breed on sandspits, sandy beaches, shell banks, dunes and tidal estuaries and river mouths. The main threats are predators. Rats, cats, hedgehogs, stoats, and dogs can easily prey on chicks. Cats, dogs and stoats can also kill adult birds. Black-billed gulls and harrier hawks can take the eggs and chicks. Dotterels are also vulnerable to habitat loss and modification, as well as disturbance.

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POTENTIAL WILDLIFE TRANSLOCATIONS

TRANSLOCATIONS

A 2013 review of all known bird translocations in New Zealand found that 68 taxa had been collectively translocated at least 495 times to at least 256 sites. The wattlebirds (North Island and South Island saddlebacks and kokako) had been translocated 68 times, with 37 successful translocations. The highest success rate was for whitehead (86%). The success rate for North Island kokako translocations was 60%.

KEY PROPOSED OUTCOMES FOR WILDLIFE REINTRODUCTIONS (SELF OR HUMAN-LED)

1. With 3000+ha where rats, possums and stoats have been eliminated, and 2000ha of linked native forest, the Trust and appropriate hapu reintroduce North Island kōkako to the Russell Peninsula.
2. To prepare for the reintroduction of kōkako, additional habitat-forming and food species have been planted in appropriate locations, and planted forested corridors have been established.
3. The previous reintroduction of North Island weka is monitored, given the Weka's now very limited distribution in the North Island.
4. Kākā migrates to the Russell Peninsula from other projects and establishes seasonal populations.
5. Kākāriki from the islands of Ipipiri gradually return to the Russell Peninsula.
6. A systematic survey for the long-tailed bats on or near the Peninsula (including northern Russell Forest) is completed. If bats are not found, an investigation/proposal to reintroduce long-tailed bats to areas where alien predators have been eliminated is developed.
7. Whiteheads/Pōpokotea are reintroduced if investigations demonstrate that it is appropriate.

Whiteheads were widespread in the North Island at the time of European settlement, but they disappeared from Northland in the 1870s. They primarily consume insects and spiders, as well as some smaller fruits (e.g., māpou, mahoe, Coprosma, and hangehange). They are reluctant fliers but move quickly through the canopy and are acrobatic when feeding. The long-tailed cuckoo parasitises whitehead nests.

Kōkako are an iconic species with a distinctive call. Kōkako were present on the Russell Peninsula in the early 1900s. They have declined on the New Zealand mainland primarily because ship rats and possums prey on kōkako eggs, chicks and adults during nesting. With the removal of invasive predators and improvements to forest habitats, the kōkako could be reintroduced to the Russell Peninsula. The kōkako recovery group requires translocation applications to be for areas of diverse native forest (with species favoured by kōkako) of at least 2000ha, with intensive control of invasive mammalian predators. The minimum population size is intended to ensure that the new population contains enough birds to maintain sufficient genetic diversity.

Kōkako translocations to the pest-free fenced Maungatautari Sanctuary (Waikato) are the only mainland translocations where kōkako numbers have increased steadily from the start. This increase is likely due to the pest-free status of the 3000ha sanctuary and the quality of the habitat.

Much of the Kōkako diet consists of broad-leaved species. The taller emergent trees, such as kahikatea and rimu, are particularly important as perches for broadcasting territorial calls and as sources of fruit. Kōkako eat at least 35 species of fruit and may once have been almost as important as native seed dispersers as kereru. However, they do not fly well and have smaller territories. To ensure that kōkako can move freely, there should be less than 100m between the forest patches they inhabit.

To prepare the habitat for a potential kokako release, the area of continuous, diverse native forest should be increased. The first step would be to establish forest corridors linking the forests and shrublands of the Pipiroa and Te Wahapu catchments, as well as the northwestern shore of Waikare Inlet, with those of Tikitikiore-Paroa Bay and the eastern parts of the Russell Peninsula. Another important step would be to plant suitable native broadleaved species alongside existing forest patches, as well as appropriately sited kahikatea, totara, matai, miro and rimu.

LONG-TAILED AND SHORT-TAILED BATS

The conservation status of long-tailed bats is "nationally critical". They were common throughout New Zealand in the 1800s. The last confirmed long-tailed bat sightings on the Russell Peninsula are from the 1970s in the Pipiroa and Te Wahapu catchments. With predicted increases in invasive predators nationwide, long-tailed bats may decline by 90% over the next 30 years. Causes for their decline include clearance and logging of lowland forests, cutting of old trees for firewood, clearance of trees for residential/urban development and agricultural expansion, predation by introduced animals, including cats, possums, rats and stoats and exclusion of bats from roosts by introduced mammals, birds and wasps and human interference.

Long-tailed bats roost in cavities in old trees, moving frequently and rarely occupying a site for more than one night. A social bat group can use more than 100 different roosting trees. Protecting standing dead trees and old trees with hollows /cavities provides useful habitat for bats. Preferred trees include the New Zealand cabbage tree, kanuka, totara, puriri, and pukatea. 95% of the trees used are in open lowland forests, with the forest edge at least 500m away. Approximately 30% of the trees used for roosting are dead standing trees. The long-tailed bat has a lifespan of 7-11 years.

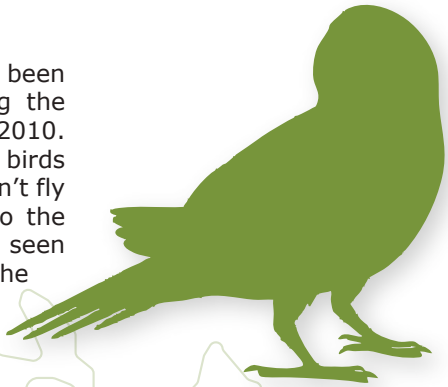
A systematic survey using appropriate bat-detection equipment is recommended to clarify whether long-tailed bats are on or near the Peninsula. If, after an extensive survey of likely habitat, no long-tailed bats are found, then work could begin to prepare an application for a reintroduction.

Short-tailed bats are found deep inside native forests, so available habitat on the Peninsula is less likely to be suitable.

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

FROM IPIPIRI

Several native bird species have been reintroduced to the Ipipiri islands following the eradication of alien mammalian predators in 2010. Except for the Kākāriki (parakeets), these birds are primarily insect feeders and generally don't fly long distances. However, Kākāriki can fly to the mainland, and individual birds have been seen there, including occasional visitors to the Russell Peninsula. Over time, enough birds may fly to the mainland to form a small population.



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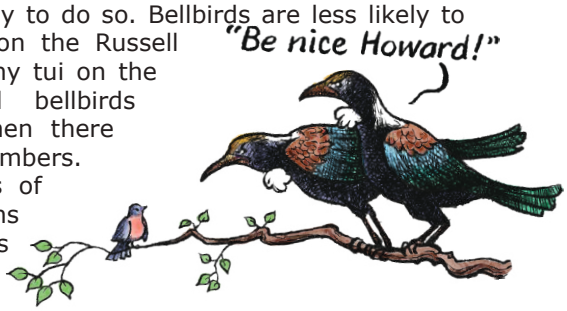
FROM BREAM HEAD/TE WHARA AND HEN AND CHICKENS ISLANDS?

Grey-faced petrels/oi self-introduced themselves back to Bream Head/Te Whara Reserve, but their survival is dependent on continued pest control in their nesting areas. Given the invasive predator-free status of the Ipipiri Islands and the spreading elimination zones on the Russell Peninsula, additional seabird species may self-introduce themselves to one or more of the islands of Ipipiri and/or the Russell Peninsula.

Bellbird and kākā both reintroduced themselves to Bream Head/Te Whara from the Hen and Chickens Islands. They may eventually reintroduce themselves to the Russell Peninsula, with kākā being the most likely to do so. Bellbirds are less likely to re-establish themselves on the Russell Peninsula. There are many tui on the Russell Peninsula, and bellbirds struggle to establish when there are already high tui numbers. Additionally, the analysis of bird reintroductions revealed a low success rate for bellbirds.



REDUCED IMPACTS OF INVASIVE ANIMALS

PROPOSED OUTCOMES TO REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF INVASIVE ANIMALS

1. Possums, rats, and mustelids are eliminated from the entire Russell Peninsula, and this status is maintained over time through control of reinvasions.
2. Invasive browsing mammals (especially goats and deer) outside of containment areas (secure fenced paddocks, etc.) are removed/ kept out of the Russell Peninsula, and this status is maintained over time.
3. Northland Regional Council's map of regionally significant indigenous habitat is revised to include additional and smaller areas of habitat, especially for the Russell Peninsula, to restrict areas where goats can be farmed on the Peninsula.
4. Feral cats have been removed from the control areas while ensuring that microchipped domestic cats are not also removed. Cat owners deploy (reflective) cat collars, and they have their cats microchipped, desexed and at home at night.
5. The extent and relative abundance of Argentine ants and plague/rainbow skinks on the Russell Peninsula are known, and further spread is constrained. The RLT Nursery and Depot are kept free of plague skinks and Argentine ants, with measures in place to prevent the high-risk pathway of spread via potted plants.
6. Mouse numbers are monitored, and action is taken if their numbers rise.
7. Red-eared slider turtles and snake-necked turtles do not establish in the wild on the Russell Peninsula.

8. The impact of invasive bird species (e.g. myna, magpie, eastern rosella) on native ecosystems is monitored with actions taken to limit adverse effects when and where necessary.
9. Wasp control is undertaken as required.

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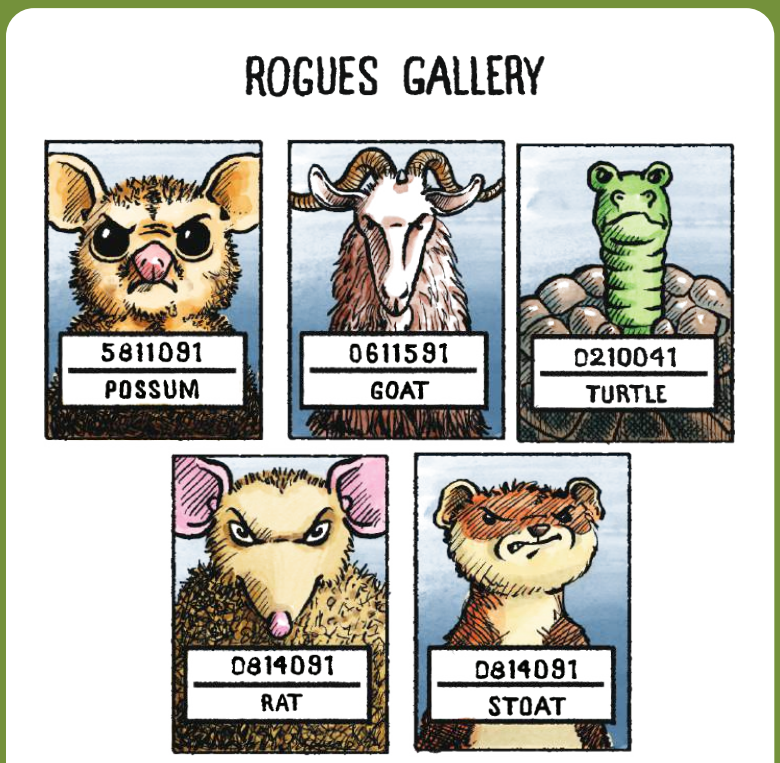

INVASIVE ANIMAL MANAGEMENT TO DATE

Progress on eradicating possums, rats and stoats was discussed in 1.2.1.

Feral cats cause local extinctions of vulnerable native species such as pāteke and ongoing declines in others. Feral cats are significant predators, killing birds, bats, lizards, wētā and other insects. Their hunting is instinctive, with 10-20 kills per day. The Trust has prepared a feral cat management plan based on live-capture traps and community education about cat management. FNDC now requires domestic cats to be microchipped and desexed to ensure they can be readily identified. Invasive wasps compete with native wildlife for food. The Trust undertook a trial across the 225ha Tapeka Peninsula to catch queens using Dome traps. Based on this trial, the traps are likely more useful as a monitoring tool, and baiting is likely more effective for control at this stage. The traps should detect the arrival of yellow-legged hornet wasps if they establish in Auckland.

Once rats and stoats are removed, mouse numbers can increase significantly. On the Russell Peninsula, weka likely provide some control, and the Trust also undertakes biannual short-term baiting pulses in rat-elimination areas to control mice.

Argentine ants are a significant invasive pest in Northland and are present in parts of the Russell Peninsula. They eat lizards, birds' eggs, and newly hatched chicks. When their nests are expanding in spring and summer, they have an insatiable appetite for sweet foods, such as honey and nectar, and for protein (such as worms), taking food away from kiwi, nectar-feeding birds such as tuis and silvereyes, lizards (including skinks and geckos), and native invertebrates. They adversely affect leaf-litter decomposition by displacing land hoppers, reducing the amount of shredded litter available for colonisation by microbes and invertebrates.

Limiting the spread of nests is essential. Potted plants have the highest risk of spread, with other high-risk items including soil, bark, building materials, camping equipment, and cavities in kayaks and dinghies.

There are many uncontrolled feral goats in the Tikitikiore area, and landowners have conflicting views on how to manage them. Goats destroy the forest understorey, consuming vegetation that is essential for preventing erosion. Eating out the preferred species can encourage the growth of invasive plant species. Goats are among the most destructive animals in forests and can survive in good condition when other species die. The Trust would like to see the areas where goats can be farmed reduced significantly, with valuable indigenous habitats on the peninsula recognised as regionally significant by the Northland Regional Council. Existing feral goats should be removed.

RED-EARED SLIDER TURTLES

Red-eared slider turtles are usually sold as hatchlings, but adults can reach a carapace length of up to 30cm and have a lifespan of around 30 years. They eat vegetation (all plant parts), zooplankton, molluscs, frogs, crustaceans, insects, gastropods, birds and small reptiles. Adults can be aggressive and can take over waterbird nesting sites to use as basking sites. The IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group has classified these turtles as one of the "world's worst invasive alien species". Recently, a dumped red-eared slider turtle was found in the Pipiroa catchment.

Indian myna are widespread, territorial, and aggressive toward other birds, and have been known to remove native species from their nests and reuse the same nest. When they gather in large numbers to feed on crops or fruit, they can cause considerable damage.

Eastern rosellas are abundant and widespread on the Russell Peninsula. They prefer open, partly wooded landscapes and may compete with native species for food and/or the tree cavities in which they nest. Their primary food source is seeds, with other items including fruit, nectar, shoots, buds, leaves, and invertebrates. They are a threat to the successful re-establishment of Kākāriki on the Russell Peninsula.

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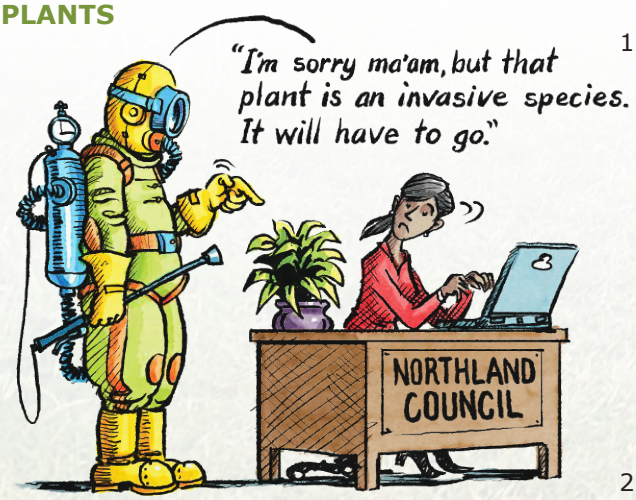
REDUCED IMPACTS OF INVASIVE PLANTS

CONCEPTS

"Invasive plants", "pest plants", and "environmental weeds" are equivalent terms for non-native plants that damage native ecosystems and prevent native plants from establishing or thriving. "Pest plant" is a term used in the Biosecurity Act (Biosecurity NZ and regional councils).

The 2024 Department of Conservation's consolidated list of environmental weeds includes 386 species. Many of these, along with some other species, are identified as pest plants in the Northland regional pest management strategy. Almost all the invasive plants listed on this page are included in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA), which prohibits their sale, distribution and propagation in New Zealand. This list is periodically updated.

PROPOSED OUTCOMES FOR REDUCING THE IMPACTS OF INVASIVE PLANTS



1. Invasive pest plants not known to be on the Russell Peninsula or that may have recently arrived have been identified and reported to the Northland Regional Council as Exclusion or Elimination species. Such species include Asiatic or Japanese knotweed, Balloon vine, Batwing passionflower, Climbing spindleberry, Micky Mouse plant, Old Man's Beard, Phragmites, Salvinia and Spartina.
2. Species identified for "pest led" invasive plant management have been managed to contain their extent and prevent further expansion. These species include climbing dock, Taiwan cherry, Arundo grass, banana passionfruit, boneseed, Sydney golden wattle, dusky coral pea (Kennedia rubicunda), Elaeagnus, alligator weed, sweet pittosporum, lantana, moth plant, Spartina, and Salvinia.

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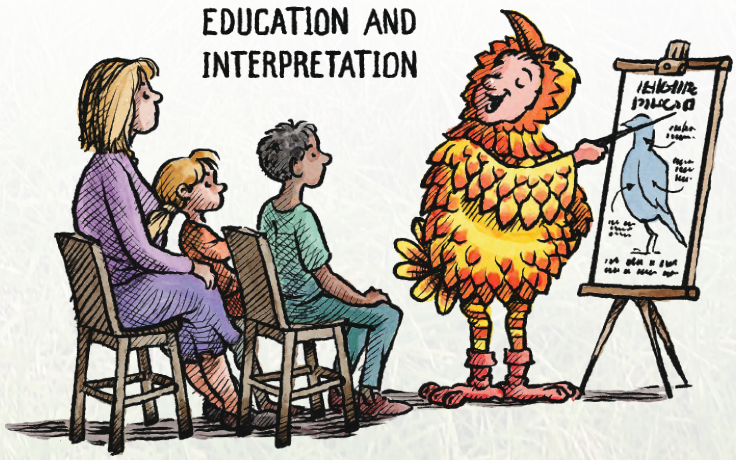
3. Areas identified as priorities for "site-led" invasive plant management would have much reduced impacts from invasive plants. These areas would generally score highly against the following criteria:
   - Protected public or private land
   - Public access
   - Current High ecological values at risk
   - Potential high ecological values if invasive plants are removed
   - Diversity of habitats/ecosystems
   - Includes threatened ecosystems
   - One or more of the following threatened wildlife or plant species are present (mātuku/ Australasian bittern, long-tailed bat, Caspian tern, northern NZ dotterel, kauri snails, swap maire)
   - Invasive plants are at a low level and could be readily removed
   - Existing community invasive plant removal programme

4. For high-priority areas with "site-led" management of invasive plants, all or mostly all invasive plants have been removed to the extent practical. These invasive plants would include wild ginger, Tradescantia, pampas, wattles, hakea, montbretia, Aristea, climbing asparagus, smilax, tree privet, Chinese privet, monkey apple, bangalow palm, agapanthus, blue spur flower, Arundo grass/giant reed, banana passionfruit, boneseed, Chinese fan palm, coral pea vine, cotoneaster, reed sweet grass, gorse, Japanese honeysuckle, jasmine, lantana, loquat, Mexican devil, mistflower, sweet pea shrub, pines, sweet pittosporum and woolly nightshade/tobacco weed. The highest priority area for "site-led" management of invasive plants is the protected areas and buffers within the Pipiroa-Te Wahapu catchments and coastal margins (Old Russell Ecosanctuary). Other high-priority sites could include: the Kororāreka-Te Maiki Reserve complex; Matauwhi Bay Reserve; Tapeka Historic Reserve; coastal margins and islets; the Fladgate reserves; the Donny Block QE II covenant; and the Hirst Reserve and adjoining public lands. Protected private lands with landowner support could be managed in a similar way.

5. An effective community education programme means that most community members are aware of some invasive plants and understand why they pose a problem. They also recognise the importance of exercising caution when managing cleared vegetation to prevent the spread of invasive plants.



6. Most community members manage their properties to reduce invasive plant cover and plant non-invasive species, and the dumping of pest plant material on roadsides or in indigenous vegetation is considered highly unacceptable.

7. Many community members help with invasive plant management.

8. Collaboration with other organisations in the wider Bay of Islands leads to the development of an ongoing programme of paid work and training for people wanting to develop skills in invasive plant control.

CONTEXT

The Russell Peninsula was initially settled by Māori and was among the early areas of European visitation and subsequent settlement. While Māori introduced six plant species to New Zealand, Europeans introduced many more. Māori cleared land for gardens and burned other areas to grow bracken rhizomes, while Europeans logged, burned, or otherwise cleared land and replanted with species from other countries.
There are 2,522 named indigenous/native vascular plant species in New Zealand. Of these, an estimated 1,984 species, subspecies, and varieties are endemic (found only in New Zealand), representing 82.2% of the NZ flora. This is extremely high internationally.

There are approximately 30,000 non-native plant species in New Zealand. 2,684 of these naturalised. Naturalised plants are those plants introduced by humans that can breed and form self-sustaining populations in the wild. Not all are initially classified as invasive, but many become so over time.

Invasive plants can cause considerable damage to natural environments. They can significantly damage or destroy ecological integrity or naturalness. Coastal margin communities are particularly vulnerable, including coastal faces and cliffs, rock stacks, shell barrier beaches, salt meadows, dunes and wetlands.

Invasive vines (e.g., banana passionfruit, Japanese honeysuckle, moth plant, and climbing asparagus) can dominate the canopy, pulling over and smothering canopy trees and shrubs. They can also prevent regeneration by smothering and preventing seedling and sapling growth. Invasive trees that can grow under shade can eventually replace native canopy trees in existing forests. In other situations, invasive trees (e.g., tree privet, tobacco weed, Taiwan cherry, monkey apple, wattles, pines) can grow rapidly and form a new type of forest that is not favoured by many native plant and animal species.

Dense, invasive forest understory plants prevent the regeneration of most native species, whether trees, shrubs, or ground cover. They can also adversely affect some native wildlife. For example, dense ginger rhizomes adversely affect kiwi, which probe the ground with their bills to get food.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR INVASIVE PLANTS

As it is not possible to remove every invasive plant from the Russell Peninsula, it is necessary to target resources carefully to achieve the best results. Three approaches are proposed.

Surveillance management looks for invasive species not thought to be present on the Russell Peninsula; if they were, they would likely cause significant damage. The first stage is to monitor the environment for these species, particularly in areas where they may first arrive and in highly vulnerable locations.

High-risk plants identified in the Northland Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan (NRPMPMP) as **exclusion plants** (to be kept out of Northland) include Asiatic or Japanese knotweed, climbing spindleberry, old man's beard, and phragmites.

High-risk plants identified for **eradication** (present in low numbers and/or with limited distribution in Northland) include balloon vine, bat-wing passionflower, Mickey Mouse plant, Salvinia, and Spartina. Only Spartina and bat-wing passionflower are currently present on the Russell Peninsula and are subject to Northland Regional Council eradication programmes.

Both exclusion and eradication plants are to be reported to the Northland Regional Council, which will remove them free of charge.

Pest-led species management focuses on identified invasive species that are likely to have a significant impact but have not yet spread to all potential sites and/or are present at low levels. For the Russell Peninsula, the management objective would generally be to remove all specimens of that species wherever they occur. It is recognised that this would be technically very difficult for species such as moth plant growing on cliffs, where the objective would likely be to constrain its distribution. These species include climbing dock, Taiwan cherry, Arundo grass, banana passionfruit, boneseed, Sydney golden wattle, dusky coral pea (Kennedia rubicunda), Elaeagnus, alligator weed, sweet pittosporum, lantana, moth plant, Spartina, and Salvinia.

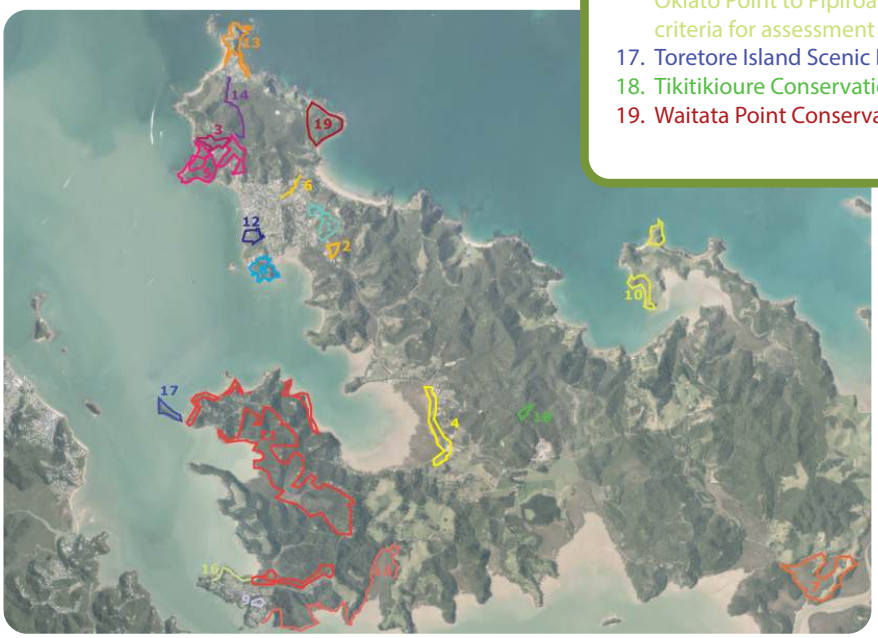
Pictures and additional information on surveillance and pest-led species are available in the full habitat restoration strategy.

"Site-led" invasive plant management focuses on maximising the ecological qualities of an area with existing or potential high ecological value. In this case, replanting may be needed to reduce opportunities for other invasive species to colonise the site. All or virtually all invasive plants are removed from the identified location, although seed banks often require ongoing follow-up. "Site-led" invasive plant management will focus on public land and protected private lands where the landowner supports this.

A "site-led" example is the Pipiroa-Te Wahapu catchments (outside the settlements), which have been part of the Russell Landcare Trust and Living Waters-Bay of Islands ecological restoration project for more than 10 years.

Map 2 shows the publicly accessible protected areas and other public lands evaluated for "site-led" (all or most species) invasive plant removal. The criteria being used to determine priority sites are on page 16.

1. Donny Block QE II, Emerald Ridge
2. Far North District Council lands around the landfill/wastewater disposal field (public land with a public walkway)
3. Fladgate Private Scenic Reserve (Titore Way)
4. Hirst Reserve and adjoining public lands
5. Kororāreka - Te Maiki Reserve complex
6. Long Beach Road Walkway
7. Man O War Conservation Area
8. Matauwhi Bay Reserve
9. Okiato Reserve, Deeming Road (FNDC)
10. Paroa Bay Peninsula, Kahuwhera Pa and Harata Historic Reserves
11. Pipiroa-Te Wahapu FNDC reserves (includes esplanade reserves)
12. Pompallier Hillside Historic Reserve
13. Tapeka Historic Reserve, coastal margins and rock stacks
14. Tapeka Fladgate land (Jim's Track and its extension)
15. Unformed legal roads along coastal margins from Moojebing to Tapu Point
16. Unformed legal roads from just east of Okiato Point to Pipiroa Bay, Suggested criteria for assessment
17. Toretore Island Scenic Reserve (DOC)
18. Tikitikioure Conservation Area
19. Waitata Point Conservation Area



Map 2

RESTORED HABITATS FOR NATIVE PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES

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PROPOSED HABITAT RESTORATION OUTCOMES AND REFERENCE CONDITIONS

The following broad habitat restoration outcomes are proposed:

The habitat quality for native wildlife has been enhanced sufficiently to allow kōkako to be reintroduced.
Native ecosystems have been restored, especially those that are naturally or locally rare
Threatened and at-risk plant species that are or were previously likely to have been found on the Russell Peninsula have been reintroduced or increased.

It is proposed that reference conditions be used to guide ecological restoration. Typically, reference conditions represent a more natural state that could potentially be reached at the restoration site over time. Reference conditions exclude invasive plant and animal species but are appropriate for the current physical environment (e.g., climate, water availability/waterlogging, topography) and recognise past environmental events (e.g. storms and cyclones). Potential reference sites for different contexts are in the full restoration strategy.

KEY PROPOSED HABITAT-SPECIFIC RESTORATION OUTCOMES

1. Forests
2. The expansion of floodplain forests, including podocarp–mixed broadleaf forests (especially kahikatea) and other fruit-bearing forest trees and shrubs. These forests provide fruit for pāteke and kererū/kukupa, as well as a wide range of food resources for kōkako and other native wildlife.
3. The primary existing native forest patches (Pipiroa-Te Wahapu-Waikare to Tikitikiore-Paroa Bay) are linked using planted native forest corridors sufficient to allow kokako to move between these larger forest areas. These planted corridors link the three main forested blocks on the Russell Peninsula, creating a continuous forest large enough to support a healthy, genetically diverse kokako population.
4. The expansion of mixed broadleaved species forests, including species such as mahoe, five-finger, puriri, kohekohe, titoki, karamu and other coprosma species, lancewood, nikau, pigeonwood, taraire, and tawa.

Wetlands, riparian habitats, and floodplains

1. Suitable indigenous habitats are created for pāteke and mātuku on floodplains, including wetlands, ponds and floodplain forest. Areas near estuaries are especially valuable for pāteke.
2. Suitable nesting and roosting cover for pāteke is provided near open water and wetlands. This cover includes sedges, rushes, and other dense ground cover, with Carex secta around water margins.
3. Habitats for indigenous freshwater fish are enhanced through fish passage protection, riparian planting and water quality enhancement.
4. Salt marshes can migrate inland as sea levels rise.

Threatened, at-risk and iconic plants

1. The Pipiroa swamp maire trees are healthy, and additional trees have been planted in other wetlands.
2. Northern rata trees re-establish on the Russell Peninsula.
3. Other threatened, at-risk, and iconic plants are maintained, increasing their numbers where possible and appropriate.

Naturally uncommon and threatened ecosystems

1. The threatened shell beach and chenier-like spit ecosystems are cleared of invasive plants, especially in Te Wahapu Inlet, and this is maintained. Progress has been made to restore the Pipiroa shell beach and chenier-like spit to a more natural state, including removing invasive plants and vehicles.
2. Surveillance of invasive estuarine plants and animals is ongoing, with problem species being reported and, where possible, removed.
3. Sustainable land use and ecological restoration are promoted as ways to reduce sediment and nutrient inputs reaching estuarine waters. This is especially critical for protecting seagrass beds in the mid- to lower Waikare Inlet, Uruti Bay, and Paroa Bay.
4. Invasive plants are removed from coastal cliffs. This may involve developing new methods, including the use of drone technology.

THREATS

Most native wildlife species benefit from the removal of pest animals. Threatened and at-risk species are typically highly sensitive to invasive animals and can often have complex habitat and food requirements. Threatened and at-risk native plant species often have specific habitat requirements. Invasive plants, pest browsing animals (e.g. goats and possums), habitat disturbance, and infections (e.g. myrtle rust, kauri dieback) can threaten them.

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PRIORITY HABITAT TYPES

The Department of Conservation has identified threatened habitats as priority sites for ecological restoration. For the Russell Peninsula, those priority habitats are **shell banks, beaches, spits, and estuaries**. Restoring these complex habitats is likely to require ongoing intervention. Other restoration priorities include **coastal cliffs, wetlands, and tall floodplain forests with kahikatea and pukatea.**

Coastal cliffs are vulnerable to invasive plants, including wilding pines, pampas, wattles, moth plant, boneseed, and pea shrub. Removing such pests can be challenging, and they can be difficult to access safely. Removing pest plants from wetlands near human settlements and maintaining their pest-free status can be complex. Wetlands are vulnerable to direct or nearby drainage activities. Tall floodplain forests and lower slope forests take many years to establish.

FRESHWATER HABITATS

The watercourses on the Russell Peninsula are small. Some of these streams have barriers to the passage of native fish. As pāteke populations increase following effective predator control, more ponds might be necessary. Thoughtful planting of the margins of existing ponds may enhance their habitat values.

Effectively removing pest plants from wetlands can be complicated, especially for species such as pampas, Japanese honeysuckle, and alligator weed. Wetlands that straddle property boundaries can be difficult to manage when one landowner wants to protect the wetland, and another wants to drain or fill it.

WILDFIRE AND CLEARANCE RISKS

Wildfire risk and potential impacts on native habitats and species are often underestimated and inadequately addressed in planning. The Far North District Council's operative district plan requires extensive vegetation clearance around buildings, while the new proposed district plan allows rather than specifically requires such clearance. This forest clearance creates numerous new forest edges, leading to forests drying out and the invasion of pest plants. Repeated clearance can progressively replace native vegetation with weedy, flammable species (e.g., gorse, bracken, pampas, tobacco weed).

HABITAT SEQUENCES AND CORRIDORS

Sequences of native habitats reflecting changes in site conditions (e.g., hillslope forest, valley-floor forest, freshwater wetland, salt marsh) are present in the Pipiroa and Te Wahapu catchments. Such sequences can have considerable ecological value. Corridors of native habitat can be established to link areas of suitable habitat for a species or group of species. For example, creating native forest corridors would expand the forest area available to kōkako, which can only fly 100m.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Potential impacts of climate change will be incorporated into the detailed planning of restoration projects. These impacts will be most problematic for coastal ecosystems, as sea-level rise and larger storms alter salt and moisture regimes and introduce potentially new invasive species.

A widespread risk from climate change is prolonged droughts and an increased risk of damaging wildfires. Increasing storm frequency and intensity increases damage to native habitats and restoration works. Storms also increase slips, creating new bare surfaces for invasive plants to colonise. Changes in average climate may make the Peninsula less attractive to native species at their distribution limits (e.g. tree fuchsia) and more attractive to some others (especially invasive plants). The Trust will work with other agencies on these risks where possible.

HAPU, COMMUNITY, AGENCY AND LANDOWNER PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

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KEY PROPOSED HAPU, COMMUNITY, AGENCY AND LANDOWNER PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

1. The Trust has quality relationships and/or partnerships with local hapu.
2. The Trust has quality relationships with:
   a. Central and local government (Department of Conservation, Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council)
   b. Other community organisations working in the environment space (Save The Kiwi, Kiwi Coast, Bay of Islands Maritime Park Inc. (Living Waters-Bay of Islands), Bay Bush Action, Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society, Guardians of the Bay of Islands /Project Island Song, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Resilient Russell)
   c. Other Bay of Islands predator-free 2050 projects (Purerua Peninsula, Rakaumangamanga)
   d. Property managers and others undertaking pest control
3. The Trust works with property owners and/or managers to encourage them to participate in the elimination of alien predators (rats, stoats and other mustelids, and possums) and damaging feral browsers (deer and goats).
4. The Trust collaborates with the community to develop effective protocols for addressing community concerns.

HAPU, AGENCIES AND COMMUNITIES

Ngāti Kuta, Patukeha, Ngāti Manu and Te Kapotai claim interests in the Russell Peninsula. Ongoing work is needed to collaborate effectively.

Most public lands where restoration activities take place are administered by either the Department of Conservation or the Far North District Council. Some habitat restoration activities on the Peninsula are currently led by BOIMP (Living Waters-BOI) on FNDC-administered and protected private land. The Trust undertakes animal pest control on all tenures of land with the owner's permission, and certain other restoration activities on some land administered by the Department of Conservation.

HABITAT RESTORATION STRATEGY QUESTIONS

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1. Would you like to see seabirds that roost and breed on land, seals and vegetated nearshore habitats (seagrass, mangroves and salt marsh) included in the habitat restoration strategy?

2. Do you support the proposed outcomes for native wildlife, including threatened and at-risk species such as Australasian bittern, pāteke (brown teal), on page 5?

3. Do you support translocations to bring back some key native wildlife (such as kōkako) to the Russell Peninsula on page 10?

4. Do you support the proposed outcomes for invasive animals on page 12?

5. Do you agree with the proposed list of "pest-led" invasive plant species (where the aim is to constrain their spread or remove them from the Russell Peninsula) on page 15?

6. Do you support the focus on public lands and protected private land (with landowner support) for ecological restoration, including the removal of most or all invasive plants ("site-led") on pages 18 and 19?

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7. Do you agree with the proposed criteria to select priority sites for removing invasive plants (page 15) and undertaking other ecological restoration activities?

8. What do you think about creating forested corridors to link existing native forest patches to create a larger continuous native forest area to meet the forest size criteria for the possible reintroduction of kōkako?

9. In addition to the existing Pipiroa-Te Wahapu catchments ecological restoration programme, what types of areas/ what locations do you think should be the priorities for ecological restoration, and why?

10. Which of the following ecological restoration education opportunities would interest you: guided nature walks in natural areas, invasive plant identification and removal, and native plant identification?