



**Far North  
District Council**



# **TŪHONOTANGA MINITI ATTACHMENTS MINUTES**

**Ordinary Council Meeting**

**25 June 2026**

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## Chief Executive briefing: Notice of Motion - Council Report Template

June 2026

### Purpose

This briefing provides the Chief Executive's (CE) response to the Notice of Motion requesting changes to Council's standard report template.

### Executive Summary

- The CE supports the intent of improving the quality and usefulness of advice provided to elected members.
- The preparation of report templates, internal review processes, and staff guidance is an operational matter, rather than a governance matter.
- Under section 42(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002, the CE is responsible for providing advice to members of the local authority. From that operational perspective, decisions about any changes to report templates will be made by the CE.
- Staff will review the concerns raised through the Notice of Motion, acknowledging the intent of them, and incorporate changes where appropriate, including through the current review of the Significance and Engagement Policy and associated templates.

### Staff Assessment

The CE acknowledges the concerns raised in the Notice of Motion and agrees that Council reports should provide clear, balanced and useful advice to elected members.

The Local Government Act 2002 requires councils to make informed decisions, including considering reasonably practicable options, significance and engagement requirements, and any inconsistency with existing plans or policies. The CE will ensure the current report template and staff guidance continue to support these requirements in a proportionate and practical way.

### Key Staff Advice

Council can set expectations for the quality of advice it receives. However, the detailed design of report templates, internal review steps, and staff sign-off processes are operational matters for the CE. The CE will review the suggested changes and incorporate them where appropriate, with the overall intent of the Notice of Motion in mind.

#### *Internal advice and legal privilege*

Publishing internal comments, legal advice, draft feedback, or "pushbacks" in every report would create risk. It could discourage open internal advice and may expose confidential or legally privileged information. Transparency could be better achieved by ensuring the final report explains the analysis, options, risks, financial implications, and reasons for the recommendation.

#### *Quality assurance of staff advice*

Council reports are organisational advice. They should be reviewed to ensure they are accurate, balanced, lawful, financially sound, and aligned with Council policy. Requiring an individual author's original assessment to remain unchanged could undermine normal quality assurance and place unnecessary pressure on staff.

#### *Proportionate reporting*

The level of detail in reports needs to be proportionate to the nature, scale, and significance of the decision. Some of the proposed changes may be appropriate for significant decisions, but not for routine, procedural, or information-only reports. Staff will assess the practical and legal implications before any changes are made.

### Recommendation

That Council note the concerns raised in the Notice of Motion. The CE will review the suggested changes to the Council report template and staff guidance, and will incorporate changes where appropriate. This review will be aligned with the current review of the Significance and Engagement Policy and associated templates, with an update to be provided alongside that workstream.