



Far North  
District Council



**Whangārei**  
*District Council*

# Far North & Whangārei District Councils i-SITEs

Section 17A review

August 2022

**Document status**

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## Executive summary

### Overview

Morrison Low was commissioned to review the delivery of the Far North (FNDC) and Whangārei (WDC) District Councils' i-SITE visitor information centres (i-SITEs) in accordance with the requirements of Section 17A of the Local Government Act 2002.

The review looked at the performance of the current service delivery model and evaluated a range of other potential service delivery arrangements. We undertook an assessment of the current arrangements and, through review of documentation and discussion with key staff, were able to understand the current issues and potential opportunities and the options available for future delivery.

### Why are we doing this?

The i-SITEs have been heavily impacted by Covid with a significant reduction in visitor numbers due to NZ's border being closed and lockdowns impacting domestic tourism. This, together with an ongoing change in the way people access visitor information (with more information being accessed online), has meant that the current arrangements need to be reviewed. Whilst the pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the tourism industry, the borders have now re-opened, and it is anticipated that international visitors will return soon.

This review also reflects the national review conducted by the i-SITE New Zealand board in 2021 with a proposed tier system of facilities moving forwards: Tier 1 concept stores in key locations and secondary Tier 2 facilities, supported by Tier 1 sites.

*The i-SITE network is at a crossroads - a traditional brick-and-mortar visitor-centric network which needs to change, because our visitor markets are changing along with how Kiwis see tourism.*

*The network is highly trusted by users and has a strong reputation among stakeholders. However, it has inconsistent standards and levels of service and lacks a long-term game plan, capital investment for improvements and standardisation, and a strong digital strategy.*

Source: Visitor Information Network (VIN) Inc Future Network Proposal 2021

### Where are we now?

The Far North has three i-SITE Visitor Centres located in Paihia (Bay of Islands), Kaitia (Te Ahu) and Hokianga (Opononi).

The Whangārei i-SITE is located alongside State Highway 1 at Tarewa Park in Raumanga. With its location, it is seen as the gateway facility to the North.

The Far North and Whangārei i-SITES provide visitor information for the people of Northland and visitors, both domestic and international.

The sites are resourced through a mix of permanent and casual staff to service the peak summer season. Each of the i-SITES is open year-round with FNDC also sharing resources across customer services.

Figure 1 Northland i-SITES



## Recommended future options

Following an assessment of options for future delivery of i-SITE services against strategic objectives and agreed assessment criteria, Table 1 captures the recommended way forward for each council and the associated cost implications.

**The overall recommended way forward is to retain the i-SITES in their current locations but to optimise those sites and the network by providing additional services, such as pop-up sites or virtual sites, to meet demand during the peak season and also to strengthen the collaborative partnering with other interested stakeholders.**

The results show good alignment in direction for FNDC and WDC which will support the two councils continuing to work collaboratively on the delivery of their respective i-SITE services.

**Table 1 Recommended future options for the i-SITES**

Solution	Far North		Whangārei	
	Preferred way forward	Cost implications	Preferred way forward	Cost implications
<b>Extent of services</b>	The recommended way forward is to retain the i-SITES in their current locations but to encourage additional foot traffic through increased visibility and enhancements. This could include improved signage, or leases for café facilities or other retail. Additional services at peak times (either through the summer months or when a cruise ship is due) could include pop-up or mobile i-SITES. Virtual sites could also be an option, such as when physical sites are unstaffed.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced sites: Facilities developed to attract more visitors</li> <li>Additional peak season services <b>and</b> virtual / digital services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs dependent on upgrades agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage low cost</li> <li>Improved IT / systems largely provided for through VIN membership and tiered system</li> </ul> </li> <li>Increased revenue through commission and retail with no additional operational costs</li> <li>Additional peak season services would require additional resources but would generate more revenue</li> <li>Virtual services would have capital outlay but minimal resource needs</li> </ul> <p>Additional permanent site at Awanui would have significant capital cost and would require additional operational resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced sites: Facility developed to attract more visitors</li> <li>Additional peak season services <b>and, maybe,</b> virtual / digital services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs dependent on upgrades agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage low cost</li> <li>Development of reserve would have capital cost</li> <li>No cost for establishment of café (would likely be some revenue through lease)</li> <li>Improved IT / systems largely provided for through VIN membership and tiered system</li> </ul> </li> <li>Increased revenue through commission and retail with no additional operational costs</li> <li>Additional peak season services would require additional resources but would generate more revenue</li> </ul>

Solution	Far North		Whangārei	
	Preferred way forward	Cost implications	Preferred way forward	Cost implications
National direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of Tier 1 (Paihia) and Tier 2 sites</li> <li>The Tier 1 site would support Tier 2 sites in both Far North and Whangārei</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current VIN fee between \$1,650 - \$2,805 per site per annum</li> <li><u>Capex / re-branding costs</u></li> <li>Tier 1 site (Paihia) – 50/50 split between FNDC and central government with indicative fit-out costs of \$200,000 - \$500,000 (to be completed between 2023-2026)</li> <li>Tier 2 sites – n/a</li> <li><u>Annual costs</u></li> <li>Tier 1 site (Paihia) - \$5,000 - \$10,000 per annum</li> <li>Tier 2 sites (Kaitaia and Hokianga) - \$1,500 - \$3000 per site per annum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 2 - secondary site (similar to status quo)</li> <li>The Paihia Tier 1 site would support the Whangārei Tier 2 site under the intent of the tiered i-SITE system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current VIN fee between \$1,650 - \$2,805 per site per annum</li> <li><u>Capex / re-branding costs</u></li> <li>Tier 2 sites – n/a</li> <li><u>Annual costs</u></li> <li>Tier 2 sites - \$1,500 - \$3000 per annum</li> </ul>
	<p>The Tier 1 Paihia site would be re-branded with central government contributing to capital investment.</p> <p>There would be standardised national systems for all Tier 1 i-SITES. Data sharing would be introduced and there would be nationally integrated digital assets with Facebook and Google My Business channels, centrally managed with local pages.</p> <p>Requirements for Tier 2 sites would be similar to now with a modified sub-brand to link them to the network. Operational aspects of the business would be standardised with Tier 1 such as fees and charges, data sharing, booking engines, Wi-Fi and brochure racking.</p>			
Service delivery	<p>Continue to deliver the service through in-house management and operations. The i-SITE activity would continue to be governed by each council alone, setting their own future direction with continued funding through rates, commission and retail.</p> <p>It is recognised that there would be benefits in these organisations working alongside and supporting each other. This could be strengthened through developing a collective Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) where objectives are set and roles and responsibilities defined. Regular collective meetings would enable the sharing of information and ideas to support tourism promotion across the region in a more structured way.</p> <p>Partnering /collaborative working with each other and interested agencies such as Northland Inc. and DOC would have minimal cost impact and has the potential for significant benefit across the region. There would be some cost, mainly in time, to develop and agree an MOU or other form of partnering agreement.</p>			



## Next steps

The next steps for the Far North i-SITES would be to further investigate the preferred options and develop an i-SITE Strategy:

### Far North

**Table 2** Next steps for the Far North i-SITES

<b>1. Further develop preferred way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the recommended way forward</li> <li>• Work with WDC in the first instance to investigate formalising collaboration (e.g. MOU) and then extend to other partners</li> <li>• Identify, cost and implement specific service improvements e.g. signage, pop-ups and virtual sites</li> <li>• Further develop cost and implementation models for preferred options, possibly using business case approach</li> </ul>
<b>2. Development of the Far North i-SITE Strategy</b> <i>Can be progressed in parallel with or separate to 1 above</i>	<p>The Far North i-SITE Strategy will support the implementation of the S17A review outcomes and will build on the VIN Inc. i-SITE Future Strategy, Tai Tokerau Northland Inc. Destination Management Plan and other related regional initiatives and strategies. It will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision for the future</li> <li>• Current situation and the challenges we are dealing with</li> <li>• How visitor information services are changing</li> <li>• Our preferred option for delivery of the i-SITE / visitor information services (from the S17A review)</li> <li>• How we intend to implement our preferred way forward and how we will fund it (develop costs further)</li> </ul>

### Whangārei

The next steps for the Whangārei i-SITE would be to further investigate the preferred options:

**Table 3** Next steps for the Whangārei i-SITE

<b>1. Further develop preferred way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the recommended way forward</li> <li>• Work with WDC in the first instance to investigate formalising collaboration (e.g. MOU) and then extend to other partners</li> <li>• Identify, cost and implement specific service improvements e.g. signage, pop-ups and virtual sites and development of the adjacent reserve.</li> <li>• Further develop cost and implementation models for preferred options, possibly using business case approach</li> </ul>
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## 1 Introduction

Morrison Low was commissioned by Far North District Council (FNDC) and Whangārei District Council (WDC) to review the delivery of the i-SITE visitor information centres (i-SITEs) in accordance with the requirements of Section 17A (s17A) of the Local Government Act 2002.

The review looked at the performance of the current service delivery model and considered and evaluated a range of other potential service delivery arrangements. We undertook an assessment of the current arrangements and, through review of documentation and discussion with key staff, were able to understand the current issues and potential opportunities and the options available for future delivery.

The i-SITEs have been heavily impacted by Covid. This together with a change in behaviour and the way people use visitor centres (with more information being accessed online) has meant that the current arrangements are in need of review.

## 2 Service delivery reviews

### 2.1 Section 17A

Service delivery reviews are a legislative requirement under s17A of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) which states:

*“A local authority must review the cost-effectiveness of current arrangements for meeting the needs of communities within its district or region for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services and performance of regulatory functions.”*

The Act goes on to specify that a review must be undertaken in the following circumstances:

- When a significant change to the level of service is proposed
- Within two years of a contract or binding agreement expiring
- At any other time, but no less than six years following the last review.

Where a review is required to be undertaken, as a minimum, the review must consider the following:

- Governance and funding by:
  - Council alone; or
  - In a shared governance arrangement with one or more other local authorities.
- Service delivery by:
  - The local authority (i.e., in-house)
  - A CCO owned by the local authority or jointly owned with another shareholder (e.g. another local authority or private party)
  - Another local authority (e.g. through a shared service arrangement); or
  - Another person or agency (e.g. outsourced contract or by opting out).

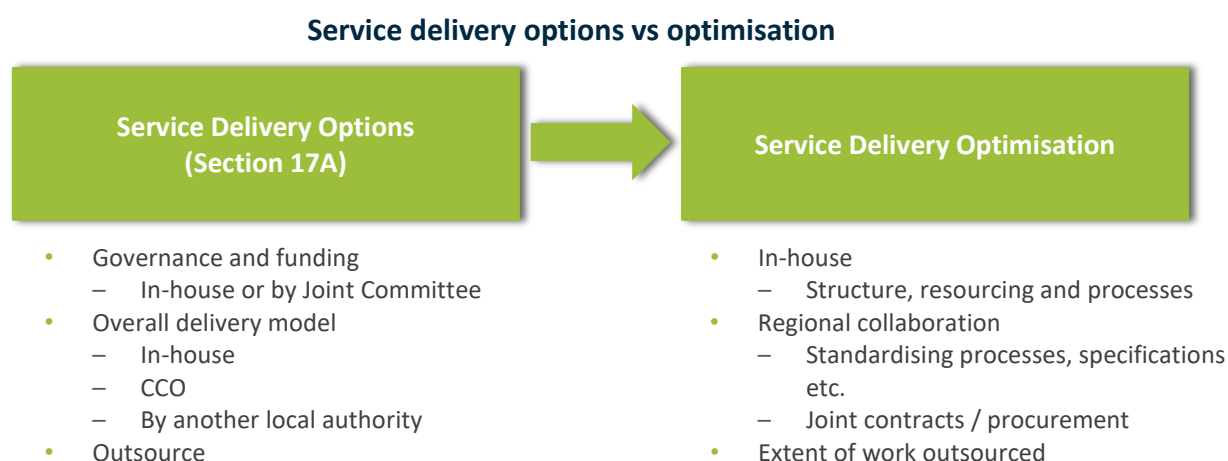
It is important to note that a s17A service delivery review is not a review of the current levels of service, an organisational review of the teams delivering the services or a detailed assessment of the processes used by the teams. Those matters are outside of the requirements of s17A.

## 2.2 Service delivery optimisation

Section 17A of the Act is focused on the overall service delivery mechanism for each council activity that delivers local infrastructure, local public services, or the performance of regulatory functions.

For services delivered in-house, the local authority is expected to continually be seeking opportunities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery including through opportunities to work collaboratively with other local authorities. This is summarised below.

**Figure 2 Ongoing service delivery optimisation after a s17A review**



## 2.3 Funding

Section 17A specifies the service delivery and governance options that need to be considered but is less prescriptive about funding options.

The focus of s17A is on service delivery and decisions regarding funding are not a key decision-making variable when looking at service delivery options. Regardless which service delivery model is accepted, the funding options remain the same and are continually assessed and refined as part of regular service optimisation reviews, when changes to service are proposed (e.g. as part of the Long-Term Plan) or when Council reviews its revenue and financing policy. For this reason, this s17A review focuses on service delivery options and the associated governance options, with funding options being optimised as part of the implementation of the preferred service delivery option.

The i-SITEs are currently funded through a mixture of sources including:

- Fees and charges (e.g. booking fees, retail)
- General rates
- Alternative funding sources such as government contributions or grants.

### 3 i-SITE National Network Review

i-SITE New Zealand is the official visitor information network with over 60 i-SITE visitor centres around New Zealand. The network provides international visitors, domestic travellers and locals with comprehensive, up to date information and a New Zealand-wide booking service for activities, attractions, accommodation and transport.

The i-SITE brand is managed by Tourism New Zealand and accredited members (including the FNDC and WDC sites) must meet standards in staff training, professionalism and information technology. Each i-SITE is individually owned and operated with funding through booking fees, retail sales and other income, supported by local government.

Pre-Covid, centres across the network were used by over 700,000 international holiday visitors each year and collectively assisted with 7.6 million visitor inquiries. A total of \$57.4m per year was generated in travel sales booked through the centres. For every \$1 of direct sales made by the network, there was a \$1.48 total additional spending in the wider economy<sup>1</sup>.

However, even before the pandemic, a number of i-SITES had already closed, visitor numbers were trending down, visitor spending had significantly reduced due to direct booking competition and operational costs were rising. In the wake of the pandemic, despite increased domestic and local visitor numbers and spending, overall visitor numbers have fallen by 57% and spend by a further 62%.

It has been recognised that the way the network operates needs to change as visitor markets are changing. In 2019 the i-SITE New Zealand board initiated the Future Network Strategy, to identify measures that would make the network more relevant to visitors, owners and other stakeholders, including the communities that centres operate in. The outcomes of that programme of work were considered in a national i-Site business case completed in July 2021. The business case found that standards and levels of service are inconsistent and there is a lack of long term planning for sustainability, capital investment for improvements, standardisation and digital strategy.

The recommended preferred way forward is a Tiered Network Model.

- Tier 1 locations would be concept stores in key locations. These would choose to meet higher membership requirements and coinvest with the government in an internal upgrade to provide an enhanced visitor experience. They would continue to be members of Visitor Information Network (VIN Inc), a subsidiary of Tourism New Zealand, who manage the i-SITE brand.
- Tier 2 locations would operate under a secondary brand, with lower membership commitments to reflect their ongoing investment. They would not be members of VIN Inc. but would operate under a license agreement.

The two Tiers would work in partnership and be closely aligned. Tier 1 concept stores would work closely with the Tier 2 locations, with each promoting each other to customers along with promotion of the wider network.

Central Government funding to support the proposed tier system for i-SITES has recently been confirmed.

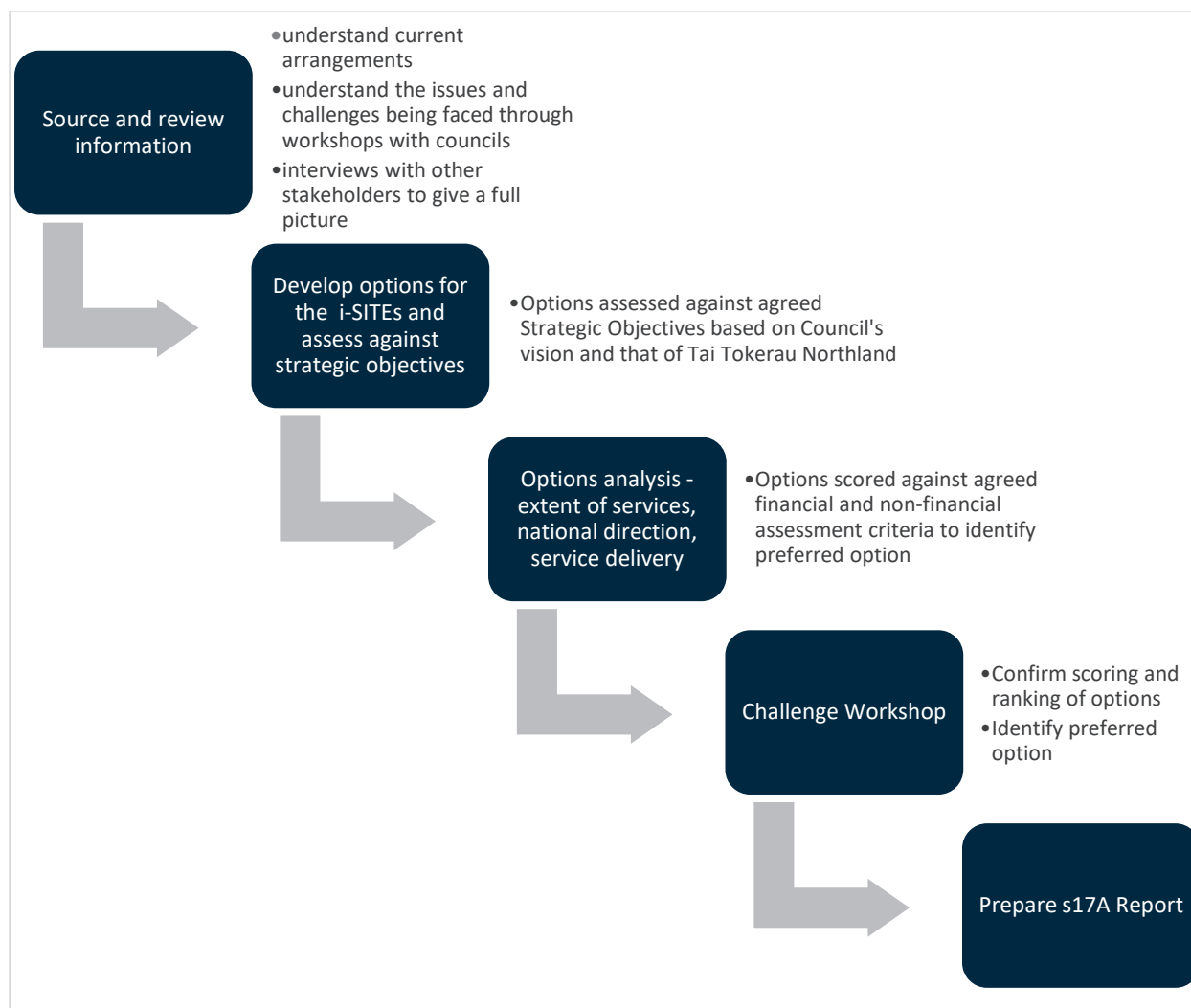
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<sup>1</sup> I-SITE Business Case, Stafford Strategy, July 2021

## 4 Service delivery review methodology

The key steps undertaken for this review were:

**Figure 3 Review methodology**



Workshops were held with both councils:

**Workshop 1** (onsite May 2022): understand current situation and identify issues and opportunities

**Workshop 2** (via videoconference August 2022): Challenge workshop to review and agree the preferred way forward

For both these workshops, individual council sessions were facilitated followed by a joint meeting to provide a collective view.

An additional presentation was made to elected members of WDC in Whangārei in July 2022 to outline the process being taken.

## 5 Current service delivery arrangements

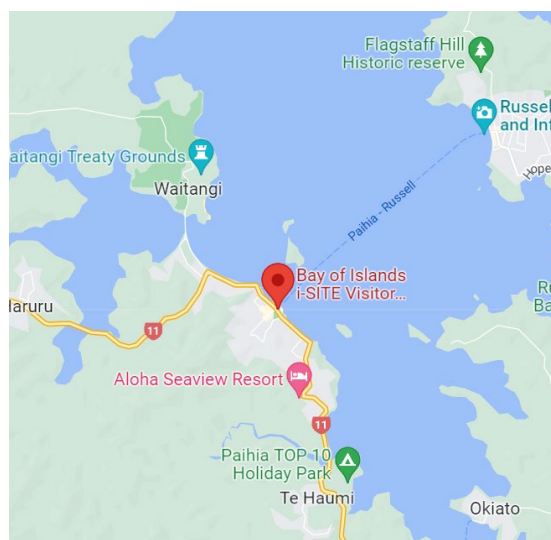
### 5.1 Far North District Council

#### 5.1.1 Facilities

The Far North has three i-SITE Visitor Centres located in Paihia (Bay of Islands), Kaitaia (Te Ahu) and Hokianga (Opononi). The i-SITES provide visitor information for the people of Far North and Northland and visitors, both domestic and international. As well as providing visitor information, the i-SITES provide council customer services for the local communities, with staff skilled in both areas.

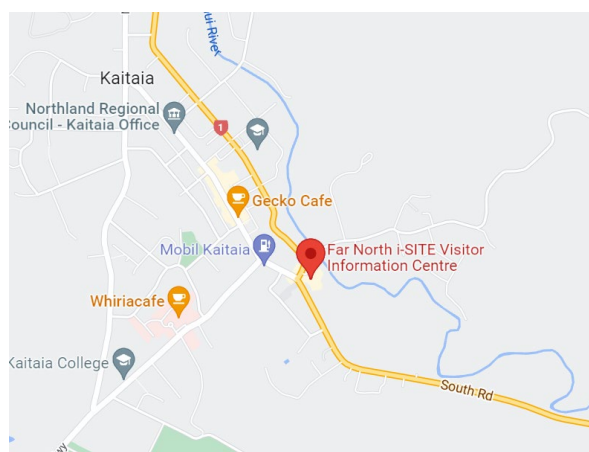
The Paihia i-SITE is the largest facility in the Far North and is located at the landward end of the wharf in Paihia.

**Figure 4** Paihia i-SITE



The Far North i-SITE is located within the Te Ahu Centre in Kaitaia which also houses, amongst other facilities, the Kaitaia Library and the Te Ahu Museum.

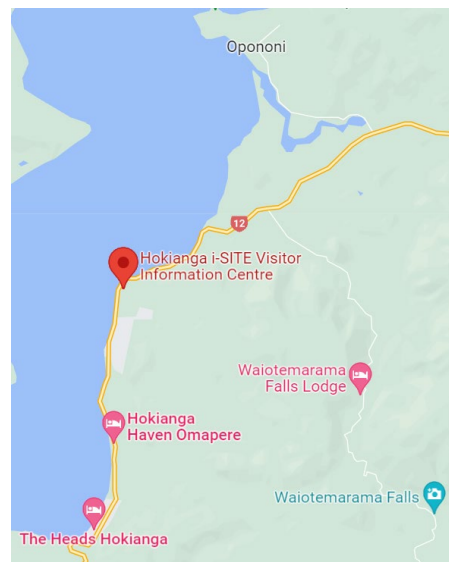
**Figure 5** Kaitaia i-SITE at Te Ahu





The Hokianga i-SITE is located on State Highway 12 just south of Opononi and has a shared space with a café.

**Figure 6 Hokianga i-SITE at Opononi**



The i-SITEs include space to meet and talk to specialist information consultants, areas dedicated to information and brochures about local businesses and tourism operators, and retail areas. Functions of the i-SITEs include:

- i-SITE visitor information – provides expert advice and booking services for both locals and visitors on accommodation, events, travel and tour bookings.
- Department of Conservation (DOC) enquiries and permits.

The sites also provide council customer service activities such as access to internet and rates services.

### **5.1.2 Management structure**

The i-SITE facilities form part of the District Services group as shown below in the diagram below. At times, i-SITE staff share resources across other Council departments such as customer services and the library at Te Ahu.

**Figure 7 District Services Organisation Structure**



### 5.1.3 Financial information

The i-SITEs are funded through rates, commission and retail sales.

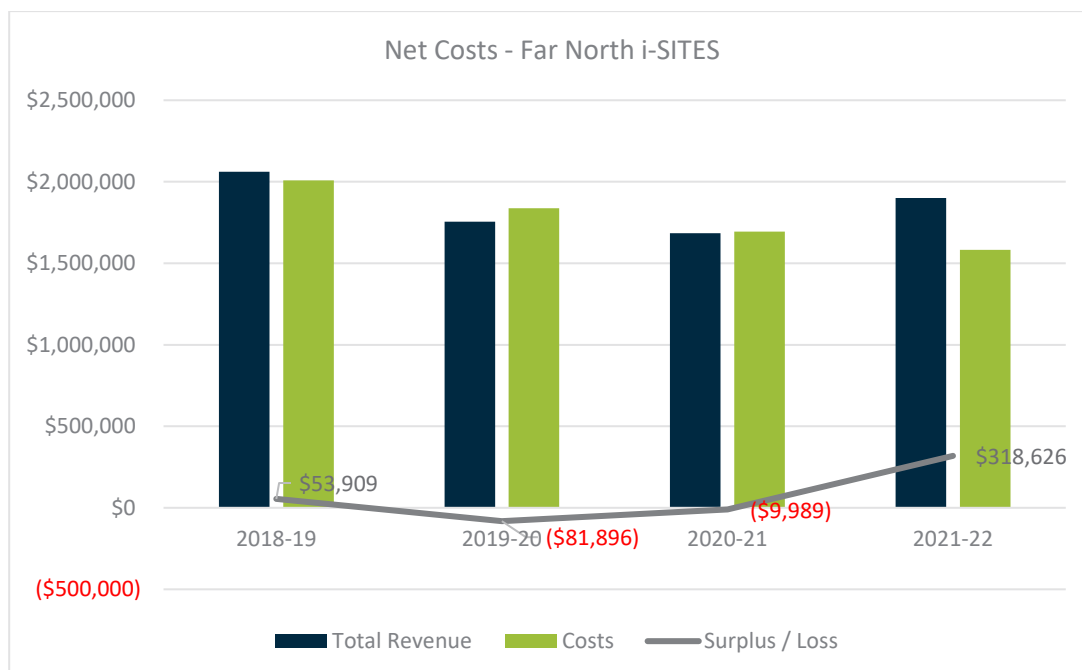
**Table 4 Far North financial data**

Year	Revenue and costs	Funding Sources
<b>2018-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue - \$2.06 million</li> <li>Costs - \$2.01 million (\$920,000 operating expenses / \$1.09 million allocated costs)</li> <li>Surplus of approximately \$54,000</li> </ul>	LTP: Rates 70%-89% User charges 11%-30%
<b>2019-20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue - \$1.76 million</li> <li>Costs - \$1.84 million (\$870,000 operating expenses / \$970,000 allocated costs)</li> <li>Loss of approximately \$82,000</li> </ul>	
<b>2020-21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue - \$1.68 million</li> <li>Costs - \$1.69 million (\$900,000 operating expenses / \$790,000 allocated costs)</li> <li>Loss of approximately \$10,000</li> </ul>	
<b>2021-22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue - \$1.90 million</li> <li>Costs - \$1.58 million (\$840,000 operating expenses / \$740,000 allocated costs)</li> <li>Surplus of approximately \$320,000</li> </ul>	

These figures reflect the lower revenue through the pandemic and the reliance on rates to cover costs.



**Figure 8 Costs and revenue – Far North i-SITES**



#### 5.1.4 Levels of service

Levels of service have been established for the i-SITES in the 2021/31 Long Term Plan and relate to the provision of facilities for visitors and locals. These results, taken from the Annual Reports, show the impact of the pandemic on visitor numbers although increased revenue in 2020-21 has shown profits margins improve.

**Table 5 Far North Levels of Service**

Level of Service	Performance Measure	Performance 2018/19	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22
To provide booking and information services through the District's Information Centres, influencing visitors to stay longer and spend more	Visitor bookings numbers through the information centres will show an increase each year.	14.2%	-14.6%	-18.7%	≥1%	≥1% increase
	Increase net profit on retail sales by 1.5% per year (profit increase on previous year).	1.8%	-0.07%	8.8%	Retail sales net profit ≥1.5%	Retail sales net profit ≥1%
	Customer / visitor satisfaction	99.0%	99.3%	n/a unable to measure	≥1% increase on previous year	Maintain / increase

## 5.2 Whangārei District Council

### 5.2.1 Facilities

The Whangārei i-SITE is located alongside State Highway 1 at Tarewa Park in Raumanga. With its location, it is seen as the gateway facility to the North. The i-SITE provides visitor information for the people of Whangārei and Northland and visitors, both domestic and international.

**Figure 9 Whangārei i-SITE**



There was a second i-SITE in the Whangārei Basin area which also provided Council customer services, but this closed in November 2021 with the site now used by the Whangārei Art Museum. WDC is now considering a pop-up site in the Basin area to service demand in peak season.

Functions of the i-SITE include:

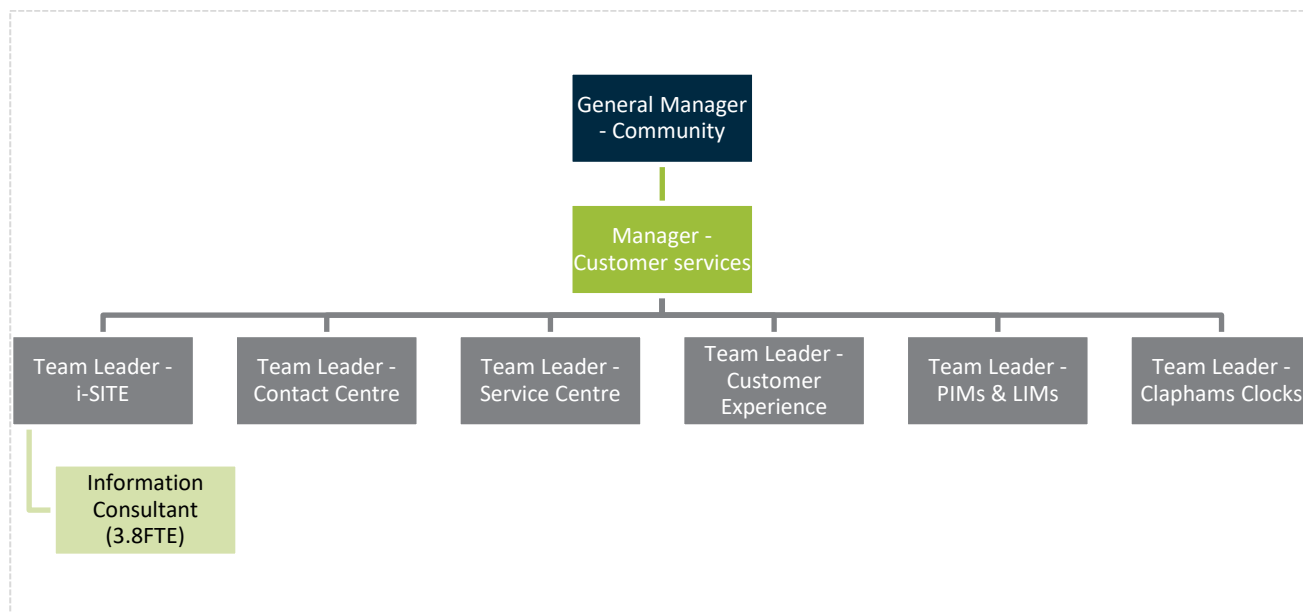
- i-SITE visitor information – provides expert advice and booking services for both locals and visitors on accommodation, events, travel and tour bookings.
- Department of Conservation (DOC) enquiries and permits.
- Public toilets.
- Provision of retail facilities

There is also an area for a café but this is currently unoccupied.

### 5.2.2 Management structure

The i-SITE activity forms part of the Customer Service Team as shown below.

**Figure 10 Customer Services Organisation Structure**



Resource for the i-SITE comprise:

- Full-time i-SITE Manager
- 3.8 FTE Information Consultants (incl 1 full time FTE vacant)

### 5.2.3 Financial information

The i-SITEs generally operate at a loss and are funded through rates, commission and retail sales.

**Table 6 Whangārei financial information**

Year	Revenue and costs	Funding Sources
<b>2020/21</b>	<i>Actual</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs - \$584,751</li> <li>• Commission and retail sales - \$20,000 (site closed 5 months)</li> </ul>	LTP: Rates 80%-100% User charges 0%-20%
<b>2021/22</b>	<i>Budget</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs - \$539,166</li> <li>• Commission and retail sales –\$10,600 (data available to April 2022 / site closed 3 months)</li> </ul>	

Note: These figures are indicative, reflecting the impact of Covid.

#### 5.2.4 Levels of service

Levels of service have been established for the i-SITE in the 2021/31 Long-Term Plan and relate to visitor satisfaction.

**Table 7 Levels of Service - Whangārei**

Level of Service	Performance Measure	Target	Performance 2018/19	Performance 2019/20	Performance 2020/21
<b>Council will provide, through the Whangārei visitor centres, an accurate booking and information service which influences more visitors to stay longer and spend more</b>	Visitors' satisfaction with the service provided by the information consultants at our information centres.	75% of 'very satisfied' customers	80%	100%	86%

## 6 Issues and opportunities

### 6.1 Overview

In undertaking this review, through discussions with staff and other stakeholders and through review of information, the following issues and opportunities were identified for the i-SITES.

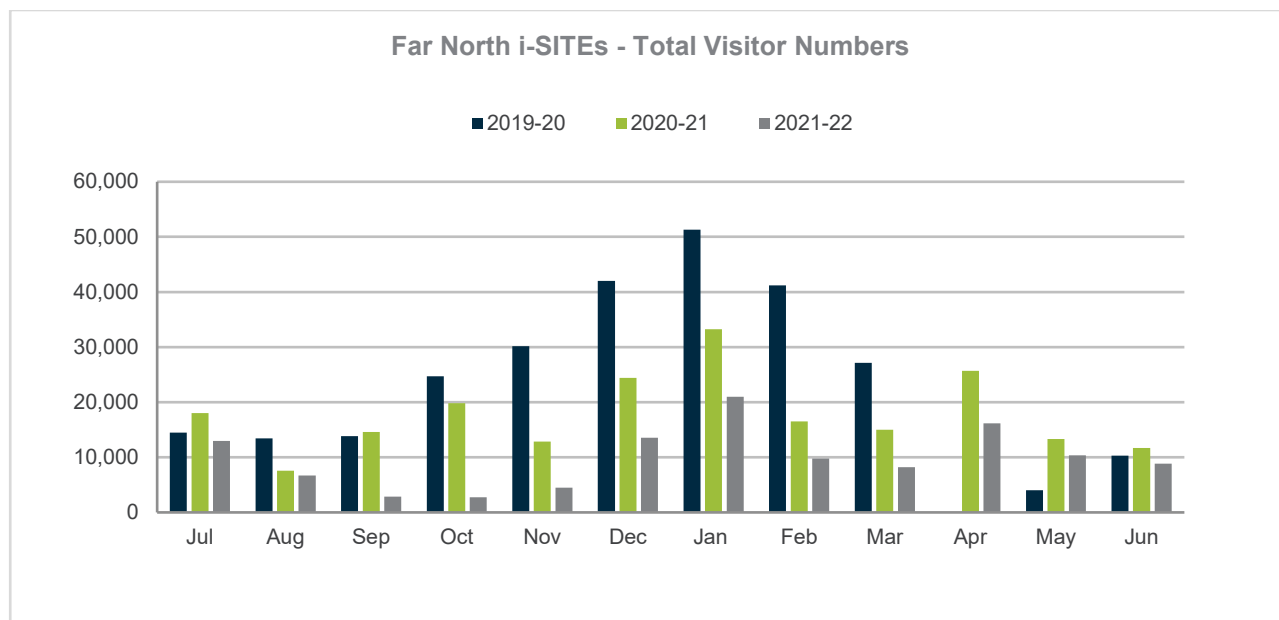
**Table 8 Issues and opportunities**

Issue / Opportunity	Discussion
<b>Visitor numbers and revenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid lockdowns and loss of international visitors has resulted in drop in numbers</li> <li>• Digital technology changing use of i-SITES</li> <li>• Sites could be more 'visible'</li> <li>• Ability to generate foot traffic with shared arrangements for other services, agencies or businesses e.g. retail, ticketing, café / other FNDC and WDC customer services / shared space with other agencies e.g. DOC, Northland Inc</li> </ul>
<b>Digital information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating the gap between online information and personal service and experience</li> <li>• Develop online communication channels for periods when i-SITE not staffed</li> <li>• Using technology to convert enquiries and requests for free information into sales</li> <li>• Options for virtual i-SITES or panels</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and retention of i-SITE personnel challenging in current market</li> <li>• Access to expertise through the national i-SITE network and working with WDC</li> <li>• Does the i-SITE national network review change this?</li> </ul>
<b>Community connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could the facility, or its co-located activities, support the local economies across the Far North and Whangārei?</li> </ul>
<b>The facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right locations? Should there be more / less?</li> <li>• Good condition and fit-for-purpose?</li> <li>• Are the facilities safe?</li> </ul>

## 6.2 Far North visitor numbers

The graphs below show the general decline in numbers over the last three years:

**Figure 11 Total visitor numbers – Far North i-SITES**

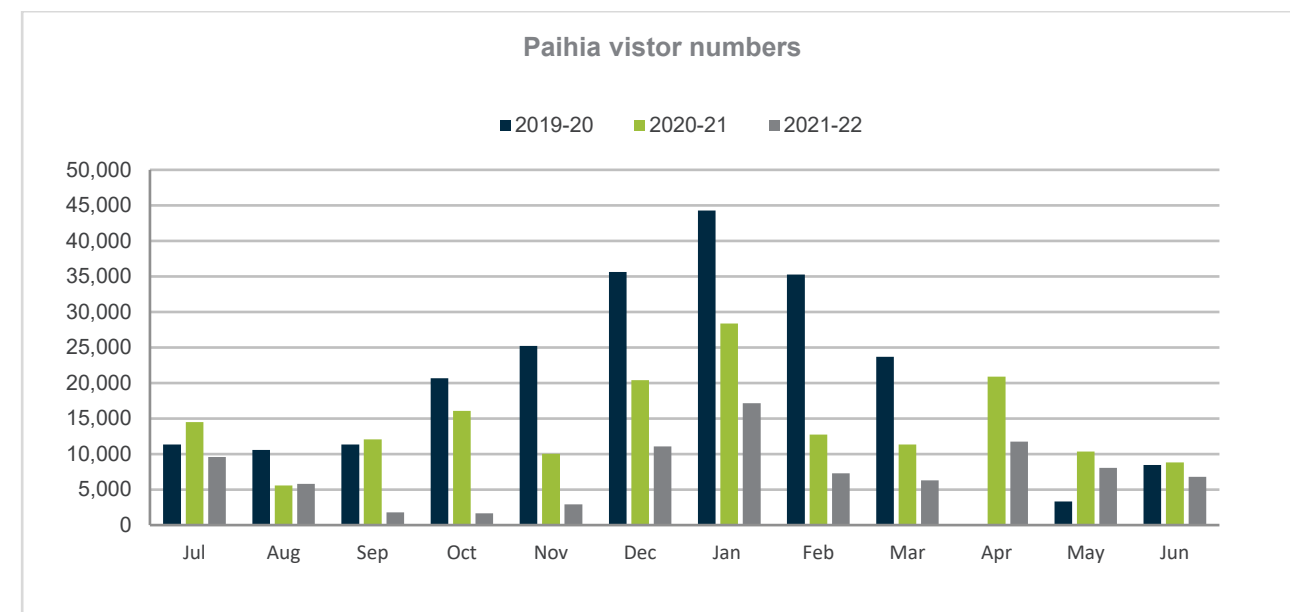


The data shows a general decline in numbers over last 3 years and is also reflective of closures through the pandemic.

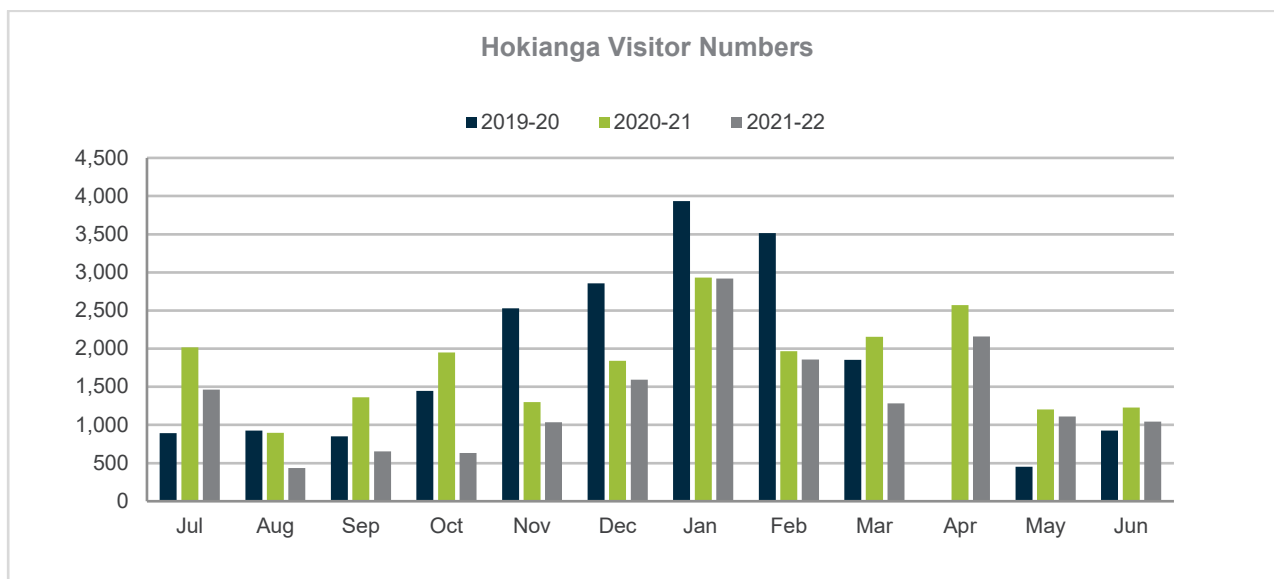
Peak season for all sites is December through to February.

The charts below show that Paihia sees in the order of 10 times the number of visitors than Hokianga and Kaitia, peaking at around 45,000 in January 2020.

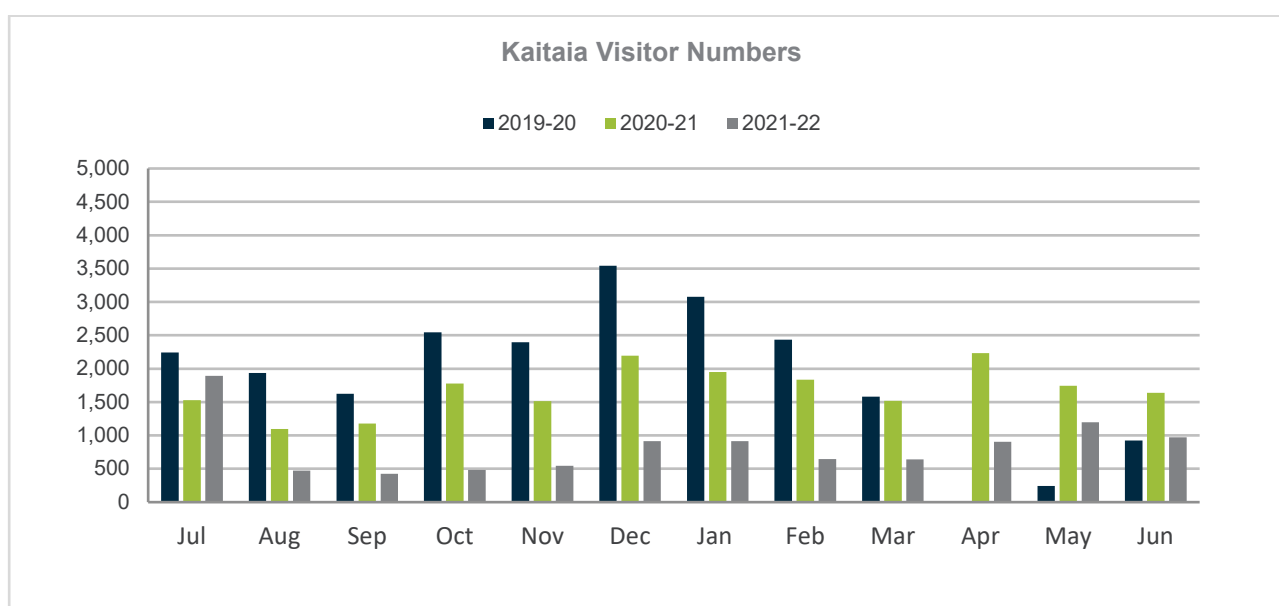
**Figure 12 Total visitor numbers – Paihia i-SITE**



**Figure 13 Total visitor numbers – Hokianga i-SITE**



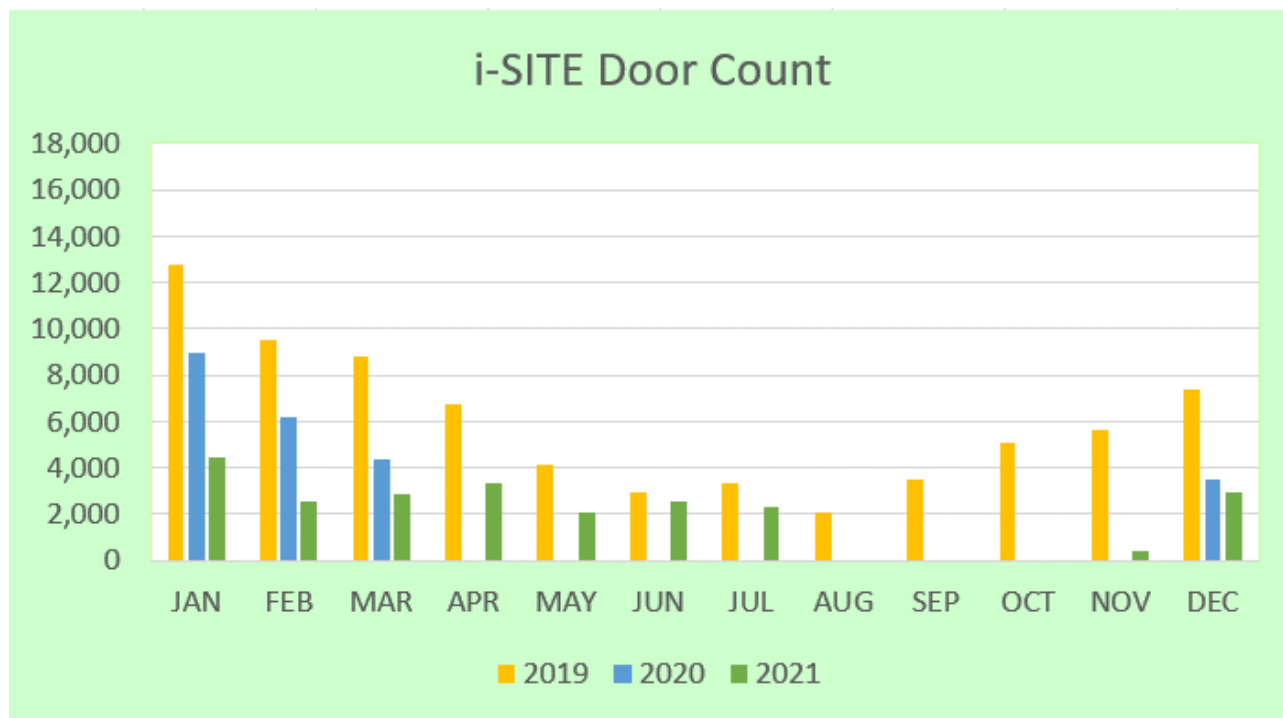
**Figure 14 Total visitor numbers – Te Ahu - Kaitaia i-SITE**



### 6.3 Whangārei visitor numbers

The graph below shows the general decline in numbers over the last three years. As can be seen from the data, numbers were declining pre-Covid. The site was closed for a total of eight months over the pandemic.

Figure 15 Visitor numbers – Whangārei i-SITE





## 7 Regional considerations

As part of the s17A review, consideration has been given to the opportunity to further collaborate with neighbouring councils and other stakeholders. Stakeholders and their potential for collaboration is shown in the table below

**Table 9 Regional considerations**

Organisation	Relationship in Northland
<b>Far North i-SITES</b>	<p>Far North District Council has three i-SITES, located in Paihia, Opononi (Hokianga) and at the Te Ahu Centre in Kaitiaki.</p> <p>Staff across both FNDC and WDC have good relationships and regularly communicate.</p>
<b>Whangārei District Council (WDC)</b>	<p>WDC currently has one i-SITE located alongside State Highway 1 at Tarewa Park in Raumanga. With its location, it is seen as the gateway facility to the North and is in an excellent location to promote and provide information for the Far North.</p> <p>Staff across FNDC and WDC have good relationships and regularly communicate. Both councils are keen to further develop their collaborative partnership as partly demonstrated through this joint review.</p>
<b>Kaipara District Council (KDC)</b>	<p>Kaipara District Council does not have any i-SITES in the district.</p> <p>They are however a shareholder of Northland Inc.</p> <p>KDC are keen to pursue options for working with both FNDC and WDC on initiatives to promote tourism in Northland.</p>
<b>Northland Inc.</b>	<p>Northland Inc is the Regional Economic Development Agency for Northland and is funded by an operational contribution from the Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council and Kaipara District Council as shareholders and is project funded through public and private agencies including central government.</p> <p>Northland Inc's Mission is <i>'To identify and focus on those activities and relationships that will strengthen, diversify, and grow Te Tai Tokerau Northland economy to help achieve equity and environmental sustainability'</i>. To deliver on this mission, they work with organisations and institutions in Tai Tokerau Northland and public and private sectors with a common purpose to deliver on the mission.</p> <p>Northland Inc. have expressed an interest in further developing a collaborative partnership with both FNDC and WDC.</p>
<b>Department of conservation (DOC)</b>	<p>DOC has limited resources in the Northland region and are keen to investigate options for more collaborative working with the Northland councils to promote their facilities.</p> <p>There are no DOC visitor centres in the Northland region although there are a number of offices. DOC is reliant on the Far North and Whangārei i-SITES to provide information on sites of interest and places to visit.</p>

## 8 Service delivery options

### 8.1 Overview

Options were identified and then assessed against agreed strategic objectives and financial and non-financial assessment criteria.

The initial results were presented and discussed with key staff at a challenge workshop, first as individual councils and then collectively. The tables below present the final results of the assessments.

Appendices A and B contain the full options assessments with scoring.

### 8.2 Strategic objectives

#### 8.2.1 Vision and community outcomes

**Tai Tokerau Northland Vision:** *To enhance the value of our visitor experiences in collaboration with iwi, hapū and stakeholders, for the benefit of our communities, businesses, the environment, and future generations*

**Far North Vision:** *He Whenua Rangatira – A District of Sustainable Prosperity and Well-Being*

**Far North Community Outcomes:**

*Proud, Vibrant Communities*

*Prosperous communities supported by a sustainable economy*

*Communities that are healthy, safe, connected and sustainable*

*Connected communities that are prepared for the unexpected*

*A wisely managed and treasured environment that recognises the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki*

*We embrace and celebrate our unique culture and heritage and value it as a source of enduring pride*

**Whangārei Vision:** *An inclusive, resilient and sustainable District*

**Whangārei Community Outcomes:**

*Efficient and resilient core services*

*Positive about the future*

*Caring for the environment*

*Proud to be local*

#### 8.2.2 Agreed strategic objectives for s17A review

Taking into account FNDC's and WDC's strategic direction through their vision and community outcomes and considering Tai Tokerau Northland's vision, strategic objectives for the i-SITEs were developed in consultation with key staff from both councils.

The service delivery options would be assessed against these objectives on a yes / partial / no basis.

**Table 10 Strategic objectives**

Far North	Whangārei
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A service that supports Council's vision of sustainable prosperity and well-being</li> <li>2. Providing information to visitors to promote the Far North and support economic wellbeing, embracing our unique culture and heritage</li> <li>3. Delivering a sustainable, meaningful and cost-effective activity for ratepayers</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A service that supports Council's vision of an inclusive, resilient and sustainable District</li> <li>2. Providing information to visitors to promote our tourism sector and support economic wellbeing</li> <li>3. Delivering a sustainable, meaningful and cost-effective activity for ratepayer</li> </ol>

### 8.3 Financial and non-financial assessment criteria

Financial and non-financial criteria were developed and agreed with key staff from the two councils. These are shown in the table below.

**Table 11 Assessment Criteria**

Financial Criteria (30%)	Non-financial Criteria (40%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up costs (10%)</li> <li>• Governance and management costs (10%)</li> <li>• Operational costs (10%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and efficient delivery of service through skilled staff and fit-for-purpose facilities and systems (15%)</li> <li>• The ability to be agile and adaptable (respond quickly to changing expectations and requirements) (15%)</li> <li>• Simplicity of governance and management (10%)</li> <li>• Supporting regional collaboration (10%)</li> <li>• Keeping community services local (employ local staff) (10%)</li> <li>• Acceptable and manageable level of risk (10%)</li> </ul>

### 8.4 Far North - Analysis of options

#### 8.4.1 Extent of services

The i-SITES have been heavily impacted by Covid. This together with a change in behaviour and the way people use visitor centres (with more information being accessed online) has meant that the status quo is not sustainable. Whilst no option scored a 'no' against any of the strategic objectives, the status quo was only assessed as a 'partial' against the objectives, recognising this in relating to efficiency of service.

The preferred option for the i-SITES in the Far North is to retain the facilities in their current locations and to optimise those sites through enhancing the existing facilities and providing additional services such as pop-up services/sites during peak season or providing virtual services. By enhancing the sites, such as through improved signage, foot traffic will be increased, providing additional revenue and promoting the district, Northland and local tourism operations. This option also fully supports the strategic objectives. There would be benefit in FNDC and WDC working together and also with other organisations such as Northland Inc to maximise the potential of any pop-up sites.

Reduction of services through closing of sites that attract less visitors is not recommended. All three sites provide other council customer services throughout the year and a large geographic area supports the retention of all sites.

An additional site at Awanui was also considered but not recommended, primarily due to costs and also due to ongoing local government reform presenting some uncertainty. This location has the potential to maximise visitors through the door due to its location where state highways 1 and 10 meet. There would be significant capital costs to establish a new site with additional resourcing costs.

The option of moving the Te Ahu site to Awanui was also considered but the benefits of being in its current location are deemed to be strong. The site is located with other council facilities and close to other community amenities. Staff are also shared with the library and customer services in this location. It is considered to be more beneficial to retain sites in their current locations but consider a pop-up site in Awanui during peak season (under preferred option A3).

**Table 12 Extent of services options**

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option A1: Status quo</b>	Current sites: Paihia, Hokianga, Kaitaia.	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective</li> </ul>
<b>Option A2: Enhanced Site</b>	Facility/ies developed to attract more visitors  Examples could be improved signage, increased retail, café	3.1 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More visible and better developed site/s would attract both locals and visitors</li> <li>Site/s would become a destination</li> <li>Could be significant benefit with little cost</li> <li>Te Ahu site in particular has the added facilities of A&amp;P grounds, pool, movie theatre etc which could be better used as a drawcard to visit the i-SITE</li> </ul>
<b>Option A3: Additional peak services</b>	Enhanced site + additional peak season services or virtual / digital service providing additional sites of information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be additional mobile / pop up sites during peak summer season (e.g. Awanui) or provision of digital / virtual services at alternative locations.</li> <li>Could be considered as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils, DOC, Northland Inc.</li> </ul>	3.2 – Recommended	Benefits of enhanced site (Option A2) + <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to build on service provided through peak summer months or by providing additional digital services</li> <li>Will be establishment costs and additional operational costs so permanent additional site not justified</li> <li>Benefits of considering this as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils / stakeholders</li> </ul>

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option A4: Reduced sites</b>	Services reduced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paihia would remain as now</li> <li>Possible closure of less-used site/s</li> </ul>	2.7 – Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational costs would reduce but coverage of the large geographic area of the Far North would be reduced (nothing on the west coast)</li> <li>Sites also provide a customer service facility which would be lost</li> </ul>
<b>Option A5: A3 + A4</b>	Number of permanent sites reduced with additional services	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational costs would be reduced in less-used site/s with services supplemented as appropriate to service demand.</li> </ul>
<b>Option A6: New site/s</b>	Change in location or addition of site/s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-location of current site/s to more visible location and / or additional sites established based on a considered demand / need</li> </ul>	2.7 – Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High cost to establish a new site / relocate</li> <li>Benefits of retaining Te Ahu location - shared resource across Council depts / co-located with other community facilities</li> <li>Additional sites = higher operational costs</li> <li>More cost-effective to make existing sites more 'visible' with additional peak season services</li> </ul>

### 8.4.2 National direction

Opting out of the tiered system was considered to only partially meet the strategic objectives, being less efficient without the support from i-SITE network.

The preferred option for Far North is to establish the Paihia site as a Tier 1 facility with Hokianga and Kaitiaia as Tier 2 operations. Tier 2 is considered to be more or less status quo but Tier 1 would see investment in the branding of the site and would support the Tier 2 sites.

Opting out of the VIN network was also considered but not recommended as the central support systems would be lost.

**Table 13 National direction options**

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option B1: Tier 1</b> Rebranded concept store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i-SITE/s would be Tier 1 'concept store/s' in key location/s.</li> <li>Rebranded under a new membership arrangement with VIN Inc</li> <li>Financial benefits available to upgrade sites, but higher membership fee</li> <li>Costs for fit out likely to be 50/50 split with central govt</li> </ul>	2.9 – not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still part of VIN</li> <li>Benefit of upgrades being partly funded through central govt and greater access to central support</li> <li>Not cost-effective to run more than 1 site as a Tier 1</li> </ul>

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option B2: Tier 2</b> Secondary site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 2 licence agreement</li> <li>Tier 2 locations not part of the VIN Inc network but access to network systems etc</li> </ul>	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still have benefits of IT systems, networks etc but under agreement with VIN not a licence.</li> <li>If Tier 2 only, would likely not attract support of Tier 1 operations (closest would likely be Auckland)</li> </ul>
<b>Option B3: Mixed</b> Mix of Tier 1 and Tier 2 sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combination of Options B1 and B2</li> <li>Paihia would be Tier 1 with Kaitaia and Hokianga being Tier 2</li> </ul>	3.4 – Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 1 site would support Tier 2 sites so would have benefits of Tier 1 whilst not having costs associated with establishment of multiple Tier 1 sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Option B3: Opt-out</b> Not part of i-SITE network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FNDC could still operate independent facility or could close the facility altogether</li> <li>For the purpose of this exercise, assume still in operation as an independent (opting out considered under Service Delivery)</li> </ul>	2.5 - Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less able to deliver the expected service - negative impact on tourism industry in the north</li> </ul>

### 8.4.3 Service delivery

The preferred option is to continue to deliver the i-SITE services as an in-house operation but to enhance key collaborative relationships with WDC and other key stakeholders such as DOC and Northland Inc as well as possibly Northland Regional Council and Kaipara District Council. This option also best meets the strategic objectives enabling support in the FNDC and Tai Tokerau visions, providing information to visitors that will support economic wellbeing and providing a cost-effective service through sharing information and initiatives.

A number of options were considered but not recommended for further consideration due to complexity of governance arrangements for a non-complex and relatively low-cost activity. These include establishment of a CCO/CCTO either as FNDC alone or under a joint arrangement with other councils, establishment of a partnership or formal shared arrangements with other council/s.

Whilst there would be a cost benefit in not continuing the services, opting out and allowing the private sector to provide visitor information services is not recommended. Council would lose control over delivery of the service which may impact in tourism promotion. In the current arrangement, Council plays an impartial role which may be lost with a private operator.

**Table 14 Service delivery options**

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option C1: Status quo</b> Sites owned and operated in-house (by Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council continues to own and operate the i-SITE</li> <li>Levels of service are based on historical patterns of delivery, with changes in response to community demand or changes in patterns of use</li> <li>Council provides strategy and policy direction</li> </ul>	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective</li> </ul>
<b>Option C2: Enhanced status quo</b>  Status quo with increased partnering with interested agencies	Partnering /collaborative working with other interested agencies e.g. shared space / co-location with DOC, Northland Inc or an agreement to work together in a more formal way	3.6 – Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits of different organisations working alongside and supporting each other</li> <li>Could introduce MOU to support partnering</li> <li>Potential for shared space arrangements but more likely i-SITEs working with WDC / DOC / Northland Inc / Business Assocs etc to be able to promote the area / local businesses etc</li> </ul>
<b>Option C3: Out-source operations</b> Owned by council, operations outsourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council outsources the i-SITE operations but continues in a management / governance role</li> <li>Facility would continue to be owned by Council</li> <li>Council continues to provide strategic direction</li> </ul>	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outsourcing option may drive efficiencies depending on format of contract and performance measures</li> <li>Council would not have the responsibility to employ staff</li> <li>Loss of control as well as a loss of benefits of sharing resources across Council depts</li> </ul>
<b>Option C4: Shared services</b> By shared service agreement with another council(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council enters into shared services agreement with other Northland Council/s to manage and provide the i-SITE services</li> <li>FNDC and other council(s) provide their own strategy, policy direction but enter into a formal shared services arrangement to manage and provide planning and/or operational services</li> </ul>	2.8 – Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some complexity to agree shared services arrangements</li> <li>Governance complexities</li> <li>However, potential opportunities such as efficiencies of scale</li> <li>Shared resourcing an unlikely benefit due to geographic spread</li> </ul>
<b>Option C5: CCO/CCTO (FNDC)</b> Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO with a board of directors / committee</li> <li>Council will retain a strategy and policy direction function</li> </ul>	1.9 - Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complexity to governance arrangements</li> <li>Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high set up costs for a CCO/CCTO</li> </ul>

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option C6: Partnership</b> Transfer of operations to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partner	Management of facility transfers to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partnership arrangement e.g. Iwi or a National i-SITE group or commercial operator	1.6 - Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant set up complexity (i.e. cost)</li> <li>More complex governance arrangements</li> <li>Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high costs for a developing and establishing a partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Option C7: Joint CCO/CCTO</b> owned by Council and other local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similar to option C5 but with one or more of the other Northland Councils as joint owners</li> </ul>	2.1 -Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complexity and cost to agree shared governance arrangements</li> <li>Some potential for reduced operational costs but likely to be relatively high set-up cost</li> </ul>
<b>Option C8: Council opts out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council ceases operations</li> <li>Service may be provided by private organisation</li> </ul>	3.1 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed as a possible option on the assumption that this service is provided by private operation</li> <li>No costs to Council</li> <li>Council would have no control over operation which may impact on tourism promotion</li> </ul>

## 8.5 Whangārei - Analysis of options

### 8.5.1 Extent of services

The i-SITE has been heavily impacted by Covid. This together with a change in behaviour and the way people use visitor centres (with more information being accessed online) has meant that the status quo is not sustainable. Whilst no option scored a 'no' against any of the strategic objectives, the status quo was only assessed as a 'partial' against the objectives, recognising this in relating to efficiency of service

The preferred option is to retain the i-SITE and to optimise the site through enhancing the existing facilities and providing additional services such as pop-up services/sites during peak season or potentially providing virtual services. By enhancing the site and making it a destination, foot traffic will be increased, providing additional revenue and promoting the district, Northland and local tourism operations. Potential enhancements include establishment of a café onsite, improved signage and development of a family friendly activity (such as a maze or a playground) on the adjacent reserve.

There would be benefit in the councils working together and with other organisations such as Northland Inc and DOC to maximise the potential of any pop-up sites. Costs could also be shared.



**Table 15 Extent of services options**

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option A1: Status quo</b>	Current site State Highway 1	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective</li> </ul>
<b>Option A2: Enhanced Site</b>	Facility/ies developed to attract more visitors  Examples could be improved signage, increased retail, café (procuring now), development of reserve with a family friendly activity	3.1 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More visible and better developed site/s would attract both locals and visitors</li> <li>Site/s would become a destination</li> <li>Could be significant benefit with little cost</li> </ul>
<b>Option A3: Additional peak services</b>	Enhanced site + providing additional sites of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be additional mobile / pop up sites during peak summer season or provision of digital or possibly virtual services at alternative locations</li> <li>Could be considered as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils, DOC, Northland Inc</li> </ul>	3.2 – Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits of enhanced site +</li> <li>Opportunity to build on service provided through peak summer months or by providing additional digital services</li> <li>Would be establishment costs and some additional operational costs</li> <li>Benefits of considering this as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils / stakeholders</li> </ul>

### 8.5.2 National direction

Opting out of the tiered system was considered to only partially meet the strategic objectives, being less efficient without the support from i-SITE network.

The preferred option for Far North is to establish the Paihia site as a Tier 1 facility with Hokianga, Kaitaia and Whangārei as Tier 2 operations. Tier 2 is considered to be more or less status quo but Tier 1 would see investment in the branding of the site and would support the Tier 2 sites.

Opting out of the VIN network was also considered but not recommended as the central support systems would be lost.

**Table 16 National direction options**

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option B1: Tier 1</b> Rebranded concept store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i-SITE/s would be Tier 1 'concept store/s' in key location/s</li> <li>Rebranded under a new membership arrangement with VIN Inc</li> <li>Financial benefits available to upgrade sites, but higher membership fee</li> <li>Costs for fit out likely to be 50/50 split with central govt</li> </ul>	2.9 – Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still part of VIN</li> <li>Benefit of upgrades being partly funded through central govt and greater access to central support</li> </ul>
<b>Option B2: Tier 2</b> Secondary site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similar to status quo</li> <li>Tier 2 licence agreement</li> <li>Tier 2 locations not part of the VIN Inc network but access to network systems etc</li> </ul>	3.0 – Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still have benefits of IT systems, networks etc but under agreement with VIN not a licence.</li> <li>If Tier 2 only, could build on support of Tier 1 operations (closest would likely be Far North if they opt for Tier 1, otherwise Auckland)</li> </ul>
<b>Option B3: Opt-out</b> Not part of i-SITE network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WDC could still operate independent facility or could close the facility altogether.</li> <li>For the purpose of this exercise, assume still in operation as an independent (opting out considered under Service Delivery)</li> </ul>	2.5 - Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less able to deliver the expected service - negative impact on tourism industry in the north</li> </ul>

### 8.5.3 Service delivery

The preferred option is to continue to deliver the i-SITE services as an in-house operation but to enhance key collaborative relationships with FNDC and other key stakeholders such as DOC and Northland Inc as well as possibly Northland Regional Council and Kaipara District Council. This option also best meets the strategic objectives enabling support in the FNDC and Tai Tokerau visions, providing information to visitors that will support economic wellbeing and providing a cost-effective service through sharing information and initiatives.

A number of options were considered but not recommended for further consideration due to complexity of governance arrangements for a non-complex and relatively low-cost activity. These include establishment of a CCO/CCTO either as FNDC alone or under a joint arrangement with other councils, establishment of a partnership or formal shared arrangements with other council/s.

Whilst there would be a cost benefit in not continuing the services, opting out and allowing the private sector to provide visitor information services is not recommended. Council would lose control over delivery of the service which may impact in tourism promotion. In the current arrangement, Council plays an impartial role which may be lost with a private operator.

**Table 17 Service delivery options**

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option C1: Status quo</b> Sites owned and operated in-house (by Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council continues to own and operate the i-SITE</li> <li>Levels of service are based on historical patterns of delivery, with changes in response to community demand or changes in patterns of use</li> <li>Council provides strategy and policy direction</li> </ul>	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective</li> </ul>
<b>Option C2: Enhanced status quo</b> Status quo with increased partnering with interested agencies	Partnering /collaborative working with other interested agencies e.g. shared space / co-location with DOC, Northland Inc or an agreement to work together in a more formal way	3.6 - Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits of different organisations working alongside and supporting each other</li> <li>Could introduce MOU to support partnering</li> <li>Potential for shared space arrangements but more likely i-SITEs working with WDC / DOC / Northland Inc / Business Assocs etc to be able to promote the area / local businesses etc</li> </ul>
<b>Option C3: Out-source operations</b> Owned by council, operations outsourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council outsources the i-SITE operations but continues in a management / governance role</li> <li>Facility would continue to be owned by Council</li> <li>Council continues to provide strategic direction</li> </ul>	3.0 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outsourcing option may drive efficiencies depending on format of contract and performance measures</li> <li>Council would not have the responsibility to employ staff</li> <li>Loss of control as well as a loss of benefits of sharing resources across Council depts</li> </ul>
<b>Option C4: Shared services</b> By shared service agreement with another council(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council enters into shared services agreement with other Northland Council/s to manage and provide the i-SITE services</li> <li>FNDC and other council(s) provide their own strategy, policy direction but enter into a formal shared services arrangement to manage and provide planning and/or operational services</li> </ul>	2.8 – Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some complexity to agree shared services arrangements</li> <li>Governance complexities</li> <li>However, potential opportunities such as efficiencies of scale</li> <li>Shared resourcing an unlikely benefit due to geographic spread</li> </ul>
<b>Option C5: CCO/CCTO (WDC)</b> Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO with a board of directors / committee</li> <li>Council will retain a strategy and policy direction function</li> </ul>	1.9 - Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complexity to governance arrangements</li> <li>Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high set up costs for a CCO/CCTO</li> </ul>

Option	Description	Score	Summary of assessment
<b>Option C6: Partnership</b> Transfer of operations to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partner	Management of facility transfers to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partnership arrangement e.g. Iwi or a National i-SITE group or commercial operator	1.6 - Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant set up complexity (i.e. cost)</li> <li>More complex governance arrangements</li> <li>Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high costs for a developing and establishing a partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Option C7: Joint CCO/CCTO</b> owned by Council and other local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similar to option C5 but with one or more of the other Northland Councils as joint owners</li> </ul>	2.1 -Not recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some potential for reduced operational costs but likely to be relatively high set-up costs</li> <li>Complexity and cost to agree shared governance arrangements</li> </ul>
<b>Option C8: Council opts out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council ceases operations</li> <li>Service may be provided by private organisation</li> </ul>	3.1 - Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed as a possible option on the assumption that this service is provided by private operation</li> <li>No costs to Council</li> <li>Council would have no control over operation which may impact on tourism promotion</li> </ul>

## 8.6 Recommended way forward

### 8.6.1 Preferred options

The impact of Covid together with a change in behaviour and the way people use visitor centres (with more information being accessed online) has meant that the status quo is no longer a sustainable business model.

Whilst the pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the tourism industry, the borders have now reopened and it is anticipated that cruise ships and visitors will return.

**The overall recommended way forward is to retain the i-SITEs in their current locations but to optimise those sites and the network by providing additional services, such as pop-up sites or virtual sites, to meet demand during the peak season and also to strengthen the collaborative partnering with each other interested stakeholders.**

The results show good alignment in direction for FNDC and WDC which will support future collaborative partnering.

Specific to each element of the review, the preferred options are:

**Table 18 Northland i-SITES – preferred way forward**

Solution	Preferred way forward	
	Far North	Whangārei
<b>Extent of services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced sites: Facilities developed to attract more visitors</li> <li>Additional peak season services and virtual / digital services</li> </ul> <p>To retain the i-SITES in their current locations but to encourage additional foot traffic through increased visibility and enhancements. This could include improved signage, or leases for café facilities or other retail. Additional services at peak times (either through the summer months or when a cruise ship is due) could include pop-up or mobile i-SITES. Virtual sites could also be an option, such as when physical sites are unstaffed.</p>	
<b>National direction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of Tier 1 (Paihia) and Tier 2 sites</li> <li>The Tier 1 site would support Tier 2 sites in both Far North and Whangārei</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 2 - secondary site (similar to status quo)</li> <li>The Paihia Tier 1 site would support the Whangārei Tier 2 site under the intent of the tiered i-SITE system</li> </ul> <p>Tier 1 site would be re-branded with central government contributing to capital investment. There would be standardised national systems for all Tier 1 i-SITES. Data sharing would be introduced and there would be nationally integrated digital assets with Facebook and Google My Business channels, centrally managed with local pages.</p> <p>Requirements for Tier 2 sites would be similar to now with a modified sub-brand to link them to the network. Operational aspects of the business would be standardised with Tier 1 such as fees and charges, data sharing, booking engines, Wi-Fi and brochure racking.</p>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<p>Continue to deliver the service through in-house management and operations.</p> <p>The i-SITE activity would continue to be governed by each council alone, setting their own future direction with continued funding through rates, commission and retail.</p> <p>Continue collaboration between the Far North and Whangārei i-SITES, and potentially extended this to other councils (e.g. Kaipara) and key stakeholders (e.g. DOC or Northland Inc). Consider formalising this collaboration/</p> <p>It is recognised that there would be benefits in these organisations working alongside and supporting each other. This could be strengthened through developing a collective Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) where objectives are set and roles and responsibilities defined. Regular collective meetings would enable the sharing of information and ideas to support tourism promotion across the region in a more structured way.</p>	

## 8.6.2 Outline cost assessment of preferred options

The table below provides an outline assessment of costs to implement the preferred options.

**Table 19 Outline costs - preferred way forward**

Solution	Cost implications	
	Far North	Whangārei
<b>Extent of services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced sites: would be dependent on upgrades agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage low cost</li> <li>Improved IT / systems largely provided for through VIN membership and tiered system</li> </ul> </li> <li>Enhanced sites (and foot traffic) would deliver increased revenue through commission and retail with no additional operational costs</li> <li>Additional peak season services would require additional resources but would generate more revenue</li> <li>Virtual services would have capital outlay but minimal resource needs</li> </ul> <p>An additional permanent site at Awanui would have significant capital cost to establish and would require additional operational resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced sites: would be dependent on upgrades agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage low cost</li> <li>Development of reserve would have capital cost</li> <li>No cost for establishment of café (would likely be some revenue through lease)</li> <li>Improved IT / systems largely provided for through VIN membership and tiered system</li> </ul> </li> <li>Enhanced sites (and foot traffic) would deliver increased revenue through commission and retail with no additional operational costs</li> <li>Additional peak season services would require additional resources but would generate more revenue</li> </ul>
<b>National direction<sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current VIN fee between \$1,650 - \$2,805 per site per annum</li> </ul> <p><u>Capex / re-branding costs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 1 site (Paihia) – 50/50 split between FNDC and central government with indicative fit-out costs of \$200,000 and \$500,000 (to be completed between 2023-2026)</li> <li>Tier 2 sites – n/a</li> </ul> <p><u>Annual costs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 1 site (Paihia) - \$5,000 - \$10,000 per annum</li> <li>Tier 2 sites (Kaitia and Hokianga) - \$1,500 - \$3000 per site per annum</li> </ul>	<p><u>Capex / re-branding costs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 2 sites – n/a</li> </ul> <p><u>Annual costs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tier 2 sites - \$1,500 - \$3000 per annum</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<p>Partnering /collaborative working with each other and interested agencies such as Northland Inc. and DOC would have minimal cost impact and has the potential for significant benefit across the region.</p> <p>There would be some cost, mainly in time, to develop and agree an MOU or other form of partnering agreement.</p>	

<sup>2</sup> Source: VIN Inc Future Network Proposal, Executive Summary July 2021

## 9 Next Steps

This s17A review has confirmed that both FNDC and WDC should continue to provide i-SITEs across the district but that those sites should be optimised by enhancing sites and providing additional services to meet demand.

### 9.1 Far North District Council

The next steps for the Far North i-SITEs would be to further investigate the preferred options and develop an i-SITE Strategy:

**Table 20** Next steps for the Far North i-SITES

<b>3. Further develop preferred way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the recommended way forward</li> <li>• Work with WDC in the first instance to investigate formalising collaboration (e.g. MOU) and then extend to other partners</li> <li>• Identify, cost and implement specific service improvements e.g. signage, pop-ups and virtual sites</li> <li>• Further develop cost and implementation models for preferred options, possibly using business case approach</li> </ul>
<b>4. Development of the Far North i-SITE Strategy</b> <i>Can be progressed in parallel with or separate to 1 above</i>	<p>The Far North i-SITE Strategy will support the implementation of the S17A review outcomes and will build on the VIN Inc. i-SITE Future Strategy, Tai Tokerau Northland Inc. Destination Management Plan and other related regional initiatives and strategies. It will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision for the future</li> <li>• Current situation and the challenges we are dealing with</li> <li>• How visitor information services are changing</li> <li>• Our preferred option for delivery of the i-SITE / visitor information services (from the S17A review)</li> <li>• How we intend to implement our preferred way forward and how we will fund it (develop costs further)</li> </ul>

### 9.2 Whangārei District Council

The next steps for the Whangārei i-SITE would be to further investigate the preferred options:

**Table 21** Next steps for the Whangārei i-SITE

<b>2. Further develop preferred way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorse the recommended way forward</li> <li>• Work with WDC in the first instance to investigate formalising collaboration (e.g. MOU) and then extend to other partners</li> <li>• Identify, cost and implement specific service improvements e.g. signage, pop-ups and virtual sites and development of the adjacent reserve.</li> <li>• Further develop cost and implementation models for preferred options, possibly using business case approach</li> </ul>
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## **Appendix A      Options Assessment – Far North District Council**



I-Site Service Delivery Options Review																			
Client:		Far North District Council																	
Review date:		August 2022																	
Version		Draft																	
		A. EXTENT OF SERVICES						B. NATIONAL DIRECTION				C. SERVICE DELIVERY							
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
		Status quo	Enhanced Site	Option A2 + Additional services	Reduced sites	Option A3 + A4	New site/s	Tier 1	Tier 2	Mixed	Opt-Out	Status quo	Enhanced Status Quo	Out-source operations	Shared services	CCO/CCTO (FNDC)	Partnership	Joint CCO/CCTO	Council opts out
Service delivery options		Current sites: Paihia, Hokianga, Kaitiaia	Facility/ies developed to attract more visitors	Additional peak season services or virtual / digital services.	Reducing services	Number of permanent sites reduced with additional services	Change in location or addition of site/s	Rebranded concept store	Secondary site	Mix of Tier 1 and Tier 2 sites	Not part of I-SITE network	Sites owned and operated in-house (by Council)	Status quo with increased partnering with interested agencies	Owned by council, operations out-sourced	By shared service agreement with another council(s)	Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO	Transfer of operations to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partner	By joint CCO/CCTO owned by Council and other local authorities	Council ceases operations.
Description of option:		Current sites - 3 locations - Paihia, Kaitiaia (part of Te Ahu), Hokianga (co-location with cafe)	Examples could be improved signage, increased retail	Enhanced site + Providing additional sites of information. Could be additional mobile / pop up sites during peak summer season (eg Awanui) or provision of digital / virtual services at alternative locations. Could be considered as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils, DOC, Northland Inc.	Services reduced Paihia would remain as now Possible closure of less-used site/s.	Permanent sites reduced (Option A4) but boosted through additional services; either peak season or digital / virtual sites	Re-location of current site/s and / or additional sites established based on a considered demand / need	I-SITE/s would be Tier 1 'concept store/s' in key location/s. Rebranded under a new membership arrangement with VIN Inc Financial benefits available to upgrade sites, but higher membership fee Costs for fit out likely to be 50/50 split with central govt	Tier 2 licence agreement Tier 2 locations not part of the VIN Inc network but access to network systems etc	Combination of Options B1 and B2. Paihia would be Tier 1 with Kaitiaia and Hokianga being Tier 2	FNDC could still operate independent facility or could close the facility altogether. For the purpose of this exercise, assume still in operation as an independent (opting out considered under Service Delivery)	Council continues to own and operate the I-SITE. Levels of service are based on historical patterns of delivery, with changes in response to community demand or changes in patterns of use. Council provides strategy and policy direction.	Partnering / collaborative working with other interested agencies e.g. shared space / co location with DOC, Northland Inc or an agreement to work together in a more formal way	Council outsources the I-SITE operations but continues in a management / governance role. Facility would continue to be owned by Council. Council continues to provide strategic direction.	Council enters into shared services agreement with other Northland Council/s to manage and provide the I-SITE services. FNDC and other council(s) provide their own strategy, policy direction but enter into a formal shared services arrangement to manage and provide planning and/or operational services	Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO with a board of directors / committee. Council will retain a strategy and policy direction function	Management of facility transfers to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partnership arrangement e.g. Iwi or a National I-Site group or commercial operator	Similar to option C5 but with one or more of the other Northland Councils as joint owners. Some potential for reduced operational costs but likely to be relatively high set-up costs	Service may be provided by private organisation
		Weighting																	
Strategic Objectives																			
A service that supports Council's vision of sustainable prosperity and well-being		Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - option can support this but need to ensure local line of sight	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - option can support this but need to ensure local line of sight	Partial - if service provided by others
Providing information to visitors to promote the Far North and support economic wellbeing, embracing our unique culture and heritage		Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - would reduce coverage of the Far North	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - option can support this but need to ensure local line of sight	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Yes - option can support this	Partial - if service provided by others
Delivering a sustainable, meaningful and cost-effective activity for ratepayers		Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - cost implication of additional site/s	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - no formal support from I-SITE network	Partial - efficiencies with current arrangements are limited	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Yes - some efficiencies will be introduced	Partial - option can support this but governance complexity may make it less affordable	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - governance complexity	Partial - if service provided by others
		Weighting																	
Financial benefits:		30%	0.9	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
Set up costs	10%	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	5
Governance and management costs	10%	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	5
Operational costs	10%	3	3	3	5	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
Non-financial benefits:		70%	2.1	2.4	2.7	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.7	1.6	2.1	2.9	2.1	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.6
Quality and efficient delivery of service through skilled staff and fit-for-purpose facilities and systems	15%	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	5	1	3	5	3	3	3	1	3	3
The ability to be agile and adaptable (respond quickly to changing expectations and requirements)	15%	3	3	5	1	1	3	3	3	5	3	3	5	3	3	1	1	1	1
Simplicity of governance and management	10%	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	5	1	1	1	1	5
Supporting regional collaboration	10%	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	5	3	3	5	3	5	3	3	5	1
Keeping community services local (employ local staff)	10%	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3
Acceptable and manageable level of risk	10%	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
Total score (financial plus non-financial benefits, out of 5):	100%	3.0	3.1	3.2	2.7	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.4	2.5	3.0	3.6	3.0	2.8	1.9	1.6	2.1	3.1
Overall assessment:		Possible	Possible	Preferred	Not recommended	Possible	Not recommended	Not recommended	Possible	Preferred	Not recommended	Possible	Preferred	Possible	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Possible
Commentary:		The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective	More visible and better developed site/s would attract both locals and visitors. Site/s would become a destination. Could be significant benefit with little cost.. Te Ahu site in particular has the added facilities of A&P grounds, pool, movie theatre etc which could be better used as a drawcard to visit the I-SITE too	Benefits of enhanced site + Opportunity to build on service provided through peak summer months or by providing additional digital services. Will be establishment costs and additional operational costs so permanent additional site not justified. Benefits of considering this as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils / stakeholders	Operational costs would reduce but coverage of the large geographic area of the Far North would be reduced (nothing on the west coast). Both Kaitiaia and Hokianga have benefit of shared space. Would lose the benefits of providing other Council services at each site.	Operational costs would be reduced in less-used site/s with services supplemented as appropriate to service demand.	High cost to establish a new site / relocate. Benefits of retaining Te Ahu location - shared resource across Council depts / co-located with other community facilities. Additional sites = higher operational costs. More cost-effective to make existing sites more 'visible' with additional peak season services.	Still part of VIN. Benefit of upgrades being partly funded through central govt and greater access to central support. Not cost-effective to run more than 1 site as a Tier 1	Still have benefits of IT systems, networks etc but under agreement with VIN not a licence. If Tier 2 only, would likely not attract support of Tier 1 operations (closest would likely be Auckland)	Tier 1 site would support Tier 2 sites so would have benefits of Tier 1 whilst not having costs associated with establishment of multiple Tier 1 sites.	Less able to deliver the expected service - negative impact on tourism industry in the north	The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective	Benefits of different organisations working alongside and supporting each other. Could introduce MOU to support partnering. Potential for shared space arrangements but more likely I-SITEs working with DOC / Northland Inc / Business Assocs etc to be able to promote the area / local businesses etc	Outsourcing option may drive efficiencies depending on format of contract and performance measures. Council would not have the responsibility to employ staff. However, there would be a loss of control as well as a loss of benefits of sharing resources across Council depts	Some complexity to agree shared services arrangements. Governance complexities. Potential opportunities such as efficiencies of scale. Shared resourcing an unlikely benefit due to geographic spread.	Complexity to governance arrangements. Turnover of the service does not justify the relatively high set up costs for a CCO/CCTO	Significant set up complexity (i.e. cost). More complex governance arrangements. Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high costs for a developing and establishing a formal partnership	Complexity to governance arrangements. Whilst there would be some benefits of collaboration, turnover of the facilities does not justify the relatively high set up costs for a CCO/CCTO	Assessed as a possible option on the assumption that this service is provided by private operation. No costs to Council. Council would have no control over operation which may impact on tourism promotion

## **Appendix B      Options Assessment – Whangārei District Council**

I-Site Service Delivery Options Review															
Client: Whangarei District Council															
Review date: August 2022															
Version: Draft															
		A. EXTENT OF SERVICES			B. NATIONAL DIRECTION			C. SERVICE DELIVERY							
		A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
		Status quo	Enhanced Site	Option A2 + Additional services	Tier 1	Tier 2	Opt-Out	Status quo	Enhanced Status Quo	Out-source operations	Shared services	CCO/CCTO (WDC)	Partnership	Joint CCO/CCTO	Council opts out
Service delivery options		Current site State Highway 1	Facility developed to attract more visitors	Additional peak season services or virtual / digital services.	Rebranded concept store	Secondary site (similar to status quo)	Not part of I-SITE network	Owned and operated in-house (by Council)	Status quo with increased partnering with interested agencies	Owned by council, operations out-sourced	By shared service agreement with another council(s)	Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO	Transfer of operations to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partner e.g. iwi or commercial operator.	By joint CCO/CCTO owned by Council and other local authorities	Council ceases operations.
Description of option:		Current site offering i-SITE services only	Examples could be improved signage, increased retail, café (procuring now), development of reserve with a family friendly activity	Enhanced site + Providing additional sites of information. Could be additional mobile / pop up sites during peak summer season or provision of digital / virtual services at alternative locations. Could be considered as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils, DOC, Northland Inc.	i-SITE would be a Tier 1 'concept stores' in key location. Rebranded under a new membership arrangement with VIN Inc Financial benefits available to upgrade sites, but higher membership fee Costs for fit out likely to be 50/50 split with central govt	Tier 2 licence agreement Tier 2 locations not part of the VIN Inc network but access to network systems etc Similar to status quo	WDC could still operate independent facility or could close the facility altogether. For the purpose of this exercise, assume still in operation as an independent (opting out completely discarded under Service Delivery)	Council continues to own and operate the i-SITE. Levels of service are based on historical patterns of delivery, with changes in response to community demand or changes in patterns of use. Council provides strategy and policy direction.	Partnering /collaborative working with other interested agencies e.g. shared space / co-location with DOC, Northland Inc	Council outsources the i-SITE operations but continues in a management / governance role Facility would continue to be owned by Council Council continues to provide strategic direction.	Council enters into shared services agreement with other Northland Council/s to manage and provide the i-SITE services. WDC and other council(s) provide their own strategy, policy direction but enter into a formal shared services arrangement to manage and provide planning and/or operational services	Transfer of operations to a newly formed CCO/CCTO with a board of directors / committee. Council will retain a strategy and policy direction function	Management of facility transfers to a Trust, Joint Venture or other partnership arrangement e.g. iwi or a National i-Site group or commercial operator	Similar to option C5 but with one or more of the other Northland Councils as joint owners. Some potential for reduced operational costs but likely to be relatively high set-up costs	Service may be provided by private organisation
Weighting															
Strategic Objectives															
A service that supports Council's vision of an inclusive, resilient and sustainable District		Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - option can support this but need to ensure local line of sight	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - option can support this but need to ensure local line of sight	Partial - if service provided by others
Providing information to visitors to promote our District and support economic wellbeing		Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - option can support this but need to ensure local line of sight	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Yes - option can support this	Partial - if service provided by others
Delivering a sustainable, meaningful and cost-effective activity for ratepayers		Partial - efficiencies with current arrangements are limited	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Yes - option can support this	Partial - no formal support from i-SITE network	Partial - efficiencies with current arrangements are limited	Yes - option can support this	Partial - some loss of control	Yes - some efficiencies will be introduced	Partial - option can support this but governance complexity may make it less affordable	Partial - some loss of control	Partial - governance complexity	Partial - if service provided by others
Weighting															
Financial benefits:	30%	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
Set up costs	10%	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	5
Governance and management costs	10%	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	5
Operational costs	10%	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
Non-financial benefits:	70%	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.2	2.1	1.6	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.1	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.6
Quality and efficient delivery of service through skilled staff and fit-for-purpose facilities and systems	15%	3	5	5	5	3	1	3	5	3	3	3	1	3	3
The ability to be agile and adaptable (respond quickly to changing expectations and requirements)	15%	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	5	3	3	1	1	1	1
Simplicity of governance and management	10%	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	5	1	1	1	1	5
Supporting regional collaboration	10%	3	3	3	5	3	3	3	5	3	5	3	3	5	1
Keeping community services local (employ local staff)	10%	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3
Acceptable and manageable level of risk	10%	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
Total score (financial plus non-financial benefits, out of 5):	100%	3.0	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.6	3.0	2.8	1.9	1.6	2.1	3.1
Overall assessment:		Possible	Possible	Preferred	Possible	Preferred	Not recommended	Status Quo	Preferred	Possible	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	Possible
Commentary:		The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective	More visible and better developed site would attract both locals and visitors. Site would become a destination. Could be significant benefit with little cost.	Benefits of enhanced site + Opportunity to build on service provided through peak summer months or by providing additional digital services Will be establishment costs and additional operational costs so permanent additional site not justified. Benefits of considering this as a shared arrangement with other Northland councils / stakeholders	Still part of VIN Benefit of upgrades being partly funded through central govt and greater access to central support	Still have benefits of IT systems, networks etc but under agreement with VIN not a licence. If Tier 2 only, could build on support of Tier 1 operations (closest would likely be Far North if they opt for Tier 1, otherwise Auckland)	Less able to deliver the expected service - negative impact on tourism industry in the north	The current arrangements deliver services that are reasonably efficient, however, some room for improvement to make the service more effective	Benefits of different organisations working alongside and supporting each other. Could introduce MOU to support partnering. Potential for shared space arrangements but more likely i-SITEs working with DOC / Northland Inc / Business Assocs etc to be able to promote the area / local businesses etc	Outsourcing option may drive efficiencies depending on format of contract and performance measures. Council would not have the responsibility to employ staff However, there would be a loss of control as well as a loss of benefits of sharing resources across Council depts	Some complexity to agree shared services arrangements Governance complexities However, potential opportunities such as efficiencies of scale Shared resourcing an unlikely benefit due to geographic spread	Complexity to governance arrangements. Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high set up costs for a CCO/CCTO	Significant set up complexity (i.e. cost). More complex governance arrangements Turnover of the facility does not justify the relatively high costs for a developing and establishing a partnership	Complexity to governance arrangements. Whilst there would be some benefits of collaboration, turnover of the facilities does not justify the relatively high set up costs for a CCO/CCTO	Assessed as a possible option on the assumption that this service is provided by private operation No costs to Council Council would have no control over operation which may impact on tourism promotion