



Notice of Council Workshop Briefing Session

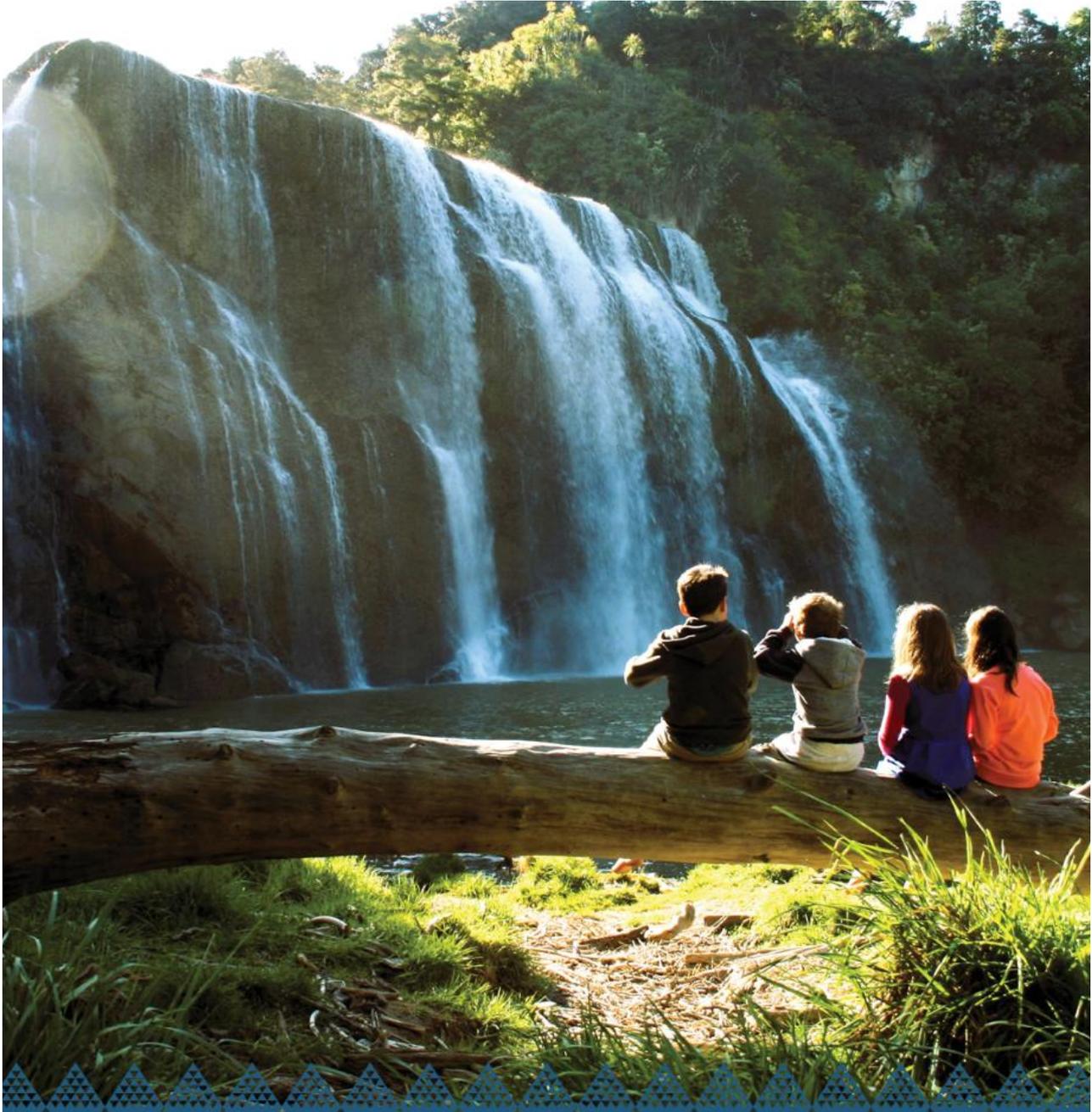
A workshop briefing session of the Tararua District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, 156 High Street, Dannevirke on **Wednesday 18 February 2026** commencing at **1:00 pm**.

Malcolm Alexander
Chief Executive

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Workshop Opening**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Briefing Papers**
 - 3.1 **Significance and Engagement Policy** 2
 - 3.2 **Strategic Framework** 13
 - 3.3 **LTP Communications and Engagement Planning** 22
4. **Closure**

Note: This workshop briefing session meeting is being held solely for the purpose of information and discussion, and no resolutions or decisions shall be made.



LONG TERM PLAN 2027-37

Significance and Engagement Policy Workshop

18 February 2026

LTP 2027 Workshop Reader



TARARUA
DISTRICT COUNCIL

[LTP 2027 Template - EM Workshop Presentation - S&E Policy.pptx](#)

Workshop purpose:

To present Council's current Significance and Engagement Policy to Elected Members.

To highlight the legislative requirement to have a Significance and Engagement Policy, what this policy is for and how it is used, and why it is important to review this policy.

To discuss Council's previous review of the policy (2023-2024) and whether a further review is required.

Guidance needed from Elected Members

- Whether the current SEP remains fit for purpose, or whether update is required;
- Any specific proposed changes or suggested focus areas for review;
- Whether there is any further information Elected Members need.

Relevant decision/adoption date:

If no changes or minor changes are required – Council's Significance and Engagement Policy could be adopted by Council on 25 March 2026.

If changes are required – public engagement will be undertaken at a level proportionate to the impact and scale of the changes. This could be discussed at the Early Engagement LTP Workshop on 4 March 2026, and an engagement approach decided by Council on 25 March 2026.

Strategic alignment

The Significance and Engagement Policy does not include a specific section on strategic alignment, but the level of strategic alignment is one criterion for assessing whether a decision, issue or matter is considered "Significant" under the policy.

- *Criteria: The degree to which a decision or action would require a change in an underlying strategic policy*
- *Measure: The decision represents a new strategic direction for Council*

The policy is a requirement of Section 76AA Local Government Act 2002 (LGA)

Key relevant legislation and policy/ strategies:

- Local Government Act 2002 (LGA): [Local Government Act 2002 No 84 \(as at 15 January 2026\), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation](#)
- Long Term Plan 2024-2034;
- District Strategy 2050;
- Memoranda of Partnership with Iwi;
- Iwi and Māori Engagement in Council Decision-Making Policy;



The Local Government Act 2002 requires councils to adopt a Significance and Engagement policy in section 76AA.

Subpart 1—Planning and decision-making

Significance and engagement policy

Heading: inserted, on 8 August 2014, by [section 20](#) of the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Act 2014 (2014 No 55).

76AA Significance and engagement policy

(1) Every local authority must adopt a policy setting out—

- (a) that local authority's general approach to determining the significance of proposals and decisions in relation to issues, assets, and other matters; and
- (b) any criteria or procedures that are to be used by the local authority in assessing the extent to which issues, proposals, assets, decisions, or activities are significant or may have significant consequences; and
- (c) how the local authority will respond to community preferences about engagement on decisions relating to specific issues, assets, or other matters, including the form of consultation that may be desirable; and
- (d) how the local authority will engage with communities on other matters.

(2) The purpose of the policy is—

- (a) to enable the local authority and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions, and activities; and
- (b) to provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions about different issues, assets, or other matters; and
- (c) to inform the local authority from the beginning of a decision-making process about—
 - (i) the extent of any public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made; and
 - (ii) the form or type of engagement required.

(3) The policy adopted under subsection (1) must list the assets considered by the local authority to be strategic assets.

(4) A policy adopted under subsection (1) may be amended from time to time.

(5) When adopting or amending a policy under this section, the local authority must consult in accordance with [section 82](#) unless it considers on reasonable grounds that it has sufficient information about community interests and preferences to enable the purpose of the policy to be achieved.

(5A)

[Repealed]

(6) To avoid doubt, [section 80](#) applies when a local authority deviates from this policy.

Water services

(7) Consultation under subsection (5) is not required to amend a policy to the extent that the amendment is made when a territorial authority—

- (a) has established a water organisation under the [Local Government \(Water Services\) Act 2025](#); and
- (b) is working with that organisation in relation to the organisation's significance and engagement policy under [section 37\(4\)](#) of that Act.

(8) This section applies subject to [sections 34](#) and [37\(4\)](#) of that Act.

Section 76AA: inserted, on 8 August 2014, by [section 20](#) of the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Act 2014 (2014 No 55).

Section 76AA(5A): repealed, on 23 December 2023, by [section 6](#) of the Resource Management (Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning Repeal and Interim Fast-track Consenting) Act 2023 (2023 No 68).

Section 76AA(7) heading: inserted, on 27 August 2025, by [section 172](#) of the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Act 2025 (2025 No 43).

Section 76AA(7): inserted, on 27 August 2025, by [section 172](#) of the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Act 2025 (2025 No 43).

Section 76AA(8): inserted, on 27 August 2025, by [section 172](#) of the Local Government (Water Services) (Repeals and Amendments) Act 2025 (2025 No 43).



Also relevant is Part 6, subpart 1 of the LGA, which relates to planning, decision making and accountability:

	Part 6
	Planning, decision-making, and accountability
75	Outline of Part
	Subpart 1—Planning and decision-making
	<i>Significance and engagement policy</i>
76AA	Significance and engagement policy
	<i>Decision-making</i>
76	Decision-making
77	Requirements in relation to decisions
78	Community views in relation to decisions
79	Compliance with procedures in relation to decisions
80	Identification of inconsistent decisions
81	Contributions to decision-making processes by Māori
	<i>Consultation</i>
82	Principles of consultation
82A	Information requirements for consultation required under this Act
83	Special consultative procedure
83AA	Summary of information
83A	Combined or concurrent consultation
83B	Interpretation <i>[Repealed]</i>
83C	Use of special consultative procedure during recovery from severe weather events <i>[Repealed]</i>
83B	Use of special consultative procedure during outbreak of COVID-19 <i>[Repealed]</i>
83C	Long-term plan commencing on 1 July 2021 <i>[Repealed]</i>
83D	Repeal of sections 83B and 83C and this section <i>[Repealed]</i>
84	Special consultative procedure in relation to long-term plan <i>[Repealed]</i>
85	Use of special consultative procedure in relation to annual plan <i>[Repealed]</i>
86	Use of special consultative procedure in relation to making, amending, or revoking bylaws
87	Other use of special consultative procedure
88	Use of special consultative procedure in relation to change of mode of delivery of significant activity <i>[Repealed]</i>
89	Summary of information <i>[Repealed]</i>
90	Policy on significance <i>[Repealed]</i>
	<i>Community outcomes</i>
	<i>[Repealed]</i>
91	Process for identifying community outcomes <i>[Repealed]</i>
92	Obligation to report against community outcomes <i>[Repealed]</i>
	<i>Planning</i>
93	Long-term plan
93A	Use of special consultative procedure in relation to long-term plan
93B	Purpose of consultation document for long-term plan
93C	Content of consultation document for adoption of long-term plan
93D	Content of consultation document for amendment of long-term plan
93DA	Amendments to long-term plan after severe weather events <i>[Repealed]</i>
93DA	Amendments to long-term plan during outbreak of COVID-19 <i>[Repealed]</i>
93E	Additional content of consultation document for adoption or amendment of long-term plan where section 97 applies to proposed decision
93F	Form and manner of presentation of consultation document
93G	Information to be adopted by local authority in relation to long-term plan and consultation



92	Obigation to report against community outcomes <i>[Repealed]</i> <i>Planning</i>
93	Long-term plan
93A	Use of special consultative procedure in relation to long-term plan
93B	Purpose of consultation document for long-term plan
93C	Content of consultation document for adoption of long-term plan
93D	Content of consultation document for amendment of long-term plan
93DA	Amendments to long-term plan after severe weather events <i>[Repealed]</i>
93DA	Amendments to long-term plan during outbreak of COVID-19 <i>[Repealed]</i>
93E	Additional content of consultation document for adoption or amendment of long-term plan where section 97 applies to proposed decision
93F	Form and manner of presentation of consultation document
93G	Information to be adopted by local authority in relation to long-term plan and consultation document
94	Audit of long-term plan
94A	Long-term plan amended during recovery from severe weather events <i>[Repealed]</i>
94A	Long-term plan amended during outbreak of COVID-19 <i>[Repealed]</i>
95	Annual plan
95AAA	2023/2024 annual plan due date <i>[Repealed]</i>
95A	Purpose and content of consultation document for annual plan
95B	Combined or concurrent consultation on long-term plan and annual plan
96	Effect of resolution adopting long-term plan or annual plan
97	Certain decisions to be taken only if provided for in long-term plan

Relevant internal documents include Council's Long-Term Plan, District Strategy and Iwi and Māori Engagement in Council Decision-Making Policy, which set out respectively: Council's critical levels of service and projects programme over 10 years; longer term strategy for the district; and how Council will engage with Iwi and Māori when making decisions.

Additionally, Council's Memoranda of Partnership with its Iwi must be given effect to in Council policies, processes, strategies and plans.

Discussion

What is our Significance and Engagement Policy?

- Each Council is required to develop a Significance and Engagement Policy under s76AA of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002;
- It is good practice to regularly review this policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflective of our communities and practices;
- This policy is a tool for letting our communities know:
 - what decisions or matters Council and our communities consider to be particularly important;
 - how Council will assess the importance of matters;
 - how and when the community can expect to be consulted or engaged with on these matters.

What is the purpose of a Significance and Engagement Policy?



Section 76AA of the LGA 2002 says:

The purpose of a significance and engagement policy is:

- (a) *to enable the local authority and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions and activities; and*
- (b) *to provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions about different issues, assets, or other matters; and*
- (c) *to inform the local authority from the beginning of a decision-making process about –*
 - i. *The extent of any public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made; and*
 - ii. *The form or type of engagement required.*

The Significance and Engagement policy allows Council to identify:

- which assets Council considers are “strategic assets” (p8 current policy).
 - These assets are considered strategic as they must be retained by Council to deliver outcomes important to community wellbeing.
 - Decisions on transferring ownership or control of these assets require the use of the Special Consultative Procedure under the Local Government Act.
- how we determine significance and what is a “significant decision”;
- which tools Council will use to engage with the community on issues.

The Significance and Engagement Policy allows Council to engage with the community in bespoke ways to get their input on these things.

Why is this so important?

- Where Council is required by other legislation to use the special consultative procedure when making a decision, this policy does not allow Council to depart from that procedure’s mandatory requirements.
- However, where consultation is permitted “in accordance with section 82 – Principles of Consultation” of the LGA 2002, there is a relaxation of the consultation requirements and Council can use the tools set out in its SEP to engage with the community how it sees fit – i.e. it is up to Council to choose how to apply the principles of consultation set out in section 82 LGA.
- The SEP is the key to this **greater flexibility** – it sets out Council’s “house rules” as to how we will engage.

Significance vs Significant

Significance and Significant are defined terms in the LGA 2002.

“significance, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter that concerns or is before a local authority, means the degree of importance of the issue, proposal, decision, or matter, as assessed by the local authority, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for, –

- *the current and future social, economic, environmental, or cultural well-being of the district or region;*
- *any persons who are likely to be particularly affected by, or interested in, the issue, proposal, decision, or matter;*



- *the capacity of the local authority to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so.”*

“significant, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter, means that the issue, proposal, decision, or other matter has a high degree of significance”.

The distinction between the two words is important. Section 76AA refers to degrees of significance, which reinforces that significance is a continuum ranging from day-to-day matters with low impact on the community, right up to those with a very high significance to and impact on the community.

Why is Council reviewing the policy now?

- The policy states that it will be reviewed at a minimum of every three years, during the first six months of the new triennium, or as required by any legislative changes or other reason.
- Council reviews the policy as part of its LTP process, in the first triennium following local government elections.
- Decisions on engagement with the community can then be assessed against Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy.

The last review of the Significance and Engagement Policy took place as part of our LTP in 2024.

- Research was undertaken to identify any improvements that Council could make to the policy, as well as any changes in Council’s engagement practices, and improving Council’s utilisation of the policy for the benefit of communities.
- Through discussions with teams / stakeholders, some general themes were identified. These are set out below with actions taken:
 - Implementation was emphasised as important, and since the last LTP, work has been undertaken to ensure the SEP is imbedded into Council life, and to develop internal guidance and wrap around processes to help officers understand their obligations and how to comply with them. Development of a levels of engagement matrix and process map for determining engagement and consultation requirements was completed in 2025.
 - Leveraging and applying officers’ insights into our communities’ preferences for engagement was seen as critical for effectively engaging with the community, and work was undertaken to capture communities’ preferences through a communication survey in 2025.
 - It was emphasised that the policy should be easy to understand, accessible, and helpful. The review captured this feedback and an implementation plan was developed.
- The outcomes of the SEP are largely prescribed by legislation (purpose section s76AA LGA).
- The review of the policy identified the following outcomes:
 - Make the decision-making process more robust;
 - Ensure decision-making complies with our obligations, duties and commitments including to our Iwi and to Māori;
 - Make the policy easier to follow for officers, encouraging compliance;
 - Ensure the policy reflects Tararua and its communities;
 - Signal to Tararua’s communities in a transparent way how, when and why Council engages.
- The review considered the Local Government Act requirements regarding engaging with Māori and ensuring participation by Māori in local authority decision-making processes, found at section 81 of the LGA:



<p>81 Contributions to decision-making processes by Māori</p> <p>(1) A local authority must—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and(b) consider ways in which it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and(c) provide relevant information to Māori for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b). <p>(2) A local authority, in exercising its responsibility to make judgments about the manner in which subsection (1) is to be complied with, must have regard to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the role of the local authority, as set out in section 11; and(b) such other matters as the local authority considers on reasonable grounds to be relevant to those judgments.

It also considered Council's Memoranda of partnerships and commitment to its Iwi:

- Council must give effect to its memorandum of partnership with each of its Iwi:
 - Rangitāne O Tamaki Nui A Rua, signed 23 February 2000; and
 - Ngāti Kahungunu ki Tāmaki nui-a-Rua Trust, signed 25 September 2019.
- Council has committed to giving effect to our Treaty of Waitangi (te Tiriti) and partnership obligations in both its District Strategy 2050 and Long-Term Plan 2024-2034.
- Council also articulates how it will give effect to these commitments at the individual activity level and in key policies, strategies and plans.

As a result of the previous review of the SEP, the following changes were made:

- The addition of a decision tree in the policy, and development of an internal process guide to assist officers with decision-making,
- Implementation measures including guides and process maps;
- A statement about our commitment to engagement with Iwi and Māori;

What has changed:

- Local Water Done Well – on 20 August 2025, following consultation with the community, Council resolved to join the proposed Wairarapa Tararua Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) and to transfer its Three Waters assets to the joint CCO.
- Further significant and extensive local government reform is underway; however, no changes have been made at this stage to remove the requirement for Council to have a Significance and Engagement Policy under the Local Government Act.
 - It remains more important than ever to have a robust policy to ensure the community is clear when and how Council will engage.
- Councils across the country are currently reviewing their Significance and Engagement Policies as part of their Long-Term Plan processes.

Community views

The community views on any proposed changes to the SEP will be captured by engagement with the community. This engagement will be tailored to the scale and impact of the changes.

Previously, although a thorough review was completed through the LTP process, the review did not propose any changes to Council's strategic assets or how Council would seek to engage with its communities. If Council were proposing changes to either its strategic assets or significance criteria and measures, it would need to consider the best way to receive and implement the community's feedback on those changes.



The community was last engaged on the Significance and Engagement Policy through the Draft LTP process 2024-2034.

Other measures for capturing community views on how and when Council engages with the community include the Community Communications and Engagement Survey, commissioned in 2025.

Management recommendation

It is recommended that Elected Members consider whether the current Significance and Engagement Policy requires a refresh or remains fit for purpose.

Management's recommendation, subject to Elected Members' views, is that following a more in-depth review in 2024, the current version of the policy remains fit for purpose or any required changes are likely to be minimal and not require engagement with the community; and

It is recommended that the policy be reviewed following the introduction of pending legislative reform (which may occur during or outside of the Long-Term Plan process) to ensure there are no further updates needed.

Next steps

- Receive feedback from Elected Members
- Review policy in light of feedback
- Assess the impact of changes, if any
- Bring the policy back to Council, either for adoption prior to engagement, or final adoption, on 25 March 2026.
- Key dates are below.

Date	Action	Who
4 March 2026	LTP Early Engagement Workshop – any engagement required?	
25 March 2026	Council Meeting – adoption or engagement	



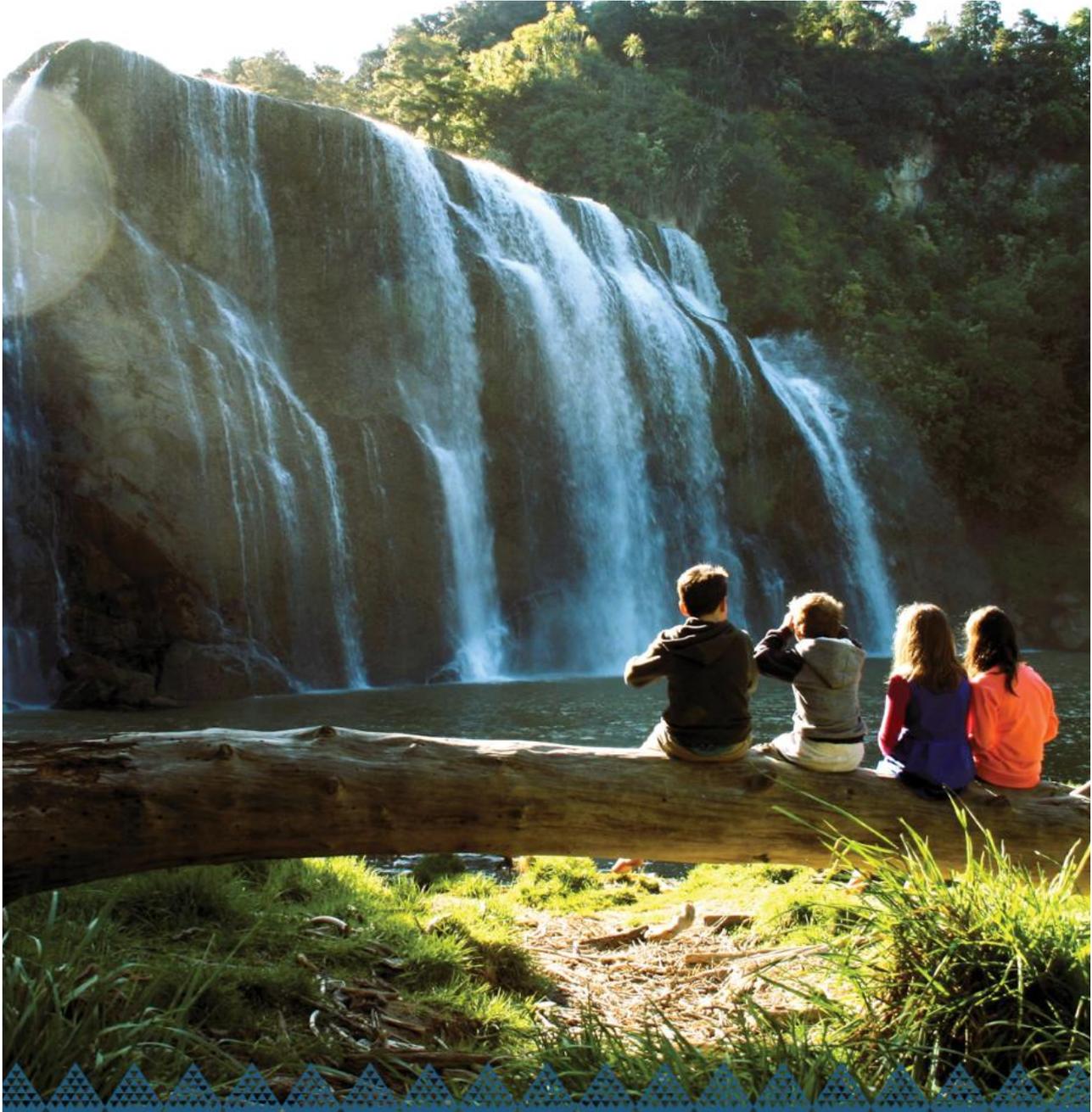


Dannevirke Service Centre
26 Gordon Street, Dannevirke
PO Box 115, Dannevirke 4942
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 5:00pm
Phone: 06 374 4080 (24 hours)
Email: info@tararua.govt.nz

Pahiatua Service Centre
136 Main Street, Pahiatua
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 4:30pm
Phone: 06 376 0110 (24 hours)
Email: info@tararua.govt.nz

Eketāhuna Service Centre & Library
31 Main Street, Eketāhuna
Monday - Friday
10:30am - 12:30pm & 1:00pm - 4:30pm
Phone: 06 376 0110 (24 hours)
Email: info@tararua.govt.nz

Woodville Service Centre, Library & site
45 Vogel Street, Woodville
Monday - Friday
9:00am - 5:00pm
Phone: 06 376 0200 (24 hours)
Email: info@tararua.govt.nz



LONG TERM PLAN 2027-37

Draft Strategic Framework

WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2026

LTP 2027 Workshop Reader



Timing – where does this discussion sit in the context of the wider project?

TARARUA DISTRICT COUNCIL LONG TERM PLAN 2027 — BIRD'S EYE VIEW (10/02/2026)							
1. PREPARATION		2. PLANNING AND REVIEW			3. CONSULTATION		4. ADOPTION + CLOSE
OCT – DEC 2025		JAN – APR 2026			MAY – AUG 2026		SEPT – DEC 2026
JAN – APR 2026		MAY – AUG 2026			SEPT – DEC 2026		JAN – APR 2027
MAY – AUG 2026		SEPT – DEC 2026			JAN – APR 2027		MAY – SEPT 2027
SCENE SETTING	Project Initiation Strategic Stocktake Environmental Scan Financial health check Project Kickoff	Strategic Planning Financial health check Strategic assumption	Activity Group structure review Infrastructure Strategy Asset Management Performance Framework	Activity Statements	DEADLINE FOR APPROVAL OF SUPPORTING INFO FOR AUDIT HARD DEADLINE: SUPPORTING INFO	KEY Grey - Not yet started Pattern - In progress Colour - Completed ✓ - Approve for audit Ⓢ - Adopt 👤 - Approve for consultation	TARARUA DISTRICT COUNCIL
ASSETS AND ACTIVITIES	Asset Management Plans Significance and Engagement Policy	Asset Management Policy	Performance Framework	Activity Statements	ADoption of ALL CONSULTATION MATERIAL		
POLICY	Development Contributions Policy?	Revenue and Financing Policy Treasury Risk Management Policy Financial Strategy	Rating System Rates Remission Policy Fees + Charges Review Rating base info	Budget Inputting B1 B2 B3 Budget Final draft Financial Statements			
FINANCIAL	Develop budget process	Financial Strategy	Rating System Rates Remission Policy Fees + Charges Review Rating base info	Budget Inputting B1 B2 B3 Budget Final draft Financial Statements			
CONSULTATION	Early engagement timing?	Early engagement timing?	Rating System Rates Remission Policy Fees + Charges Review Rating base info	Budget Inputting B1 B2 B3 Budget Final draft Financial Statements	Consultation Hearings Deliberations		
AUDIT	Early meeting with Audit Manager to project timing and expectations	Early meeting with Audit Manager to project timing and expectations	Rating System Rates Remission Policy Fees + Charges Review Rating base info	Budget Inputting B1 B2 B3 Budget Final draft Financial Statements	Audit of CD and supporting info		Audit review of final LTP
DOC DEVELOPMENT			Rating System Rates Remission Policy Fees + Charges Review Rating base info	Budget Inputting B1 B2 B3 Budget Final draft Financial Statements	Develop LTP doc		Adopt LTP Project debrief and close
NON-LTP MAHI	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27	Quarterly reporting Annual Report Annual Plan 2026/27

Workshop purpose:

The purpose of this workshop is to present a working draft of Council's strategic framework for further discussion and direction from elected members.

Guidance needed from Elected Members

1. Does this framework (vision, values, priorities, and outcomes) clearly express your strategic direction for this LTP?

Relevant decision/adoption date: 25 March: Approval as a draft for community feedback.

Strategic alignment

Today's discussion will inform the update to Council's current strategic framework which can be found on pages 12- 13 of the 2024 LTP.

The Local Government Act 2002, Schedule 10, section 1 requires Council's long term plan to describe its community outcomes:

Part 1
Information to be included in long-term plans

1 Community outcomes
A long-term plan must, to the extent determined appropriate by the local authority, describe the community outcomes for the local authority's district or region.

There is no LGA requirement to include a vision, values, or priorities, however the process of identifying and articulating these elements of the framework is considered best practice in strategic planning.

Discussion

Purpose of a Strategic Framework

Council's priorities and outcomes are the foundation of all the planning and decisions made in the LTP:

- All of the research and investigation that staff to support your decision-making process is guided by your strategic framework.
- Options will be assessed for alignment to your **priorities** and **outcomes**.
- All the processes, including community engagement will be undertaken according to your **values**.



An LTP in which all the individual elements align with your strategic framework will tell a single story about where Council intends to take the district over the next 10 years.

The one-pager will sit up-front in the LTP document, as the anchor for what follows. You can develop short explanatory content for each element “to the extent you deem appropriate” (see snip from the LGA on previous page).

Your strategic framework directly influences the way you fund your activities, levels of service and performance measures.

Background

At its Strategy Retreat on 29 and 30 January 2026, Council discussed a range of matters, including:

- What elected members heard from the community during the election process,
- Council’s values,
- Council’s existing strategies and key planning documents,
- Goals and aspirations for the next 3, 10, 30 years,
- Key priorities.

Following the retreat, staff drafted a one-page strategic framework based on the ideas and priorities raised over the two days.

Governance Views

Focus

- Engagement and communication – build trust with all stakeholders
- Visibility of council activities
- Transparency
- Enhanced facilities – more recreational opportunities
- Strong connections with iwi and Māori
- Community voice especially in decision making
- Relationship between councilors and operational staff
- District plan change:
- Growth (sustainable)
- DCs



- Revenue streams
- Utilising / rationalising existing resources
- Sustainable infrastructure
- Core services
- Cost efficiency / productivity
- Improved communication and consultation
- Improve the workflow from community via elected member to operation and completion
- How do we do things smarter? Affordable rates
- Change in mindset
- Cure the legacy problems
- Cost effectiveness

Passion

- Innovation and growth
- Finance (national and global)
- Efficiencies– Adding value to the community
- Māori culture – Future of NZ
- District growth
- Promoting Tararua as a place to live and visit
- Growth
- Communications
- Community services for diverse needs
- Communication and utilising tech
- Delivering a plan, doing the basics right and manage expectations
- Enabling / removing barriers to recreation for the community
- Advocating for services
- Growth and making our communities attractive



- Leveraging on new highway
- Telling our story better and taking the community on the journey
- Local voice / localism
- Competitive advantage – point of difference

Community views

Themes from the retreat discussion on what elected members heard from the community during the election process can be summarised as follows:

1. Affordability vs Expectations

Communities want improved services while also wanting lower cost impacts. This indicates a need for stronger communication around trade-offs and prioritisation.

2. Trust is Closely Linked to Understanding

Many concerns appear to stem from limited understanding of council roles, legislative obligations, and cost drivers rather than dissatisfaction with outcomes alone.

3. Visibility Matters

Residents strongly judge council performance based on visible, everyday services and how responsive council appears.

4. Desire for Partnership

There is a clear expectation that council should:

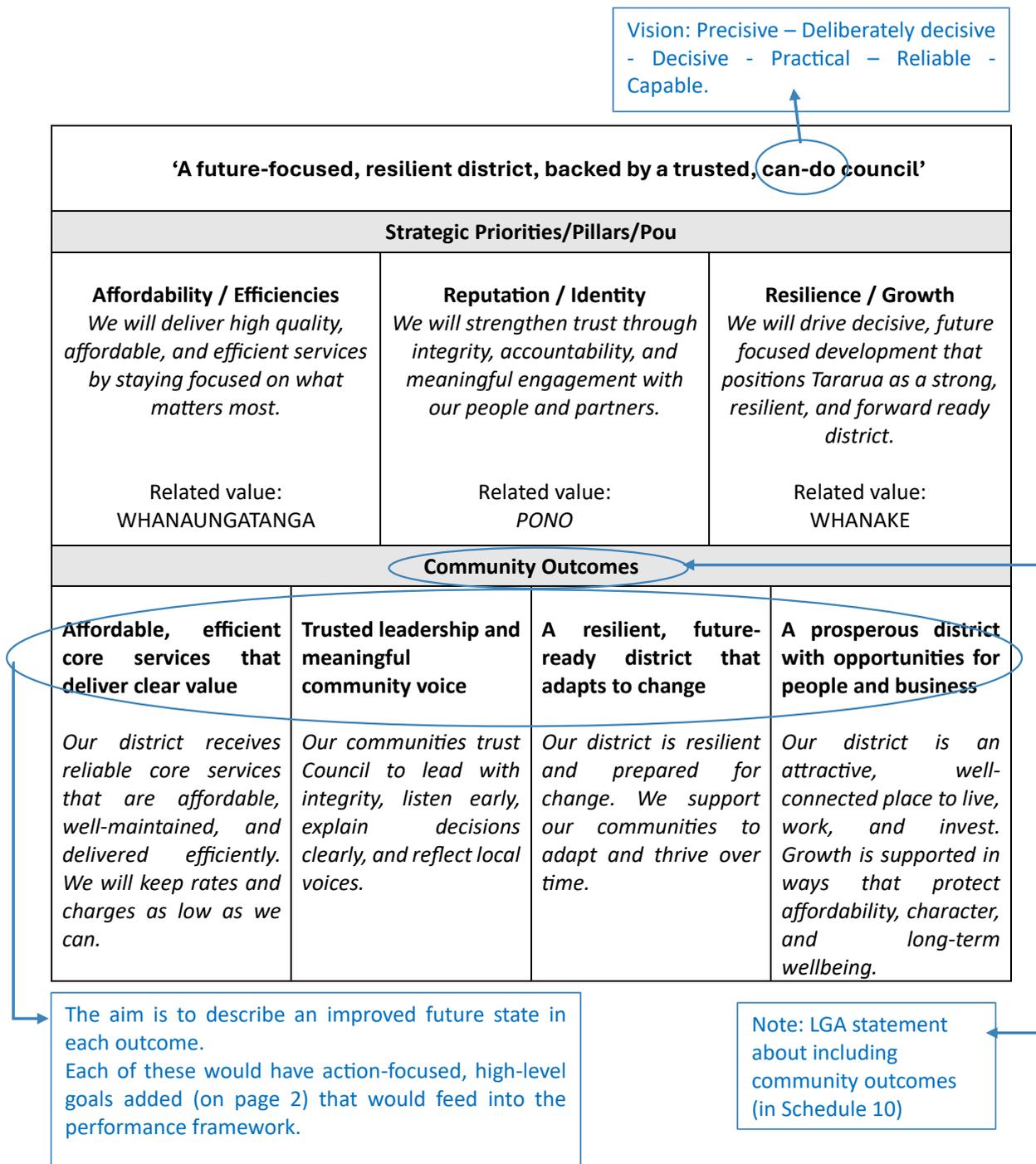
- Listen earlier
- Communicate more clearly
- Enable community and business activity
- Demonstrate integrity and accountability

These themes are reflected in the draft framework.



Strategic Framework: the working draft...

The draft framework below is presented for discussion and refinement. If the draft progresses to the point where Council is happy to adopt it as a draft for community feedback, it can be added to the Council agenda for 25 February. If ongoing work is required, adoption as a draft can be scheduled for 25 March.



Management recommendation

No recommendation made.

Next steps

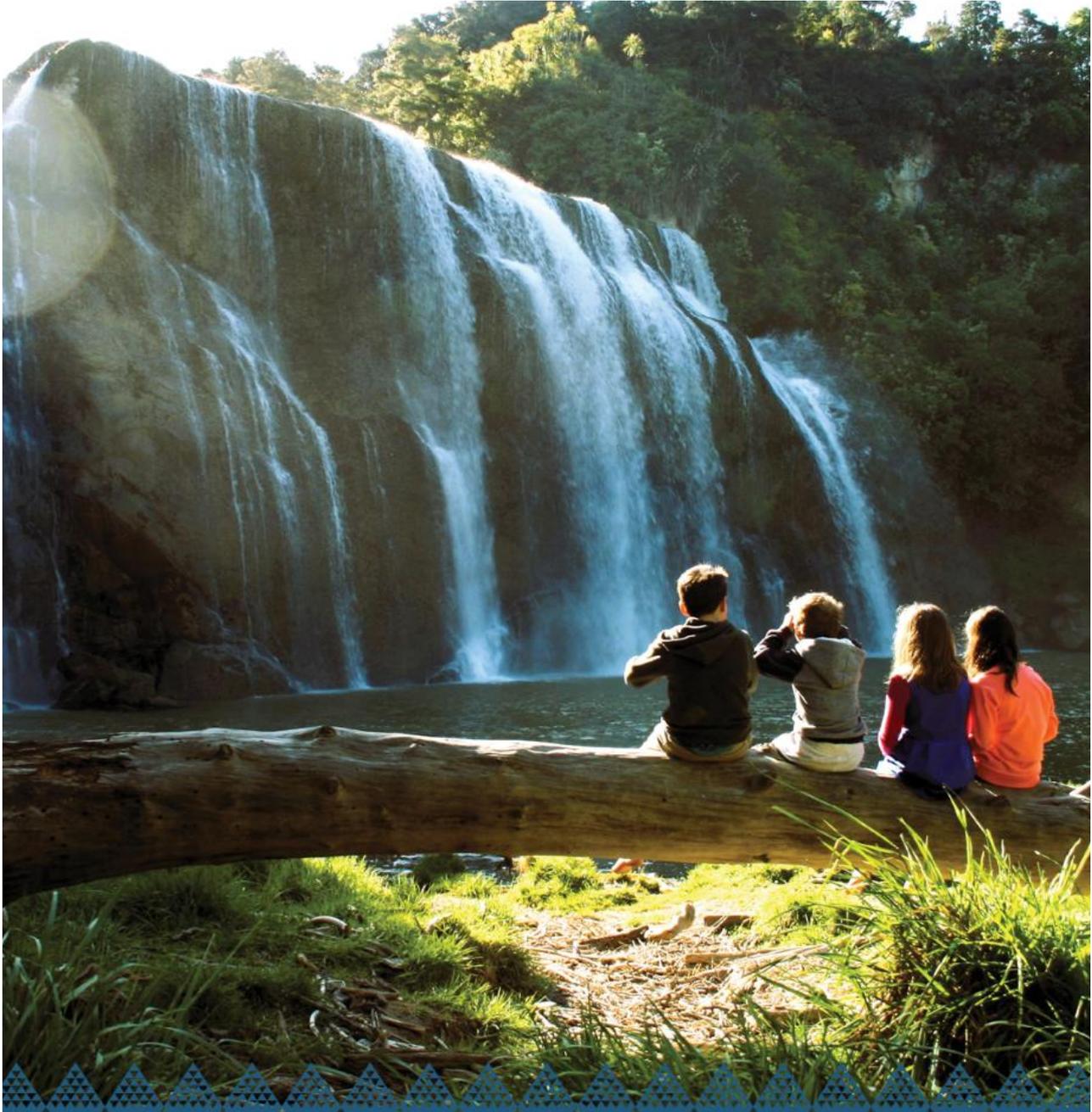
Date	Action	Who
Either 25 February or 25 March	Approve as a draft for community feedback.	Council





TARARUA
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<p>Dannevirke Service Centre 26 Gordon Street, Dannevirke PO Box 115, Dannevirke 4942 Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm Phone: 06 374 4080 (24 hours) Email: info@tararua.govt.nz</p>	<p>Pahiatua Service Centre 136 Main Street, Pahiatua Monday - Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm Phone: 06 376 0110 (24 hours) Email: info@tararua.govt.nz</p>
<p>Eketāhuna Service Centre & Library 31 Main Street, Eketāhuna Monday - Friday 10:30am - 12:30pm & 1:00pm - 4:30pm Phone: 06 376 0110 (24 hours) Email: info@tararua.govt.nz</p>	<p>Woodville Service Centre, Library & site 45 Vogel Street, Woodville Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm Phone: 06 376 0200 (24 hours) Email: info@tararua.govt.nz</p>



LONG TERM PLAN 2027-37

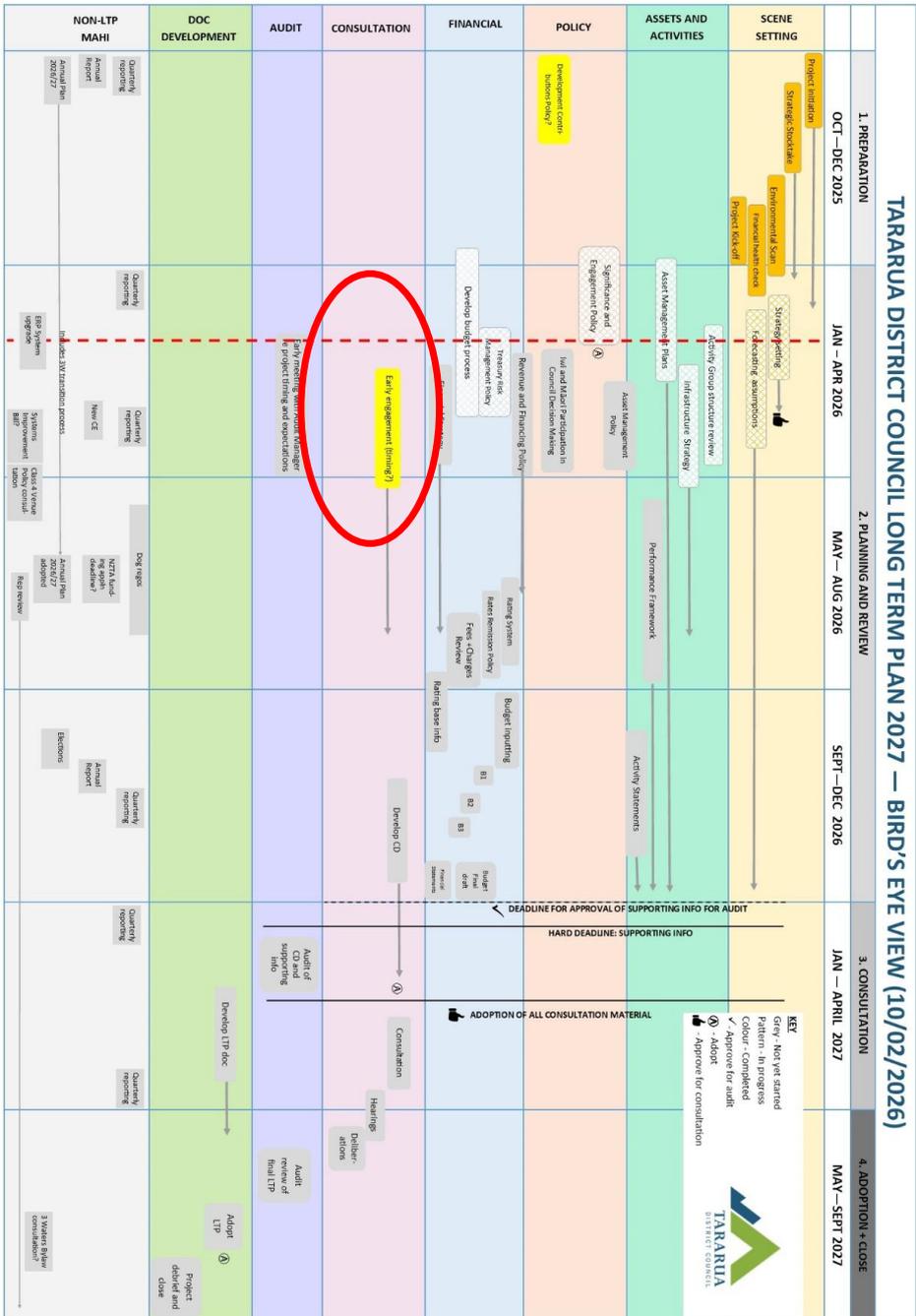
Communications and Engagement

WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2026

LTP 2027 Workshop Reader
[Link to workshop presentation]



Timing – where does this discussion sit in the context of the wider project?



Workshop purpose:

To set the foundations and expectations for communications and community engagement for the duration of the Long Term Plan 2027-2037.

Guidance needed from Elected Members

- **Focus Groups:** How should staff and the various Focus Groups work together throughout the Long Term Plan process?
- **Iwi Engagement:** How should iwi engagement be approached alongside governance- and executive-level engagement?
- **Community Views:** Are there specific community perspectives, groups, or issues that need stronger focus or are not yet adequately considered?
- **Channels:** Which communication and engagement channels should we prioritise, and where should we focus most effort and investment?
- **Tone/Look/Feel:** What overall tone and visual style should guide how the LTP is presented to our community?
- **Key Messages:** If our community only remembers one thing about the Long Term Plan, what should that be?

Strategic alignment

Alignment with Council Values		Alignment with new strategic direction	
Pono	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Affordability	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Whanake	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Reputation	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Whanaungatanga	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Growth	✓ ✓ ✓

Risks +and Mitigations

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Consultation Fatigue	High volumes of consultation across multiple agencies, potentially reducing willingness to engage.	Starting the conversation early in spaces and places that align with everyday life. Exploring outside the box ideas and taking a fresh new approach to engaging with or communities. Continuous and pro-active championship of the engagement by council representatives.
Limited knowledge and understanding of what the Long Term Plan is and why it's important for our communities.	Few submissions, low quality submissions. Feedback is received outside of LTP process limiting the ability for real change to be influenced by community.	Build messaging into our plan that educates on LTP – using real world examples and plain language messaging.
Dominating vocal minority leading the discussion.	People shy away from participating, afraid of voicing their opinion or being overshadowed by louder voices. Potential increase of misinformation and disinformation (intentional misinformation) regarding council services/plans.	Hyper vigilant on social media channels, responding to commentary and where required, enforcing rules of engagement. Increase our monitoring of community pages, capturing trends and crafting careful and targeted responses. Direct approaches from ELT/EM where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
Complex issues and information not being presented in a user friendly way.	People who want to engage with the process feel disengaged, alienated and unable to participate. Quality voices remain unheard.	Ease of language, and reader-focussed tone. Intentional and deliberate ordering of debate items. Sharing content in digestible formats and delivering across a variety of channels.



<p>Central Government – political landscape and reform avalanche create confusion and distraction.</p>	<p>Council discussions are overshadowed and don't feel like a priority.</p> <p>Communities disengage from discussions due to high levels of uncertainty.</p> <p>Council positions itself poorly in the eyes of the incoming government.</p>	<p>Use “everyday channels” to create a prominent and reliable conversation space. Prioritising relatability of decisions in terms of people’s lives and experiences.</p> <p>Being clear, transparent and direct about what we do (and don’t) know about the future.</p> <p>Be adaptable and deliberate in our choice of wording.</p>
<p>Level of internal support and championship from council representatives.</p>	<p>Internal support across all-of-council is required to deliver meaningful in-person engagements.</p>	<p>Early notice and clear instruction given to support staff and representatives.</p> <p>CE and Mayoral advocacy.</p>

Discussion

- **Focus Groups**

How should staff and the various Focus Groups work together throughout the Long Term Plan process?

Staff are seeking guidance on:

- the role the Focus Groups want to play at different stages of the process
- how and when staff should work alongside the group
- how advice and feedback from the group should be reported back to full Council

Stages of LTP Process:

- **Early Engagement:** Early engagement allows council the opportunity to share information with and gather information from the community, without the legal requirements and restrictions of formal public consultation. Feedback from this workshop will be used to develop a draft approach for early community engagement.
- **On-going communication:** Feedback from this workshop will also be used to develop a set of high-level key messages and a consistent look/feel (brand) to guide all LTP communications.



- **Public Consultation:** Insights gathered through early engagement and subsequent workshops with elected members will inform a draft public consultation approach. This will include the opportunity to change or adapt the approach carried out for early engagement if this didn't yield desirable results.
- **Feedback Loop:** It is important to inform the community how their feedback influenced decision-making.

See **Management recommendation** for more information.

- **Iwi Engagement:**

How can we ensure that our messages reach and resonate with Māori audiences?

We are seeking guidance on elected members' expectations for engagement with Māori people, beyond existing governance- and executive-level relationships with iwi partners.

This guidance will help ensure engagement is meaningful and appropriately resourced.

- **Community Views:**

What community views should we consider as we design engagement for the Long Term Plan?

Through earlier internal workshops and a recent community survey, a number of recurring community views have already been identified. These reflect not just opinions on specific issues, but broader perceptions about Council, consultation, and trust.

This section is intended to sense-check those views and identify any additional perspectives that need to be actively considered or addressed as part of Long Term Plan engagement.

This will ensure engagement existing perceptions, anticipates likely points of tension or misunderstanding, and reaches those who may otherwise feel unheard.

Community views captured to date (summary):

- Perception that consultation can feel tokenistic or pre-determined
- Doubts that feedback genuinely influences decisions
- Affordability and value-for-money concerns
- View that Council can feel bureaucratic or disconnected
- Rural communities feeling overlooked
- Low visibility or late awareness of engagement opportunities



• **Channels**

Which method of communication and engagement should we prioritise for the Long Term Plan, i.e. where should we focus the most effort and investment?

This guidance will help staff determine where to concentrate time, budget, and efforts. Before providing guidance, it is important to understand that different channels serve different purposes:

- Digital and online channels provide broad reach, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness, and are often the first point of contact for information.
- Print supports accessibility, particularly for residents with limited digital access, but is resource-intensive and slower to adapt.
- In-person and verbal engagement allows for deeper conversations, trust-building, and more nuanced feedback, but reaches fewer people and requires significant staff and elected representative time.
- Extraordinary methods may increase visibility or participation but are typically untested and can involve higher complexity, cost or risk and require clear justification.

We are seeking guidance on:

- which channel types should be prioritised i.e. where Council should invest most heavily to achieve meaningful engagement; and
- Council’s appetite for extraordinary engagement methods, including any options elected members wish officers to explore further.

	Digital + Online	Print	In-Person / Verbal	Extraordinary
COUNCIL	Website Facebook Instagram LinkedIn YouTube <i>(i.e. council meetings)</i> Antenno	Media release Posters Information Sheets/Brochures Signage	Drop-in sessions/council-organised events <i>(utilise Library buildings)</i> Council meetings and workshops <i>(streaming and recording)</i>	<i>Visual display at service centres and libraries</i> <i>Voting Stations (i.e. at supermarkets)</i> <i>Forums</i>
EXTERNAL	Radio TVNZ Ads-On-Pause Medium-Rectangle (MREC) Adverts (the small square ads typically down the sides of websites)	Advertising in Bush Telegraph Advertising in other local papers or newsletters Community newsletters	Stall/presence at community events Speaker at community meetings	<i>Citizen Assemblies</i>
\$*	\$	\$\$\$	\$\$	\$?

* Relative cost and staff effort only. Does not represent allocated or approved budget.



• **Tone/Look/Feel:**

What overall tone and visual style should guide how the LTP is presented to our community?

This guidance will set the general direction for how the LTP is presented and experienced by the community, rather than providing instruction on individual designs, formats, or materials.

To support this discussion, a directional matrix has been developed that reflects a range of valid approaches, based on differences in tone (formal to conversational) and visual style (corporate to distinctive).

Elected members are asked to indicate where, across this matrix, they believe Council should primarily position itself for the Long Term Plan. The combined views will help identify a collective centre of gravity, which staff will use to guide the development of consistent, accessible, and effective communications across all channels.

This approach allows for nuance and flexibility, while ensuring a clear and agreed direction underpins all LTP engagement activity.

	< FORMAL	CONVERSATIONAL >
CORPORATE ^	<p>Option A: Clear & Corporate <i>(Formal tone + Corporate visual style)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean, structured, and familiar presentation Formal, informational tone Strong and consistent use of Council branding Emphasis on clarity, accuracy, and readability 	<p>Option B: Branded but Bold <i>(Formal tone + Distinctive visual style)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong Council identity with more expressive design Formal, information-led tone Greater visual emphasis while remaining recognisably "Council" Clear structure with more visual interest
< DISTINCTIVE	<p>Option C: Simple & Eye-catching <i>(Conversational tone + Corporate-to-lightly-distinctive visual style)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain language and conversational tone Minimal text with clear visual hierarchy Focus on fast understanding and accessibility Simple, uncluttered presentation 	<p>Option D: Distinctive & Different <i>(Conversational tone + Distinctive visual style)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversational, engaging tone Highly stylised and non-traditional presentation Strong visual identity specific to the LTP Expressive design choices used consistently



Visual Examples

From our neighbours: (typically corporate, with some distinctive elements)



Winners of the most recent Taituarā consultation document competition: (typically distinctive, with some corporate elements)



What we've previously done: (typically corporate, with some distinctive elements)



Tone Examples

Tone is often discussed in abstract terms, but in practice it is shaped by **small, deliberate choices in language**. To make discussion on this practical, the following examples show how using “sentence surgery” can allow the same message to be expressed in different ways by adjusting wording and structure (without changing meaning).

Examples from our previous consultation document:

Before surgery	After surgery
<p>We know this is a large increase, so in this Long Term Plan (LTP) we’re exploring ways to lessen the financial impact on ratepayers. To get here Council had prioritised the capital projects, reduced operational budgets and focused on delivering on its core activities. To lessen the financial impact further we are considering delaying our depreciation funding and smoothing the rates increase in Year 1 of the LTP by spreading it over the first 3 or 6 years. This means instead of one big jump in 2024/25, ratepayers would see incremental rises over time. For example, if we smoothed rates over 6 years, Year 1 becomes an 10.30% increase. You can see the full breakdown in the table on the next page.</p>	<p>We know this is a big increase, so in this Long Term Plan we’re looking at ways to reduce the impact on ratepayers. That includes prioritising essential projects, cutting back on other spending, and spreading the increase over several years so it’s smaller and more gradual instead of one big jump.</p>

Before surgery	After surgery
<p>The proposed indoor aquatic facility is seen as a long-term solution that could cater for future growth in our district. The proposed facility isn’t just a pool; the ‘Sprung swimming pool’ design is a year-round hub for swim education, from school programs to private lessons. Plus, it caters to club swimming and offers a therapeutic space for older members of the community. The pool will operate as a programmed swimming pool, which will also reduce the operating cost.</p>	<p>The proposed indoor aquatic facility is more than just a pool; it’s a long-term investment designed to support future growth in our district. The year-round Sprung Pool would support swim education, club and therapeutic swimming, and operate as a programmed facility to help keep operating costs down.</p>



- **Key Messages:**

If our community only remembers one thing about the Long Term Plan, what should that be?

Staff are seeking guidance on the **core message or messages** Council wants consistently reinforced across all communications and engagement.

These are not detailed explanations of projects or proposals – i.e. “we’re consulting on...” – instead, they are the **enduring themes** that sit above, underneath and in the centre of everything else.

This guidance will help ensure that LTP communications are aligned with both the strategic priorities of Council and the message we most want the community to take away. For example:

“We’re making careful choices to support a strong and sustainable Tararua.”

“We’re planning for a future Tararua can afford and be proud of.”

“We’re balancing today’s need with tomorrow’s opportunities.”

.... your suggestion goes here: _____.

Management recommendation

Use information gathered on 18 February (today) to develop a draft early engagement plan, with input from Focus Groups on their focus area.

A Draft Early Engagement Plan will then be provided to Council through the [XXXXXX meeting/workshop] for endorsement, noting that communication and engagement plans are living documents and subject to adaptability.

Recommendation for Early Engagement to commence in April-May 2025.



Next steps

Date	Action	Who
19 Feb – 25 Feb	Develop a Draft Early Engagement Plan (EEP) and Begin Drafting an “LTP Brand”	Communications and Community Engagement Teams, Mayor, CE/ELT and Focus Groups (for input on focus areas).
4 March	Workshop: Early Engagement <i>(Part one: Topics and Messages)</i> <i>(Part two: Draft Engagement Plan)</i>	Staff and Elected Members
5 March – 24 March	Refine EEP and LTP Brand	Communications and Community Engagement Teams
26 March	Council meeting – endorsement of plan and brand	Council
26 March – 20 April	Preparation of Materials and Events	Communications and Community Engagement Teams
20 April - May 2026	Recommended Engagement Period	All-Of-Council

