



District Growth Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the District Growth Committee held in the Council Chamber, 156 High Street, Dannevirke on Wednesday 18 March 2026 commencing at 9:30am.

1. Welcome and Meeting Opening

Cr P A Johns (Chairperson), Mayor S M Gilmore, Crs A J Amboy (Deputy Chairperson), E F Kennedy, P M Naylor and S M Wards.

In Attendance

Cr C Corlett (online)

Cr Erana Peeti-Webber (online)

Mr C Haines	- Chief Executive
Mrs K Tani	- Group Manager – Strategy and Information
Mr H Featonby	- Group Manager - Operations
Ms T McDonald	- Chief Financial Officer
Mr P Wimsett	- Chief Advisor
Ms J Smith	- General Counsel
Mrs A Charmley	- Planning Services Manager
Mrs S Anthony	- Democracy Support Officer

2. Apologies

2.1 There were no apologies.

3. Public Forum

Nil

4. Notification of Items Not on the Agenda

Nil

5. **Declarations of Conflicts of Interest in Relation to this Meeting's Items of Business**

Nil

6. **Reports**

6.1 **Regulatory Services Report - 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026**

The District Growth Committee considered the report of the Regulatory Services Manager dated 04 March 2026 that provided an update including statistical information for the period 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026.

The Planning Services Manager spoke on behalf of the Regulatory Services Manager and highlighted several updates to the report. Under Section 3 – Building, a new consent system called *Consent It* will replace *Go Get*. This is an internal system for processing building consents, and the customer-facing interface will remain unchanged.

The statement in Section 3.1 does not fully reflect the current risks. Contractors have significantly reduced their available capacity, impacting the ability to be able to meet statutory timeframes for processing consents. The Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE) has been notified of this situation.

Under Section 4.1 – Accreditation, International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) has been informed of the changes to the consent system. Although unlikely, this change may affect the next assessment date or require information to be provided earlier than scheduled. Issues are also being experienced with suppliers when processing consents, due to their limited capacity, increasing the likelihood to exceed the 20-day statutory processing timeframe.

In Section 4.5 – Earthquake-Prone Buildings (EPB), based on a recent government announcement, it is expected that once the new legislation comes into effect later this year, there will be very few—if any—earthquake-prone buildings in the district. MBIE has not yet begun engagement on this policy, and minor changes may still occur once that process begins; however, this is the current expected outcome.

A concern was raised regarding the risk of not meeting statutory timeframes following the change in contractors. MBIE was notified, and their response was to reiterate that failure to meet statutory timeframes means statutory obligations are not being met.

To manage the risk, once the main supplier advised they could no longer take on work—and the backup supplier was also unable to take additional work—the procurement team were engaged to source alternative contractors. Although an

additional supplier was secured, their capacity is limited, so the risk of non-compliance remains.

This situation also highlights internal challenges: without sufficient in-house staffing and processes, the team are heavily dependent on external contractors. A further emerging challenge is that several external suppliers are now establishing their own Building Consent Authorities (BCAs), reducing their availability for contracted work.

Members asked about the regulatory risk and potential consequences if statutory timeframes are not met. Staff advised that while some individual consents may go over time, the majority remain within the 20-day requirement. Active monitoring, reallocation of work, and communication with MBIE and customers are in place. The primary risk is reputational.

Staff confirmed they continue to meet the broader KPI of processing 85% of consents within statutory timeframes and will keep the Committee updated.

The Committee acknowledged the transparency and congratulated the team for achieving 100% in Section 9 (p.10). Staff attributed this to strong team focus, good use of RMA timeframes, and internal processes.

It was clarified that both the planning and building teams use a mix of in-house staff and external consultants. For subdivisions and consent applications, the costs of using external consultants are passed on to applicants. However, external consultant costs for plan changes cannot be recovered, as the Council is effectively the “customer” in these processes or reforms. Therefore, caution is required when engaging external consultants, as these costs may fall to Council and impact the budget.

The increase in total consent value reflects more complex developments, including 16 new houses in Woodville. Infrastructure capacity has been considered through Land Development Engineering and the Long Term Plan.

Concerns were raised regarding roadside dumping. Staff noted that if the site is on the State Highway, NZTA is responsible; otherwise, Council responds immediately. Costs to Council are currently unknown and will be reported back. Members suggested this be included in future LTP discussions, particularly noting the potential risk of increased dumping if transfer stations in Eketāhuna and Woodville are removed.

That the report from the Regulatory Services Manager dated 04 March 2026 concerning the Regulatory Services Report - 1 November 2025 to 28 February 2026 be received.

Gilmore/Naylor

Carried

6.2 State of the Nation - Growth Planning Changes under Legislative Reform

The District Growth Committee considered the report of the Planning Services Manager dated 10 March 2026 that provided an overview of the planning environment Tararua District Council is now operating within, and how national reforms are reshaping our statutory responsibilities.

The Planning Services Manager reported that the organisation is in a significant period of RMA reform, with a multi-year transition creating a hybrid operating environment. The new legislation is expected to pass around June–July, after which Clause 14 requirements must be given effect. Roles and processes dependent on the current framework to be redrafted.

Major changes will impact the team, including development of a mandatory 30-year Spatial Plan due in 2027. This will serve as the blueprint for growth and requires substantial staff contribution to ensure Tararua’s infrastructure and future needs are met. Regular engagement occurs with regional partners and iwi.

National direction continues to evolve (e.g., freshwater, housing, environmental standards). Staff are monitoring changes, providing feedback, and supporting customers as guidance remains limited. Close collaboration with neighbouring councils is ongoing.

Two plan change exemption requests have been submitted and positively received, with only minor questions returned. These relate to growth planning and industrial rezoning in Dannevirke, Woodville, and Pahiatua.

Significant workload pressures remain, and budget considerations for the LTP are already underway. Staff noted that unlike larger councils, TDC does not have a dedicated RMA policy role, creating gaps that need addressing.

Members discussed concerns about the ability to maintain development standards under the new framework. Staff confirmed there will still be some ability to manage effects, but the shift in legislation will change how resource consents are assessed and may increase complaints where developments proceed without consent which is outside of council control.

Infrastructure remains the largest long-term challenge, particularly in relation to CCOs and the future cost of providing services.

MWLASS partners meet regularly (currently bi-monthly, moving to monthly) to coordinate on reform and shared challenges.

Additional staffing will be required to build internal resilience, reduce reliance on consultants, and position Tararua effectively under the future planning system. External consultants are costly and not always recoverable.

The Committee acknowledged the significant workload and the value of the expertise within the team. Shared services and collaboration across the region

were identified as essential, while maintaining local independence. Future meetings may be adjusted, and extraordinary meetings held as needed to ensure timely updates.

That the report from the Planning Services Manager dated 10 March 2026 concerning the State of the Nation - Growth Planning Changes under Legislative Reform be received.

Notes that the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025 has suspended the requirement under s79 of the RMA to review the District Plan every 10 years under s79(4) of the RMA, until 31 December 2027.

Notes the Planning team have submitted Plan Change 1 exemption application to enable rezoning of residential and industrial land to facilitate growth and provide for housing across our four main town centres to the Minister for approval. Decision from Minister Bishop anticipated mid-late April 2026.

Notes that Plan Change 2 exemption application to provide for designations for requiring authorities is currently being drafted and will be submitted to Minister Bishop for approval before 20th March 2026.

Notes Resource Management reform is underway with the Planning and Natural Environment Bills.

Notes the proposed policy and planning work programme that results from Planning and Natural Environment Bills initially includes giving effect to Clause 14, preparing for Regional Spatial Plan and keeping up with legislative changes and national direction.

Wards/Amboy

Carried

7. Items not on the Agenda

7.1 Nil

There being no further business the Chairperson thanked those present for their attendance and contributions, and declared the meeting closed at 10:24am.