Horowhenua District Council
Interim Organisation Performance Report

30 September 2025

Nā te Kaiwhakahaere Matua
Executive Summary

I am pleased to present the Interim Organisational Performance Report (OPR) to 30 September 2025. This report would ordinarily be presented at a Council meeting; however, due to reporting timeframes, it has been prepared to ensure transparency and accountability for both our community and the incoming Council.

The purpose of this report is to encourage open, constructive dialogue between Council and the community, ensuring that our work programme continues to align with Council's vision and the aspirations of our district. The Top Priorities remain those set out in Council's Plan on a Page, which will continue through to the end of 2025. Note that the reporting period for the Top Priorities update covers 16 August – 30 September, while the Organisational Performance Dashboard reflects data for August.

A highlight of this period was the official sod turning for the Ōtaki to North Levin Expressway (Ō2NL). We have said it before, the evidence is clear that with the growing traffic volumes, safety challenges and the need for a more resilient transport corridor have reinforced that this project is not a "nice-to-have," but a must-have. Ō2NL is a transformational project, vital not just for Horowhenua but for the wider region and New Zealand as a whole. We are excited, bring it on!

Also during this reporting priod progress was made on Local Waters Done Well. The Joint Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP), developed by the Horowhenua, Palmerston North, and Rangitīkei Councils, was submitted to the Secretary for Local Government ahead of schedule. To maintain momentum toward the target establishment dates — 1 July 2026 for legal setup and 1 July 2027 for asset transfer — an Executive Director has been appointed to lead the next phase. Collaboration continues to strengthen across all three Councils and iwi partners, with key achievements including the signing of a Collaboration Agreement, formation of core workstreams, and establishment of a Project Oversight Group comprising the three Mayors.

As we move into a new triennium, I would like to acknowledge and thank outgoing elected members for their service and welcome our incoming Councillors and Te Awahou Foxton Community Board members. The months ahead will be both busy and energising as we deliver a comprehensive induction and training programme to equip our new governance team with the knowledge, context, and confidence needed to make informed decisions on behalf of our community.

Monique Davidson
Chief Executive

Ngā Ihirangi

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Organisation Performance Dashboard

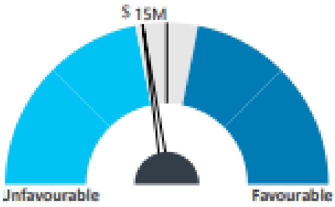
Organisation Performance Dashboard August 2025

Organisational Performance

YTD Ending 31 August 2025

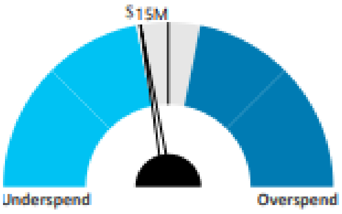
This dashboard shows a snapshot of how we are tracking against our performance measure targets, our financial performance overall and activity financial information.

Financial Performance



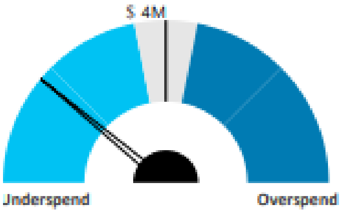
INCOME

YTD Actual:	$14.88M
YTD Budget:	$15.47M
Full Year Forecast:	$90.78M
Full Year Budget:	$89.92M
YTD Variance:	-$0.59M, (3.8%)
on target	



OPERATING EXPENDITURE

YTD Actual:	$14.73M
YTD Budget:	$15.39M
Full Year Forecast:	$93.18M
Full Year Budget:	$92.36M
YTD Variance:	$0.67M, 4.3%
on target	



CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

YTD Actual:	$2.94M
YTD Budget:	$3.79M
Full Year Forecast:	$52.58M
Full Year Budget:	$52.58M
Variance:	$0.85M, 22.3%
below target	

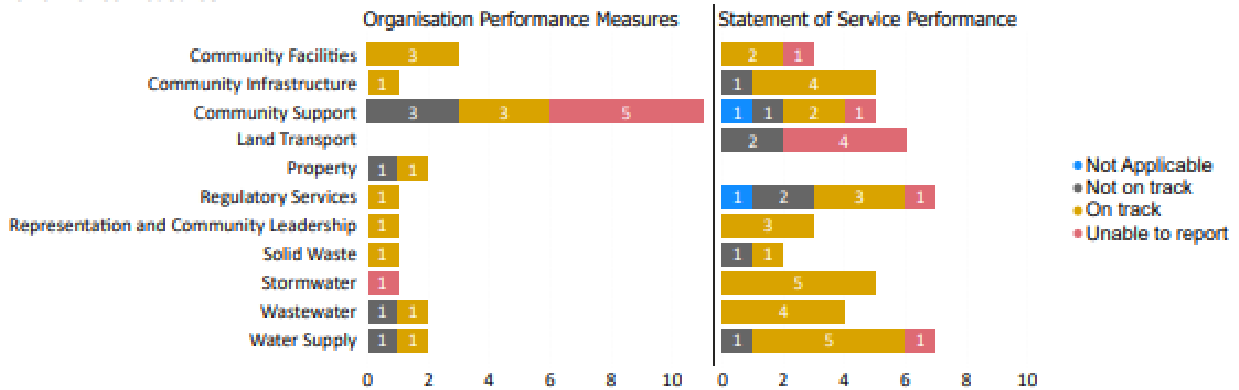
below target	< -5%
on target	>= -5% to <= +5%
above target	> +5%

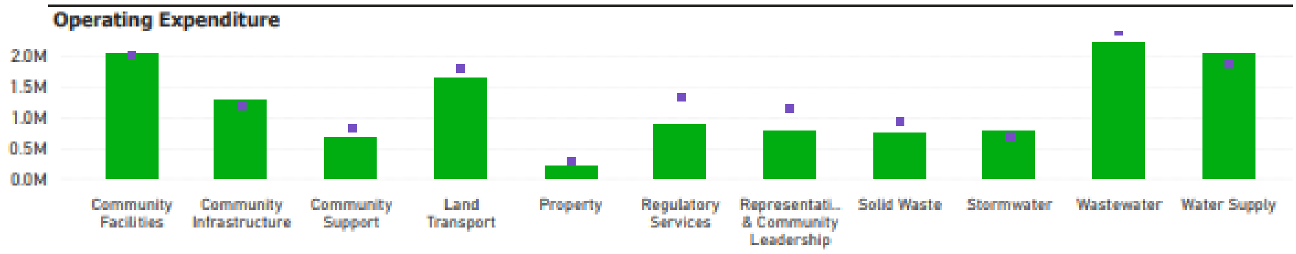
Our operating income is tracking slightly lower than planned but our operating expenditure is tracking slightly favourable to budget. Overall operating results is tracking as planned to the end of August 2025. This excludes loss on derivatives which is a non-cash item and an accounting treatment to recognise the value of interest rate swap decreases.

Focus is being put on planning in the first quarter of the financial year and we aim to report back on the revised forecast position on where the Council is heading for the financial year in the next full Organisation Performance Report.

We have completed nearly $3m for the capital programme to the end of August 2025. On 10 September, Council approved $4.84m of capital carry forward requests from 2024/25 to 2025/26 making the total capital budget for 2025/26 a total of $52m. Project managers are focusing on project planning and we aim to report back on the revised capital spending forecast in the next full Organisation Report.

Performance Measures

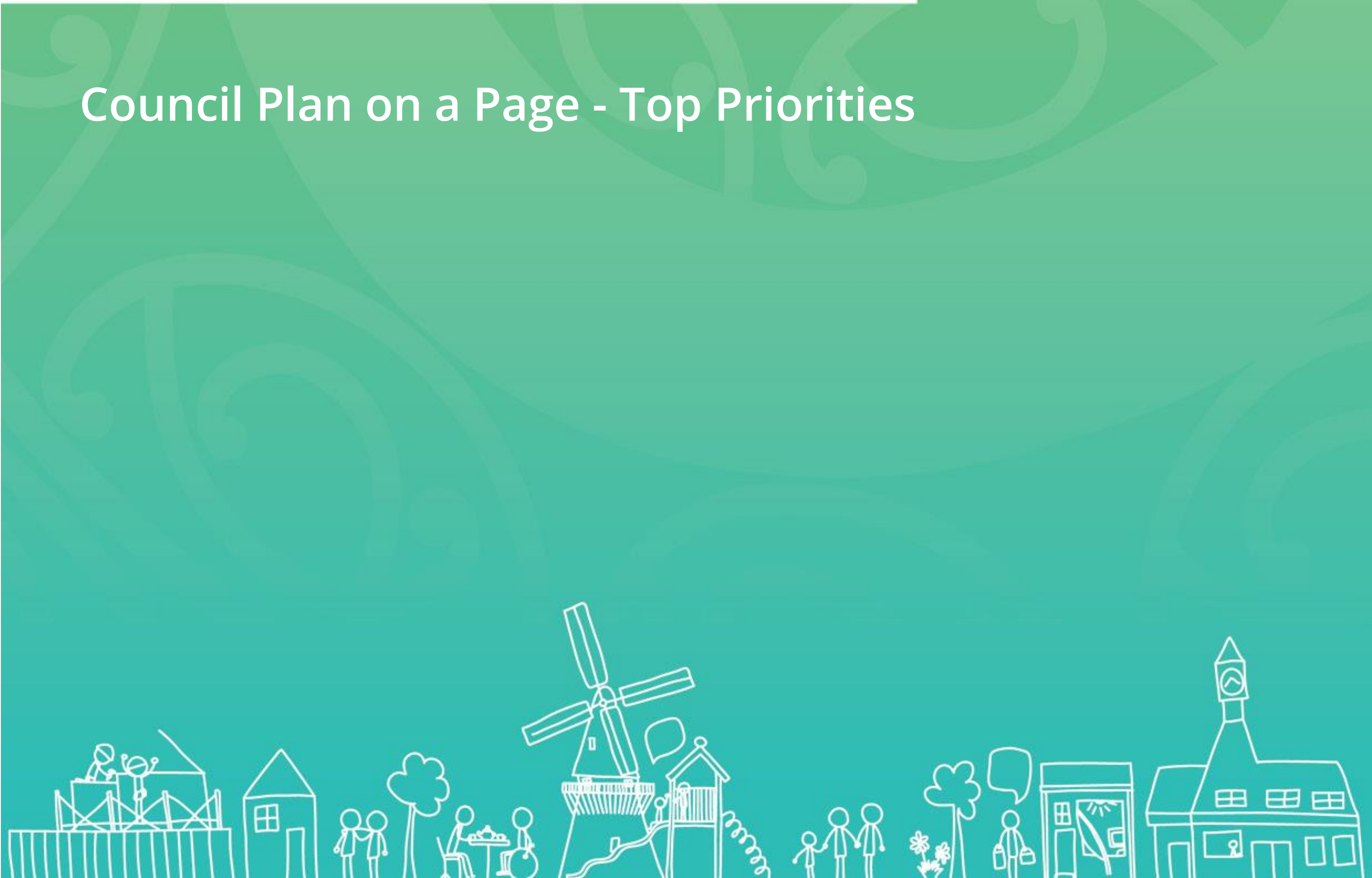




Horowhenua
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ngā Whāinga Matua

Council Plan on a Page - Top Priorities



Ngā Whainga Matua
Top Priorities

Pursuing Organisation Excellence

Continuing the journey of organisational transformation by enabling a culture of service, excellence and continuous improvement.

Review the Organisation Roadmap and implement identified action

In this reporting period we took some time to refresh our organisation roadmap, weaving in our match fit focus and supporting strategic enablers of:

- Customer and Community First – Our efforts exist to serve and enhance customer and community experience and outcomes. We are committed to zooming in on the lived experience of our customer and community, surfacing insight, joining the dots, and designing from the outside in.
- Change: Embracing future-ready innovation to meet evolving customer needs and responding to the changing landscape of local government.
- Culture: Fostering a collaborative, high-performing and nurturing environment to better serve.
- Continuous Improvement: Challenging the status quo through everyday innovation – always looking for faster, smarter, easier and simpler ways to serve and support our community.

In addition, we have continued to support our people leaders with embedding our development framework into staff performance and development conversations, helping to lift capability and build consistency in how we grow and support our people. This work has also shaped goal setting to ensure a strong focus on customer delivery, responsiveness and engagement.

Further progress on getting the basics right and enhancing the customer experience through implementation of the Customer and Digital Action Plans.

During the reporting period we have advanced investigations on upgrading our Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS). Council currently uses an on-premises Content Manager (CM) product incurring annual licensing and server operating costs. The need to upgrade the current version prompted several discussions around not only upgrading but exploring a Software as a Service (SaaS) offering. A pathway has been determined to carry out the upgrade, followed by migration to SaaS, delivering seamless integration with critical systems, reducing complexity, and positioning Council to enable hybrid/federated record management across SharePoint Online and Microsoft 365. The implementation plan will span the future reporting period through to end of December 2025.

Officers completed a business case for the integration of Antenno with our Customer Request Management system to enable customer feedback to be captured more efficiently, centrally stored, and actioned in a timely manner. This integration will reduce manual data entry by staff, saving time, minimising errors, and allowing teams to focus on higher-value tasks. Additionally, it will enable alerts and notifications to be sent to our community.

Together, these improvements will lead to better service delivery, deeper insights, and a more streamlined workflow across the organisation, while increasing community awareness, satisfaction and engagement. The implementation plan goes through to end of December 2025.

We delivered foundations of innovation training in-house to 83 staff, of which 47 completed all 3 foundational workshops and 21 completed the introduction to design thinking 101. The foundation sessions are aimed at understanding the types of and mindset for innovation with a focus on action bias for incremental change that makes things easier, smarter and faster.

Preparation for the 2025 elections and potential referendum.

Voting for the recent local elections has now concluded, bringing to a close a successful election period across the district.

Significant effort was undertaken to promote voter enrolments and updating details, encourage candidates to stand, and increase voter participation. Bright orange ballot bins were strategically placed in key locations, while voters also utilised standard street mailboxes to return their voting papers.

The Elections Team engaged proactively with the former refugee community, facilitating a dedicated voting session for 26 individuals. This initiative ensured their meaningful participation in the democratic process and represented an important step toward greater inclusivity and accessibility in local elections.

Overall, the election period demonstrated strong community engagement and a positive response to the district's comprehensive outreach and voter awareness initiatives.

Supporting Lake Punahau / Horowhenua Aspirations

Giving focus to advancing actions that speak to community and owners of Lake Punahau / Horowhenua aspirations specific to the role of Horowhenua District Council.

Strengthen relationships with the Lake Trust to consider enabling community aspirations.

A hui with Lake Trustees took place on 9 October with the main discussion on enhancing the relationship as we look to ensure the Lake Trust are fully engaged and contributing to key projects that impact the Lake which as Trust they represent the beneficial owners in.

Complete the Lake Domain development plan using 'Better off Funding'.

The Lake Domain Board reviewed the draft Development Plan at its September meeting. While the Board was generally supportive of the draft, members requested that one set of additional feedback be incorporated. Officers are awaiting this input and will present the updated version at the next Board meeting for endorsement.

Support reactivation of the Lake Domain Board.

The Domain Board has continued to meet on a regular basis, with secretariat support from Council. The Board now has a full membership from Muaūpoko (four members), Horowhenua District Council (three members) and the Chair, Mr Kevin O'Connor representing the Director-General of Conservation. The Board agenda and minutes are published on the Council's agendas and minutes web page: [Agendas and Minutes : Horowhenua District Council](). At its most recent meeting, the Domain Board progressed discussions to re-open the Lake Domain to the public, once the rāhui has been lifted.

Develop Best Practicable Options for Stormwater management in collaboration with the Lake Trust (as representative of the owners) and other key stakeholders and partners.

Council has engaged a local archaeologist to undertake an archaeological survey at the proposed location of the stormwater treatment device on Queen Street West. A representative of the Horowhenua Lake Trust (HLT) also attended the on-site meeting to input into defining the scope of the survey work.

Potholing and the archaeological survey are scheduled for 13 October 2025. Depending on the survey outcomes, an application to Heritage New Zealand is likely to be lodged in October 2025.

In the meantime, officers are refining the design of the proposed device in response to concerns raised regarding fish and eel passage.

Continue to be an active partner with the Arawhata Wetland Project led by Horizons.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Group Manager – Community Infrastructure attend regular hui as Council representatives, providing ongoing input into both the planning and design stages of the wetland. Their participation ensures that Council's perspectives and community priorities are considered throughout the development process, supporting a collaborative approach to creating a sustainable and accessible wetland environment.

Support community led planting and clean up initiatives.

Clean Up week events were organised by the Parks & Property team alongside community partners. Clean Up week is highlighted later in this report as a Values Highlight.

Enhancing Māori Relationships

Ensuring a concerted focus on developing a partnership framework, to advance our relationships and set up both Council and our partners for shared success through well-defined partnership arrangements and clear engagement expectations.

Progress development of Māori relationships and the Engagement Framework.

Council adopted the Tiraki – Iwi/Hapū Relationships Framework in August. The next steps focus on operationalising Tiraki, including facilitating training in the IAP2 model and reviewing current Iwi partnership agreements to strengthen collaboration and engagement across the district.

Wiki o te reo Māori / Māori Language Week - the Cultural Outcomes team partnered with Muaūpoko to deliver Te Ahurei Kapahaka o Horowhenua Festival, a vibrant celebration of kapa haka and Māori culture. The festival featured performances from 20 groups, including preschools, schools, colleges, and community organisations across the district. More than 500 performers took to the stage, entertaining an audience of around 1,000 spectators in a day filled with energy, pride and cultural celebration.

As part of Māori Language Week, three Reo Cafés were held in Taitoko, Te Awahou, and Shannon. These welcoming spaces invited members of the community to immerse themselves in Te Reo Māori — speaking, listening and experiencing the language in everyday settings.

Enabling balanced growth with fit for purpose infrastructure

Continuing with our integrated growth planning and strategic delivery approach to enable smart and sustainable development that delivers balanced growth and fit for purpose infrastructure.

Progress an initial omnibus District Plan change to effect quick wins and address immediate issues.

As noted in the previous update, progress on this plan change has been affected by the Government-directed Plan Stop. Consequently, there are no further updates to report on this matter.

Continue integrated growth planning to inform future capital investments.

The integrated growth portal has been launched (internal intranet) and work has commenced on the Tararua Road Master Plan.

Retaining focus and energy on bringing to life the outstanding environment and thriving economy community outcomes through fit for purpose infrastructure.

An update on capital delivery is provided below.

Development of Vested Assets Policy.

The Vested Assets Policy remains a work in progress. Once completed the intent is to address the financial burden on ratepayers arising from long-term maintenance of infrastructure assets vested through new developments. Preliminary research into comparable policies across New Zealand revealed no clear precedents, making this a pioneering initiative.

The policy intent proposes that third parties provide financial contributions (commuted sums) to offset future maintenance costs (consequential opex) for assets vested to Council but not necessarily required by it. A draft concept was introduced to Council for initial feedback, receiving positive support to proceed with further refinement and to carefully assess potential implications.

Current Status – Ongoing:

Collaboration between HBAD, Integrated Growth and Planning, Finance and Infrastructure teams continues towards developing clear guidelines and parameters for delivery. External expertise had been engaged to help with the development of this view however this opportunity has not progressed as rapidly as we had intended.

The proposal is premised on a calculation of asset maintenance and depreciation. To optimise this proposal and to ensure it can be delivered at an operational level it is important that the data is available and understood.

Work continues in this space with the infrastructure and finance teams to determine and inform the basis of any future working primarily based around maintenance costs and renewal parameters. This is a complex task when starting from scratch however there is slow progress toward what is deemed a positive opportunity. Community consultation is planned once the policy is sufficiently developed and viable.

Update August/September 2025 - There is complexity involved in that the development of such a mechanism may have flow on effects to other considerations and existing policies and methodologies such as the Development Contributions Policy, in time.

To this end a wider frame of reference has been sought through an external party to test and frame up the legislative ability of council to attain the targeted outcomes as this may impact wider council financing policy considerations. The goal is to return to Council prior to the end of 2025.

Deliver the Capital Programme.

Delivery of the Capital Programme is underway with a full schedule of projects allocated for both Water and Wastewater treatment plants and across the network. Over this period Council approved the procurement approach for a number of projects including the Levin Wastewater Treatment Plant Headworks, Queen Street Stormwater intervention device, as well as the Filter Refurbishments at the Levin Water Treatment Plant, the projects team are now preparing the tender documents for these projects to be tendered out over coming months.

Districtwide Water Meter Installation - 95% of residential meters have now been installed across the district. The contractor meter installation and maintenance programme are nearing completion. The project is now entering the close out stage with GPR location investigations underway for laterals unable to be located, followed by bulk/commercial meter installations and commencement of the gateway trials for ongoing meter reading.

Works on MacArthur Street, Levin renewals are progressing well. The final stage from Bartholomew Road to Fairfield Road has commenced and the project is on track for completion in October 2025.

Levin WWTP Inlet pipe and Sewer Bulkmain Renewal Project - The Inlet pipe and sewer bulk main renewal project is the first project in the programme of works to upgrade the Levin Wastewater treatment plant. Stage 1 works of this project commenced mid-August, with 420m of bulkmain pipe laid, works on-track for completion November 2025.

Renewal works on Bryce Street, Shannon are progressing well with pipework and pumpstation installed, on schedule for completion October 2025.

Conduct appropriate investigations in key strategic focus areas —including aquatics, parks, property, and sports—preparing for informed decision making ahead of the next Long Term Plan.

The Strategic Investment Framework and needs-analysis have now been completed and circulated with sporting clubs in the district. Officers hosted a drop-in session which was attended by six people where the framework and dashboard were explained. Another two sessions are being held in October.

Local Water Services Done Well

Navigating change towards inhouse provision of reliable three water services while strategically positioning ourselves to embrace and benefit from sector change.

Navigate in housing of three water services.

This action has been completed.

Position Council for future changes to Local Waters Done Well waters arrangements.

Horowhenua, Palmerston North and Rangitikei Councils submitted the Joint Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) to the Secretary for Local Government prior to the due date of 3 September 2025. DIA has asked some additional questions about the content, which Officers have provided. At this stage it is unknown as to when a final response will be received.

To meet the key dates outlined in the WSDP (1 July 2026 for the organisation to be legally set up (Day 0), and 1 July 2027 for asset transfer (Day 1) the three Chief Executives have appointed an Executive Director to guide the process. Progress made includes:

- the signing of the Collaboration Agreement between the three Councils
- development of a Finance Workstream Plan

- initiation of an Operations and Assets Workstream to start developing a plan
- Initiation of the Project Oversight Group made up of each Mayor of the three Councils
- Working with relevant iwi partners to ensure that Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations are met and that the previous commitment that iwi will have meaningful input is honoured.

Strategically Positioning Horowhenua

Ensuring targeted advocacy and proactive pursuit of third-party funding opportunities and strengthening of national and regional connections, to ensure our community's needs are clearly understood and prioritised, keeping us relevant and well-positioned to pursue or react to opportunities.

Pursue new look funding arrangements with CIP or others to advance growth infrastructure.

No current active engagement.

Pursue funding opportunities to speed up plans or advance unfunded or under resourced priorities.

In January 2025, a group of community kai champions, supported by Horowhenua District Council, came together to address rising food insecurity among local whānau. This kōrero highlighted the challenges many face and inspired the creation of the Horowhenua Mana Kai Network—a community-led initiative focused on connecting, supporting, and aligning local kai projects.

The Horowhenua District Council has secured external funding to support the Network's first-year pilot programme, including $69,742 from DIA and $28,000 from ECCT. As the umbrella organisation for this funding, Council will manage the finances, making payments as directed by the Horowhenua Mana Kai Steering Group in line with the approved pilot project proposal and milestone schedule. All payments will be approved by the Steering Group according to quorum requirements.

Two further community projects have been identified as meeting the criteria for external funding applications. These applications are currently being worked on.

Respond to regional deal opportunities.

For the first phase of City and Regional Deals, 18 applications were received and considered by DIA. Of those, three regions were selected to progress into Memoranda of Understanding: Auckland Council, Western Bay of Plenty and Otago Central Lakes. The proposal for the South Manawatu City and Regional Deal (Horowhenua, Manawatū, Tararua, Palmerston North and Horizons) was not selected to progress to Phase 1. An assessment of the proposal including feedback was provided along with the confirmation of the decision for Phase 1. Further announcements on the CRDs will be made as the programme progresses.

Ensuring Financial Discipline and Management

Ensuring targeted advocacy and proactive pursuit of third-party funding opportunities and strengthening of national and regional connections, to ensure our community's needs are clearly understood and prioritised, keeping us relevant and well-positioned to pursue or react to opportunities.

Ensure financial discipline and compliance with our financial strategy and benchmarks.

Final capital carry forwards request was approved by Council on 10 September; the final capital budget approved and carried forward to 2025/26 is $4.842m, increasing the total capital spending budget for 2025-26 from $47.740m to $52.582m. There is a $1.207 net reduction in the required borrowings by the end of 2025-26 as a result of this.

For 2025/26 financial year, we are initiating a savings target of $1m as officers continue to maintain fiscal discipline, and delivery on operating efficiency target. As we continue this journey, how the results are tracking will be reported in the next report.

Implement organisation-wide stringent budget monitoring to ensure all departments adhere to allocated budgets, promoting a culture of financial accountability and transparency across all levels.

Further improvements to Council's reporting, forecasting, and budgeting tool began in August, in preparation for the 2026/27 Annual Plan budgeting process. Year 3 of the 2024–44 Long Term Plan currently proposes an average rates increase of 10.1% (11.8% before growth), with 6.2% of this driven by depreciation.

Throughout September, work has focused on identifying any emerging budget pressures or risks not yet captured, uncovering potential savings, and assessing the financial impacts of central government reforms and legislative changes. An internal workshop is scheduled for early October, where the Senior Leadership Team will test budgets, explore savings opportunities, and ensure the overall savings target can be achieved.

Procure wisely and strategically, to prioritise spending on essential services and projects that deliver the highest value to the community.

An analysis into Supplier Panels – much like the already implemented Legal and Trade Services panels – for other areas of the organisation has been completed. The report has highlighted a need for additional panel/s and provided recommendations where efficiencies can be introduced in the procuring of services. The aim of this work is to enable Council to procure commonly used products and services in a streamlined and consistent manner while also being time and cost effective.

Monitor Treasury opportunities to take advantage of favourable interest rates, reduce debt servicing costs, and maintain the Council's credit rating.

No additional borrowings have occurred during the reporting period; we are carefully managing spending expectation and being more efficient at planning for spend. Officers will start to work with Council's treasury advisor on a revised interest forecast. Council's net debt to total operating revenue as of 31 August 2025 is 197%, compared to 198% as of 30 June 2025.

Provide transparent financial reporting and regular updates to the community on the Council's financial performance and initiatives.

Audit NZ commenced their annual audit for 2024/25 at the beginning of September. This year, Council requested approval from Audit NZ to complete the audit in time for the Annual Report to be adopted prior to the local election. This request was approved, with Audit NZ agreeing to resource the audit to provide an update to this committee by 1 October 2025 and an audit opinion by 8 October 2025.

On 23 August 2025, Council was advised that, due to additional Central Government audits requiring resources, the Council audit would be delayed by a week and commence the week of 1 September. During that week, Audit NZ would have a significantly reduced audit team available. Council took this opportunity to further update the financial statements based on the Audit NZ model statements, resulting in the first draft being provided to Audit NZ on 28 August 2025.

Despite the delayed start, Council officers and Audit NZ worked closely to maintain the shared goal of adopting the Annual Report by 8 October. The draft 2024/25 Annual Report, along with an update on the audit's progress, was presented to the Risk and Assurance Committee on 1 October 2025. The draft Annual Report was subsequently adopted by Council on 8 October, officially closing out the 2024/25 financial year.

Enriching Our Environment

Focusing on targeted initiatives to enrich, preserve and enhance Horowhenua's natural environment through promoting sustainability, waste management practices and resilience to climate change for the benefit of current and future generations.

Establish the emission monitoring portal.

There are no further updates since the last OPR. Council continues to have access to the Moata Carbon Portal until February 2026.

Implement the Climate Action Plan within budget allocations.

The Climate Action Fund ($500-$2,500) went live for the August grants period with three applications received. The Community Funding and Recognition Committee awarded the full grant ($2,500) to the Mana Kai Project.

The Climate Action Joint Committee meeting was held 1 September (Action 1.4 of Climate Action Plan). During the meeting the Te Pātaka: Rangatahi Leadership Camp Attendees presented on their time. Councils presented their end of triennium progress reports towards the joint climate action committee, an update was provided on the Pūtiki flood resilience, and report received on RMA provisions.

Iwi partners, community and Council launched the Horowhenua Mana Kai Network at the September BA5 event (Actions 4.1 and 4.2 of the Climate Action Plan).

The second monitoring survey with the Senior Leadership Cohort was distributed to track progress against the Climate Action Plan.

Continue workstreams to enable decision making on Council's role and focus on waste management and minimisation, including potential future uses of the Levin Landfill site.

The Solid Waste Team is developing a range of educational resources to support the Waste Management and Minimisation Education program, which will reach up to 11,000 primary school students across the district. This program, one of three new initiatives under consideration, will be delivered by the HDC education team in the first term of the 2026 school year.

The Food Scrap Composting Trial, conducted over three months and offered to 500 Levin households, achieved a 30% participation rate. The trial generated valuable insights that will inform future decisions regarding this initiative.

Investigation into a Resource Recovery Centre is gaining momentum. Construction and development waste currently makes up 50% of general landfill waste, of which an estimated 75% could be reused or recycled.

The Closed Landfill Management Plan was endorsed by Council on 10 September 2025. As a living document, it continues to evolve, guiding Officers on revised consenting conditions, ongoing groundwater management, mitigation of leachate impacts, and potential future uses of the sites.

Support the protection and restoration of natural habitats, including wetlands, forests, and coastal areas.

Over the past few months, the Parks & Property Team has led a range of community clean-up and restoration initiatives across the district, including:

- Clean Up Week (late September): Activities took place across five sites in the district.
- Mangahao White Water Park working bee: Volunteers undertook weeding and track clearance beside the white water course.

Beach clean-ups:

- Waitārere Beach: From the northern end to the Manawatū Estuary, a significant amount of rubbish was removed with support from the Waitārere Beach Care Group and the NZ Four Wheel Drive Organisation, who assisted with vehicle access to retrieve large debris.
- Hokio Beach: In partnership with the Hokio Progressive Association, volunteers successfully cleared large amounts of rubbish from the coastline.

The team also completed a dune planting at Foxton Beach, planting approximately 2,500 spinifex in the foredunes at the southern end, with the help of 25 community members.

Officers are working with the Manawatū Estuary Management Team (MEMT) to update the Foxton Beach Coastal Reserves Management Plan, which will be incorporated into a district-wide Coastal Reserves Management Plan scheduled for the 2026 workplan. As part of this process, a site visit and hui were held at Paranui Marae, Foxton, allowing all participants to gain valuable insights from Hapū on the history, cultural significance, and priorities for this coastline. This iwi knowledge will directly inform and enhance the overall Management Plan.

Continue partnerships with schools, local organisations, and community groups to promote environmental stewardship.

The Solid Waste Team is currently developing a number of educational resources to support the Waste Management and Minimisation Education program that will be delivered to up to 11,000 primary school students in our district. This program will commence in the first term of the 2026 and will be delivered by Council's Educational Team.

Officers supported community groups and schools who were running their own Clean Up week activities by providing gloves, rubbish bags, educational support and giveaways.

Community Preparedness

Focusing on strengthened Council and community preparedness and resilience to enable our ability to plan for, respond to, adapt and recover from emergencies and district changes.

Emergency management planning and preparation.

NZ Shakeout 2025: Planning is underway for 16 October, with the team coordinating participation across Council facilities and exploring ways to encourage wider community and organisational involvement.

Linton Military Camp Visit: The Emergency Management Team joined a Regional EM Professionals visit to better understand military support capabilities for national, regional and local events. The visit strengthened collaboration and identified follow-up initiatives with Regional EM advisors.

Horowhenua Emergency Management Committee Meetings: Monthly meetings were held on 12 August and 11 September. Key discussions included the upcoming Regional CDEM Exercise Te Ara o Te Tuarua (28 November), with partner agencies confirming full participation and activation of the Horowhenua DC Emergency Operations Centre and Incident Management Team.

Waitarere Beach Community Wildfire Meetings (27 September): Two meetings at the Surf Club, led by FENZ and Council, raised awareness of wildfire risks and outlined response procedures for the community surrounded by forestry.

Whakamana Marae / Marae Emergency Management Resilience Project: The project team, including Council Iwi Advisors, Electra, NEMA and potential funders, held a positive meeting to progress energy resilience planning for marae, with follow-ups underway to determine funding requirements.

Kamchatka (Russia) Earthquake & Tsunami Threat: Council coordinated the local response to the limited coastal marine threat, ensuring consistent public messaging, liaising with partner agencies, updating ELT/IMT, installing tsunami signage, and participating in CDEM/NEMA briefings.

Emergency Management Systems Improvement Workshop: HDC attended a NEMA-facilitated workshop representing local TLAs. Discussions focused on resilience funding, strengthening regional support, and enhancing local and regional preparedness and readiness workstreams.

Progress priority business continuity and resilience initiatives.

This work has been completed; we now move to the testing stage through exercising which is currently being planned for.

Continue tackling stormwater hotspots across our district.

Waitārere Beach Stormwater Outlets – Three out of the five stormwater outlets at Waitārere Beach become blocked with sand and driftwood during king tides, impacting the performance of the stormwater network. Most of the outlets were extended in 2018; however, blockages continue to occur. We are now investigating and designing further extensions of the outlets into the sea to ensure the conveyance capacity of the pipes is not compromised. Officers will work closely with a consultant on this project. A new resource consent from Horizons Regional Council will also be required to undertake the necessary earthworks and dune reshaping.

Proposed Installation of two new stormwater flow meters – two new stormwater flow meters are proposed to be installed this year. One flow meter will be installed on the Domain Drain near Western Park in Levin, and the second will be located at Waitārere Beach near Kahukura Avenue to monitor flows from the Wairarawa Stream.

Community Connections and Better Wellbeing

Focusing on priority wellbeing initiatives driven by the Horowhenua Blueprint, Wellbeing framework and the Housing Action Plan while strengthening place-based community relationships and engagement to foster authentic relationships and enhanced community connections.

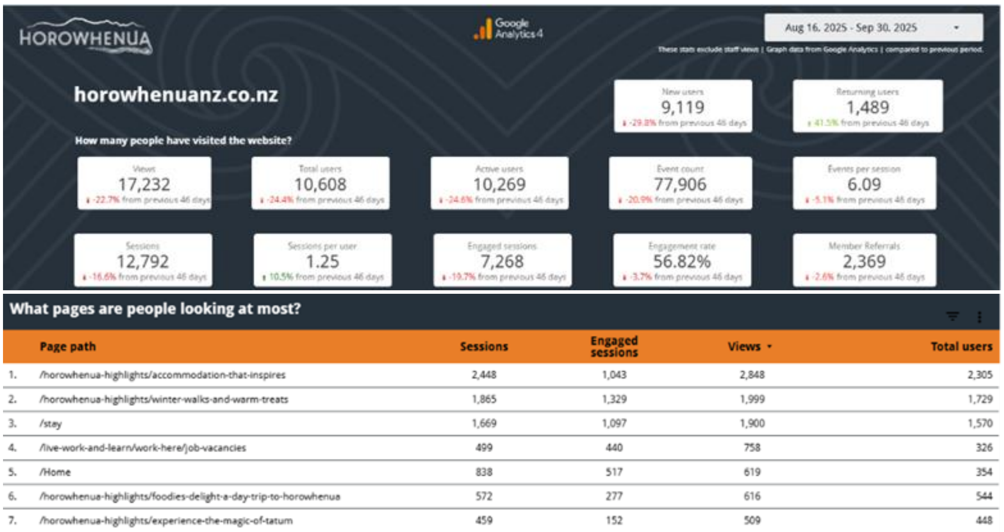
Council endorsed the refreshed Destination Management Plan (DMP) at its September meeting. The plan provides a clear pathway to strengthen the district's visitor economy and turn Horowhenua's unique strengths into sustainable outcomes. In the year ending March 2025, visitors spent $124 million in the district, contributing 3.2% of GDP; with targeted investment, this is forecast to more than double to $300 million by 2035. Originally developed in 2020, the plan has been updated to reflect population growth, new infrastructure such as the Ōtaki to North of Levin Expressway, and other emerging opportunities.

The DMP outlines five key recommendations:

- Deliver a comprehensive Market Development Plan grounded in consumer insights and integrated master planning.
- Increase marketing activity and expand sector support, with a focus on the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market.
- Revisit and activate the Horowhenua Events Strategy to encourage year-round visitation.
- Identify funding needs and advocate for co-investment supported by strategic planning.
- Establish a Destination Management function affiliated with Regional Tourism New Zealand (RTNZ), working closely with Iwi/Hapū and Council leadership.

A major milestone in 2025 was Horowhenua becoming the first district to join RTNZ as an Associate Member, unlocking new funding opportunities, national partnerships, and resources.

During this period, the HorowhenuaNZ website recorded 7,268 engaged sessions from 10,269 active users, generating 2,369 member referrals (clicks to local businesses and experiences). Visitors engaged most with travel blogs such as “Accommodation That Inspires” and “Winter Walks and Warm Treats”, with job vacancies ranking among the top four most searched pages.



Implement the Housing Action Plan priorities.

The Housing Action Plan has been refocused to move away from reliance on state-led development, instead prioritising partnerships with Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and alternative channels for affordable and emergency housing. This shift means progress is slower as relationships with both established and emerging CHPs are developed.

Key highlights from the past quarter include:

- Levinable project stage one completed: Public toilets, fencing, and landscaping are now in place.
- Community-based housing initiatives: Work continues to improve accessibility to housing, including accessible housing, with further builds planned (commercially sensitive at this stage).
- Land release for housing: Revocation processes are underway for four parcels of land identified as surplus to Council requirements. Recent central government plan changes have added complexity, as rezoning is required.
- Council property portfolio review: Ongoing review aims to identify additional parcels for potential disposal, expected to conclude by the end of October.
- Private developments: Several commercially sensitive projects are progressing, with recent reports indicating significant social housing growth across the district.
- Continued focus: Council remains committed to driving further social housing growth through evolving channels aligned with new central government direction.

Activate the key priorities within the Community Wellbeing Strategy.

Although no Community Wellbeing Committee meetings are scheduled until Q1 2026, Council officers continue to advance wellbeing initiatives across the district.

Recent highlights include:

- Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori: Celebrated 50 years with Reo Cafés in Levin, Foxton, and Shannon, a tamariki-focused event, and the Te Ahurei Kapahaka o Horowhenua Festival, featuring 20 groups from primary schools, colleges, and adults in a vibrant cultural celebration.
- Horowhenua Mana Kai Network: Officially launched on 22 September at a joint event with The Horowhenua Company, aiming to improve community access to healthy kai.
- NZ Clean Up Week (19–25 September): Council and community members participated in clean-ups at Parikawau Reserve, Foxton Beach Bowl, Queen Street West, Gladstone Reserve, and Hokio Beach, keeping parks and reserves clean and welcoming.
- Digi-Coaches: Available at Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō until year-end to support residents with digital skills and technology needs.
- Youth Space Programme: Delivered an engaging school holiday programme tailored to Rangatahi interests.
- Community Climate Action Grant: The Funding and Recognition Community awarded its first grant of $2,500 to support local climate initiatives.
- Council remains committed to fostering community wellbeing and maintaining engagement opportunities despite the temporary pause on Committee meetings.

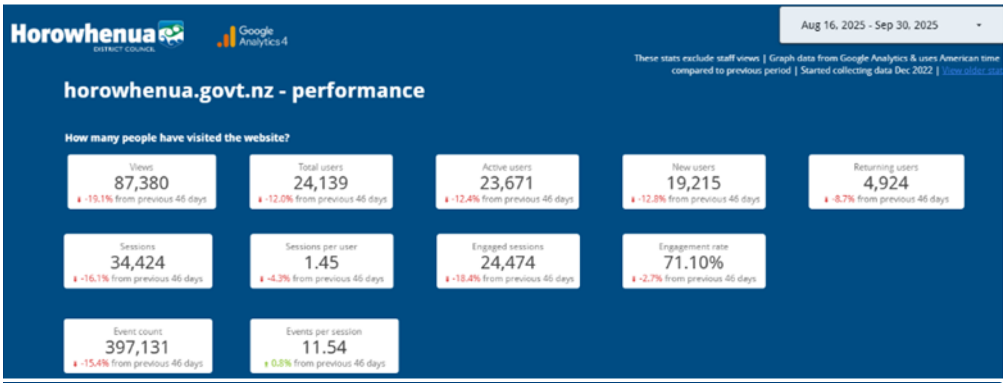
Maintain a sustained focus on improving our communication and engagement across communities.

Council continued to prioritise communication and engagement across the district throughout the period, focusing on major initiatives such as signing the Joint Water Services Delivery Plan, advocating for the Ōtaki to North of Levin highway, endorsing the Closed Levin Landfill Management Plan, and beginning work on the Levin Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade. Updates to natural-hazard reporting in LIMs and the launch of a dedicated Ō2NL project webpage kept residents informed as design decisions progressed.

Highlights included:

- Regional wins and local milestones: Horizons Regional Council signed a contract for new Palmerston North–Wellington trains, and Council endorsed the refreshed Destination Management Plan.
- Community campaigns: Participation in New Zealand Clean-up Week, Age on the Go Expo, Local Body Election voting, rates-rebate promotion, the Ice Skate Tour at Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō, and the Civil Defence Grab Bag Giveaway.
- Ongoing recognition and support: Promotion of Civic Awards, Youth Excellence Scholarships, and Grants and Funding programmes.
- Community consultation: Communications supported the Foxton Beach Endowment Fund Policy consultation, ensuring residents stayed informed and engaged.

Digital engagement remained strong, with 34,424 sessions on horowhenua.govt.nz, and the most-visited pages covering Local Election candidate profiles, rating information, and rates-rebate details.



	Page title	Sessions	% Δ	Views	% Δ
1.	/Home	6,408	-29.1%	8,887	-27.5%
2.	/System-pages/Search-Results	2,481	-27.0%	4,679	-28.6%
3.	/Council/Participate/Elections/Candidates-profiles	2,676	38,128....	3,518	43,875.0...
4.	/Services/HomeProperty/Rating-Information	2,190	-3.6%	3,102	-7.2%
5.	/Services/Home-Property/Rubbish-Recycling/Check-my-rubbish-and-recycling-collection-date	1,694	-11.9%	2,217	-12.9%
6.	/Services/Home-Property/Online-Maps	1,425	-21.0%	1,878	-24.9%
7.	/Council/Participate/Elections	939	-1.3%	1,266	-6.6%
8.	/Growth-Projects/Projects/Otaki-to-North-of-Levin-Highway-O2NL	1,029	31.4%	1,216	35.1%
9.	/Services/Home-Property/Rating-Information/Apply-for-a-Rates-Rebate	839	111.9%	1,091	122.7%
10.	/News-Events/Events/Event-Calendar	414	33.1%	1,064	35.5%

Initiate community plans in Foxton and Shannon and continue with place-based relationships.

Foxton and Foxton Beach Community Plan - Foxton Futures Group meeting held its first meeting under the revised governance structure. All six community themes were represented to present action plans that the groups had met independently to complete. The plans were to outline priorities, tasks and actions to the group to be incorporated into the development of the full Foxton and Foxton Beach Community Plan.

Shannon Community Plan – In August the first community meeting was held to develop actions for the Priority Areas of the Shannon Community Plan. Over 30 people attended from various groups, businesses and organisations. The Working Group facilitated the meeting and led discussions for the four priority area groups. Overall, it was a great start, with several participants sharing their ideas and expressing a desire to get involved and discuss further. Since then, the Working Group coordinators of each priority area have been agreed, and invites have been sent for the second meeting for the Priority Areas, on 16 October. The second issue of the Shannon Community Newsletter went out on 26 September. It highlighted positive local stories which the Working Group intend to publish each month.

Activating the Levin Town Centre

Activating key strategic initiatives to act as a catalyst for change, stimulating collaborative and transformational revitalisation of Levin's hub.

Implement agreed Strategy initiatives.

A significant milestone reached for Council and the community with the commercial negotiations complete for Levin War Memorial Hall, with Council and The Wellington Company having a conditional Development, Sale and Purchase Agreement in place and signed by both parties.

The Warehouse Carpark has been sold to remain as a free public carpark for the Warehouse customers. This sale has a settlement date of 5 June 2026 to align with Council's financial year. The onsite toilets will be decommissioned and removed before settlement. After this date, Council will no longer be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of this carpark.

The documentation and communications requirements are being prepared to release the Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the Bath/Salisbury Street carpark to market in October. The EOI process will be for four weeks duration to gauge ideas/concepts for redevelopment. An RFP process will follow for successful respondents pending Council approval.

A business case is being developed to outline the next stage of investment required to realise the opportunities presented by the six Council-owned properties on Oxford Street. It will include a road map outlining an efficient and effective process for bringing the properties to market.

The work with Arterra Interactive to develop a video showing the future transformation of the Levin Town Centre is progressing with a timeline for completion by November. This work will be integrated into our comms and engagement strategy work for the Levin Town Centre Transformation.

The Carparking Strategy is in the final stages of internal review. The draft Carparking Strategy will be made available for the community to provide their feedback via Let's Kōrero in conjunction with the Bath/Salisbury Street EOI phase.

The team has re-engaged Agite who will plan and facilitate a workshop with Greater Wellington to discuss regional public transport connectivity, and the relocation of the Levin train station platform.

Pursue connections and relationships to build momentum outside of Council led initiatives.

The Levin Town Centre internal project alignment group meetings are proving beneficial to ensure collaboration on initiatives that may require support or input from other teams across the organisation. It was during one of these meetings that it was suggested to host a meet and greet opportunity with The Wellington Company team to establish relationships with key contacts, to provide assistance and advice during the initial and ongoing stages of the redevelopment process.

Ōtaki to North Levin Readiness

Leveraging the Ōtaki to North of Levin Expressway Project to seize opportunities and ensure alignment with strategic council priorities for long-term community benefit

Continued advocacy on Ō2NL revocation.

Council officers continue to advocate for greater clarity regarding the Ō2NL revocation.

Elected members have provided feedback to officers on the proposed revocation principles outlining how HDC and NZTA will work together regarding revocation.

On 27 August, Council received a briefing from NZTA which provided a revocation programme overview and outlined the revocation principles in more detail. Post workshop, officers were able to work with NZTA to refine Council's feedback and finalise revocation principles.

On 24 September, Officers attended a revocation workshop with NZTA to have an initial discussion on the future function of the revoked roads at time of handover. Officers will work through this in more detail.

Championing legacy outcomes.

Council officers continued to be actively involved in the Legacy Outcomes Rōpū and related workstreams, advocating for long-term positive outcomes for the Horowhenua community. This ongoing involvement is helping to ensure local priorities remained central to the Ō2NL project.

Tuesday 23 September marked a significant week for the Ō2NL project with the official sod turning in a paddock in North Manakau Road. The Prime Minister and Hon. Chris Bishop both spoke positively about the importance of Ō2NL not only in terms of providing a safer road, but also to support the growth and housing in the district including Tara-Ika where the Government has also invested in infrastructure.

Exploring opportunities and planning for consequential Ō2NL impacts with a specific focus on revocation.

Officers have been actively participating in the Internal Alignment Team to maintain strong internal coordination across Council activities. They continue to engage regularly with NZTA, the project Alliances, and contribute to key forums such as the NZTA Owner Team, Ō2NL Owner Interface Manager group, Systems and Design group, Project Steering Group, and communications team. Officers have also been actively involved in the design review process, which has ensured consistent input on design elements, seamless integration with existing HDC infrastructure, and alignment on messaging across all stakeholders.

Officers continue to assess the wider implications of Ō2NL on the local transport network in relation to revocation, which remains a central consideration in discussions around community and network effects.

Economic Development Update from The Horowhenua Company Ltd

Chief Executive, Andrew Reid provided an update on the work The Horowhenua Company Limited (THCL) has been undertaking over the past three months.

International Investor Forum

In August, THCL hosted an International Investor Forum, bringing together local business leaders, iwi, and national and international investors. The event focused on opportunities in housing, industrial land, health, and infrastructure across the district. The forum has already led to follow-up discussions on housing development, workforce training pathways, and industrial growth.

Ō2NL Business Readiness

Two practical sessions were delivered in partnership with NZTA, iwi, and Council to support local businesses in preparing for the upcoming Ō2NL expressway works. A further three sessions are scheduled for October to maximise local supplier participation and readiness.

Electra Business Showcase – Mana Kai Special Event

Co-hosted by Electra and Horowhenua District Council at the Civic Building on 22 September, this event brought together over 100 local businesses to celebrate and support the Mana Kai food-security initiative. The showcase highlighted the strength of local enterprise and the power of collaboration in addressing community wellbeing.

Business Growth Advisory Clinics

Our Business Growth Advisor delivered tailored one-on-one sessions in Levin and Foxton, supporting SMEs to access Regional Business Partner funding, digital enablement tools, and business expansion opportunities.

- AI Roundtable - *21 attendees*
- Height WinWrite Workshop - *8 attendees*
- Health & Safety Workshop - *12 attendees*
- Little & Loud: AI for Business Workshops - *Two sessions delivered*
  There were *34 attendees* and we co-funded and sent x18 (RBP).

Get-Go Youth Pathways

During the reporting period, the Get-Go programme has entered a discovery and redesign phase focused on strengthening the connection between schools, students, and local industry. THCL convened an initial reference group meeting and targeted workshops with schools, employers, and sector experts to review the existing model and identify improvements to how Futures Day and Snapshot Visits are coordinated and measured. This work will inform a refined delivery framework, with a deep-dive design workshop scheduled for November to finalise recommendations and next steps.

Transformational Projects in Motion

- **Health & Wellbeing Hub (Durham St)** – Construction on track for Oct 2025 completion: roof installation, landscaping and internal fit outs nearing final stages. The hub is set to open as a community-centred health facility supporting both wellbeing and local jobs. (photos above)
- **Levin Retail Transformation Plan** –A part of its contract deliverables, THCL will be preparing a Retail Transformation Strategy on behalf of Council, setting out a pathway to revitalise the town centre ahead of the Ō2NL expressway opening.

Community & Partnerships

We continue to build and nurture relationships with iwi partners with a focus on fostering trust, respect, and shared aspirations for the district's growth.

This was evidenced through actively seeking iwi perspectives on key projects to ensure future initiatives reflect cultural values and community priorities. And also, we amplified local stories through THCL's social platforms – over 30 posts this quarter celebrating business wins, investment activity, and community initiatives.

We're proud of the momentum building across Horowhenua's economy and grateful for the partnerships with Council, iwi and business that make it possible.

Horowhenua DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ngā Uara

Organisation Values Highlight

Living Our Values

Tiakitanga

We proudly and professionally contribute every day to the care of our community and whenua with courage, positivity and mana - leaving a legacy which will protect a future that matters.

The Parks & Property Team displayed tiakitanga in coordinating Clean-up Activities across the district in September.

Clean Up Week 2025 (19–25 September) once again brought our communities together in a shared effort to care for our local environment and raise awareness about the ongoing issue of fly tipping. Across the district, residents, schools, and community groups rolled up their sleeves to make a visible difference.

The biggest turnouts were seen at Shannon School's Clean Up event and in Foxton, Waitārere Beach and Hōkio Beach, where volunteers collected significant volumes of rubbish and illegally dumped materials. These clean-up efforts not only improved the look and feel of our neighbourhoods and natural spaces but also reinforced the importance of collective action in protecting the environment.

Throughout the week, Council worked alongside community leaders to highlight the real costs of fly tipping—both environmental and social—and to promote practical alternatives to illegal dumping. Through social media, local advertising, and on-the-ground engagement, residents were encouraged to make use of Council's waste and recycling services, transfer stations, and kerbside collection options.

Clean Up Week served as a timely reminder that small actions, when taken together, can have a lasting impact. The strong turnout and community spirit demonstrated once again that caring for our environment is a shared responsibility—and one that the Horowhenua community takes seriously.

Manaakitanga

We put our people first by showing them they matter, through a caring, whānau centric and solutions focussed approach.

Group Manager Organisation Performance, Jacinta Straker, demonstrated manaakitanga through her participation, for the second time, in the Pacific Technical Advisory Programme with Taituarā. This programme is funded through Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and we are a proud participant in the programme.

Jacinta spent a week in the Solomon Islands, working alongside the Finance Team and Activity Managers at Honiara City Council to provide mentoring and support. Her focus was on developing a Finance Business Partnering process and strengthening understanding of how to create effective Financial and Infrastructure Strategies.

Through a series of workshops with Finance staff, Councillors and Activity Managers, the team successfully developed the foundations of Honiara City Council's first 10-year Long

Term Plan budget and high-level Asset Management Plan, which will be finalised by the end of 2025.

This programme provides an excellent opportunity for New Zealand local government professionals to share their expertise and build capability in developing nations. Jacinta will continue to work remotely with the Honiara team to support ongoing learning and skill development. Her contribution has been warmly received and is greatly appreciated by Honiara City Council.

Jacinta and Philip Fakani – Chairman of Finance Committee.

Jacinta and members of the Finance Team.

Horowhenua
DISTRICT COUNCIL