



# **Horowhenua District Council Interim Organisation Performance Report**

25 June 2025



# Nā te Kaiwhakahaere Matua

## Chief Executive Introduction and Executive Summary

### Executive Summary

I am pleased to present the Interim Organisational Performance Report (OPR) for the June Council meeting.

The purpose of this report is to foster open, constructive dialogue between Council and within our community, ensuring our work continues to align with Council's vision and the expectations of our district.



Eleven months into the 2024/25 Council Plan on a Page, we have made substantial progress across our key priorities. This is clearly reflected in our update on the Top Priorities which evidences strong momentum and delivery from across the organisation.

As we approach the end of the financial year, we are on track to report a healthy surplus. Financial discipline has remained a key focus, with savings achieved wherever possible—positioning us well for a strong year-end result.

A major area of activity over the past month has been the Ōtaki to North Levin (O2NL) project. Following NZTA's announcement of proposed design changes, we have consistently advocated for the current design to remain unchanged, reinforcing our commitment to the long-term benefits of this critical infrastructure project.

We are proud to celebrate the national recognition of two of our outstanding officers at the recent 2025 Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards. Ashley Huria was named Emerging Leader of the Year—a prestigious honour that acknowledges her exceptional leadership and passion for local government. Ashley will represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Conference in Tampa, Florida later this year.

In addition, Brent Harvey, Group Manager Community Experience and Services, was awarded an International Exchange to Australia. This award recognises Brent's significant contributions to the sector and provides a unique opportunity for trans-Tasman learning and collaboration, with Horowhenua hosting the Australian recipient in return.

Together, these achievements reflect a strong year of delivery, advocacy, and recognition for the people driving our district forward.

Monique Davidson

**Chief Executive**

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# Ngā Ihirangi

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# Organisation Performance Dashboard

## Organisation Performance Dashboard



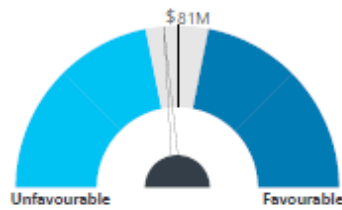
## Organisation Performance Dashboard YTD Ending 31 May 2025

### Organisational Performance

YTD Ending 31 May 2025

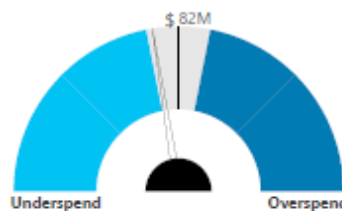
This dashboard shows a snapshot of how we are tracking against our performance measure targets, our financial performance overall and activity financial information.

### Financial Performance



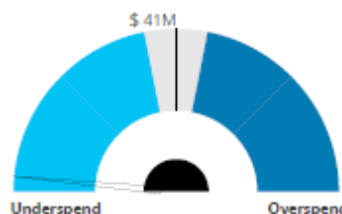
#### INCOME

YTD Actual:	\$79.37M
YTD Budget:	\$81.12M
Full Year Forecast:	\$86.81M
Full Year Budget:	\$87.97M
YTD Variance:	-\$1.75M (2.2%)
Status:	on target



#### OPERATING EXPENDITURE

YTD Actual:	\$78.76M
YTD Budget:	\$82.10M
Full Year Forecast:	\$89.30M
Full Year Budget:	\$89.09M
YTD Variance:	\$3.34M, 4.1%
Status:	on target



#### CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

YTD Actual:	\$25.44M
YTD Budget:	\$40.76M
Full Year Forecast:	\$34.60M
Full Year Budget:	\$44.48M
Variance:	\$15.32M, 37.6%
Status:	below target

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

Our operating Income is tracking lower than planned. This is mainly due to lower funding from Waka Kotahi, which is offset by lower spending agreed by Council. It is also due to delayed CIP funding with the changes in the timing of associated capital projects. The position is forecast to continue for the year. While Grants and Subsidies are lower, we are tracking well in our Regulatory area with income for consenting higher than planned and additional waste rebate received.

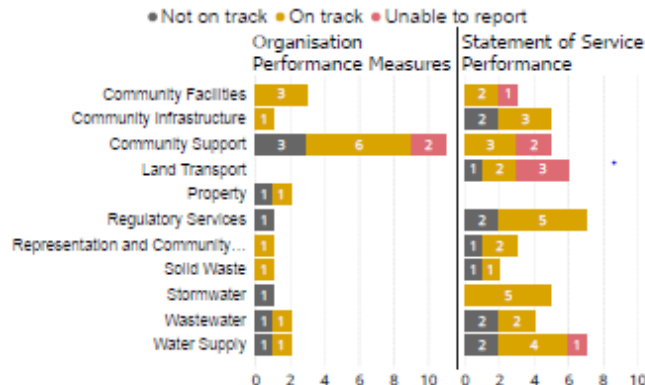
Our operating expenditure (excluding Loss on Derivatives\*) is tracking favourable to budget, which is largely due to lower professional services and other operating costs. The position is forecast to be on budget due to the offset between favourable Maintenance and unfavourable Employee costs and interest costs. The reason for the offset is that our adopted full year budget reflects the outsourced model for local water with costs in Maintenance, whereas the full year forecast reflects the current in-house delivery model of local water services with costs mainly in Employee costs and other operating costs. The additional interest cost is expected to offset fully by the interest revenue generated from term deposits.

We are tracking well to meet the underlying savings of \$300k (excluding capital items). This is mostly due to additional net income in Regulatory. Potential risks within the three waters budget are being monitored closely.

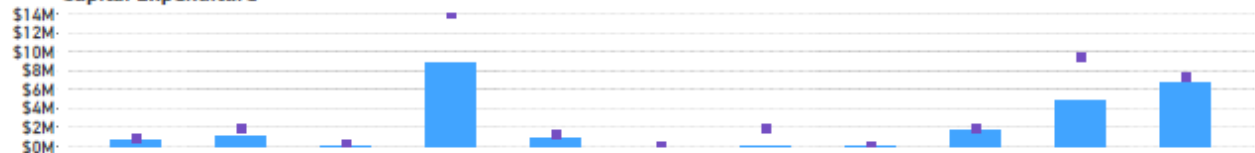
We have completed \$25.4m for the capital programme, with around \$9m planned to be spent in June 2025, some of these may relate to projects committed but won't be spent by the end of 2024/25 financial year. As we approach the end of the current financial year, this position may change following capital carry forwards requests for projects committed but not yet spent for 2024/25 with Council decision in early September 2025.

\*A loss on Derivatives is a result of loss on interest rate swaps - this occurs when the value of the swap decreases due to unfavourable changes in interest rates. Swaps are used to manage interest rate risk and potentially lower borrowing costs. Loss on Derivatives is not cash item.

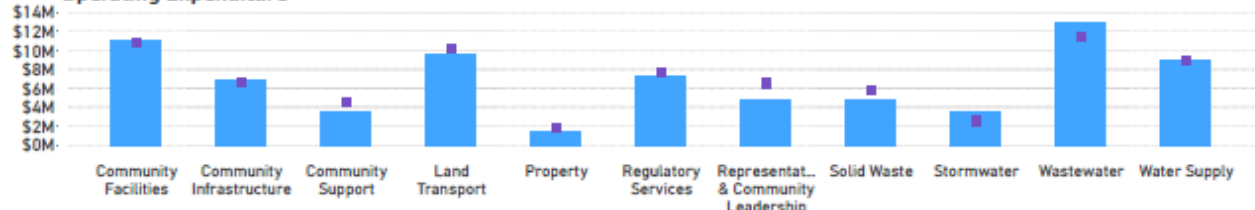
### Performance Measures



### Capital Expenditure



### Operating Expenditure





# 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***

A key focus remains on empowering our people leaders through the rollout of the Development Framework. The Senior Leadership Cohort (SLC) has completed one-on-one coaching with our organisational coach, Sally Duxfield, reflecting on their leadership, strengths, areas for growth, and engagement survey results. Together SLC have developed a collective leadership plan focused on building capability across the organisation.

A 12-month professional development plan has been developed covering 12 key leadership topics. This plan starts with the SLC delivered through monthly sessions and will cascade through our people leaders, with topics refined to suit each leadership level. Key themes will also be shared with all staff through quarterly all-staff meetings, ensuring organisation-wide relevance and impact.

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

In the Customer Service Excellence kaupapa, customer journey maps have been developed for key regulatory licensing interactions to identify pain points and opportunities for improvement in our service delivery. A new internal process for how new business enquiries and applications are received and processed has been implemented to create a single point of contact for licensing matters.

The team successfully launched the improved Kbase FAQ site to all staff. The improvements include template email responses, and a space for temporary notices. Stage two of the Messages Matter – Part 2 mahi has been published and is about written communication which focus on letter writing guidance for staff to support clear and professional customer correspondence.

New staff intranet pages and announcements have been drafted and a release schedule developed for delivery. These weekly customer service announcements kicked off in May and will have service tips for kaimahi that range from where to find Kbase, how to set your out of office auto-reply to how to use the visitor sign-in system in the Civic building, to name a few.

Data analysis of the annual resident satisfaction survey, Voice of the Customer, was completed this month by the Capability and Transformation team; with results to presented to Council in June.

In this reporting period we have engaged with our mail house to set up templates for Water Billing and Debtor statements. Transitioning this process to our mail house improves our

delivery timeframes to customers, allows us to scale as required and aligns us to the same standards we have on our Rates correspondence.

The 2025/2026 online dog registration forms have been set up, with this comes many internal optimisations that improve the flow of data and positively impact our processing time.

In addition, we have taken the initiative to work through our Customer Request Management (CRM) categories, which are used for managing both internal and external enquiries. This month's focus was on the CRM categories for our Roothing, Strategic Projects, and Integrated Growth and Planning team. Optimising these alongside their information in our knowledge base will greatly benefit customer response time and accuracy.

### ***Preparation for the 2025 elections and referendum.***

Officers recently attended a regional Kapa Haka event in Palmerston North Te Pōtini. The focus of this event was to enrol and update voter details, and raise awareness about the elections this year.

The pre-election report is nearing completion and is expected to be delivered well before the legislative deadline. A pre-candidate session is planned for Tuesday 24 June where potential candidates are able to receive important ahead of making the decision to stand. The nomination period opens 4 July, and closes 12pm Friday 1 August.



### **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.**

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

The Lake Domain development plan is still in draft, as the May Board meeting did not have a quorum. This will now go to the June meeting for endorsement.

However, an extraordinary Board meeting was held in early May where the Board signed off on what activities the Better-Off funding should be spent on. Officers are now implementing this and are confident this will be complete 30 June.

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

The outstanding appeal on the Arawhata Wetland consent has been resolved, therefore the consent can now be given effect.

#### ***Support community led planting and clean up initiatives.***

The top priority for spending of the Better-Off funding is to clean up the Domain area. The bulk of the work is being undertaken by Green by Nature and Officers are linking with Lake Domain and Trust whānau to support this mahi.





## **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.***

The latest draft of the Iwi/hapū Engagement Framework was presented to Council on 4 June. Feedback from Elected Members has been grouped into themes and is being reviewed. The draft was also provided to the Iwi representatives in the Project Advisory Group for feedback. Feedback has been received from Rangitāne and will be incorporated into the review. Awaiting further responses from Iwi. Officers are now reflecting on Elected Member feedback to bring back an updated draft for feedback.



## **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.***

The omnibus plan change is progressing, particularly in the definitions space. We are currently exploring adding a topic in response to a recent flurry of implementation challenges (being 'accessways'). We are reviewing the National Direction package (released end of May 2025) to determine if this has any impacts or warrants any change in approach.

***Continue integrated growth planning to inform future capital investments.***

The Integrated Growth Programme was launched internally to SLC, who provided feedback which is being analysed to inform key priorities. Work on a 'growth narrative' is underway – and is timely, given the recent online community interest in the district's growth. Work is commencing with the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee Housing and Business Capacity Assessments, as are early conversations with Horizons Regional Council on spatial planning.

## **Development of Vested Assets Policy.**

Intent: The Vested Assets Policy is under development at present and once completed aims to address the financial burden on ratepayers arising from long-term maintenance of infrastructure assets vested from new developments. Preliminary research into comparable policies across New Zealand revealed no clear precedents, making this a pioneering initiative – although Manawātū District Council have recently completed a draft of a similar document and we are collaborating with them to take what we can from their experience and share our own learnings at the appropriate time.

The policy 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 in November 2024 for initial feedback, receiving positive support to proceed with further refinement and to carefully assess potential implications.

Current State: Collaboration between HBAD, Integrated Growth and Planning, Finance and Infrastructure teams continues to develop clear guidelines and parameters for delivery.

There is some complexity involved in that the development of such a mechanism may have flow on effects to other considerations such as the Development Contributions Policy, in time. We are on track to bring a draft policy for feedback by the end of August.

***Deliver the Capital Programme.***

The Levin Wastewater Treatment Plant downstream inlet pipe and bulk main council report was presented to Elected Members on May 14th. Council approved the proposed works outlined in the report, allowing the team to proceed with the tender and contract processes. An independent engineer has reviewed all designs and related documents to ensure the project aligns with best practices and standards. The Headworks design is progressing well with technology selection underway. Council Officers are now preparing to draft the Procurement for the Headworks, for this to be presented to PRG in July. Lutra will be providing assistance and guidance throughout the procurement and tender stages for the Headworks project

MacArthur Street, Levin renewals are progressing as planned, with the section from Cambridge to Queenwood along MacArthur now live. In Shannon, Tatana Contractors commenced construction on Bryce Street and are pressure testing on Margaret Street.

Investigations and designs are underway for the extension of the North East Levin Stormwater main, running from Okarito Avenue through to the main installed on Magnolia Place and into Coley Pond.

Officers have been reviewing all expenses over the past 11 months in preparation for the end of the financial year. Additionally, they are assessing the budgets approved through the Annual Plan and are actively planning and preparing for projects scheduled to commence in the new financial year.

***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 Recreation Investment Framework draft was workshopped with Councillors in May, with feedback provided. The framework will be presented to Council in June seeking adoption.

Officers and Visitor Solutions are still gathering and collating data to complete the needs assessment, which will create a key moves list with key strategic focus areas based off the framework. This is expected in August.



## **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.***

HDC voted unanimously to form a Joint Water Services Organisation with Palmerston North City Council and Rangitikei District Council to deliver water services and recognises Whanganui and Ruapehu District Councils as potential willing partners.



## **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.***

Nothing further this period.

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

An external funding stocktake has been undertaken and a document created which will enable officers to prioritise projects and initiatives, depending on eligibility against available funding streams.

***Respond to regional deal opportunities.***

Nothing new to update for this period. We are still awaiting to hear the outcome of the Greater Manawatu City and Regional deal that was submitted at the end of February.



## **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.***

Council continues to operate within the parameters of our adopted Financial Strategy and 2024-44 Long Term Plan, with regular internal reviews to ensure ongoing compliance with debt and rates benchmarks. The 2025 pre-election report presents these benchmarks information and shows how we are tracking.

Departmental budget holders are being supported through enhanced financial guidance and training to ensure prudent use of allocated resources and early identification of cost pressure. Monthly discussion and forward communication from the Finance team is also happening to support the budget holders.

***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.***

Council implemented monthly budget variance analysis and forecasting across all activity areas. This enables timely identification of risks and reallocation opportunities, ensuring we remain within our operating and capital budgets. For 2024/25 financial year, we are tracking to achieve a \$300,000 operating savings. This follows the zero-based budgeting approach taken in the 2024-44 Long Term Plan setting.

Early work is also starting to identify any potential capital carryovers that are committed or will be delivered early next financial year. Council approval will be sought on these requests in September.

A renewed focus on financial accountability is being embedded at all levels of the organisation through improved communication channels, reporting tools and leadership engagement.

Council adopted the 2025/26 Annual Plan, and Fees and Charges in May following a comprehensive budget impact assessment by budget holders, and regular engagement with elected members. A workshop was held in late May with elected members to review the impacts of rates increases for different types of properties. Total rates increase for 2025/26 financial year is projected to be 10.2% with 1.13% growth expected. This means the average rates increase after growth is 9.1%.

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

An analysis is currently underway into Supplier Panels – much like the recently implemented Legal and Trade Services panels – for other areas of the organisation. This is in its final stages and due to be completed and provided in a report to the Executive Leadership Team next month. This report will include the analysis as well as recommendations on where additional panels are appropriate and where better efficiencies can be introduced. The aim of this work is to enable HDC 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.***

Council's treasury management practices are under continuous review to identify and capitalise on favourable interest rate movements. In May, the Mayor, Chief Executive and Senior Finance officers met with Standard and Poor's representatives to discuss Council's performance and position including debt liquidity and budgetary performance. This is part of the annual review of Council's credit rating with the outcome to be announced later in June.

Treasury policy compliance is regularly monitored and reported to the Risk and Assurance Committee.

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

The pre-final audit for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 commenced on 16 June. Officers have been in regular communication with Audit New Zealand to plan for the early adoption of Council's 2024/25 annual report which is scheduled for 8 October. End of financial year preparation is also underway.

Open recommendations from our annual audits and tax compliance evaluations are being regularly worked on and reported to the Risk and Assurance Committee through the monitoring report. Since 1 July 2024, we have closed off 50 of the 71 open recommendations with 20 outstanding recommendations being worked through.

PwC was engaged to undertake the PAYE compliance evaluation and this will be reported back to the Risk and Assurance Committee in August.



**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.***

The initial assessment report for the Moata Carbon Portal has been completed, focusing on the carbon emissions of selected water and wastewater projects, as well as the roof upgrade of Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom. This report provides a high-level analysis using the portal to better identify project hotspots.

We are currently in phase three and are working with SLC to implement the Moata Carbon Portal across Council projects. This phase will continue until April 2026, when the subscription ends.

***Implement the Climate Action Plan within budget allocations.***

The Climate Action Fund (\$500–\$2,500) website information is ready to be uploaded to Smarty Grants. Integrated Growth & Planning (IG&P) has been working closely with Community Development to ensure it is ready for the next grants period.

IG&P has supported the establishment phase of the kai resilience project, including financial assistance to enable it to continue until government grants or funding can be secured (Action 5.6, Action 1.3 of the Climate Action Plan).

Following feedback from the monitoring survey exploring progress towards the Climate Action Plan, it was demonstrated that direct progress has been made on 84% of the actions. No further monitoring has been completed since, but another survey will be recirculated for response in August.

***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.***

A Waste Review paper will go to Council on 25 June for decisions on bag collection and transfer station contracted services.

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

In May Officers worked with both the Waitārere Beach and Waikawa Beach communities on their coastal resilient planting days. Plants were supplied by Horizons and Officers provided tools and information on what plants were pest species and should be removed and where to plant the new species.



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

In May, Officers and the Open Spaces Maintenance team supported Waikawa Beach residents with their community planting. This included providing mulch and working with the community on best practice.

The Open Spaces Maintenance team further supported community efforts by taking away the rubbish collected by the Foxton, Waitārere and Hōkio communities.

## **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.**

During the reporting period, Emergency Management advisors attended the Coordinating Executive Group meeting (Palmerston North) – items included the new Emergency Management



Bill and the draft Manawatū-Whanganui CDEM Group Plan. They also attended the Manawatū-Whanganui CDEM Regional Welfare Forum (Palmerston North) where there was a presentation from GNS Volcanologist Brad Scott was part of the day.

Staff training was facilitated for the ITF Foundation Course – there were 15 attendees, and assistance given for Toa Consulting to conduct an audit of the EOC as part of our SSP commitments.

Met with project team including Electra and HDC Iwi Advisors to further discussions and identify next steps for the Whakamana Marae / Marae Emergency Management Resilience project. Good progress is being made. Within the next month the project team will meet with potential funding agencies.

### ***Progress priority business continuity and resilience initiatives.***

The draft Business Continuity Plan has been completed with the inclusion of the high-risk processes. This document is out for review, with the aim to have it adopted internally by 30 June 2025.

### ***Continue tackling stormwater hotspots across our district.***

The stormwater works on Waitārere Beach Road have been completed which fixes a longstanding flooding issue on the Waitarere Beach Road / Waitarere Rise Avenue roundabout.



## **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.**

### ***Continue progressive implementation of Blueprint priorities.***

The Horowhenua Blueprint continues to be progressed with a range of the actions and workstreams being currently undertaken, a number of these are addressed specifically under other Council Priorities.

Among the highlights for Destination Management during this period have been the connections we are making across the sector – officers attended TRENZ, New Zealand’s biggest tourism industry event. Off the back of that conference, we’ve had really productive meetings with the CE of the Te Araroa Trail, the CE of Regional Tourism Organisation and made connections with Destination Management leaders from Queenstown, Rotorua, Wellington, Manawatū and Gisborne (who are keen to go halves in developing sector resources to reduce costs for both of us).

We’re in discussions with tourism content creators/promoters Neat Places to pilot an influencer campaign in the summer.

The Destination Management team presented alongside Brad Rowe and Dave Hockly at May’s BA5 event and held a tourism business capability and proposition workshop with local tourism businesses, which led to a well informed and aspirational list of actions, including the desire for

better collaboration from the industry, the establishment of famils and the need for additional sector resources.

We've reviewed the Destination Management and Development Plans for our neighbours in Wellington and Manawatū to understand where there might be shared goals/opportunities and we held a workshop with key stakeholders to inform the refresh of our own Destination Management and Development Plan. We aim to have this completed by the end of July.

We saw 8,379 new users to our destination management website [www.horowhenuanz.co.nz](http://www.horowhenuanz.co.nz) for the month of May, up 10% month on month. This resulted in 5,597 engaged sessions, which led to 1,563 member referrals (clicks on local tourism experiences/business listings). 73% of traffic to site are females. 83% of this traffic came from a combination of paid social media and paid google search. Our content strategy is driving the majority of page views, with 'accommodation that inspires' and 'kiwi camping' as the pages viewers are looking at most. Our foodie's day trip ranks 5th most viewed page, with 'live work and learn' job vacancies page views ranking 6th. Pop Up Eats and Tatum are also in the top 10.

Levin Town Centre Strategy (Blueprint Action 11) has been actively advanced and well supported by the Levin Town Centre Steering Group. A digital video tool to show how Levin and the town centre is envisioned to be developed, is currently being developed which is expected to help be used in a way that promotes the vision, encourages inward investment and showcases opportunity while also be a tool that can be used for community engagement when it comes to processes such as revocation planning for Oxford Street. More specific detail on the Levin Town Centre programme and progress is detailed under Priority 11 below.

Work undertaken by officers to advance the Foxton Futures Community Plan and Shannon Community Plan (Blueprint Action 12) are detailed further and have both been processes that the local communities have stepped up and got behind. The forward focus will be on maintaining that community drive and involvement as these plans shift to implementation.

The District Plan programme as part of the new Integrated Growth and Planning workstream has continued to explore changes to the District Plan both to keep up with current reform but also to unlock land supply and development (Blueprint Action 3). Plan Change 6A has been notified and is tracking through the statutory plan change process with the potential to unlock between 400 and 500 new lots for housing in the north-west of Levin. Submissions on Plan Change 6A closed 14 May with 71 submissions received. The next phase of the process is to notify the Summary of Submissions which is on track to occur in June.

The Integrated Growth and Planning workstream is a direct response to Blueprint Action 4 and looks to take a comprehensive approach to planning for and managing growth in our district. The workstream brings together the different growth-related functions within Council and will ensure alignment and integration across in a way that has previously occurred within our Council.

Our advocacy and involvement in the public transport space (Blueprint Action 10) has increased as opportunities for new and enhanced public transport (bus and rail) services are on the cusp of being committed to for our district. This has seen officers attend meetings, make

submissions and presentations to both Horizons and Greater Wellington Regional Councils to ensure that the perspectives of our district are included in the early planning.

Recent engagement on the Draft Economic Development Strategy with Muaūpoko Tribal Authority and Te Tūmatakahuki representatives has helped ensure that the strategy will have a specific focus on support Māori economic development aspirations (Blueprint Action 5). Council has further supported these aspirations through its support and leadership in the Ō2NL Legacy Outcomes Investment Framework space.

### ***Implement the Housing Action Plan priorities.***

The Housing Action Plan has been refocused on pivoting away from reliance on state-led development, turning toward Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and other alternative channels for affordable and emergency housing delivery. This change has had a stalling effect as we shift direction and work to bed in the new CHP delivery methodology. A recent focus on 'Community-Led Initiatives';

- A successful Family Flat Pilot event was held in Shannon, providing guidance for residents interested in adding flats to their properties. The event had an unexpectedly high turnout, and more sessions are planned.
- Recent government changes to Family Flat rules are being reviewed and will be presented to Council to inform future initiatives.
- The Community Development Team are working in partnership with the Housing & Business Development Team to run a series of workshops.
  - a) 'Creative ways to get onto the property ladder' – a talk about new ways to achieve home ownership, including rent to own, shared ownership, Kiwibuy, progressive home ownership, tips and tricks to accelerate deposit savings.
  - b) 'How to be a good landlord' - for practitioners and whānau. Being a landlord in New Zealand comes with a set of responsibilities and legal obligations. Learn more about key legislation, health and safety standards, effective property management, selecting tenants carefully, tenancy agreements and financial management.
  - c) 'Smart Renting' - If you are working with young people or families, or you are a family member helping younger members find a safe and affordable rental property. Learn about what renters need to know before they sign a tenancy agreement.

### ***Activate the key priorities within the Community Wellbeing Strategy.***

We continue to make strong progress on the Community Wellbeing Action Plan and remain on track to complete all Year One actions by the end of the financial year.

Key actions during this reporting period include:

- The launch of the updated centralised Community Directory, which now lists contact details for local groups, clubs, organisations, and services – grouped into categories to make it easier for the community to directly find the support they need.
- Development of a new resource outlining available social support services for displaced members of our community.

- The establishment of the Horowhenua Kai Resilience Collective – a community-led, Council-supported initiative focused on improving connectivity between existing kai initiatives across the district.

In addition to our Community Networks, Council Officers have established the following Community Wellbeing Collectives to help drive key deliverables within the Community Wellbeing Strategy:

- Housing Vulnerability Collective
- Youth Driving Licence Collective
- Horowhenua Kai Resilience Collective.

The Community Wellbeing Committee met on 21 May, and it was fantastic to have all Community Network Representatives in attendance, along with representatives from each of the Collectives who provided updates to the Committee.

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

We continue to roll out strategic communication campaigns that align with Council's Top Priorities, with the next concept centred on providing clarity and insights on common myths as part of helping people better understand Council and local government ahead of the 2025 elections. Our always on media approach, provides a valuable multi-channel mix, with priority campaigns featured consistently across radio, print, digital billboards and social media.

The refreshed Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-po website has progressed and is expected to live by the end of June.

The refreshed Community & Business directory went live, with emails sent to current listing holders, asking them to update their listings. The next part of the project will be getting the Sports and Recreation listings live. <https://www.horowhenua.govt.nz/CommunityPlaces/Our-District/Business-Directory>

During May we saw 18,459 users to the horowhenua.govt.nz website, down 13% from the previous month. 59% were mobile users. 67% were female. Among the top 5 ranked pages were rubbish and recycling collection days, rating information, online maps and cemetery searches. Interestingly we saw a 128% increase from the previous month on agenda and meeting minute link clicks and a 255% increase in Council Meeting livestream views.

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

Foxton and Foxton Beach Community Plan:

Officers facilitated a Foxton Futures Group Workshop on Tuesday 6 May where invitations were extended to current members of Foxton Futures Group, and the community members who had expressed an interest to be involved in the Foxton Futures Group going forward. The objective of the workshop was an introductory session to provide an opportunity for those who had expressed an interest, to come together to meet each other, align roles, expectations and confirm their theme preference/s, and set a foundation for collaborative community planning.

Attendance comprised an even representation of both existing and new community members with a total of 27 people attending. This was a positive workshop where there was a collective enthusiasm and passion from all members to move forward together to contribute to the community.

The next steps have been for Officers to schedule four planning workshops in June to introduce the framework and provide members with direction and advice to start to prepare action plans with their thoughts and ideas on priorities, tasks, actions and roles of responsibility for each theme to be included in the final version of the Community Plan. These workshops will be facilitated by Council officers. Members will then be responsible for gathering their groups together to identify a theme lead and complete their action plan in time for the theme leads to bring to the first Foxton Futures Group meeting - yet to be scheduled for late July 2025. Horowhenua District Council and Horizons Regional Council will lead the respective Infrastructure and Transport and Nature and Environment themes.

#### Shannon/Ōtauru Community Plan:

Since the last update in May, the Shannon Community Working Group has met several times to finalise the draft Community Plan. The Group has worked together to ensure the plan accurately reflects the aspirations of their community. In May the Working Group presented the draft plan to the Shannon Community emphasising the collaborative effort. The following week, Councillor Olsen, Officers and the Working Group presented the draft plan at a Council Workshop, seeking feedback ahead of the Community Plan adoption in Shannon on 18 June.

The Working Group is working towards this and for the Council meeting to take place in Shannon.



### 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.**

Officers presented HDC's submission to Greater Wellington Regional Council at the Regional Public Transport Plan 2025 hearings. Some relevant questions and positive comments were

provided during the question-and-answer part of the submission process. A video clip from Waiopēhu College formed part of HDC's submission and was well received.

Work continues with Arterra Interactive to provide digital/spatial map services to support the LTC Transformation. This will provide a visualisation of what the Town Centre could look like in the future.

Carparking data collection is now complete and has been collated and compiled into a report. The report identifies interesting trends and insights that will be beneficial to support the Carparking and Accessibility Strategy.

Work has been initiated to create a Retail Transformation Strategy and action plan with a brief created and shared with The Horowhenua Company Ltd, who will be working with Council on this piece of work. A key focus will be on how we can ensure the retail environment supports the town centre's strategic objectives, and how we can create an environment that sees our retailers thrive.

A Levin Town Centre Steering Group Workshop was held in May. The purpose of this workshop was to review and provide direction on the LTC implementation plan, including the project framework, mix of projects, sequencing, proposed budgets, project governance and community engagement, ensuring alignment with strategic goals. All members of the Steering Group were in attendance, and it was beneficial to have a site visit around the town centre.

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

In line with Council's 26 March resolution, which required further engagement with Muaūpoko Tribal Authority and Raukawa ki te Tonga before finalising the sale of the Levin War Memorial Hall and Village Green to the Wellington Company Ltd, officers engaged with eight Te Tumatakahuki representatives to assess the proposal's alignment with iwi relationships, culture, traditions and ancestral connections.

The hui took place at Ngātōkōwaru Marae where officers and Ian Cassels from The Wellington Company were welcomed onto the marae. This was a positive hui where questions and concerns were able to be responded to.

Officers have offered to engage with Muaūpoko Tribal Authority, however Muaūpoko Tribal Authority have not confirmed that they will take up that opportunity.

#### **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.***

The NZTA revocation team presented to Council on revocation on 7 May. Following this, meetings have been scheduled with the respective councils that are undertaking, or have been through, a revocation process. A meeting between the NZTA revocation team and operational staff has also taken place, and a workshop is planned for July to help shape the revocation vision. Council officers continue to advocate for greater clarity regarding the Ō2NL revocation. Preparations for



the next steps in the planning process are underway, including an initial meeting scheduled with NZTA.

***Championing legacy outcomes.***

Council officers have been actively participating in Legacy Outcomes Rōpū meetings, continuing to advocate for positive outcomes for the community and to ensure local infrastructure needs are reflected in the Ō2NL project. As part of this work, Council has written to the Minister of Transport and the Chair of the NZTA Board to express strong opposition to proposed design changes — specifically, the removal of the Manakau Heights connection and the downgrading of the planned Tararua Road interchange from a full interchange to a roundabout. Council's view is that legacy outcomes refer to the long-term impacts left behind once the highway is completed, and every effort must be made to ensure those outcomes are positive for Horowhenua.

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

Officers have been regularly attending Internal Alignment Team meetings to maintain internal coordination across Council activities. Officers have continued to meet with NZTA, the project Alliances, attend NZTA Owner Team meetings, Ō2NL Owner Interface Manager meetings, North Alliance Working Group meetings, Project Steering Group meetings, and communications meetings to provide input on design elements and ensure tie-in with existing HDC infrastructure, and that communication is consistent. Officers have been assessing the wider impacts of Ō2NL on the local transport network, including implications from the proposed design changes which have an impact on the community and have received significant community attention. Work with NZTA and the Alliances is progressing to finalise the East West Arterial consent application, targeting lodgement of the Notice of Requirement by mid-June.

A strong focus during this period has been communication, with NZTA sharing news with communities about the proposed design changes. The Mayor and Chief Executive attended the first two sessions to support the community. Throughout these meetings, officers have actively advocated for positive community outcomes and continue to work on establishing impacts on the wider network.

In the regulatory space, officers have been preparing for receipt of the draft and final Outline Plan of Works as part of the Ō2NL consent process. This has involved attending workshops and briefings and engaging technical experts in traffic management, environmental impact, and urban design to support the review and response process.



# Ngā Uara

## Organisation Values Highlight



## Living Our Values

**Mahi Tahī**

**#Arohatōmahī**

**Tiakitanga**

**Manaakitanga**

*From within the organisation, our aspiration is to build a high-performing team defined by a lasting culture of service excellence, supported by a community that aligns with the Council's vision and recognises the value in the services we provide.*

One of the organisation goals that sits within our Organisation Roadmap is: to empower our people to achieve success, and lift leadership capability. To evidence this goal, this month we would like to spotlight two officers who have been recognised as leaders on NZ's local government stage.

### Taituarā Emerging Leader of the Year Award

Ashley Huria, Business Performance Manager, was named the Emerging Leader of the Year at the 2025 Taituarā Local Government Excellence Awards, held on 13 June.



This prestigious award recognises individuals who demonstrate outstanding leadership, unwavering commitment, and a passion for local government—both today and into the future. As part of this award, Ashley will represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Conference in Tampa, Florida later this year.

Ashley's local government journey began in 2010 when she joined the Council in a junior role. Over the past 15 years, she has shown exceptional dedication to her professional growth and has been a strong advocate for nurturing talent within the organisation.



Her leadership style is marked by positivity, collaboration and a deep connection to her hometown. Ashley sets a powerful example for her team and colleagues, demonstrating how a fulfilling and impactful career can be built in the local government sector.

Her career has spanned key areas including Finance, Corporate Projects, Governance and Business Support. A natural leader, Ashley consistently works across teams, shares her knowledge generously and contributes to building a culture of continuous improvement.

Ashley's contribution to Horowhenua and the wider local government sector is outstanding and this award is a testament to her capability and bright future ahead.

### **Taituarā Overseas Manager Exchange**

At the same awards function, Brent Harvey, Group Manager Community Experience and Services, was awarded an International Exchange to Australia. This award recognises the significant impact Brent has made and the mana he holds across the local government sector. The exchange provides a valuable opportunity for Brent to explore the Australian local government landscape, followed by hosting the Australian recipient here in Horowhenua.

Brent is a strategic leader dedicated to building resilient, connected communities. As Group Manager, he consistently champions innovation, operational excellence and meaningful community engagement. Passionate about shaping the future of local government, Brent is eager to explore international best practice and bring back transformative insights that will benefit both Horowhenua and the wider local government sector across Aotearoa.



