

Whakatāne District Council Submission to Bay of Plenty Regional Council Long Term Plan 2024-34.

Please note - the Whakatāne District Council wishes to be heard in support of this submission. We look forward to your confirmation of a time and date to present our submission to your Council. For enquiries related to the submission please contact Wouter Vullings, Senior Advisor Strategy and Transformation at Whakatāne District Council - p.07 306 0500 e.wouter.vullings@whakatane.govt.nz

1. Enhancing wellbeing where most needed

Summary of submission points:

- 1.1. WDC supports the BOPRC vision and community outcomes for the region.
- 1.2. WDC strongly encourages BOPRC to consider the equity context of our region when deliberating and making final decisions for the Long Term Plan.

WDC is supportive of the BOPRC vision and community outcomes for the region as set out on pages 8-9 of the consultation document. Whilst recognising the specific roles of our respective organisations, our strategic direction and the vision for our communities share much common ground. WDC does suggest elevated prioritisation of the underlying strategic challenge of wealth disparity and levels of deprivation facing many of our communities - in the Eastern Bay of Plenty in particular.

Our region faces the challenge to support, enable, and resource communities to uplift their wellbeing in a sustainable and meaningful way. This must look to address geographies of disadvantage noting that the communities most in need of uplift do not necessarily have the capability, capacity, or resourcing to do so.

WDC strongly encourages BOPRC to consider this equity context when deliberating and making final decisions for the Long Term Plan. In numerous submission points in this submission, we request steps be taken towards analyse and consider equity in terms of affordability, but also and more so, in terms of ensuring the prioritisation and allocation of resources to support uplift where most needed.

2. Using limited funding tools as best we can

Summary of submission points:

- 2.1. WDC supports the financial strategy principles set out in the BOPRC consultation document for affordability and financial resilience.
- 2.2. WDC notes there is a continuing and growing disproportionality in allocation of rates.
- 2.3. WDC continues to request a 'comprehensive' review of the BOPRC funding policy that does not exclude review of river scheme rates.
- 2.4. WDC supports a stronger holistic approach to the impact of revenue needs – as guided by legislation.

WDC supports the principles within BOPRC's Financial Strategy to ensure rates will be kept affordable while having financial resilience to respond to climate change and other challenges. There is general agreement across the sector that the local government funding model is no longer fit for purpose and that available funding tools are very limited. The local government sector needs to continue to advocate to central government for solutions. In the meantime, we are limited to the available tools and must apply these in a way that best meets the needs of the region and its communities.

WDC considers there is a concerning and growing disproportionality in the distribution of rates requirements across the region. In relation to the 'affordability' principle, we note that the Whakatāne District (and Ōpōtiki District) face substantially higher rates when compared to other parts of the region. As illustrated in the BOPRC consultation document (p.30) - the median per property rate is in some cases as much as double that for other sub-regions. Also, the rate of increase over the coming years is faster for Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki than for other areas which will further perpetuate this disproportionality. As BOPRC will be aware, this is against a context of these areas (the Eastern Bay of Plenty) having amongst the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation across the country.

WDC acknowledges the rates disproportionality is driven by river scheme costs and for some time (more than a decade) we have requested a review of the associated funding principles. We have not yet seen any review of the rating of river schemes, or any consideration of how BOPRC rating impacts affordability in relation to these schemes. In 2019 BOPRC procured an affordability report from BERL, however this report specifically excluded river scheme rates as these were so variable across the region. It is the variability of these rates that needs to be reviewed, as these are primary contributors to affordability challenges. In the Opotiki township river scheme rates are the highest in the country and Whakatāne is not far behind.

A review of river schemes funding principles should be undertaken within the context of the overall distribution of rates costs. This approach is being applied to other projects and services delivered by BOPRC - spreading the rates burden, through increased use of the general rate is being applied to passenger transport, Rotorua Lakes management and Rotorua Air management. We note that this will increase the contribution of Whakatāne District ratepayers towards these projects and their respective outcomes. While we support in principle the justification for regional benefits and a regional approach towards supporting wellbeing, the changes need to be considered within a more holistic context of rates disproportionality.

Distribution of benefit can be somewhat subjective and the argument for a broader regional benefit of river schemes (such as protecting productive land, protecting economic production, protecting river scheme amenity values, and so on) could be made. This notes the interconnections across our region for recreational, economic, employment and environmental outcomes that are protected by river schemes.

In any case, WDC would encourage BOPRC to consider the need for the funding philosophies for individual activities to be tempered by an overarching holistic approach to the impact of revenue needs. This approach is a requirement under legislation (Local Government Act section 101(3)(b)). Put simply, our most financially vulnerable communities are already struggling and will struggle more under the current funding framework.

3. Supporting passenger transport services and funding

Summary of submission points:

- 3.1. WDC supports continued efforts from BOPRC for transport modal shift.
- 3.2. [Response to Key Question] In principle WDC supports the justification of regional benefit from passenger transport services but encourages BOPRC to consider the proposal against the underlying equity and affordability context of the region.
- 3.3. WDC supports continuation of free bus passenger services for under 18s.
- 3.4. WDC requests that BOPRC investigate opportunities to support on-demand passenger transport services for the Whakatāne District.

WDC is generally supportive of focus on transport modal shift. This includes through provision of accessible public transport services as well as other mechanisms (such as walking and cycling infrastructure for example).

WDC acknowledges the regional benefits of passenger transport and transport modal shift in terms of environmental benefits and climate change mitigation. As such, in principle, WDC supports the proposed approach to use some targeted rates to fund passenger services. This said, we do not recommend this decision to be considered in an isolated manner and would encourage BOPRC to consider the proposal against the underlying equity and affordability context of the region. This context continues to see an overall distribution of costs falling disproportionately on communities with the lowest levels of wealth, as discussed previously in this submission.

WDC requests that BOPRC investigate opportunities to provide greater support for on-demand passenger transport services in the Whakatāne District. WDC understands an on-demand service commences in March for Tauranga City – an area already serviced by more transport options (buses, uber, taxi for example) than Whakatāne District. On demand services can provide increased accessibility and mobility for lower populated parts of the region that do not tend to have access to the broader range of services that an urban area has. In the Whakatāne District there are providers that are trying to meet needs for on-demand passenger services within our communities. WDC requests that BOPRC investigate the opportunities to support and or supplement these services provided so that by working together community accessibility requirements can be more comprehensively met.

WDC is very supportive of the bus services in the Whakatāne District and in particular, having bus services that are free for under 18's. The services are critical enablers for participation/access to services and activities, such as sports, recreation, education, and health.

4. Selling Port of Tauranga shares

Summary of submission points:

- 4.1. WDC supports use of investment portfolio returns to enhance outcomes across the region.

4.2. [Response to Key Question] WDC supports sale of PoT shares subject to diligence on risk and sustainability of portfolio.

WDC is supportive of Quayside holding enhancing their investment portfolio. This support is with the provision of the overarching principle that this would facilitate greater ongoing investment in the wellbeing of our region's environment and communities.

WDC supports the BOPRC proposal to sell shares and diversify the quayside portfolio from a risk management perspective and to maximise return to quayside holdings (with respect to the above noted principle – that increased investment returns will support increased wellbeing investment to the region). Following on from this intention, WDC requests greater consideration be given to the equitable application of this valuable resource to uplift wellbeing within the region, where most needed. This point reinforces the discussion in the opening point of our submission.

WDC requests diligence with regards to the risks of not retaining a controlling share – noting connection of the port to broader economic development opportunities including in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (such as inland port/logistics hub), and also to ensure long term sustainability of the investment portfolio.

5. Developing new regional parks

Summary of submission points:

- 5.1. [Response to Key Question] In principle WDC supports the proposal to investigate two new regional park opportunities.
- 5.2. WDC requests that should the initial investigations lead to further investment that further consultation should be undertaken on costs and options.
- 5.3. WDC request increased focus on Eastern Bay of Plenty and Whakatāne District opportunities to progress similar outcomes.

WDC is supportive of Regional Parks to advance outcomes such as environmental enhancement, cultural preservation, advancing climate change mitigation response, and supporting visitor economy opportunities. WDC specifically acknowledges and supports continued maintenance and enhancement of the Onekawa Te Mawhai Regional Park (in the Ōpōtiki District).

Although the parks being investigated are not located in the Whakatāne District, given the benefits these parks provide WDC is supportive of the proposal to investigate regional park opportunities. We note that the initial investment to 'investigate' is not substantial. This said, as regional parks are funded by way of general rates, we therefore ask that any future investment to purchase or develop these opportunities should allow for further consultation with WDC on cost implications.

WDC requests that BOPRC engage with WDC to support (directly or in-kind) opportunities to advance projects that will support similar outcomes for the Whakatāne District, such as walkways and cycleways for example.

6. Partnerships with Iwi Hapū Māori

Summary of submission points:

- 6.1. WDC supports focus on strengthening partnerships with Iwi, Hapū and Whanau.
- 6.2. WDC encourages greater use of mātauranga Māori in decision making.
- 6.3. WDC encourages continued uptake of te reo Māori.
- 6.4. WDC requests an increase in resourcing towards Iwi and Hapū capability and capacity building.

WDC supports BOPRC's general focus on strengthening partnerships with Iwi, Hapū and Whanau across the region. WDC is similarly committed to intentions of strengthening the relationship between local government and Iwi, Hapū and Whanau, and of supporting more equitable outcomes for Māori albeit at the Whakatāne District level.

WDC encourages BOPRC's application of mātauranga Māori as valued evidence in the decision making process - not only through their climate change focus (as disclosed in the consultation document) but also more generally across council decision making.

WDC understands it is the intention of BOPRC to develop their LTP document in full Te Reo Māori alongside the English version. WDC commends this intention and is not aware of any other Council that has yet taken this approach.

WDC encourages BOPRC to collectively, alongside Local Councils, increase the resourcing to Iwi and Hapū towards building their capability and capacity. This investment ensures that Iwi and Hapū can effectively engage and contribute, leading to better decision-making and outcomes for the region.

7. Approach to partnering with Central Government

Summary of submission points:

- 7.1. WDC requests continued BOP council collaboration towards partnering with central government.
- 7.2. WDC requests recommencement of financial contribution towards Toi EDA.

WDC values and encourages a continued collaborative approach to partnership opportunities with central government. This approach recognises that an aligned strategic approach at the regional and sub-regional levels, and with collective voice, we stand to have greater influence into partnership opportunities with central government than we might alone.

WDC notes that Eastern Bay of Plenty, through ToiEDA (the Economic Development Agency for the Eastern Bay of Plenty) is currently reviewing the Regional Economic Development Strategy as a basis for each Council to develop partnerships and external funding applications.

Toi Economic Development Agency plays a critical part in helping to unlock economic opportunities for the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Their work contributes towards socio-economic uplift and ultimately broader

enhancement of community wellbeing. WDC thanks BOPRC for their ongoing in-kind support for Toi EDA in the use of offices at no cost. Currently the three territorial local authorities of the Eastern Bay of Plenty are core funding partners. This said, BOPRC has been a core funding partner of Toi EDA in the past and a re-commencement of a financial commitment towards Toi EDA is requested.

WDC see's merit in advocating for the concept of city and regional deals, ensuring benefit to whole region including smaller townships and rural Districts, alongside major urban centres. WDC welcomes the continued conversation at the regional level to advance this kaupapa.

8. Future of Three Waters service delivery [Bevan]

Summary of submission points:

- 8.1. WDC requests continued partnership towards finding a sustainable solution for the future of waters services following the repeal of three waters reform.

The previous government launched a water services reform aimed at transferring three-waters assets from local councils to regional entities, placing financial responsibilities on these regional bodies. This transition was part of a proposed move towards centralised funding and financing arrangements. However, with the recent government change and the repeal of the water services reform, three-waters assets are expected to remain under council ownership. This reversal has reinstated significant funding pressures and rate increases, exceeding what the community can afford. As such, following the repeal of the reform programme there continues to be a need for long term sustainable solution to three waters service delivery.

WDC acknowledges that BOPRC has a critical role in three waters related outcomes and infrastructure for the region. We look forward to a continued partnership as we navigate the way forward following the repeal, towards a sustainable and solution for our environment and communities.

9. New consents required for water services [David/Bevan]

Summary of submission points:

- 9.1. WDC requests an agreed plan with BOPRC on gaining new resource consents for our water and wastewater systems due by 2026, and on the delivery of necessary upgrades to those services.

With the responsibility for three waters returning to local government, WDC is once again very conscious of the impending expiry date for numerous water and wastewater related consents. The scale of work to gain new consents is significant, not just in the planning and consenting phase but also noting the substantial investment that will be needed to upgrade systems to deliver on modern consent standards.

WDC is taking a co-design approach with iwi to work through new consent options and planning. A strong project relationship with iwi and hapū will be critical to successful outcomes being achieved. This has been a successful approach in developing options for the Matata wastewater reticulation scheme.

The scale of work and investment that is required to successfully deliver new consents and upgraded infrastructure is complex and costly. The BOPRC will also be considering how it processes the sheer volume of new consents that are required by the 2026 timeframe.

The District Council would like to discuss and agree a realistic programme of works to obtain the new consents and to then implement them given the administrative workload and cost considerations for both Councils. We request that, without compromising legal requirements, we agree an approach that prioritises, and stages consents and implementation based on engagement, risks, cost and affordability.

10. Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan Project [David]

Summary of submission points:

- 10.1. WDC supports continued partnership with BOPRC on the EBoP Spatial Plan.
- 10.2. WDC requests a BOPRC funding commitment of \$100,000 per annum in the Long Term Plan towards implementation of the Spatial Plan beyond the development phase.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan will be a keystone strategy to provide for growth, support community wellbeing, and help to unlock investment into our sub-region. WDC acknowledges the continued collaboration and commitment by BOPRC towards this project and gives thanks for the commitment of specialist staff time and financial resourcing.

Progress on the Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan continues to be made noting that further support and investment is needed to achieve critical milestones within the intended timeframes. WDC has a commitment in our draft LTP of \$400,000, but we are aware our smaller participating Councils do not have the capacity to make similar level commitments, and that the BOPRC funding commitment is short term to support the development phase of the spatial plan. At the same time, we are conscious that other parts of the region have had ongoing support from BOPRC for their spatial plans over a longer period of time.

WDC requests the provision of a continued ongoing commitment from BOPRC towards the Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan to support the plan into implementation following the development phase. A placeholder budget is requested in the Long Term Plan of \$100,000 per annum towards Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan implementation.

11. Awatarariki Restoration Project [David]

Summary of submission points:

- 11.1. WDC requests continued partnership on the Awatarariki restoration project.

WDC thanks BOPRC for their commitment to the Awatarariki managed retreat and restoration project. Progress made to date on the project illustrates good partnership and commitment by our respective Council's for what has been a challenging project and one that is pioneering for New Zealand. Recently, progress has been paused to allow for Ngāti Rangitihi Settlement and the establishment of the Tarawera Awa Restoration forum, both of which would help to inform aspirations for the continuation of the Awatarariki project. Future stages are expected to plan and implement site recovery including for example clean-up of site, cultural heritage recognition, and environmental restoration.

WDC requests in-principle support from BOPRC towards the continuation of the Awatarariki project noting that the details and resource requirements will require further consideration before being finalised.

12. Flood mitigation and climate change adaptation [David]

Summary of submission points:

- 12.1. WDC values continued collaboration on risks, hazards and climate change.
- 12.2. WDC encourages a more holistic approach to fluvial flood risk management.
- 12.3. WDC requests lower Whakatāne stopbank work to be identified as a high priority in the BOPRC LTP.
- 12.4. WDC requests the Whakatāne River spit fuse consent be transferred to BOPRC.
- 12.5. WDC requests strengthened partnership and information sharing protocols for this area of focus.

WDC values the continued collaboration on natural hazard and climate change risk assessments and response. We note this is a high priority for both our organisations and acknowledge that recent events both within our region and beyond continue to challenge safety and security, disrupt communities and economies and test the limits of critical infrastructure.

WDC encourages BOPRC response to fluvial flood risk management to take an holistic and sustainable integrated catchment management approach. This would ensure recognition of impacts on upstream townships (not just a focus on Whakatāne only) and potentially provides greater risk mitigation by avoiding reliance on single points of infrastructure.

WDC acknowledges the ongoing effort, and continued investment, that is needed to upgrade and maintain stopbanks in the lower Whakatane catchment. This work intends to improve stopbank integrity and provide a minimum flood protection level of service of 1% annual exceedance probability. WDC requests this work be formally recognised as a priority issue in the BOPRC LTP - prioritisation notes the scale of flood risk that has recently been identified which also carries resulting implications and liability for WDC. For example - flood maps being developed by BOPRC are leading WDC to need to develop evacuation plans for large numbers of people from the lower Whakatane catchment in the event of uncontrolled breach of the stopbanks due to concerns over stopbank structural integrity.

WDC requests the Whakatāne River spit fuse consent be transferred to BOPRC. The District Council holds a resource consent to lower the height of accumulated sand at the Whakatane River mouth. This is monitored by the BOPRC but is implemented by the WDC to lower the height of the sand to a set level. The spit fuse effectively allows for broadening of the Whakatāne River mouth to allow flood water in the river to pass through the river mouth in greater volumes thereby lowering the risk of flooding in Whakatāne. The Whakatane District Council believes this consent should be transferred to the BOPRC so it can use this consent itself to better manage the river catchment, especially during flood conditions.

WDC requests continued strengthening of the partnership in relation natural hazard adaptation and mitigation. For example this should include sharing of information, clarity around of implications of information with focus on the ownership of risk and liability, coordination of public information, and prioritisation of work within limited capacity and financial constraints.

13. Project Future Proof Floodwall Integration [Steven]

Summary of submission points:

- 13.1. WDC supports a continued close working relationship on Project Future Proof stopbank works.
- 13.2. WDC requests 'in-principle' financial commitment towards stopbank integration works and/or support to advocate to central government for same.

WDC acknowledges BOPRC for the continued partnership approach on Project Future Proof - the multi-stage project to upgrade Whakatāne River flood defences (stopbanks and floodwalls) along the river's boundary with the Whakatāne township and CBD. WDC acknowledges the core purpose of stopbanks in terms of providing flood protection and the work that is needed in the context of climate change. At the same time WDC is dedicated to ensuring that stopbanks are integrated with Whakatane urban design, preserving cultural connection to awa, enhancing access, improving recreational amenity, and enhancing visitor destination opportunities. While disruptive to our town, the work required on the stopbanks provides opportunities to enhance these broader community aspirations for the river.

Stage 1 of the project (from the McAlister Street pump station to the Whakatāne i-SITE) is underway. Stage 2 will run from our i-SITE to the Wairere Stream outlet on Quay Street, Whakatāne. WDC has approved concept plans for consultation which we have agreed to run jointly with BOPRC. This is expected to occur in April 2024 once BOPRC has sufficiently progressed Stage 1 and WDC has completed detailed drawings and costings. WDC is aiming to coincide its urban design build with the Regional Council's floodwall works in the summer 2025 construction season. Subject to consultation and confirmation of external funding we expect to require consents around August 2024. WDC has allocated \$6million in its draft Long-Term Plan to invest in the build, however additional third-party funding will be required.

This project is dealing with a unique context. When flood wall stopbanks are increased in a town centre there is significant cost impacts for the District Council to retain town centre amenity, access to waterways and attractiveness, however in rural settings (where the majority of stop banks are located)

these issues and opportunities are not the same. WDC requests that BOPRC consider direct funding and/or advocating to central government for funding where this occurs in town centres and district councils are faced with these impacts.

14. Support for cycling projects [Steven/Nicola]

Summary of submission points:

- 14.1. WDC supports continued partnership with BOPRC on destination cycleways and urban cycle projects.
- 14.2. WDC support continued partnership with BOPRC on the current Rangitāiki cycleway project.

WDC supports the continued partnership and coordination between our councils that is helping to unlock and create efficiencies, for cycling project opportunities. The partnership is helping to advance both urban cycle networks progressed through our Active Whakatāne District Strategy, and specific destination cycleway projects. Specifically we acknowledge the MOU for cycleways on stopbanks that will help to ensure shared vision, goals and alignment of work programmes. We also support the BOPRC engineering approach for stopbanks (materials used for stopbank capping) that enables more efficient cycle trail development.

In the short term our destination cycleways are focused on the Rangitāiki area, with connections between Whakatāne, Awakeri, Te Teko, Edgecumbe, Matatā and Thornton. The long-term goal is for interconnected cycleway loops in the Rangitāiki, Whakatane/Ōhope, Tāneatua and towards Murupara and then to Ōpōtiki, Rotorua and the Western Bay of Plenty. We welcome continued collaboration and support from with BOPRC which is key to unlocking these opportunities and linkages.

15. Matatā wastewater system project [David]

Summary of submission points:

- 15.1. WDC acknowledges BOPRC continued partnership on the Matatā wastewater project.
- 15.2. WDC request a funding contribution of \$15 million towards the Matatā wastewater project delivery.

WDC supports continued partnership approach to the Matatā wastewater project and acknowledges the commitment of resourcing that BOPRC has already set aside in their current LTP. WDC is developing a wastewater solution for Matatā that seeks to address the current public health and environmental risks, and this would also unlock possible residential intensification and expansion in and around Matatā. At this time the project is going through a negotiation with landowners stage for location of the wastewater plant and for land discharge. Following negotiations, a consent application is expected later this calendar year. Subject to consent and to confirmation of funding, construction would expect to commence in the first three years of the upcoming LTP.

WDC seeks an increased funding commitment from BOPRC through their LTP. To deliver the project, \$37.75 million is indicated in the Whakatāne District Council's draft Long-Term Plan 2024-34. Of this, approximately 50% is proposed to be funded by the Council, with the remaining sum contingent on external funding. The Ministry of Health has previously allocated \$6.72 million for the Matatā Wastewater Project, which remains available - to support the project's progression, this funding will be sought in the short term. A renewed business case and funding plan will be developed to support delivery of the project. WDC requests seek an in-principle decision from BOPRC for an increased contribution in the order of \$15 million to support project delivery.

WDC understands that if a reticulated system is not able to be delivered, an OSET maintenance zone approach would need to be progressed under the responsibility of BOPRC. This will come a cost to BOPRC and also carries considerable implications for the Matatā community including substantial compliance costs and the need to vacate numerous properties.

A submission on this matter will also be made by Te Niaotanga o Mataatua o Te Arawa (Matatā Wastewater Co-design Group). WDC is a member of this group and is fully in support of their submission.

16. Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub [Georgina/Sarah]

Summary of submission points:

16.1. WDC request partnership with BOPRC on Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub project.

WDC has recently developed masterplan options for long standing intentions to redevelop and enhance what is collectively referred to as the 'Rex Morpeth Recreation Hub'. The masterplan will outline the future use and development of the Whakatāne War Memorial Hall, the 17 hectares of surrounding reserve land at Rex Morpeth Park and Rugby Park, Whakatāne Aquatic and Fitness Centre and the Whakatāne Arts and Craft Centre. The plan responds to the need for seismic strengthening of various assets as well as longstanding community demand for enhanced recreational assets and events facilities.

Various master plan options and resourcing approaches for the project are currently subject to confirmation through our own LTP consultation process. While acknowledging that a decision process is still required, the preferred option is for a large-scale project of sub-regional significance beyond the Whakatāne District.

Should a large-scale concept be favoured, partnerships will be required to deliver the project. WDC would be looking to prepare an extensive funding and project delivery plan, including securing partnership with multiple external parties. While we are yet to confirm the project options, partnership will be requested from BOPRC which may include funding, in kind support, and advocating for the project to help progress an exciting and long-standing aspiration.

17. Development and implementation of environmental plans [Georgina/Sarah]

Summary of submission points:

- 17.1. WDC request continued partnership and commitment to Whakatāne/Ōhope and Ōhope Spit environmental programmes.
- 17.2. WDC request continued support for the valuable work of environmental care groups.

WDC acknowledges the recent extension of the Whakatāne and Ōhope Sites Environmental Programme 2024-2029. The BOPRC led plan provides for continued restoration and improvement of environmental outcomes for specific sites in our District.

WDC also looks forward to continued involvement in the development of the Ōhope Spit Environmental Management Plan by BOPRC. We look forward to finalisation of the plan and partnership in implementation.

As part of the work on environmental plans WDC acknowledges the great work of numerous local community groups connected to the programme (such as HALO, KiwiTrust, Coastcare and others). WDC encourages continued support from BOPRC for these groups to continue their valuable contributions.

18. Awatapu Lagoon and Sullivan Lake [Georgina/Ian]

Summary of submission points:

- 18.1. WDC requests continued support and technical expertise from BOPRC towards the Awatapu Lagoon and Sullivan Lakes management programmes.

WDC appreciates the partnership towards the management and enhancement of the Awatapu Lagoon and Sullivan Lake. The BOPRC continue to be active in supporting the health and wellbeing of these waterways. The Whakatāne community has ongoing aspirations for the future management of these waterways including for example (but not limited to) a major aspiration to reconnect the Awatapu Lagoon to the Whakatāne River. The funding and in-kind support for work such as riparian plantings, desilting, management of algae, and plant and animal pest control often in collaboration with community groups, helps significantly towards the environmental and amenity value of these features in our urban landscape.

WDC has recently received options reports for the future management of these waterways. The timing and implementation of options will be subject to the level of resource that is able to be committed. As we finalise the management programmes for these waterways and continue/commence implementation of actions, the continued support and technical expertise provided by BOPRC will be very much appreciated.

19. Transport partnership and network resilience [Bevan]

Summary of submission points:

- 19.1. WDC acknowledges the collaborative approach to regional transport planning and investment.
- 19.2. WDC requests continued partnership on transport network resilience noting connections of risk to land drainage.

The region faces a number of challenges around the resilience of the transport network. We thank the Regional Council for their collaborative approach to addressing these, and the conversations with key staff about ensuring that budget is put aside to partner with WDC on a number of resilience projects over the term of the LTP, aimed at addressing closures to the transport network. WDC has a number of roads that close every time there is a significant weather event, these have increased in frequency over recent years, and isolate communities. More often than not land drainage is a main contributing factor to these closures. WDC commends BOPRC's collaborative approach in looking for solutions to these where both parties contribute to the project in order to ensure our communities are not isolated, and our transport networks are more resilient.

Alongside flood and climate change resilience, the future of the District transport network continues to face further challenges. Among these are increased volumes of traffic, pressure on critical links between Whakatāne and our neighbours Rotorua, Gisborne, Ōpōtiki, and Tauranga, reliance on single points of infrastructure (like the Whakatāne and Pekatahi Bridges), the need and demand to invest in modal shift, and the importance of Whakatāne Airport in emergencies.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty Spatial Plan and regional transport planning will be critical to addressing a number of these challenges. We look forward to a continued collaborative approach to transport planning and investment. We also take this opportunity to provide general support for the RLTP co-developed with BOPRC and the other BOP councils. At the time of writing this submission, we note that the draft RLTP is open for feedback and in particular we support WDC projects and programmes included.

20. Waste Management [Bevan/Nigel]

Summary of submission points:

- 20.1. WDC requests BOPRC to establish and resource a dedicated regional waste management role.
- 20.2. WDC encourages BOPRC to allocate funding to refresh the regional waste strategy.
- 20.3. WDC requests BOPRC to include provision for a contribution to regional level waste related infrastructure.

WDC notes that Regional Councils have a role under the Resource Management Act 1998, Local Government Act 2002 and the New Zealand Waste Strategy in waste management through undertaking activities such as education, support for services, pollution prevention, consenting processes, and importantly regional coordination.

WDC encourages the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to consider funding a dedicated resource to undertake this role. The draft Long Term Plan does not acknowledge the role of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council in providing leadership for waste management across the Bay of Plenty. A dedicated resource could continue the work started in the Bay of Plenty Waste Infrastructure Review and Circular Economy Study. This position would support and monitor the actions of variety of stakeholders and taking a regional view as to how these connect and collaborate with the aims of avoiding duplication and identify opportunities for improvement.

WDC would encourage the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to allocate funding to support a refresh of the regional waste strategy. An updated strategy would incorporate actions from the Bay of Plenty Waste Infrastructure Review and Circular Economy Study. The strategy would give the region a platform on which to advocate for greater waste investment from central government and, would improve the coordination of waste management activities across the region. The strategy would give direction on region wide waste issues, such as infrastructure, planned service changes, communications/education initiatives, data gathering, timing of contracts, waste catchment areas. The strategy would give effect to work agreed through the Mayoral Forum to work together on regional level waste intervention.

WDC would also encourage the Regional Bay of Plenty Council to include provision for a contribution to regional level waste related infrastructure, such as Resource Recovery Hubs to enable and support the transition to a circular economy. Providing a contribution to the cost of this Infrastructure reflects the direction of the NZ Waste Strategy which calls on a range of users, funders, and agencies to help fund the waste infrastructure gap.

21. Other specific financial management and revenue points [General]

Summary of submission points:

- 21.1. WDC supports continued regional rate for funding EMBOP, and Surf Life Saving.
- 21.2. WDC has received feedback about logistical challenges for paying rates for Murupara residents and suggests BOPRC explore potential improvements.