

Recommendations from the Climate Change Steering Group to the Whakatāne District Council's Long Term Plan Deliberations

The following recommendations are provided to the Whakatāne District Council by the Climate Change Steering Group in response to submissions received on the draft Whakatāne Climate Pathway. These recommendations have specific regard to the Long Term Plan or budget implications for the Council, to inform Council LTP deliberations.

Summary of recommendations

The following list outlines the recommendations made in this report. Note that the first 2 recommendations are seeking additional budget compared to the draft Long Term Plan, whilst the next 10 recommendations may be accommodated within the draft budget, but cumulatively may not be realistic within proposed resource:

- 1) Provide additional resource across years 1 and 2 of LTP to establish climate change programme.**
- 2) Include budget to reduce Council emissions and increase resilience, including solar and electric vehicles.**
- 3) *Establish a Climate Change Community Contestable Fund.*
- 4) *Continue to fund active transport initiatives.*
- 5) *Seek opportunities for developers/growth to fund climate change assessments/action through the Development Contributions Policy.*
- 6) *Deliver education and awareness campaigns.*
- 7) *Deliver Adaptation Programme to inform future LTPs.*
- 8) *Collaborate with industry groups to provide education and awareness.*
- 9) *Ensure climate change considerations in all Council projects.*
- 10) *Investigate Park and Ride solutions.*
- 11) *Community education around water saving and grey water reuse.*
- 12) *Ensure appropriate funding for Civil Defence Emergencies.*

General Sentiment

Affordability

In making these recommendations, the Steering Group was cognisant of the economic pressures on the District at this time and the challenges the Council faces with trying to respond to competing priorities. However, a strong sentiment from the Group is that not investing in climate change mitigation and adaptation will ultimately cost Council more in the long run, and that to be able to meaningfully deliver on the climate pathway will require more resource. With that in mind the group have attempted to help prioritise where Council focuses resources to have the most impact.

The Steering Group identified three key priorities for Council investment into the Climate Pathway:

- Supporting Education
- Building Awareness
- Showing Leadership

Supporting Education

There is a lot of information available for different sectors, but providing District specific information is a key role for Council. Council should take the lead on education, help whānau, communities and small businesses understand what they can be doing and how. Especially low cost changes that can be incorporated as a way of life.

Building Awareness

There is an important role for Council in encouraging the conversation and keeping the messages alive. Council can't tell people what to do but can show them. Provide the link to the community and make it real, relevant and understandable. There is a lot happening across sectors, and industry isn't waiting for the government. Especially in the agriculture sector, industry bodies are investing and requiring action. Council doesn't need to duplicate in this space, but can support action through messaging and sharing examples. The Steering Group can support this work as a resource for the Council.

Showing Leadership

It's not about the past it's about the future and future generations. Council should be walking the talk and lead by example, thinking about the bigger picture and thinking strategically. That includes things like solar panels on Council buildings and transitioning Council's fleet to Electric Vehicles. A 10 year plan is the perfect opportunity to outline such investments that have triple benefits:

1. Showing leadership in reducing emissions
2. Increasing resilience, especially during civil defence emergencies
3. Reducing costs in the medium to long term.

Projects that decrease emissions and enhance resilience at the same time make investment more agreeable to the community.

Specific recommendations regarding submissions:

General increase in Climate Change funding:

Community fund:

Recommendation: Establish a Climate Change Community Contestable Fund

Reason: Strong support for Council to provide a contestable Climate Fund, especially with support from Trust Horizon. Perhaps using a similar approach to the Waste minimisation fund. Encourage use for seed funding larger initiatives. Seek additional funding from other partners to grow the fund.

Active and public transport initiatives:

Recommendation: Continue to fund active transport initiatives

Reason: Fund active transport as a priority, and advocate for alternate transport options. Support for the Warren Cole Cycleway to be extended all the way around the new stopbank that BOPRC have been upgrading. Acknowledgement that public transport is generally under BOPRC not WDC.

Climate change impact assessments for new developments:

Recommendation: Seek opportunities for developers/growth to fund climate change assessments/action through the Development Contributions Policy

Reason: Incorporate a reward/incentive system through Development Contributions Policy. Incentives for new subdivisions and developments to build greener, e.g. less concrete, solar installations. Adapting practices from the beginning is better.

Action with agriculture sector:

Recommendation: Deliver education and awareness campaigns

Reason: Council doesn't need to be a key player as the sector is doing a lot proactively. However, sharing information and demonstrating good action will encourage change.

Resourcing Council actions; embed into Council decision-making, District Plan, resource to support community and deliver actions:

Recommendation: Provide additional resource across years 1 and 2 of LTP to establish climate change programme

Reason: Whilst the Steering group is cognisant of affordability, any extra resource to deliver climate action would be good. Concern that the cost of inaction will be higher in the long run. It's important to take a two pronged approach. Climate Change needs to be embedded across Council, in all decisions. This requires leadership and systems to enable all staff to consider their work through a climate lens. This could include having climate change KPIs for example. This is essentially more effective than having additional specific staff dedicated to climate change. However, it is acknowledged that to get to a place where frameworks, processes etc are established, will require additional resource, beyond the draft LTP budget. Therefore, the Steering Group recommend a short-term additional resource to get the process and systems established and build the climate change culture into the Council way of working. Possibly for a calendar year (Jan 2025- Dec 2025) split across financial year 1 and 2.

Additional resource will also be required to deliver the 2 priority areas of education and awareness building, both within Council and in the community.

Adaptation funding:

Recommendation: Deliver Adaptation Programme to inform future LTPs

Reason: Whilst the Steering Group acknowledges the importance of adaptation and the potential significant costs that the District may face, Council does not currently have the necessary information to include budget for specific adaptation actions. It is acknowledged that this will have to become a key component of future LTPs.

Mitigation related work in the LTP:

Recommendation: Include budget to reduce Council emissions and increase resilience, including solar and electric vehicles

Reason: The Council needs to be seen to be doing the right thing and show leadership. We encourage the Council to have a broader view on mitigation action within their LTP and maximise Climate Change opportunities. Ensure a range of decision-makers are considering opportunities, not just one person. Seek opportunities for external funding. Showing community leadership needs to be a key priority.

Audit service for business community:

Recommendation: Collaborate with industry groups to provide education and awareness

Reason: Work with the Chamber to run workshops, to support many small businesses who don't have technical expertise or resource. Knock on impact for staff who take learnings home. Support for Kaitiakitanga Business Award which spreads awareness. Is there an opportunity to provide discounts for lessees of Council-owned land or buildings, where climate mitigation action is taken?

Funding requests for specific proposals

Solar panels on Council buildings and supporting community renewable energy:

Recommendation: Include budget to install solar on Council buildings

Reason: Council needs to show leadership, it makes prudent business sense, especially as Council facilities are generally operating during the day when the sun is shining. Adds to resilience during emergencies. Priority focus is on Council buildings and facilities. Support for a solar funding through rates scheme, but we acknowledge difficulties with current legislation. Could provide education regarding 1% interest green-loans, although not a solution for everyone.

Climate change considerations for Matatā Wastewater Treatment Plant and War Memorial Hall:

Recommendation: Ensure climate change considerations in all Council projects

Reason: Council needs to ensure that the people making the decisions have the requirement that Climate Change is considered.

Park and Ride ferry service across the Whakatane River:

Recommendation: Investigate Park and Ride solutions

Reason: Reducing traffic over the bridge is a good outcome. This might be a carpark at the marina and water shuttle over to the CBD, a shuttle bus from the Hub, or a walking and cycling bridge at Arawa Road.

Storage and treatment of stormwater and use of rainwater tanks:

Recommendation: Community education around water saving and grey water reuse

Reason: The Council already has projects underway regarding storing and treating stormwater. Encourage the community to save rainwater, but mixed views regarding the success of Council subsidising rainwater tanks.

Civil defence preparedness:

Recommendation: Ensure appropriate funding for Civil Defence Emergencies

Reason: As the climate changes then the demand for civil defence will increase. It is more effective to be more prepared. Including considering the resilience of Council buildings.