

Council

Meeting of 19 August 2026

Business Unit: Corporate

Date Created: 01 July 2026

Adoption of the Halls Management Policy

Purpose Te Aronga o te Pūrongo

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's adoption of the revised Halls Management Policy (Annex A). The revised policy modernises the governance framework for the management of community halls, clarifies the respective roles of Council and Hall Committees and aligns the policy with Council's current strategic direction.

Recommendations Ngā Tūtohunga

1. That Council adopts the Halls Management Policy 2026 (Annex A).
2. That Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make minor editorial amendments to the Halls Management Policy prior to publication, provided those amendments do not alter the policy's intent.
3. That Council notes that adoption of the policy does not predetermine future decisions on the retention, renewal, repurposing, divestment, disposal, depreciation, or funding of individual halls, which remain subject to Council decision-making through the Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, Financial Strategy, asset management planning, and applicable engagement requirements.
4. That Council notes that a more substantive review of the community hall network, including service levels, funding and depreciation settings and network configuration, is intended to be undertaken after the Long-Term Plan 2027-37 review cycle.

OR

5. That Council does not adopt the Halls Management Policy and retains the existing Halls Management policy pending a substantive review of the hall network following the adoption of the Long-Term Plan 2027-37.

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1 Background Ngā Kōrero o Muri

- 1.1 Council has maintained a policy framework for the management of community halls since 2000. The current Halls Management Policy was last substantively reviewed in 2009 and was subsequently reconfirmed.
- 1.2 Since that review, the environment in which Council and Hall Committees manage community facilities has changed significantly. Council has adopted updated strategic and asset management frameworks, Long-Term Plan and financial planning processes have matured, and expectations around governance, accountability, asset stewardship, and community engagement have evolved.
- 1.3 The review has therefore focused on modernising the policy so that it better reflects current practice and provides a clearer governance framework for the relationship between Council and Hall Committees. The intent is not to fundamentally change how halls operate in the short term, but to improve clarity, consistency, and transparency and to provide a stronger platform for future planning.
- 1.4 The revised policy provides a strategic framework for the provision, management, and development of community halls across the Manawātū District. It establishes ownership tiers, a priority classification framework, eligibility requirements for ongoing Council support, funding principles and responsibilities, and governance expectations for Hall Committees.
- 1.5 The policy also strengthens expectations around annual reporting, ongoing communication with Hall Committees, utilisation monitoring, condition assessments, and engagement during Long-Term Plan development.
- 1.6 The revised policy should be viewed as a staged modernisation. A more substantive review of the hall network, including service levels, funding and depreciation settings and network configuration, is intended to occur after the 2027-37 Long-Term Plan review cycle.
- 1.7 The revised policy:
 - updates terminology and governance arrangements;
 - clarifies the respective responsibilities of Council and Hall Committees;
 - strengthens alignment with Council's strategic planning framework;
 - introduces a clearer Hall Network Framework that distinguishes ownership tiers from investment priorities; and
 - supports more transparent and evidence-based decision-making.
- 1.8 A draft policy was circulated to Hall Committees for feedback. Feedback received has been considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the final draft.

2 Strategic Fit Te Tautika ki te Rautaki

- 2.1 The Halls Management Policy supports the priority *A future planned together* by providing a framework for a sustainable and accessible network of community halls that enable

community connection, participation and local activities. It also recognises the role of volunteer leadership and community stewardship in ensuring halls remain responsive to local needs.

- 2.2 The policy supports the priority *Infrastructure fit for future* through establishing a clearer framework for the long-term management, maintenance and renewal of community hall assets. Investment decisions are informed by asset condition, community demand, priority classification and available funding, supporting a more sustainable and resilient hall network.
- 2.3 The policy supports the priority *Value for money and excellence in local government* by providing a clearer and more transparent framework for prioritising Council investment across the hall network. Linking investment to utilisation, asset condition, governance sustainability, community demand and strategic importance supports more informed use of Council resources.
- 2.4 The proposed policy supports Council's strategic priority *A place to belong and grow*, by providing a framework for a sustainable and accessible network of community halls that enable community connection, participation and local activities. It also recognises the role of volunteer leadership and community stewardship in ensuring halls remain responsive to local needs.

3 Discussion and Options Considered Ngā Matapakinga me ngā Kōwhiringa i Wānangahia

- 3.1 The Halls Management Policy has not undergone a substantive review since 2009. Since that time, Council's strategic approach to community facilities, asset management and long-term investment planning has evolved considerably.
- 3.2 The review has therefore focused on modernising the existing policy framework and improving its alignment with Council's current strategic direction, while retaining the established partnership approach between Council and Hall Committees.
- 3.3 In particular, the revised policy is more closely aligned with the Community Facilities Strategy – Community Halls Sub-Plan, which provides the long-term strategic direction for the hall network of providing fewer, higher-quality facilities. The revised policy gives greater effect to this direction through its ownership tiers, priority classifications and investment framework.
- 3.4 The review has also addressed inconsistencies in terminology identified through the previous Long-Term Plan audit process. The revised policy establishes a clearer distinction between a hall's ownership tier, which describes its ownership and governance arrangements, and its priority classification, which informs Council's investment approach. This terminology is now more consistently aligned with the Community Facilities Strategy and Council's wider asset management framework.
- 3.5 Other key changes include clearer responsibilities for Council and Hall Committees, strengthened eligibility and annual reporting requirements, a clearer framework for funding and investment decisions, and improved provisions for ongoing communication and engagement with Hall Committees.

Option 1 – Adopt the revised Halls Management Policy (recommended)

- 3.6 Council may adopt the revised Halls Management Policy. This option would replace the existing policy with a contemporary governance framework that better reflects Council's current strategic direction and provides greater clarity about how the community hall network is managed.
- 3.7 Adoption would address the terminology inconsistencies identified through the previous LTP audit and provide stronger alignment between the policy, the Community Facilities Strategy and Council's asset management approach. It would also provide greater clarity for Hall Committees, staff and elected members about ownership arrangements, responsibilities, investment prioritisation and the information required to support future decision-making.
- 3.8 Adoption of the policy does not, however, predetermine future decisions about individual halls or commit Council to particular levels of renewal or depreciation funding. Significant decisions concerning future service levels, investment, depreciation, rationalisation or disposal would remain subject to the appropriate Council and Long-Term Plan decision-making processes.

Option 2 – Retain the existing Halls Management Policy

- 3.9 Council could choose not to adopt the revised policy and retain the existing Halls Management Policy. This would maintain the current arrangements while allowing a more comprehensive review of the hall network to be undertaken at a later date.
- 3.10 This option is not recommended. Retaining the existing policy would leave in place a framework that has not been substantively reviewed since 2009, is less well aligned with the Community Facilities Strategy and current asset management practices and does not address the terminology inconsistencies identified through the previous LTP audit process.
- 3.11 On balance, adoption of the revised policy is recommended. It provides an updated and clearer governance framework for the hall network now, while preserving Council's ability to consider the more substantive strategic, financial and service-level questions through future Long-Term Plan processes.

4 Risk Assessment Te Arotake Tūrarū

- 4.1 The principal risk in adopting the revised policy is that the framework could be interpreted as committing Council to future funding, depreciation, renewal, or disposal decisions before those matters have been considered through the appropriate Long-Term Plan and financial processes.
- 4.2 This risk is mitigated by making clear that priority classifications guide, rather than determine, investment decisions and that future funding and depreciation arrangements remain subject to Council's Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, Financial Strategy, and asset management processes.
- 4.3 There is also a risk in deferring adoption. Audit identified inconsistencies in hall terminology during the previous Long-Term Plan audit. The revised policy addresses those inconsistencies through a clearer and more consistent framework. Deferring adoption would leave the outdated 2009 policy in place and delay formal resolution of those matters at policy level.

5 Engagement Te Whakapānga

Significance of Decision

- 5.1 The Adoption of the revised Halls Management Policy is not considered to trigger the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. The policy establishes a governance and planning framework but does not itself make decisions to dispose of, close, relocate, or materially change the level of service of any individual hall.

Māori and Cultural Engagement

- 5.2 The revised policy applies across the community hall network. No specific Māori or cultural engagement requirement has been identified for adoption of the governance framework itself. Future proposals affecting particular communities or facilities would be assessed for appropriate engagement at the time.

Community Engagement

- 5.3 The review has included engagement with Hall Committees and internal staff involved in community facilities, asset management, and governance. Feedback has been used to refine the policy, particularly around roles and responsibilities, communication, reporting, maintenance expectations, and the relationship between policy and Long-Term Plan decision-making.
- 5.4 Elected members have also been introduced to the review through a Council workshop on 5 August 2026.

6 Operational Implications Ngā Pānga Whakahaere

- 6.1 Adoption of the revised policy is not expected to create significant new operational requirements. Council and Hall Committees already undertake the core activities described in the policy.
- 6.2 The policy will, however, formalise and strengthen several existing practices, including annual reporting, regular engagement with Hall Committees, utilisation monitoring, condition assessments, and earlier coordination during Long-Term Plan development.
- 6.3 These changes are expected to improve consistency of information, clarify accountability, and support more informed asset and investment planning across the hall network.

7 Financial Implications Ngā Pānga Ahumoni

- 7.1 There are no financial implications with this report.
- 7.2 The policy expressly links maintenance, renewal, depreciation, and other investment decisions to Council's Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, Financial Strategy, Revenue and Financing Policy, and asset management planning processes.

8 Statutory Requirements Ngā Here ā-Ture

- 8.1 There are no statutory requirements for this report.

9 Next Steps Te Kokenga

9.1 Subject to Council adoption of the Halls Management Policy, staff will:

- Finalise the adopted policy;
- Communicate the adopted framework to Hall Committees and relevant staff; and
- Continue to develop consistent annual reporting, utilisation, condition and governance information for the hall network.

10 Attachments Ngā Āpitihanga

- Proposed Halls Management Policy