

Council

Meeting of 03 December 2025

Business Unit: Community
Date Created: 13 October 2025

Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust Annual Report 2024 - 2025

Purpose Te Aronga o te Pūrongo

To present for consideration the Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust's Annual Report for the financial year 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Recommendations Ngā Tūtohunga

That the Council receive the Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust's Annual Report 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Report prepared by:
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Community Operations Adviser

Approved for submission by:
Lyn Daly
General Manager - Community

1 Background Ngā Kōrero o Muri

- 1.1 The Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust (AFKPT) is a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO). A CCO is any organisation in which one or more local authorities own or control 50% or more of the voting rights or have the right to appoint 50% or more of the directors of the organisation.
- 1.2 The Council is required by the LGA to regularly undertake performance monitoring of its CCOs. Council is required to evaluate:
- The contribution of each CCO to the Council's objectives for the CCO;
 - The desired results set out in the SOI; and
 - The overall aims and outcomes of the Council based on the six-month reports.
- 1.3 Council revoked the exempt CCO status for AFKPT on 01 February 2024 and introduced the Statement of Expectations (SOE) and Statement of Intent (SOI) process. The inaugural [SOE](#) and [SOI](#) were finalised for the 2024 to 2025 year. Council received the six-month report in April 2025 and this is the first annual report in response to the expectations and targets / outputs set in these statements.
- 1.4 When a New Zealand entity stops being an exempt CCO under the Local Government Act 2002, it loses the ability to use the simplified reporting exemptions that applied previously. As a result, it must move to the required Public Benefit Entity (PBE) reporting framework that matches its size and nature. For AFKPT this is Tier 3 (PBE Simple Format Reporting – Accrual) Public Sector (PS). Exempt CCOs are permitted reduced reporting because the parent council absorbs accountability. Once the exemption is removed, the entity must stand on its own from a public-reporting perspective.
- 1.5 The change in framework has meant additional time and work required by the Trust along with an increase in the audit fee. Now the new reporting template is in place, less work should be required for future reporting.

2 Strategic Fit Te Tautika ki te Rautaki

- 2.1 The Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust assists in the ecological restoration, management and enhancement of the forest contributing to an environment to be proud of.

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

- 3.1 Council provided the following five expectations for AFKPT for the 2024 to 2025 year:
- Expectation 1. Maintain the forest / park, within the existing boundary, as an area of unspoilt nature (scenic reserve) for the benefit of the community and visitors.
 - Expectation 2. Actively pursue third-party funding opportunities for forest / park investment (to invest in the activities within the forest / park and development of the forest / park).

- Expectation 3. Plan to develop further walking and cycling tracks within the forest / park to connect to the “loop track concept” described in Council’s Walking & Cycling Strategy.
- Expectation 4. Minimise future flooding impacts to the forest / park through appropriate design and planting.
- Expectation 5. Make the forest / park available for educational opportunities.

3.2 AFKPT has reported against these expectations on pages 14 – 21 of the annual report, which includes the following achievements:

- successful in attracting funding
- the positive lobbying approach re Phragmites control – likely a key reason why the successful attraction of funding. Now the Trust has managed to initiate the beginnings of national involvement with the phragmites project,
- agreement by Horizons to have their river engineer as an advisory trustee,
- have the original large tree species reintroduced to the forest,
- the forest footprint is largely planted out and the Trust are now turning their focus to balancing the plant species across the forest,

3.3 The trust will be present at the 03 December 2025 meeting to speak to the annual report 2024 – 25.

4 Risk Assessment Te Arotake Tūraru

4.1 AFKPT 2024–25 Key Organisational Risks and Mitigations identified:

Risk	Description	Mitigations
Ecological Degradation – Invasive Species & Pests	Persistent invasive weeds (e.g. Phragmites karka, Old Man’s Beard) and pest animals causing ecological decline and increased management costs.	Maintain pest management programmes and partnerships relating to indigenous flora and fauna.
Extreme Weather patterns	A-typical flood patterns cause damage to plantings, trees, tracks, stream edges, and equipment, reducing restoration success and increasing maintenance costs.	Follow up care and infill planting in the wetland. Collaboration with MDC and Horizons to progress required infrastructure work.
Operational Capacity & Safety	Safety incidents, reliance on volunteers/contractors, and risks associated with ageing forest assets and infrastructure.	Regular hazard inspections and planned maintenance continuation. Continue to work together with the MDC HS&W Manager for continuous improvement
Governance Continuity	Trustee turnover resulting in loss of institutional knowledge.	Focused succession planning and continued use of technical advisers as appropriate. Documented history,

Risk	Description	Mitigations
		procedures and long-term biodiversity management planning important.
Financial Sustainability	Dependence on variable grants and council funding, with ongoing restoration costs and occasional unsuccessful funding bids.	Continue to seek diversified funding streams, increase in-kind support, and maintain strong funder reporting.

5 Health, safety and wellbeing

- 5.1 As part of due diligence and Council's prioritisation for our CCOs to comply with Health and Safety legislation, AFKPT has provided the following update on Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
- 5.2 The Trust works to ensure all external parties working in the forest have their own policy in place to ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation.
- 5.3 The Trust has confirmed they have a Health and Safety reporting system which collects information from contractors regarding accidents, incidents, and near miss. There was one incident for the 2024 - 25 year (wasp sting).
- 5.4 MDC Safety and Wellbeing Adviser (Andrew Leighton) has worked with the Trust (Bessie Nicholls) to audit the new walkway around the park on the western side, ensuring the walkway adheres to legislation. There are now barriers in place where the walkway goes over water.
- 5.5 Andrew will work with the Trust early in 2026 to continue the development a Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Policy for the Trust.

6 Engagement Te Whakapānga

Significance of Decision

- 6.1 The Council's Significance and Engagement Policy is not triggered by matters discussed in this report. No stakeholder engagement is required.

Māori and Cultural Engagement

- 6.2 There are no known cultural considerations associated with the matters addressed in this report. No specific engagement with Māori or other ethnicity groups is necessary.

Community Engagement

- 6.3 There is no community engagement associated with this report.

7 Operational Implications Ngā Pānga Whakahaere

- 7.1 The annual report will be published on Council's website for a period of seven years.

8 Financial Implications Ngā Pānga Ahumoni

- 8.1 There are no financial implications with receiving this report.

- 8.2 The audited financial statements show the following related party transactions concerning MDC from the 2024-25 annual report (note inclusive of GST):

Note 7: Related Party Transactions

The Trust is a Council Controlled Organisation of the Manawatu District Council, the following related parties transactions occurred during the financial year:

	This Year \$	Last Year \$	This Year \$	Last Year \$
	Value of Transactions	Value of Transactions	Amount Outstanding (INCL GST)	Amount Outstanding (INCL GST)
Revenue				
Operating Grant	125,330	135,530	-	-
Flood Protection Grant	-	28,305	-	32,550
Education Grant	5,833	10,000	-	-
Signage Grant	-	5,840	-	1,702
Boardwalk Seating Grant	-	7,890	-	-
Wetland Landscaping	-	51,610	-	53,055
Wetland Boundary Fence	-	5,225	-	6,008
Wetland Awahuri Access Track	-	4,250	-	4,888
Disability Walkway Access	-	8,818	-	10,140
Honorary Grant	1,418	-	1,418	-
Corduroy Road Marking Grant	-	2,350	-	2,703
Total Related Party Revenue Transactions	132,581	259,818	1,418	111,046
Expenditure				
Plant Purchases	37,688	36,128	-	10,549
Total Related Party Expenditure Transactions	37,688	36,128	-	10,549

- 8.3 MDC 2025 – 26 budget for AFKP (note excluding GST):

Item	Total Budget 2025 - 26 exc. GST
PR1000. AF-KP Op Grant	\$129,190
AP request to fund wetland plant management	\$20,000
Honorary Budget @ \$1,000pp p.a. (pro rata)	\$6,000
Total grant funding to AF-KP	\$155,190

In addition, Council's Community Assets team has a combined total of \$308,486 budgeted for approved projects during 2025 - 26 relating to the Awahuri Forest, Kitchener Park and surrounding area. For example, a link between the Park and Council's recently developed Henson's Bush track, a walkway / cycleway alongside the Park, signage and seating upgrades, etc.

9 Statutory Requirements Ngā Here ā-Ture

- 9.1 Under the Local Government Act 2002, section 69 titles "Financial Statement's and auditor's report":

(1) A report must include (a) audited consolidated financial statements for that financial year and (b) an auditor's report on those financial statements.

(2) The audited financial statements must be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

10 Next Steps Te Kokenga

- 10.1 MDC will prepare a Statement of Expectation for 2026 - 27 and AFKPT will prepare a Statement of Intent in response.

11 Attachments Ngā Āpitihanga

- Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust Annual Report 2024 - 25