



Council Agenda

Wednesday 22 July 2026, 8:30 am

The meeting will be held at the Manawatū District Council Chambers, 135 Manchester Street, Feilding, and a video recording made available on

www.mdc.govt.nz

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson

His Worship the Mayor, Michael Ford

Deputy Chairperson

Councillor Grant Hadfield

Members

Councillor Bridget Bell
Councillor Shelley Dew-Hopkins
Councillor Rob Duindam
Councillor Colin Dyer
Councillor Sam Hill
Councillor Raewyn Loader
Councillor James McKelvie
Councillor Jerry Pickford
Councillor Andrew Quarrie
Councillor Alison Short

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Shayne Harris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shayne Harris
Chief Executive

ORDER OF BUSINESS

PAGE

1. MEETING OPENING

Janette Waugh from the Salvation Army will open the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

7

Recommendation

That the minutes of the Council meeting held 17 June 2026 be adopted as a true and correct record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Notification from elected members of:

- 4.1 Any interests that may create a conflict with their role as an elected member relating to the items of business for this meeting; and
- 4.2 Any interests in items in which they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest as provided for in the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968

5. PUBLIC FORUM

There are no public forum speakers scheduled for this meeting.

6. PRESENTATIONS

There are no presentations scheduled for this meeting.

7. NOTIFICATION OF LATE ITEMS

Where an item is not on the agenda for a meeting, that item may be dealt with at that meeting if:

- 7.1 The Council by resolution so decides; and
- 7.2 The Chairperson explains at the meeting at a time when it is open to the public the reason why the item is not on the agenda, and the reason why the discussion of the item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

There are no recommendations from committees.

9. NON-COUNCIL MEETINGS – FOR INFORMATION

Minutes of the following Council Committees and Community Committee meetings are uploaded to the Council’s website, as they become available.

Liaison councillors will have the opportunity to provide a verbal update.

The below meetings took place from 17 June to 21 July 2025:

COMMITTEE MEETINGS	
Finance and Performance Committee	• 24 June 2026
https://www.mdc.govt.nz/about-council/meetings-agendas-and-minutes/agendas-and-minutes	

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETINGS	
Āpiti – Cr Sam Hill	• 17 June 2026
Bainesse-Rangiotu – Cr Raewyn Loader	• 17 June 2026
Colyton – Cr Colin Dyer	• 16 July 2026
Glen Oroua-Taikorea – Cr Shelley Dew-Hopkins	• 23 June 2026
Halcombe – Cr Jerry Pickford	• 6 July 2026
Himatangi Beach – Cr Jerry Pickford	• 25 June 2026
Hiwinui – Cr Raewyn Loader	• 21 July 2026
Kiwitea – Cr Andrew Quarrie	• 20 July 2026
Rongotea – Cr Colin Dyer	• 6 July 2026
Sanson – Cr Alison Short	• 9 July 2026
Tangimoana – Cr James McKelvie	• 20 July 2026
https://www.mdc.govt.nz/about-council/committees-and-organisations/community-committees-and-plans	

MARAE
Aorangi Marae - Cr Rob Duindam
Kauwhata Marae -
Parewahawaha Marae – Cr Alison Short
Poupatatē Marae – Cr James McKelvie
Taumata-o-te-rā Marae – Cr Colin Dyer
Te Hiiri Marae – Cr Sam Hill
Te Rangimārie Marae -
Te Tikanga Marae – Cr Shelley Dew-Hopkins
Ngāti Te Au – Cr Grant Hadfield

10. OFFICER REPORTS

10.1	LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – HEAD START PATHWAY	20
	Report of the General Manager – Corporate.	
10.2	APPOINTMENT OF LIAISON COUNCILLORS TO MARAE	60
	Report of the General Manager – Corporate.	
10.3	ROADING EMERGENCY WORKS CLAIM FEBRUARY 2026	63
	Report of the General Manager – Infrastructure.	

11. CONSIDERATION OF LATE ITEMS

12. PUBLIC EXCLUDED BUSINESS

COUNCIL TO RESOLVE:

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

1. Confirmation of Minutes: 17 June 2026
2. Tender Award Recommendation - Community Resilience Programme
3. Release of Public Excluded items into Open Session
4. Feilding Civic Centre Trust Interim Trustee Appointment

That the general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
13. Confirmation of Minutes : 17 June 2026	<i>To consider the accuracy of the minutes of the public excluded Council meeting on 17 June 2026.</i> <i>Any changes to previous minutes may require members to discuss the content of the public excluded session.</i>	s48(1)(a)
14.1 Tender Award Recommendation - Community Resilience Programme	s7(2)(i) – commercial negotiations <i>This report discusses commercially sensitive details that includes potential contract sums</i>	s48(1)(a)
14.2 Release of Public Excluded items into Open Session	s7(2)(a) – privacy s7(2)(h) – commercial activities <i>This report includes notes on public excluded resolutions that may not be approved for release into the public forum</i>	s48(1)(a)
14.3 Feilding Civic Centre Trust Interim Trustee Appointment <i>Report to be tabled</i>	s7(2)(a) <i>This report discusses private details of departing trustees and potential future trustees</i>	s48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interests protected by Section 6 or Section 7 of the Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public as specified above.

16. MEETING CLOSURE

MEETING MINUTES	
COUNCIL	TIME
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026	8:30 AM

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 17 June 2026, which commenced at 8.30 am at the Manawātū District Council Chambers, 135 Manchester Street, Feilding.

PRESENT:

Councillor Grant Hadfield	Chairperson
Councillor Bridget Bell	Via Zoom
Councillor Shelley Dew-Hopkins	
Councillor Rob Duindam	
Councillor Colin Dyer	
Councillor Sam Hill	
Councillor Raewyn Loader	
Councillor James McKelvie	
Councillor Jerry Pickford	
Councillor Andrew Quarrie	
Councillor Alison Short	

APOLOGIES: Mayor Michael Ford

IN ATTENDANCE:	Shayne Harris	Chief Executive
	Hamish Waugh	General Manager – Infrastructure
	Frances Smorti	General Manager – Corporate
	Kate Jarvis	General Manager – People
	Lyn Daly	General Manager – Community
	Joel Richards	Chief Financial Officer
	Ash Garstang	Governance and Assurance Manager
	Lisa Thomas	Strategy Manager

MDC 25-28/291

MEETING OPENING

Cr Colin Dyer opened the meeting.

MDC 25-28/292

APOLOGIES

Mayor Michael Ford is on a leave of absence.

MDC 25-28/293

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Council meeting held 03 June 2026 be adopted as a true and correct record.

Moved by: Cr Andrew Quarrie

Seconded by: Cr Sam Hill

CARRIED (11-0)

MEETING MINUTES	
COUNCIL	TIME
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026	8:30 AM

MDC 25-28/294

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andrew Quarrie – Item 13.1 Vesting of 10 Montgomery Street (non-pecuniary).

MDC 25-28/295

PUBLIC FORUM: TE WHATU ORA – SMOKEFREE/VAPEFREE SIGNS

Julie Beckett and Sally Darragh were in attendance speaking to Council.

- They outlined Health NZ's role in environmental health, disease prevention, and public health regulation.
- Free smokefree/vapefree signs and stickers were made available to Council, for the purpose of supporting community smokefree initiatives.
- A complaints process is available for the public to report smoking, vaping, and illicit tobacco-related concerns.
- Sally Darragh advised that as of 2023, 7.7% of New Zealander's smoke, with smoking rates for Māori being three times higher, and smoking rates for those suffering deprivation being six times higher. As of 2024, 26% of 18-24 year olds vape.

MDC 25-28/296

PRESENTATION: FHS FIRST XV RUGBY TEAM – SANIX WORLD RUGBY YOUTH TOURNAMENT

Justin Lock, Lucas Goodman (Captain) and Monty Gibson (Head Boy) were in attendance speaking to Council.

- Feilding High school competes against the best school rugby teams across the country. In 2024 they placed 3rd nationally, and in 2025 they placed 2nd. This placement resulted in them being extended an invitation to the Sanix World Rugby Youth Tournament in Japan.
- Both players enjoyed the tournament and were struck by how well the Japanese team prepared for their opponents.

MDC 25-28/297

NOTIFICATION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items of business notified for consideration.

MEETING MINUTES	
COUNCIL	TIME
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026	8:30 AM

MDC 25-28/298

RECOMMENDATION FROM MANAWATŪ WATER SERVICES COMMITTEE RE: DECISION ON WHETHER TO AUDIT THE WATER SERVICES STRATEGY

Report of the General Manager – Infrastructure presenting a recommendation from the Manawatū Water Services Committee meeting on 10 June 2026, recommending that Council does not engage the Audit Office.

RESOLVED

That the Council:

- Notes the recommendation of the Manawatū Water Services Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2026 (MWS 25-28/018) that the Council does not engage the Audit Office to audit Council's Water Services Strategy;**

and

- Does not engage the Audit Office to audit Council's Water Services Strategy.**

Moved by: Cr Shelley Dew-Hopkins

Seconded by: Cr Jerry Pickford

CARRIED (11-0)

MDC 25-28/299

COMMITTEE AND GROUP MEETINGS – FOR INFORMATION

The following Community Committee meetings were notified for information.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEES	
Himatangi Beach CC – Cr Jerry Pickford	• 16 June 2026
Kimbolton CC – Cr Rob Duindam	• 8 June 2026
Pohangina Valley CC – Cr Bridget Bell	• 10 June 2026
Sanson CC – Cr Alison Short	• 11 June 2026
Tangimoana CC – Cr James McKelvie	• 15 June 2026

Liaison Councillors provided brief updates on their respective Committees.

- Himatangi Beach – no comments.
- Kimbolton – Cr Rob Duindam. Fully attended by the Committee, but unfortunately the Chair has resigned. Another member has also resigned. The Committee had a discussion, but they were not yet in a position to appoint a new Chair and will instead have a special meeting on the 29 June and go out to the Community to seek nominations. Nick Galpin and Hannah Tokona came out have been helping with emergency management, which has been appreciated.

MEETING MINUTES	
COUNCIL	TIME
WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026	8:30 AM

MDC 25-28/302

ADOPTION OF THE RATES RESOLUTION FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

Report of the Chief Financial Officer seeking Council approval to set rates, due dates, and penalties for unpaid rates, for the financial year ending 30 June 2027 as required by the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.

RESOLVED

That the Manawātū District Council, in pursuance of the exercise of powers conferred on it by the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 and any other empowering provisions, resolves to set the following rates on rating units in the district for the financial year commencing 1 July 2026 and ending 30 June 2027:

All rates and amounts expressed are inclusive of goods and services tax.

A. General Rates

Under section 13(2)(b) and 14 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a general rate on every rating unit, assessed on capital value and on a differential basis.

Differential Category	Differential	Rate in the \$ of CV
1. Feilding Residential	1.00	0.00114
2. Feilding Rural	0.50	0.00057
3. Feilding CBD	2.25	0.00256
4. Rural	0.40	0.00046
5. Industrial and Commercial	1.60	0.00182
6. Utilities	1.60	0.00182
7. Defence	0.40	0.00046

B. Uniform Annual General Charge

Under section 15(2)(b) of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a uniform annual general charge of \$620 on every separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit.

C. Parks, Reserves and Sports Grounds Targeted Rate

Under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate on every rating unit, assessed on capital value and on a differential basis.

Differential Category	Differential	Rate in the \$ of CV
1. Feilding Residential	1.00	0.00057
2. Feilding Rural	0.30	0.00017
3. Feilding CBD	2.75	0.00158
4. Rural	0.30	0.00017
5. Industrial and Commercial	1.50	0.00086
6. Utilities	1.75	0.00100

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7. Defence	0.30	0.00017
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D. Parks, Reserves and Sports Grounds Uniform Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for parks, reserves and sports grounds, set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 on every rating unit in the district, of \$25.00 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit.

E. Roading Targeted Rate

Under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a targeted rate on every rating unit, assessed on capital value and on a differential basis.

Differential Category	Differential	Rate in the \$ of CV
1. Feilding Residential	1.00	0.00094
2. Feilding Rural	1.00	0.00094
3. Feilding CBD	1.00	0.00094
4. Rural	1.00	0.00094
5. Industrial and Commercial	1.00	0.00094
6. Utilities	1.00	0.00094
7. Defence	1.00	0.00094

F. Roading Uniform Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for roading, set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 on every rating unit, of \$100.00 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit.

G. Makino Aquatic Centre Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for the Makino Aquatic Centre set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 on every separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit, assessed on a differential basis described below:

- Within Feilding Differential Rating Area \$ 233.00
- Outside the Feilding Differential Rating Area \$ 163.00

H. Library Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for the library set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 on every separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit, assessed on a differential basis described below:

- Within Feilding Differential Rating Area \$ 253.00
- Outside the Feilding Differential Rating Area \$ 177.00

I. Kerbside Recycling Targeted Rate

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A targeted rate for the kerbside recycling collection service, set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, of:

- \$130.00 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit to which the kerbside recycling collection service is available, excluding vacant lan.

J. Feilding CBD Parking Enforcement Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for the Feilding Central Business District (CBD) Parking Enforcement set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, of:

- \$0.00012 in the dollar of capital value on all rating units situated within differential category 3 (Feilding CBD).

K. Feilding CBD Security Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for Feilding CBD security, set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, of:

- \$309.00 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit situated within differential category 3 (Feilding CBD).

L. Ultra-Fast Broadband Infrastructure Targeted Rate

A targeted rate for the ultra-fast broadband infrastructure in the Kawakawa Road/Darragh Road industrial area, set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, of:

- \$704.00 per separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit that is within 10 meters of the Ultra-Fast Broadband infrastructure.

M. Stormwater Targeted Rate

A targeted rate on each rating unit in the areas that are located in: Feilding Differential and all rating units zoned as 'village' in the District Plan located in Rongotea, Sanson, Himatangi Beach, Tangimoana, Halcombe and Cheltenham.

This rate is a fixed amount of \$207.00 per rating unit that are connected directly or indirectly to a stormwater network set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.

N. Rural Land Drainage Targeted Rates

Targeted rates, based on land value (LV), for rating units that are part of one of the schemes listed below, for the maintenance and development of land drainage schemes, set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, of:

Category	Rate in \$ of LV

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Bainesse drainage district	
Bainesse Class A	0.000890
Bainesse Class B	0.000430
Bainesse Class C	0.000350
Makowhai drainage district	
Makowhai Class A	0.000170
Makowhai Class B	0.000170
Makowhai Class C	0.000040
Maire drainage district	
Maire Class A	0.000200
Maire Class B	0.000090
Maire Class C	0.000120
Maire Class D	0.000140
Oroua Downs drainage district	
Oroua Downs Class A	0.000740
Oroua Downs Class B	0.000360
Oroua Downs Class C	0.000210

O. Water Supply Targeted Rate – Urban

A targeted rate applied on a differentiated basis of provision or availability of service for the reticulation and treatment of potable water through Council's water network (excluding those properties connected to a rural water supply scheme), set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, of:

Water Supply - Connected	\$500.00 per SUIP
Water Supply - Available	\$250.00 per SUIP
Water Supply - Restricted	\$400.00 per SUIP

P. Volumetric Water Charges

For rating units that have opted for water volumetric charging and extraordinary users of the water scheme under Council's bylaw, a differential targeted rate based on the level of service provision (connection size and number of connections) to the rating unit (as set out in the table below):

Connection size	Charge per connection
15 mm to 50 mm	\$869.40
80 mm to 150 mm	\$885.50

A water consumption charge set under section 19 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 for consumption in excess of 380 cubic meters within the rating year of \$2.37 per cubic meter of water supplied.

Q. Wastewater Disposal Targeted rates

A targeted rate applied on a differentiated basis of provision or availability of service for the reticulation, treatment and disposal of sewage and trade effluent, (to properties that are not subject to volumetric trade wastewater charges) set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002,

Wastewater disposal - Connected	\$1,149.00 per rating unit
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Wastewater disposal - Available	\$574.50 per rating unit
Wastewater disposal - Restricted	\$919.00 per rating unit

R. Water Supply Targeted Rates – Rural

Targeted rates, set under section 19 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, for the rural water supply treatment, reticulation, and supply of water per unit allocated or supplied to each participating rating unit in the following schemes.

- Stanway/Halcombe Rural Water Scheme – per unit allocated \$458.00
- Waituna West Rural Water Scheme – per unit allocated \$522.00
- Ohakea Rural Water Scheme – per unit allocated \$355.75
- Kiwitea Rural Water Scheme – per unit allocated \$281.75
- Kiwitea Rural Water Scheme – per additional unit used but not allocated \$281.75

S. Capital Contribution Targeted Rate

Where a ratepayer has signed an agreement to pay their capital contribution over a set term, for the Himatangi Beach wastewater scheme or the Rongotea water scheme capital contribution, a targeted rate is set under section 16 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002. Each of the rates is a fixed amount per rating unit, as set out in the table below.

Capital Contribution Targeted Rate	Targeted Rate Amount
Himatangi beach wastewater scheme - twenty-year term, 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2033	\$923
Rongotea water scheme - twenty-year term, 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2035	\$374

T. Rates invoice and penalty dates

Rates are set for the year commencing 1 July 2026 and ending 30 June 2027.

Rates will be payable in four equal instalments (except for volumetric water rates) and must be paid by the due date. Payment can be made using online banking, direct debit, credit card through internet or at the Council Office situated at 135 Manchester Street, Feilding between the hours of 8.00am and 5.00pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday – 9.00am and 5.00pm Thursday.

If the total annual rates (not including volumetric water rates) are paid in full by 30 November 2026, any penalties added for instalment one will be remitted.

	Instalment One	Instalment Two	Instalment Three	Instalment Four
Invoice Date	1 August 2026	1 November 2026	1 February 2027	1 May 2027

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Payment Due Date	28 August 2026	30 November 2026	26 February 2027	31 May 2027
Penalty Date	3 September 2026	10 December 2026	4 March 2027	10 June 2027

Volumetric Water charges will be invoiced at the end of each quarter and are due for payment on the last working day of the following month (as set out in the table below).

	Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four
Invoice Date	30 September 2026	31 December 2026	31 March 2027	30 June 2027
Payment Due Date	30 October 2025	29 January 2026	30 April 2026	30 July 2026

U. Instalment Penalty

Under section 57 and 58(1)(a) of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, a 10% penalty will be added to any portion of the current instalment (not including volumetric water rates) that remains unpaid after the due date. The penalty will be added on the date set out in the table above in the “Penalty Date” row.

V. Additional Arrears Penalty

A 10% penalty will be added on 9 July 2026 to any unpaid rates from previous financial years that remains unpaid on 8 July 2026. Another 10% will be added on 16 January 2027 to any unpaid rates from previous financial years that remain unpaid on 15 January 2027.

Moved by: Cr Andrew Quarrie

Seconded by: Cr Shelley Dew-Hopkins

CARRIED (10-1)

Cr Jerry Pickford voted against the motion.

MDC 25-28/303

ADOPTION OF THE BORROWING RESOLUTION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

Report of the Chief Financial Officer seeking Council authorisation for the Chief Executive to borrow when necessary to fund the programmes identified in the Annual Plan 2026/27.

RESOLVED

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1. That the Council authorises the Chief Executive to borrow new loans up to \$17,918,000 to fund the capital projects identified in the Annual Plan 2026/27.
2. That the Council authorises the Chief Executive to borrow to refinance existing loan facilities as they fall due. Loans can only be refinanced within the terms of the original loan approval as outlined in the financial strategy.
3. That the Council authorises the Chief Executive to negotiate and agree the terms, interest rate payable, type of loan facilities or issues of stock and/or swaps that make up the borrowing and to execute any agreements, documents, and certificates in respect of such loans, facilities, or stock on behalf of the Council.
4. That the borrowing be secured by a Debenture Trust Deed over all rates made from time to time by Council under the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.
5. Council notes that the planned draw down of debt will breach the debt cap under the Current Liability Management Policy. However, due to Councils AA credit rating the planned total debt will not breach covenants with the Local Government Funding Agency.

Moved by: Cr Colin Dyer

Seconded by: Cr Alison Short

CARRIED (10-1)

Cr Jerry Pickford voted against the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.06 am and reconvened at 10.25 am.

MDC 25-28/304

DEVELOPMENT OF GRANTS POLICY

Report of the General Manager – Community seeking Council adoption of the new Grants Policy and revoke the existing Community Development Policy. The report also introduces the accompanying Community Grants Guidelines, which will provide operational detail and criteria for Council-administered funding programmes.

RESOLVED

That the Council:

1. **Adopts the Grants Policy.**
2. **Revokes the Community Development Policy.**

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3. Notes that the operational detail, eligibility criteria, assessment processes, and funding priorities for Council-administered funding programmes will be contained within the Community Grants Guidelines.
4. Notes the following proposed funding approach changes for the 2026/27 funding year that will be outlined in the Community Grants Guidelines:
 - a. The Representative Fund will be focused on applicants aged 19 years and under, with tiered funding available for regional, national, and international representation.
 - b. The Community Development One-Off Fund criteria will be clarified to reflect that the “one-off” nature of the fund relates to the funding allocation itself rather than limiting support to one-off initiatives or projects, allowing greater flexibility to support initiatives and services that demonstrate clear community benefit.
 - c. The Events Fund will move to a fully contestable approach, with no specific funding allocations reserved for individual events or organisations.
 - d. The Council-funded traffic management support will continue for Anzac Day commemorations, Rural Day, and the Feilding Christmas Parade for the 2026/27 funding year, with all other event-related traffic management requests to be considered through the Events Fund application process.
 - e. The future structure and administration of the Traffic Management Fund may be reviewed through future Long Term Plan discussions.
 - f. The consequential amendments will be made to the Community Committee Policy and Marae and Hapū Development Policy to incorporate relevant funding administration and accountability provisions previously contained within the Community Development Policy.

Moved by: Cr Sam Hill

Seconded by: Cr Rob Duindam

CARRIED (11-0)

MDC 25-28/305

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Report of the General Manager – Corporate seeking Council approval for adoption.

RESOLVED

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That the Council adopts the updated Risk Management Policy, without amendment.

Moved by: Cr Rob Duindam

Seconded by: Cr Jerry Pickford

CARRIED (11-0)

MDC 25-28/306

CONSIDERATION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items notified for consideration.

MDC 25-28/307

PUBLIC EXCLUDED BUSINESS

RESOLVED

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

1. Vesting of 10 Montgomery Street, Feilding to Council

That the general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
13.1 Vesting of 10 Montgomery Street, Feilding to Council	s7(2)(i) – commercial negotiations <i>The report includes details of a commercial nature, that may be sensitive</i>	s48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interests protected by Section 6 or Section 7 of the Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public as specified above.

Moved by: Cr Grant Hadfield

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Seconded by: Cr James McKelvie

CARRIED (11-0)

The meeting went into public excluded session at 10.51 am. For items MDC 25-28/308 to MDC 25-28/309 refer to public excluded proceedings. The meeting returned to open session at 10.56 am.

MDC 25-28/310

MEETING CLOSURE

The meeting was declared closed at 10.56 am.

Meeting Video

<https://www.mdc.govt.nz/about-council/meetings-agendas-and-minutes/videos-of-council-and-committee-meetings/manawatu-district-council-meeting-videos>

Council

Meeting of 22 July 2026

Business Unit: Corporate
Date Created: 09 July 2026

Local Government Reform - Head Start Pathway

Purpose Te Aronga o te Pūrongo

The purpose of this report is to present the Government's Head Start pathway for local government reform, summarise the work undertaken by Council to date, and seek Council's decision on its preferred response to the Head Start and Back Stop pathways.

Recommendations Ngā Tūtohunga

That the Council:

1. Receives the report titled “Local Government Reform – Head Start Pathway”.
2. **Will not** submit an outline proposal under the Government’s Head Start pathway for local government reform.
3. Confirms its opposition to compulsory local government amalgamation while continuing to engage constructively with the Government on alternative local government reform approaches.
4. Authorises the Mayor and Chief Executive to continue exploring and advocating for alternative local government reform models outside the Head Start pathway that seek to achieve the Government's objectives while retaining local representation, local decision-making and local accountability, including working collaboratively with other councils where appropriate.
5. Authorises the Mayor to communicate Council's position to the Minister of Local Government, MCERT, or any affected councils should the Manawātū District Council be identified as a proposed partner in any Head Start proposal or other local government reform proposal that has not been endorsed by the Council.

Report prepared by:
Frances Smorti
GM - Corporate

1 Background Ngā Kōrero o Muri

- 1.1 On 5 May 2026, the Government announced the Head Start pathway as part of its wider *Simplifying Local Government* reform programme. The Head Start pathway provides an opportunity for two or more territorial authorities to voluntarily develop and submit an outline proposal to form one or more new unitary councils by 9 August 2026. Councils that do not participate in the Head Start pathway are expected to move into a compulsory Back Stop process following the 2028 local elections, with the Government intending to introduce the necessary legislation before those elections.
- 1.2 The Government has stated that the purpose of the reform is to simplify local government, improve regional coordination, reduce duplication between councils, strengthen delivery of regional functions, and better support the new planning system. Outline proposals submitted through the Head Start pathway are intended to be high-level and will be assessed against five criteria:
- Support for the new planning system;
 - Simpler local governance;
 - Economies of scale;
 - Maintenance of local voice; and
 - Deliverability.
- 1.3 Following the Government's announcement, the Council considered the implications of the reform through a series of elected member workshops. Officers also undertook an assessment of a range of potential structural options and coordinated with neighbouring councils and the Horizons Mayoral Forum to better understand the opportunities, risks and implications of the Government's proposals.
- 1.4 Recognising the significance of the issue, the Council undertook a programme of community engagement during June 2026. This included public meetings, online engagement, information material and a community feedback process. A total of 745 valid submissions were received, with 85.7% of submitters supporting an approach that opposed compulsory amalgamation while exploring alternative reform options.
- 1.5 Community feedback consistently identified the importance of retaining local representation, local decision-making and local accountability, while also expressing concerns regarding the potential financial implications of amalgamation, including the sharing of debt and infrastructure costs. Many submitters also indicated that, should amalgamation ultimately be required, they would prefer any future discussions to focus on councils with similar rural communities and interests.
- 1.6 This report seeks Council's direction on its response to the Government's Head Start pathway, including whether to submit an outline proposal, and on any further work Council wishes to

undertake regarding alternative local government reform models as the Government's wider reform programme progresses.

2 Strategic Fit Te Tautika ki te Rautaki

2.1 The Government's local government reform programme has the potential to significantly influence how local government is structured and how services are delivered in the future. The Council's response to the Head Start pathway is therefore a strategic decision that will help shape the future governance and delivery of local government services within the Manawatū District.

2.2 This report aligns most strongly with the following Long-term Plan priorities:

2.2.1 A future planned together

The Council has undertaken extensive community engagement to understand local views and ensure the community has an opportunity to help shape Council's response to the Government's reform programme.

2.2.2 A prosperous, resilient economy

Future local government arrangements could influence the district's long-term financial sustainability, economic development and regional collaboration.

2.2.3 Value for money and excellence in local government

This report supports Council's responsibility to determine the approach that best serves the long-term interests of the Manawatū District and its communities, while ensuring local government continues to deliver value for money and high-quality services.

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

3.1 The Government's Head Start pathway requires councils to decide whether they wish to voluntarily develop and submit an outline proposal for local government reorganisation by 9 August 2026.

3.2 Council must determine the most appropriate response for the Manawatū District, taking into account:

- The Government's objectives for local government reform;
- The information currently available;
- The views of the Manawatū community;
- The likely impacts on local representation, decision-making and accountability; and
- The long-term interests of the Manawatū District.

3.3 Option One – Submit an outline proposal under the Head Start pathway

This option would involve Council working with one or more other councils to develop and submit an outline proposal to become a unitary authority to Government by 9 August 2026.

Advantages

- Enables Council to directly influence the development of a reform proposal.
- Demonstrates early engagement with the Government's preferred process.
- May provide greater opportunity to influence the design of any future local government arrangements.

Disadvantages

- The timeframe provides limited opportunity to fully understand the financial, governance and operational implications of reform.
- Significant uncertainty remains regarding the future delivery and funding of regional council functions.
- Limited opportunity exists to investigate alternative reform models.
- Officers consider that the current evidence base is insufficient to confidently recommend a preferred structural model.

3.4 Option Two – Do not submit an outline proposal (Recommended)

Under this option, Council would not participate in the Head Start pathway and would instead continue engaging with Government and other councils through the wider reform programme, and potentially the Back Stop process.

Advantages

- Aligns with the clear direction received through community engagement.
- Allows additional time to investigate alternative reform models.
- Enables further assessment of financial implications, particularly relating to regional council functions.
- Retains flexibility as Government policy and implementation arrangements continue to develop.
- Supports ongoing collaboration with other councils on alternative approaches that achieve the Government's objectives.

Disadvantages

- Reduces Council's ability to directly influence the development of a reform proposal.
- The detail of the Government's Back Stop process remains uncertain.

- Other councils may submit proposals that include the Manawatū District, requiring Council to respond. The DIA's official guidance on the Head Start pathway states that the Government will have the discretion to consider these types of applications. This creates a risk that Government could progress an outline proposal involving the Manawatū District without Council's support.
- 3.5 Officers acknowledge the Government's objectives of 'simplifying' local government, improving regional coordination and strengthening delivery of regional council functions. However, officers consider that the current level of information is insufficient to recommend participation in the Head Start pathway. In particular, further work is required to better understand the financial implications, governance arrangements, future delivery of regional council functions, and the potential impacts on the Manawatū District.
- 3.6 The community engagement undertaken by Council also provides a clear indication that the community wishes Council to oppose compulsory amalgamation while continuing to investigate alternative approaches.
- 3.7 Accordingly, officers consider that not submitting an outline proposal under the Head Start pathway, while continuing to investigate alternative reform models and engage constructively with Government and other councils, best balances the Government's reform objectives with Council's responsibility to act in the long-term interests of the Manawatū District.

4 Risk Assessment Te Arotake Tūraru

- 4.1 This decision is strategic in nature and involves balancing the risks of participating in the Government's voluntary Head Start pathway against the risks of not participating and continuing engagement through the wider local government reform process.
- 4.2 The Council's Risk Appetite Statement recognises that some risks are appropriate where they support positive long-term outcomes, while other areas require a more cautious approach.
- 4.3 The principal risks associated with this decision are summarised below:

4.3.1 Financial and investment risk

The Regional Council has only recently provided information regarding the costs and revenues associated with delivering some of the regional council functions within the Manawatū District. While this is a valuable first step, there has not yet been sufficient time to undertake detailed financial modelling or assess the long-term implications of the range of structural options that may emerge through the reform process.

Submitting an outline proposal before these assessments are available creates a risk that Council could commit to a preferred direction without fully understanding the long-term financial consequences for the Manawatū District. Given the Council's cautious appetite for financial and investment risk, this uncertainty weighs against submitting a Head Start proposal at this time.

4.3.2 Reputational risk

Regardless of the decision reached, some members of the community, neighbouring councils and central government may disagree with Council's position.

This risk has been mitigated through an extensive programme of community engagement and by ensuring Council's decision is informed by both community feedback and available evidence. While reputational risk cannot be eliminated, officers consider the process undertaken by Council provides a strong basis for whichever decision is ultimately made.

4.3.3 Political risk

The Council has an open appetite for political risk where proactive engagement with central government supports positive outcomes for our District.

Not submitting a Head Start proposal does not remove the need to continue engaging constructively with Government. Officers therefore recommend that Council continues working with Government and other councils to explore alternative reform models and communicate the District's position throughout the wider reform process.

4.4 Overall assessment

Officers acknowledge that choosing not to participate in the Head Start pathway carries its own risks, including reduced influence over the first stage of the Government's reform programme and the possibility that other councils may include the Manawātū District within their own proposals.

While these risks are significant, Council will continue to engage with Government and neighbouring councils to mitigate the likelihood and/or impacts of this occurring. In contrast, the financial and strategic risks associated with committing to a Head Start proposal before key information is available are considered more significant.

For these reasons, officers consider the recommended approach represents the more prudent risk position while preserving Council's ability to continue influencing future local government reform.

5 Engagement Te Whakapānga

Significance of Decision

- 5.1 Officers consider this to be a significant decision under the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. The decision has the potential to influence the future governance of the Manawātū District, including local representation, decision-making, accountability and the future delivery of council services. Consistent with the Policy, a significant decision warrants a high level of community engagement.

Community Engagement

- 5.2 Although the Government indicated that the timeframe for the Head Start pathway did not allow for formal consultation before councils made their decisions, the Council determined that community input was important given the significance of the issue.
- 5.3 Accordingly, Council undertook a comprehensive programme of engagement during June 2026. This included:
- Five public meetings (including an online Facebook Live session);

- A dedicated information webpage;
 - A community factsheet and feedback form;
 - Media and social media communications; and
 - Opportunities for written submissions.
- 5.4 A total of 745 valid submissions were received through the community engagement process, demonstrating a high level of public interest in the future of local government within the Manawātū District. Of those who provided feedback, 85.7% supported an approach of opposing compulsory amalgamation while continuing to explore alternative reform options, 6.9% supported participating in the Government's Head Start pathway, 4.3% supported waiting for the Government's Back Stop process, and 3.1% expressed another view. The results of the engagement have been considered alongside technical advice, discussions with other councils, and Government guidance in developing the recommendations contained in this report.

Māori and Cultural Engagement

- 5.5 Given the significance of the Government's proposed local government reforms to mana whenua, Māori representation and future governance arrangements, Council recognised the importance of engaging directly with Māori alongside the wider community engagement programme.
- 5.6 Councillor Bridget Bell, as the Council's Ngā Tapuae o Matangi Māori Ward Councillor, led this engagement on behalf of the Council. This included direct engagement with iwi, marae leadership and Māori communities. Councillor Bell also undertook direct communications with Māori stakeholders to encourage participation and ensure Māori perspectives could inform Council's decision.
- 5.7 The views expressed through this engagement have been considered alongside the broader community feedback and have informed the recommendations contained within this report.

6 Operational Implications Ngā Pānga Whakahaere

- 6.1 The decision will have operational implications for the Council regardless of which option is adopted.
- 6.2 If Council resolves **not** to submit an outline proposal under the Head Start pathway, officers will continue to:
- Engage with the Government and neighbouring councils as the wider reform programme progresses;
 - Investigate alternative local government reform models, including options for the future delivery of regional council functions;
 - Monitor the development of the Government's Back Stop process; and
 - Provide further advice to Council as additional information becomes available.

6.3 If Council resolves to submit an outline proposal under the Head Start pathway, a significant programme of work, including unbudgeted expenditure for urgent financial modelling, would be required within a compressed timeframe to develop the proposal in collaboration with other councils before the Government's deadline of 9 August 2026.

6.4 The preferred option will require a continued programme of work to investigate alternative local government reform models, undertake detailed financial and governance modelling, and better understand the implications of transferring regional council functions. This work is likely to require external expertise and will have resource and budget implications that are not currently provided for. Officers will report back to Council with proposed work programmes and any associated funding requirements as these become clearer.

7 Financial Implications Ngā Pānga Ahumoni

7.1 The recommendations contained in this report do not commit Council to any immediate expenditure beyond existing operational activities.

7.2 However, if Council wishes to continue investigating alternative local government reform models and undertake the detailed financial, governance and service delivery analysis required to inform future decisions, additional funding is likely to be required. This may include external specialist advice, financial modelling, legal advice and technical analysis.

7.3 The extent of this work, and any associated funding requirements, is not yet known. Officers will bring proposed work programmes and budget requirements back to Council for consideration before any significant expenditure is incurred.

8 Statutory Requirements Ngā Here ā-Ture

8.1 The Head Start pathway is an initiative established by the Government as part of its *Simplifying Local Government* reform programme. Participation in the Head Start pathway is voluntary and there is no legislative requirement for councils to submit an outline proposal.

8.2 The Council is required under the Local Government Act 2002 to make decisions that promote the current and future interests of the Manawātū District and to consider the views and preferences of its community when making significant decisions.

8.3 The Government has indicated its intention to introduce legislation to give effect to the wider local government reform programme, including the proposed Back Stop process. At the time of writing this report, that legislation has not yet been introduced to Parliament.

9 Next Steps Te Kokenga

9.1 Subject to Council's decision, officers will implement the resolutions of this report.

9.2 If Council resolves not to submit an outline proposal under the Government's Head Start pathway, officers will continue to engage with the Government and other councils as the wider local government reform programme progresses. This will include supporting the Mayor in developing a joint position with other councils where appropriate and continuing to investigate alternative local government reform models that seek to achieve the Government's objectives while retaining local representation, local decision-making and local accountability.

- 9.3 Officers will also continue to develop the evidence base required to inform future Council decisions, including further financial modelling and assessment of options for the future delivery of regional council functions. Any proposed work programme requiring materially additional resources or budget will be reported back to Council for approval.
- 9.4 Should there be any material changes to the Government's reform programme, or if the Manawatū District Council is identified as a proposed participant in another council's reform proposal, officers will provide further advice to Council or support the Mayor to communicate Council's position, consistent with the resolutions of this report.

10 Attachments Ngā Āpitihanga

- Head Start pathway – Simplifying Local Government
- Guidance for Head Start outline proposals

Head Start pathway

Simplifying Local Government



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Ministerial foreword

Local government plays a central role in shaping how New Zealand grows and develops. Councils understand their communities and regions, and they are key partners with central government in delivering housing, infrastructure, and environmental management.

The Government knows councils are managing significant change, with multiple reforms happening at once. Alongside implementing a new planning system, councils told us through submissions on the [Simplifying Local Government proposal](#) that they wanted greater flexibility, including the ability to shape future governance arrangements themselves and, where they are ready, to move more quickly.

The Head Start pathway is a direct response to that feedback. It provides a voluntary, streamlined option for councils that want to lead the transition early, while continuing to deliver the new planning system. Head Start enables locally led solutions, so councils can set their own direction and pace rather than waiting for wider reform settings to apply.

The Government has been clear that regional governance needs to be simpler and more effective over time. Head Start is voluntary. Councils that do not opt in will not face mandatory change until after the 2028 local elections, giving them space to focus on delivering the first generation of plans under the new planning system.

Together, the Head Start pathway and the backstop approach provide certainty and confidence, supporting councils to lead where they are ready, while setting the system up to work better for the long term and delivering the new planning system.



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform



Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Local Government

The Simplifying Local Government proposal

In November we consulted on a draft proposal to establish regional boards of mayors, replacing regional councillors, to lead the development of reorganisation plans for a region. The proposal can be found at dia.govt.nz/Simplifying-Local-Government#Proposal.

What we heard

Consultation on this proposal resulted in more than 1,150 submissions, including around 70 from councils and local government sector bodies, and around 60 from iwi/Māori organisations. Submitters generally agreed with the need for reform but raised issues with the specific proposal.

There was more support for regional reorganisation plans than combined territories boards (CTBs). Many submitters had concerns about council capacity to progress these reforms at the same time as other government initiatives. Some suggested changes to the timing, membership, or remit of CTBs.

Many submitters supported keeping regional councillors in place until the 2028 local elections – as a practical measure to support mayors and maintain democratic legitimacy.

Submissions highlighted the important relationships regional councils have with iwi Māori, and the Treaty settlement redress arrangements that relate to regional council functions.

Other issues raised in submissions included:

- preserving and supporting local democracy, including balancing urban and rural interests, with some support for Crown observers
- retention of regional service delivery, particularly environmental management and river catchment management
- mayoral workloads and adopting a regional perspective; and
- funding and process concerns.

Councils told us they wanted greater flexibility to take locally led approaches to reform. Some councils and mayors have been clear that they are ready to move faster, building on existing regional arrangements such as mayoral forums rather than establishing a board of the region's mayors.

The Head Start pathway responds directly to that feedback, giving councils that are ready the opportunity to take the lead, shape their own regional solutions, and progress at pace.

What we are doing

We have listened to feedback and refined our approach.

We will introduce a streamlined Head Start pathway for councils that are ready to develop and progress reorganisation proposals, with the aim of creating unitary authorities within a region through bespoke legislation.

We will legislate for councils not progressing through Head Start to enter a compulsory backstop process after the 2028 local elections.

We will replace regional councillors at the 2028 local elections with an interim body (for example, a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a combination of both). The precise model will be confirmed later. Retaining regional councillors until the 2028 local elections will provide capacity during a period of substantial change.

How this fits with the new planning system

We know councils are navigating significant change, with multiple reforms happening at once.

The Head Start pathway gives councils that are ready to move early the confidence to get on with delivering the new planning system now, while they shape the governance arrangements ahead of the 2028 local elections.

By progressively aligning governance with how the new planning system is designed to work, Head Start enables councils to lead the transition on their own terms, rather than waiting for wider reform to commence.

Delivering the new planning system remains core business for all councils and continues in parallel, whichever pathway councils choose.

Head Start pathway

From 5 May 2026, two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities can submit an outline proposal to establish a new unitary authority covering part or all of a region. Proposals will need to be submitted by 9 August 2026.

A unitary authority combines the functions of a regional council and a city or district council into a single organisation. This can simplify governance, reduce duplication, and improve regional coordination.

Councils participating in the Head Start pathway will continue implementing the new planning system alongside any reorganisation activity.

Who can submit an outline proposal?

Any two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities (except for Auckland) including cross-boundary groupings, may submit if they represent a majority of either the:

- directly affected territorial authorities, or
- population across directly affected areas.

Proposals cannot be submitted by minority groupings, individual territorial authorities or unitary authorities, regional councils, individuals or other organisations.

Eligibility criteria

Proposals must be submitted by two or more territorial authorities that together represent a majority of either directly affected territorial authorities or a majority of the population across directly affected districts. The following examples illustrate how this may work.

What types of reorganisation can be proposed?

Outline proposals must provide for the establishment of new unitary authorities. The most straightforward approach is for all councils in a region to combine to form a single unitary authority.

We will also consider outline proposals for subregional unitary authorities and potential cross-boundary proposals, where:

- existing territorial authorities are combined and regional council functions are transferred
- the proposed arrangements would result in fewer local authorities overall
- the proposed arrangements would deliver clearer accountability and effective delivery of key functions, including regional planning, transport, and catchment management.

More than one unitary authority in a region is only likely to be approved if:

- the region is large and has more complex issues
- the proposal clearly meets the criteria and doesn't lead to the fragmentation of key regional functions where collaboration is required, such as catchment management.

Working with iwi/Māori

Treaty settlement arrangements will continue to be provided for. We will work with applicants and iwi/Māori affected by the Head Start pathway to support the continuation of effective relationships and uphold settlement redress.

Councils will be expected to engage with relevant post-settlement governance entities (PSGEs) to demonstrate how existing Treaty settlement arrangements could be transferred to new unitary authorities with equivalent effect. The Government will also work with PSGEs directly on proposed arrangements. Councils will have an opportunity to further engage with Māori as they continue to develop outline proposals ahead of final decisions in 2027.

Example 1: Majority of directly affected councils

A region contains three territorial authorities: Council A, Council B and Council C. Council A and Council B jointly submit a proposal that affects Council C.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because Councils A and B form a majority of the directly affected territorial authorities, regardless of population size.

Example 2: Majority of population

A region contains four territorial authorities: Councils A to D. Councils A and B jointly submit a proposal that also impacts Councils C and D. Councils A and B together represent more than 50% of the population of the directly affected area, even though Council C and Council D are larger in land area.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because the proposing councils represent a majority of the population, even if they do not represent all councils.

Example 3: Minority of directly affected councils

A region contains five territorial authorities: Councils A to E. Council A and Council B jointly submit a proposal that also affects Councils C, D and E. Councils A and B together do not represent more than 50% of the population or the majority of affected councils of the directly affected area.

- ✗ This proposal would not be eligible for consideration because, while it involves two councils, it does not represent a majority of councils or population.

Example 4: Subregional unitary authorities

A region contains five territorial authorities: Councils A to E. Council A, Council B, Council C and Council D jointly submit a proposal for two unitaries for the region affecting Council E.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because the proposing councils are a majority of the directly affected territorial authorities, regardless of population of the directly affected areas.

Example 5: Subregional proposal - part of region

A region contains seven territorial authorities: Councils A to F. Council A, Council B and Council C jointly submit a proposal for a unitary for the three councils within their part of the region. The other four councils are unaffected.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because there are more than two territorial authorities proposing amalgamation and the majority of territorial authorities and population affected by the proposal are in favour of the proposal. Reorganisation plans for the remainder of the region (Councils D to F) will be required after the 2028 local body elections.

Note: eligibility is not acceptance, and eligible proposals will still need to pass the assessment.

How will outline proposals be assessed?

Five criteria will be used to assess the proposals:



Deliverability: Proposals are realistic and demonstrate how new arrangements can be implemented in a timely manner.



Supports the new planning system: Shows clear support for implementing the new planning system – including progress on spatial and natural environment plan development – and avoids or minimises disruption to that work.



Simplifies local governance: Proposes more efficient regional governance arrangements, consolidating decision-making and improving alignment between a region's councils.



Economies of scale: Supports regional strategic planning and effective delivery of key regional functions (such as transport and catchment management), and demonstrates responsible and affordable asset management, infrastructure investment, and service delivery.



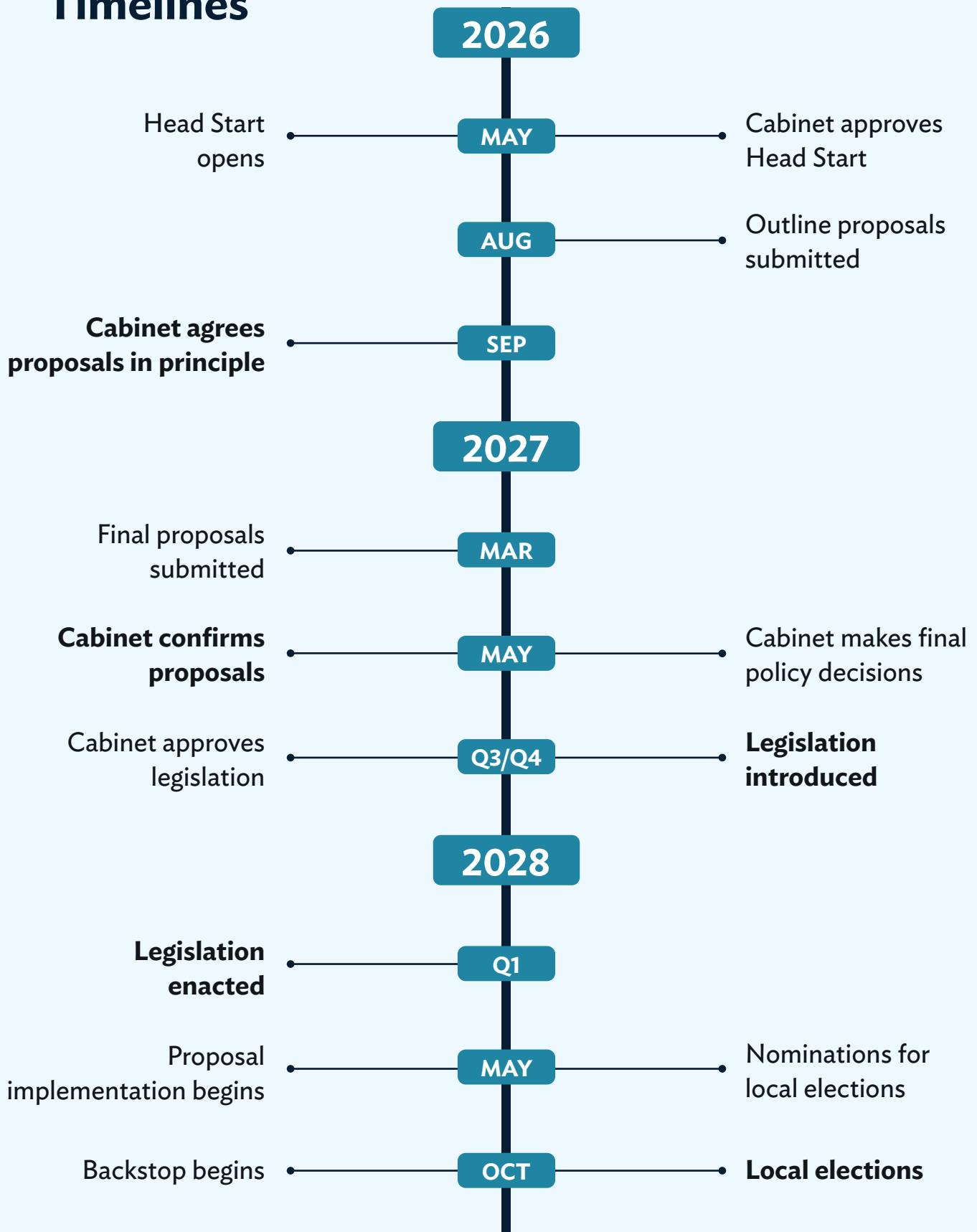
Maintains local voice: Demonstrates fair and effective representation for communities of interest and how decisions will be made at the local level, balancing urban and rural interests.

Next steps for Head Start

Once outline proposals have been assessed, Cabinet will decide which proposals are accepted into the detailed design phase of the Head Start pathway.

Once agreed in principle, any support required to develop detailed reorganisation proposals will be determined with submitters and agreed by Cabinet.

Timelines



Status of regional councillors

We previously proposed replacing regional councillors with boards of mayors.

Submitters suggested that retaining regional councillors until the end of their current elected periods would:

- support the transition to the new planning regime, including the first generation of spatial and natural environment plans
- retain institutional knowledge needed to make the transition
- provide additional governance capacity and capability during a period of substantial change.

It is our intention that regional councillors will not be elected at the 2028 local elections. They will be replaced by an interim body, for example a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a hybrid model. We will confirm the exact model in 2027, when successful Head Start proposals are approved.

Current regional councillors will stay on through to the end of the 2028 term to lead regional councils in their roles in the new planning system, particularly regional spatial plans.

Backstop legislation

Progress through the Head Start pathway will help inform the design of backstop arrangements for other regions.

Councils that do not progress through Head Start will continue to focus on delivering the new planning system, including development of the first generation of plans. Reform for those councils will not occur until after the 2028 local elections, through the compulsory backstop process.

This approach gives councils more time to concentrate on planning system implementation before any mandatory governance changes take effect, while still providing a strong indication of when and where future reform will occur.

Regions and councils not progressing through the Head Start pathway will be subject to a backstop process. During the transition, regional council governance would be exercised by an interim body, with the precise model to be confirmed in 2027. Legislation for the backstop will be enacted before nominations open for the 2028 local elections. This will ensure candidates understand any new roles and responsibilities, and electors can vote with clarity.

The final models of governance will be informed by lessons from the Head Start, feedback from consultation on the Simplifying Local Government proposal, and further advice from officials.

Rapid review update

A rapid review of regional council functions was completed to help guide councils during reorganisation planning. It was intended to identify functions that could potentially be centralised or ceased.

The review found that the key opportunities for centralisation are already being considered through existing government work programmes. For example, a national regulator for compliance and enforcement is being considered as part of the new planning system.

The RMA Expert Advisory Group recommended that, in the new planning system, compliance and enforcement functions should be transferred to a national regulator with regional compliance hubs. Policy work on this proposal is expected to be progressed after the Planning and Natural Environment Bills pass. The Government then expects to engage with local authorities and others to discuss the merits of different approaches.

The review concluded that other functions are still best delivered at a regional or local scale. In general, centralisation would involve high transition costs, be disproportionate to the problem identified, and is unlikely to materially improve regional or system outcomes. In some cases, the status quo is functioning effectively or could benefit from targeted modification rather than substantial change.

Transport is one key regional function that requires further consideration as a part of Head Start proposals. Transport responsibilities are currently split across central (NZ Transport Agency) and local government, with territorial authorities responsible for local roading while regional councils are responsible for network planning and public transport.

Outline proposals do not need to resolve all issues relating to any transfer of regional functions. However, proposals should:

- address the need to consolidate regional transport functions (such as in a regional unitary authority, regional joint committee or regional council controlled organisation)
- propose interim arrangements with respect to the new planning system compliance and enforcement functions, until Government decisions have been made
- explain how effective river catchment management can be maintained.

Resources

For further information, including guidance and how to engage with officials and access support, see dia.govt.nz/Simplifying-Local-Government

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Guidance for Head Start outline proposals

Simplifying Local Government



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

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Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to support councils to develop outline proposals for Head Start. The content in your outline proposal will help central government assess alignment with the Head Start pathway, and enable the Government to make decisions on which proposals should be accepted into the next phase of the Head Start pathway for detailed proposal development.

This Guidance builds on the Head Start [Policy Document](#) and should be read alongside that document.

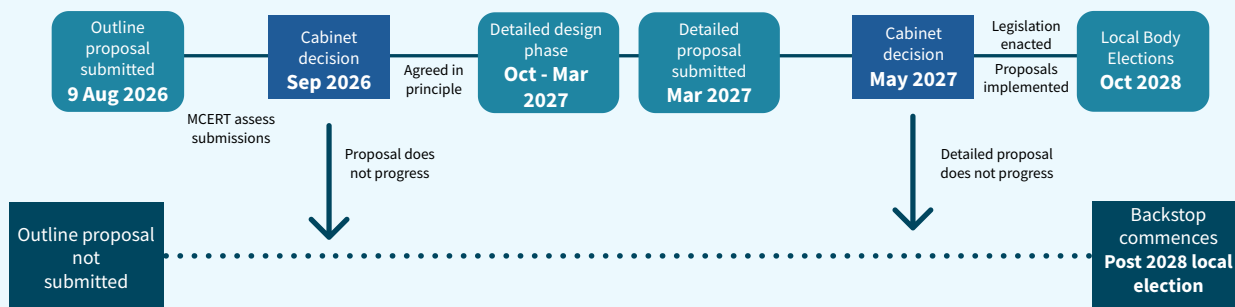
Who will assess proposals and how will they assess them?

Outline proposals will be assessed by Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions, and Transport officials against the agreed criteria, recognising that:

- outline proposals are intended to be ‘light touch’, high-level, and strategic
- there are no strict content requirements (guidance is a guide)
- there are no set thresholds for meeting each of the criteria; and
- Ministers are prepared to make trade-offs when considering outline proposal assessments.

For example, while outline proposals should address all criteria, one might score well against ‘supports the new planning system’ and ‘economies of scale’ assessment criteria, whereas another might score well against those for ‘maintains local voice and deliverability’. Outline proposals will be assessed by how well they meet the criteria as a whole.

Cabinet will make final decisions on which outline proposals are agreed in principle for the detailed design phase. Detailed proposals approved by Cabinet will be given effect through primary legislation.



Eligibility

Who can submit an online proposal?

Any two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities (except for Auckland Council) including cross-boundary groupings, may submit an outline proposal. To ensure the right scale, proposals must represent a majority of either the:

- directly affected territorial authorities; or
- population across directly affected areas.

A directly affected territorial authority is one that is proposed to be part of the creation of a unitary authority or authorities. It may or may not be a party to the proposal.

A cross-boundary grouping could include a territorial authority from a neighbouring region or a proposal that divides existing boundaries within a region.

Outline proposals cannot be submitted by minority groupings, individual territorial authorities or individual unitary authorities, regional councils, individuals or other organisations. However, the support for or contribution to an outline proposal by a regional council or other organisation can be highlighted.

For examples of how eligibility criteria may work, see page 7 of the [Head Start Policy Document](#)

What types of reorganisations can be proposed?

Outline proposals must provide for the amalgamation of at least two territorial authorities or unitary authorities into a new unitary authority.

The most straightforward approach is for all territorial authorities in a region to combine to form a single unitary authority, which takes on the functions of the regional council.

We will also consider outline proposals for subregional unitary authorities and potential cross-boundary proposals, where:

- existing territorial authorities are amalgamated, and regional council functions are transferred

- the proposed arrangements would result in fewer local authorities overall
- the proposed arrangements would deliver clearer accountability and effective delivery of key functions, including regional planning, transport, and catchment management.

More than one unitary authority in a region is only likely to be approved if:

- the region is geographically large, contains a large number of territorial authorities and has significantly complex issues; and
- the proposal clearly meets the criteria and doesn't lead to the fragmentation of service delivery for key regional functions where collaboration or integration is required.

Developing your outline proposal

What level of detail is expected?

- Provide a high-level, strategic outline of your proposal only. Focus on the core ideas, key trade-offs, and what still needs to be worked through.
- Make the case for change, setting out your evidence base. We don't expect you to generate new evidence for the proposal or undertake detailed modelling but rely on information you already have available.
- For each criterion, tell us: how does the proposal meet the criteria, why it is better than the current state, what are the trade-offs and risks, and what still needs work.
- Detailed design will occur in the next phase (see Finalising Proposals section). Signpost in your outline proposal what are your priorities for further work against each criterion.
- Provide the best information you have available that makes the strongest case for your proposal being accepted into the detailed phase.

We are testing whether your proposal is workable in practice – not whether it is fully designed.

Subregional proposals

The Government is open to considering subregional outline proposals that improve outcomes for the region as a whole.

Officials will consider the merits of a subregional proposal within the context of the broader region when assessing it against the assessment criteria.

For subregional proposals, we are looking for information on the following questions:

How does the proposal benefit the region as a whole?

- Will the governance and delivery of regional services be improved?
- How will unitary authorities created through the Head Start process work with the rest of the region to deliver regional planning outcomes and regional services, such as catchment management?
- Does the proposal provide better outcomes for particular communities of interest or labour market areas?
- How else does a subregional approach make sense for your region in contrast to a single regional unitary authority?

What is the impact on councils not included in the proposal?

- How do you propose regional functions and services will continue to be delivered for councils not included in your proposal?
- Are there any communities that are likely to be negatively impacted by the proposal through things like changes in regional service provision or higher rates burden to meet the costs of existing regional functions (eg, flood protection infrastructure such as stopbanks, regionwide biosecurity, etc.)?
- Does the outline proposal leave the door open for other councils to join at a later stage?

Any subregional unitary authorities formed through Head Start must continue with spatial planning at the regional level at the time of enactment of the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill. The Bills, as introduced, allow for subregional plans to feed into the broader regional spatial plan where this is necessary.

What do we expect outline proposals to cover

How does the proposal meet the eligibility criteria?

Confirm your proposal is eligible to be considered. Specifically:

- identify how the proposal meets the eligibility criteria covered in the previous section
- identify the territorial authorities and/or unitary authorities directly affected by the proposal in the regional or cross boundary area
- confirm which territorial authorities and/or unitary authorities support the proposal
- explain what role affected territorial authorities or the regional council have played in the development of the proposal; and
- highlight the position of directly affected territorial authorities that are yet to decide on or don't support the proposal, or if a

regional council supports the proposal.

What is the proposed structure and governance arrangements?

We are looking for a high-level description of your proposed local governance structure and arrangements. This should focus on how local governance structures within your region will be consolidated and the division of roles and responsibilities. For example:

- a regional unitary authority
- a region consisting of more than one (two or three) subregional unitary authorities
- a subregional proposal
- any territorial or unitary council being combined
 - local representative and decision-making bodies, such as local boards, community boards, or any new models for local representation and decision-making
 - intended regional spatial plan governance arrangements; or
 - for subregional proposals, how the authorities will work together to govern and deliver key regional services (eg, transport and catchment management, etc.) through joint committees, council-controlled organisations, or other options for regional collaboration.

Supports the new planning system



What we're asking for

To assess outline proposals against this criterion, officials will consider how proposals show clear support for implementing the new planning system – including progress on spatial and natural environment plan development – and avoid or minimise disruption to that work.

At a high level – how will your proposal make the new planning system easier to deliver and operate – not harder - and how you will ensure continuity throughout the process through the arrangements you are putting in place?

How does this structure help the new system work in practice?

What we need to know

We are looking for information on the following questions:

How does this help the new planning system work better?

- How does it support delivery of a stable regional spatial planning process?
- Does it make coordination easier (eg, fewer plans, fewer layers of governance)?

What are the trade-offs and risks?

- Could this disrupt or complicate delivery of the new planning system?
- How will these risks be managed?
- Explain how your proposal reflects integrated catchment management. If an existing catchment is split, in your proposal describe the implications, risks, and potential mitigations.

What still needs to be worked through?

- What still needs to be resolved in your detailed design phase?

What does 'good' look like?

- Focus on practical impacts for the planning system.
- Steps or processes that could be applied to support the planning reforms. Focus on setting out the initial steps needed to support the development of a stable regional spatial plan process.
- Clear, simple explanation of why this helps.

What we don't expect in an outline proposal

- Detailed plan or process design (natural environment plans, land use plans - detailed committee structures, formalised delegations or formed governance arrangements for plan making, etc).
- Overly technical planning detail, 'process agreements' for regional spatial plans, or detailed programmes for plan delivery. You may, however, indicate that these – along with any specific governance arrangements – will be developed in a later step and may require more detailed provision in the detailed design phase.

For an outline proposal, any reference to a 'region' in the Planning Bill or Natural Environment Bill applies to the region that applied at the time those Bills were introduced (not any new regional boundary proposed through an outline proposal).

Irrespective of Head Start outcomes, councils must move at pace following enactment of the Bills to prepare regional spatial plans upon current boundaries.

System Shifts for local government in the Planning Reforms

Councils will have statutory functions in the new planning system to:

- **jointly make and maintain a spatial plan for the region**
- **make and maintain a regulatory plan (a regional council makes a natural environment plan, each territorial authority makes a land use plan, and a unitary authority prepares both); and**
- **administer and implement their regulatory plans including consenting/permitting, monitoring and enforcing compliance, and regulating and managing effects.**

Regional entities will also set environmental limits for the region and undertake state of the environment monitoring. The spatial plan, natural environment plan and land use plans are proposed to be brought together into a combined regional plan.

Assessment Criteria

Simplifies local governance



What we're asking for

To assess proposals against this criterion, officials will consider how proposed governance arrangements will reduce complexity, improve accountability, and support effective decision-making.

At a high level - Does your proposal simplify things? Will it reduce duplication and make decision-making clearer and more efficient? Does it reduce complexity and make the system easier to understand and run?

What we need to know

We are looking for information on the following questions:

How does your proposal simplify local government?

Will your proposal reduce complexity, improve accountability, and support effective decision-making? For example:

- how does the proposal demonstrate simpler governance arrangements compared to the status quo (ie, how will the proposal reduce duplication and remove any unnecessary governance layers)?
- is there a clear distinction of roles and responsibilities allocated or delegated to local representative bodies, including local boards and community boards?
- are there innovative approaches to new forms of local representative bodies (ie, not constrained by current Local Government Act 2002 options)?
- is the proposed governance structure easy to understand for communities? Is it clear to communities who is accountable for what?

- does the proposed governance structure support decision-makers to consider competing objectives and trade-offs and make effective decisions?
- for subregional proposals, how will the proposed governance arrangements for the delivery of key regional services be designed to minimise complexity and duplication?

What are the trade-offs and risks?

In answering the questions above, please outline any identified trade-offs for 'simplifies local governance'. For instance, impacts on local voice and representation or service delivery.

What still needs to be worked through?

Please outline any further work you intend to undertake following the submission of your outline proposal, as part of the detailed design of your final Head Start proposal.

What does 'good' look like?

- In many cases a single unitary authority would be a feasible option.
- In larger more complex regions two or at most three unitary authorities could be considered.
- The roles and responsibilities of local representative bodies are well defined, and it is clear who is accountable for what.
- Simple and effective arrangements for subregional unitary authorities to work with other councils within the region.

What we don't expect in an outline proposal

- Detailed information on all governance arrangements across councils, including committee structures and detailed decision-making delegations.
- Agreement to have been reached with non-submitting councils on regional governance arrangements.

Economies of scale



What we're asking for

To assess outline proposals against this criterion, officials will consider how proposals support regional strategic planning and effective delivery of key regional functions (such as transport and catchment management), and demonstrate responsible and affordable asset management, infrastructure investment, and service delivery.

At a high level – does your proposal support regional strategic planning, including spatial planning, land transport, public transport and economic development? Will it deliver better value? How does it improve efficiency, save money over time, and support better asset management, infrastructure and services?

What we need to know

We are looking for information on the following questions:

How will functions be effectively delivered?

- How does your proposal support the effective delivery of regional and territorial transport functions?
- How will functions that require regional integration be delivered in a more effective way? Specifically, consider how catchment management and transport responsibilities would be managed effectively.

How will increased economies of scale add benefits?

- Explain potential impacts on rates and financial sustainability. For example, through changes in population or businesses paying for services, or geographical coverage.
- Highlight potential for improved service delivery, economic development opportunities, opportunities for innovation, etc.

What are the expected financial impacts of reorganisation?

Set out at a high level whether the reorganisation will promote:

- improvements in asset management/stewardship
- infrastructure investment
- enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and financial sustainability of services
- assurance that the entities proposed will have the resources necessary to enable them to effectively perform or exercise their responsibilities, duties, and powers
- plans for managing debt for the unitary
- plans for any council-controlled organisations
- projected costs of implementing the proposed reorganisation; and
- improved appetite for risk and innovation.

Where will efficiencies come from?

For example, consider the potential for economies of scale or economies of scope for:

- governance of functions
- planning and regulatory functions
- emergency management
- science, data, systems, and capability
- asset management and infrastructure investment/procurement; and
- service delivery (eg, shared services).

What are the trade-offs and risks?

Outline any identified trade-offs and risks for 'economies of scale'. For instance, impacts on 'maintains local voice', and how they may be managed or mitigated.

What still needs to be worked through?

Outline any further work you intend to undertake following the submission of your outline proposal, as part of the detailed design of your final Head Start proposal.

What does ‘good’ look like?

- Clear shift to fewer, larger councils with stronger financial resilience and capability.
- Practical examples of where scale and efficiency gains are expected.
- Proposals that consider regional services such as transport, planning and catchment management and propose either aligning boundaries, or clear governance and accountability mechanisms to manage these functions effectively.

What we don’t expect in an outline proposal

- Detailed mapping of all regional functions to the unitary.
- Detailed financial modelling.
- Attempts to quantify savings precisely.

Assessment Criteria

Maintains local voice



What we're asking for

For this criterion, officials will consider how proposals demonstrate fair and effective representation for communities of interest, and how decisions will be made at the local level, balancing urban and rural interests.

At a high level - how will communities continue to be represented and heard, and how local voice will be maintained in a larger system?

What we need to know

We are looking for information on the following questions:

How will people elect representatives?

Set out your high-level approach to representation arrangements for new unitary authorities. For example, whether the members of a unitary authority (other than the mayor) are proposed to be elected at-large, by wards, or a mix, and where any wards are likely to be.

We do not expect representation arrangements to be fully agreed by outline proposals. However, there should be sufficient information to assess whether the proposal supports the fair and effective representation of communities of interest, and the good governance of key regional and local functions, if a distinction remains.

How will communities be represented?

At a high-level, explain the approach to local representation and decision-making for the new unitary authorities. For example, whether a unitary authority is proposed to have local or community boards, or a new model for local representation and decision-making—and if so, where these are likely to be and how members will be chosen.

How will iwi/Māori participate in decision-making?

What are the opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes, as required under the Local Government Act 2002? This could involve identifying any existing relationship agreements or arrangements between affected councils and iwi and hapū, as well as any other processes that support Māori to contribute to local decision-making and considering how these may transfer to new unitary authorities.

Arrangements provided through Treaty settlement redress are covered in the 'Treaty settlements' section below.

What are the trade-offs and risks?

Identify any trade-offs and risks for 'maintains local voice'. How will the proposal provide coherent decision making? What are the impacts on representation of the simplification of local governance or economies of scale, and how they may be managed or mitigated? For example:

- loss of local responsiveness addressed through the use of service centres; or
- replacing current representation arrangements with equally or more complex local or community board representation.

What still needs to be worked through?

Outline proposals should set out what issues will be resolved in the detailed design phase of the Head Start pathway. For example, representation arrangements more closely resembling those proposed as part of a routine representation review, including more detailed proposals for local or community boards and any Māori representation.

What does ‘good’ look like?

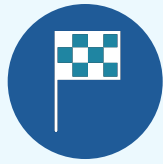
- An agreed list of principles or a framework for representation that can be worked through in the detailed design phase.
- Clear intent and direction, not detailed structures.
- Shows balance between scale, complexity and local input.
- Considers what level ‘place-making’ decisions are best allocated or delegated to.

What we don’t expect in an outline proposal

- Full representation model design.
- Electoral system detail (ie, ward boundaries and member numbers per ward, etc.).

Assessment Criteria

Deliverability



What we're asking for

For this criterion, officials will consider whether proposals are realistic and provide confidence that new arrangements can be implemented by the 2028 local elections.

At a high level - how this can be implemented? Is it realistic and able to be delivered on time?

What we need to know

We are looking for information on the following questions:

How would you implement the proposal?

Set out your high-level approach to transition and implementation. That means describing generally how you would set this up (eg, transition board or joint committee), who would be involved and how, any key decisions already made, and any major risks or challenges.

How would changes be timed?

Include proposed high-level milestones for the full reorganisation, describing when the new authorities could realistically be established, and any key dependencies or constraints (eg, elections and proposed 'backstop' legislation).

What still needs to be worked through?

Explain what issues you expect to resolve in the detailed design phase. Officials will help refine these if your outline proposal is approved. For example, detailed costs and benefits of amalgamation, transitional arrangements and implementation planning (resembling those proposed as part of a standard reorganisation pathway).

Are there interactions with other local government programmes?

Does your proposal align with the approach to other existing local government programmes, such as Local Water Done Well, City and Regional Deals, or is future alignment planned?

What do you need from the Government?

Describe any barriers to implementation and, if you are seeking reorganisation assistance, the nature and extent of the support you expect from the Government, including any additional changes to the enabling primary legislation, funding, or other specific support.

What does 'good' look like?

- Realistic and practical proposal to deliver new arrangements before the 2028 elections.
- Clear about trade-offs and risks .
- Shows honest assessment of what is known vs unknown.
- Specific and realistic about support needed from Government.

What we don't expect in an outline proposal

- Full transition and implementation plan.
- Drafting instructions for bespoke legislation.

Treaty settlements

What we're asking for

Any Treaty settlement arrangements that councils have with Post-settlement Governance Entities (PSGEs) must be upheld with the same or equivalent effect through the Head Start process. We are interested in your view on how settlement arrangements captured in the scope of your proposal could be transferred to new unitary authorities. This information will be used to inform the Crown's engagement with PSGEs on any changes needed to Treaty settlement redress.

The Crown is responsible for upholding Treaty settlements.

What we need to know

To support the Crown to uphold Treaty settlements, outline proposals must either:

1. explain how existing Treaty settlement arrangements could transfer to new unitary authorities with equivalent effect; or
2. propose a plan to work with affected PSGEs to determine how existing Treaty settlement arrangements can be given equivalent effect in the new unitary authority.

In developing your outline proposal, you may wish to consider:

- what Treaty settlement arrangements will be affected under the proposal
- how could these arrangements transfer to new unitary authorities with equivalent effect; and
- have you engaged with affected PSGEs, or if not, what is your plan to do so.

What does good look like?

- Affected Treaty settlement arrangements are clearly identified.
- Explains outcomes from early engagement with PSGEs.
- Includes provision for working with PSGEs on giving equivalent effect to Treaty settlements in the new unitary authority.

What we don't expect in an outline proposal

- You are not expected to determine or agree any changes to Treaty settlement redress. This will be worked through between the Crown and PSGEs as part of broader engagement on upholding Treaty settlement arrangements in the new planning system.
- You are not expected to have completed a full engagement process with affected PSGEs on how settlement arrangements could be transferred to new unitary authorities. We expect engagement will continue after outline proposals are submitted.
- If you intend to engage with PSGEs after an outline proposal is submitted, we will work with you to ensure alignment with the Crown's process.

Other supporting information

Include in your outline proposal any other supporting information or matters you think are important to support consideration of your regional or subregional proposal by officials and Ministers.

Finalising proposals

As signalled under the assessment criteria above, it is expected that your outline proposal will signpost where you think further work is necessary (ie, distinguishing between what has been agreed and what could be further investigated/developed in the detailed design phase).

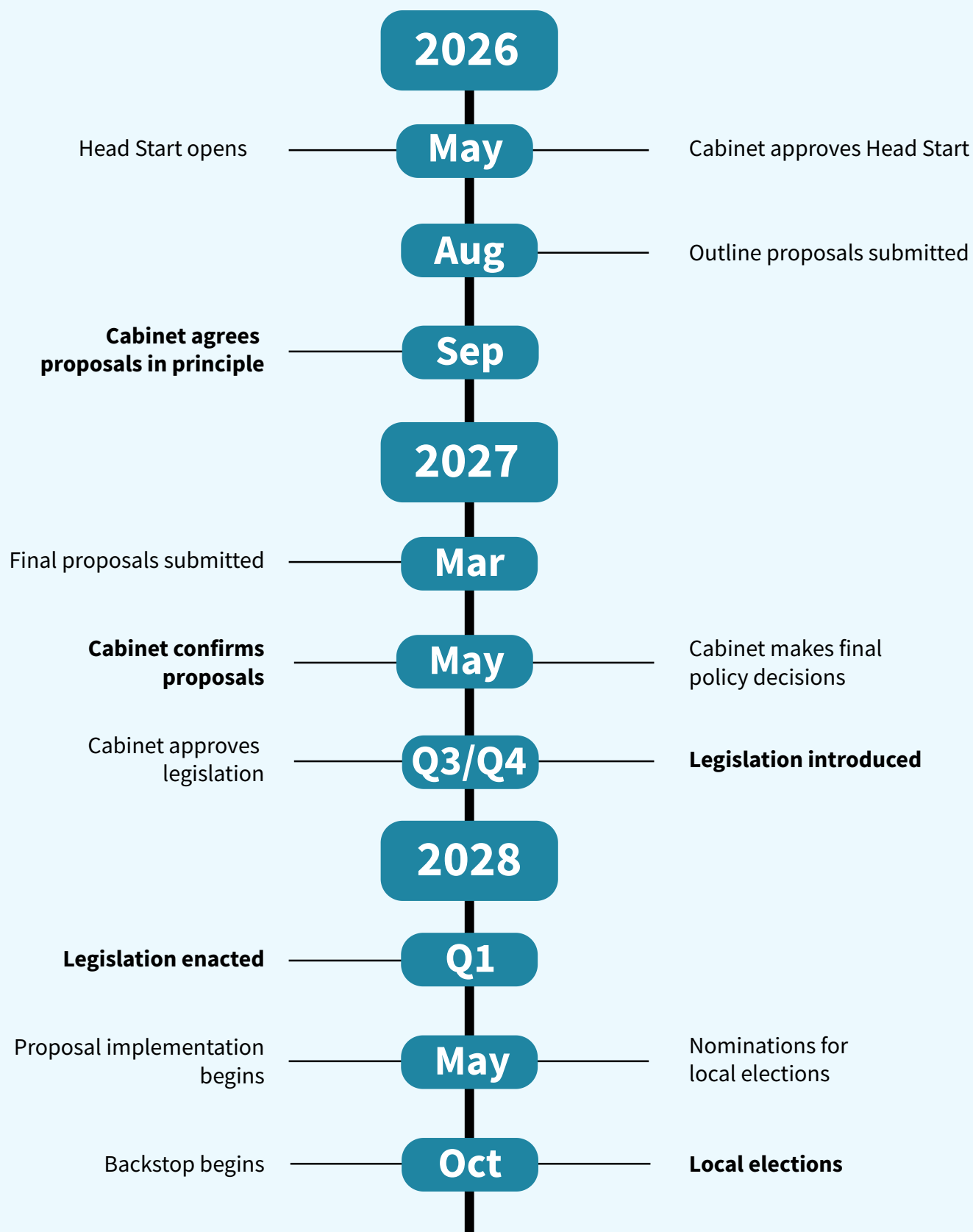
Further information will be provided for submitters accepted into the detailed design phase. It is likely that this phase will involve ensuring the final proposal addresses:

- **regional spatial planning** (timing alignment between the new planning system - including national instruments - and amalgamation processes)
- **regional council functions and services** (full mapping to mitigate the risks of any lone or under-resourced functions or services. Proposed interim arrangements with respect to the new planning system compliance and enforcement functions will need to be considered until Government decisions have been made)
- **cost and benefits** (financial analysis of the impacts of the proposal including projected transition costs and longer-term financial sustainability)
- **representative structures** (detailed design including governing bodies, local boards, community boards, committees or other innovative variations, and Māori representation)
- **transitional arrangements** (a board, body, etc.)
- **implementation planning** (personnel transfers, asset transfers, council-controlled organisations, debt management, etc.)
- **outcomes from any Iwi/Māori engagement for representation and Treaty settlement redress;** and
- **outcomes from any engagement with the community.**

The summary timeline on the next page sets out the current expected timeframes.

- Outline proposals (May to August 2026).
- Cabinet agrees proposals in principle (September 2026).
- Detailed design phase (October 2026 to March 2027).
- Cabinet confirms final proposals and makes final policy decisions (May 2027).
- Legislation enacted to implement Head Start proposals and the backstop (Q1 2028).

Timeline



Contact

There is a rolling FAQ on the [Simplifying Local Government website](#), so please look there for the latest answers.

For further questions, please contact your Department of Affairs (DIA) Partnership Director below or email us at SimplifyingLocalGovernment@dia.govt.nz.

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Partnership Director</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Northland / Auckland / Waikato	Vanessa Blakelock	Vanessa.blakelock@dia.govt.nz 021 832 417
Bay of Plenty / Gisborne Tairāwhiti / Hawkes Bay / Manawatū Whanganui / Taranaki	Rebecca Maplesden	Rebecca.maplesden@dia.govt.nz 021 852 853
Wellington / Otago / Southland	Warren Ulusele	Warren.ulusele@dia.govt.nz 021 227 8187
Nelson City and Tasman / Marlborough / Canterbury / West Coast	Sarah Polaschek	Sarah.polaschek@dia.govt.nz 027 281 5617

Deadline

Final proposals are to be sent to SimplifyingLocalGovernment@dia.govt.nz by 9 August 2026.

Resources

For further information, including guidance and how to engage with officials and access support, see dia.govt.nz/Simplifying-Local-Government

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

Council

Meeting of 22 July 2026

Business Unit: Corporate

Date Created: 29 June 2026

Appointment of Liaison Councillors to Marae

Purpose Te Aronga o te Pūrongo

To seek Council approval for the confirmation of three marae liaison appointments to marae in the District.

Recommendations Ngā Tūtohunga

That the Council approves the below marae liaison appointments:

- Cr Raewyn Loader to Kauwhata marae.
- Cr Jerry Pickford to Rangimārie marae.
- Cr Andrew Quarrie to Ngāwhakaraua marae.

Report prepared by:

Ash Garstang

Governance and Assurance Manager

Approved for submission by:

Frances Smorti

General Manager - Corporate

1 Background Ngā Kōrero o Muri

- 1.1 Council has been progressing the confirmation of marae liaison appointments across the district to strengthen relationships between elected members and marae.
- 1.2 Marae liaison roles support engagement with hapū and iwi, enabling councillors to participate in hui and build meaningful connections with their respective marae.

2 Strategic Fit Te Tautika ki te Rautaki

- 2.1 This report supports Council's strategic priority of "A future planned together" by strengthening relationships with marae and iwi across the district.

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

- 3.1 These three appointments represent the final stage of the marae liaison appointment process.

4 Risk Assessment Te Arotake Tūraru

- 4.1 This report relates to Council's strategic risk "Iwi Relationships", which recognises the importance of maintaining strong and effective relationships with iwi and tangata whenua.
- 4.2 Strong relationships between marae and Council support positive collaboration, improve engagement in Council decision-making, and enable more effective navigation of Council regulatory and project processes.
- 4.3 These relationships also support marae by providing a consistent point of contact with Council, improving access to information, and enabling more effective participation in Council processes and decision-making. They also play an important role during local emergencies, where marae often act as key community hubs providing welfare support, shelter, and coordination for affected communities.
- 4.4 The appointment of marae liaison councillors is a key enabler within this risk area, supporting ongoing relationship-building at a local level. Confirming these appointments in a timely manner helps strengthen connections between marae and Council, contributing to improved trust, communication, and collaboration.
- 4.5 Council has a cautious risk appetite in the areas of reputational and cultural risk. In practice, this means that Council seeks to carefully manage risks associated with relationships and cultural engagement, while still proactively investing in opportunities to strengthen partnerships that deliver long-term value.

5 Engagement Te Whakapānga

Significance of Decision and Māori Engagement

- 5.1 The decision is considered to be of low significance under the Significance and Engagement Policy. While no broader community engagement has been undertaken, targeted engagement has occurred with marae through their own governance processes, supported by Council. This approach aligns with the principle of engaging directly with relevant parties where a matter is of specific interest to those groups.

Community Engagement

- 5.2 No additional community engagement is required.

6 Operational Implications Ngā Pānga Whakahaere

- 6.1 There are no operational implications with this report.

7 Financial Implications Ngā Pānga Ahumoni

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8 Statutory Requirements Ngā Here ā-Ture

- 8.1 There are no statutory requirements relating to the appointment of marae liaison councillors.

9 Next Steps Te Kokenga

- 9.1 Elected members will have the opportunity to provide updates to future Council meetings on their progress.

10 Attachments Ngā Āpitihanga

- Nil

Council

Meeting of 22 July 2026

Business Unit: Infrastructure
Date Created: 07 July 2026

Roading Emergency Works Claim February 2026

Purpose Te Aronga o te Pūrongo

To seek Council's approval to fund the local share of the response and recovery phase following a severe weather event which occurred in February 2026. Noting that the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) subsidy is 51%.

Recommendations Ngā Tūtohunga

1. That Council approves an increase in Roothing operational budget for the 2026/27 financial year by \$3,135,281 noting that \$1,598,993 will be funded by NZTA and the balance of \$1,536,288 will be funded by Council. This amount is made up of \$2,966,189 of Opex works and \$169,092 of Capex works.
2. Council fund the local share of Opex works through a combination of use of the Reliance Reserve (\$1,231,035) and the draw down of new debt (\$222,398) and the local share of Capex works through draw down of new debt (\$82,855). Noting this will exhaust the balance of the Resilience Reserve.

Report prepared by:
Wayne Keightley
Roothing Manager

Approved for submission by:
Hamish Waugh
General Manager - Infrastructure

1 Background Ngā Kōrero o Muri

1.1 In the 2025/26 Financial Year Council's roading network was impacted by a severe weather event. Claims amounting to \$3,135,281 were approved by the NZTA Emergency Works fund to cover the cost of the response and recovery for these events.

1.1.1 The initial response valued at \$537,000 has been completed to re-open roads and unblock critical bridges and drainage assets.

1.1.2 The remaining works require investigations, design and construction works across more than 500 recorded defective items valued at \$2,598,281. This work will commence in the 2026/27 financial year. This amount includes \$169,092 of new capex work.

2 Strategic Fit Te Tautika ki te Rautaki

2.1 Not applicable as this is a legislative / operational item.

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

3.1 Discussion and options are considered within the financial implications section of this report.

4 Risk Assessment Te Arotake Tūraru

4.1 Not applicable.

5 Engagement Te Whakapānga

Significance of Decision

5.1 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

5.2 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

5.3 Community engagement is not required.

6 Operational Implications Ngā Pānga Whakahaere

6.1 The NZTA process for assessing and approving the Emergency Works Claims has taken some time. In the interim. The initial response has been completed while continuing where possible with the ongoing maintenance and renewal programme.

7 Financial Implications Ngā Pānga Ahumoni

- 7.1 The table below shows the Emergency Works funding currently approved by NZTA for the 2026/27 Financial year.

Event	NZTA Approved Funding	FAR %	NZTA Share	MDC Share
Feb 2026 Recovery Phase Opex	\$2,429,189	51	\$1,238,886	\$1,190,303
Feb 2026 Recovery Phase - Capex	\$169,092	51	\$86,237	\$82,855
Feb 2026 Response Phase	\$537,000	51	\$273,870	\$263,130
Total	\$3,135,281		1,598,993	\$1,536,288

- 7.2 The usual method to fund unbudgeted operational costs for roading is via the roading targeted rate reserve, however this reserve is in deficit. It is recommended that Council fund the local share of Opex works through a combination of use of the Reliance Reserve (\$1,231,035) and the draw down of new debt (\$222,398) and the local share of Capex works through draw down of new debt (\$82,855).
- 7.3 The event caused widespread damage and resulted in the identification of 551 faults and defeats, ongoing from bridge scour, bridge over-topping, dropouts, overslips blocked drains and culverts, unsealed road, metal loss, trees down and river alignment issues.

8 Statutory Requirements Ngā Here ā-Ture

- 8.1 Council has the statutory responsible to provide a safe and efficient roading network (Land Transport Management Act 2003).

9 Next Steps Te Kokenga

- 9.1 For the 2026/27 Financial Year the roading operational budget needs to be increased by \$2,966,189 and Capital budget needs to be increased by \$169,092. Noting that \$1,159,933 will be funded by NZTA and the balance of \$1,536,288 will be funded by the Council.

10 Attachments Ngā Āpitihanga

- Not applicable