

Whangarei District Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, 18 December, 2025
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Civic Centre, Te Iwitahi, 9 Rust Avenue

In Attendance

Mayor Ken Couper
Cr Tangiwai Baker
Cr David Baldwin
Cr Crichton Christie
Cr Nicholas Connop
Cr Brad Flower
Cr Deborah Harding
Cr Stephen Martin
Cr Scott McKenzie
Cr Marie Olsen
Cr Simon Reid
Cr Phoenix Ruka
Cr Matthew Yovich
Cr Paul Yovich (Teams)

Scribe

D.Garner (Democracy Adviser)

Administrative Matters

- Meeting livestreamed
- Supplementary Agenda, extraordinary business – Item 7.11 Decision making over the Christmas recess period 2025-2026

1. Karakia/Prayer

Cr Deborah Harding opened the meeting with a karakia.

2. Declarations of Interest – Take Whaipānga

Item 7.1 Cr David Baldwin - Notice of Motion - Position on Fast Track Approvals Bill Application - Bream Bay Sand Extraction
Item 8.2 Trust Capital Grant Changes

3. Apologies / Kore Tae Mai

Cr Paul Yovich

Moved By Cr Scott McKenzie

Seconded By Cr Simon Reid

That the apology be sustained.

Carried

4. Public Forum / Huihuinga-a-tangata

Jody Partridge – To present a petition requesting WDC to prioritise road safety on Matarau Road, specifically between Matarau School and Comrie Park Kindergarten.

Mary Adriane Sinclair and Malcolm Robert Morrison (Bream Bay Guardians) – Overview on why McCallum Brothers Limited Fast Track application does not comply with the Fast Track Legislation purpose and intent. Overview the probable impacts and effects to the Bream Bay moana, benthic and marine/bord life, the coastline, and Northland economy.

Cr Paul Yovich joined the meeting at 9:06am via Teams.

5. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Whangarei District Council / Whakatau Meneti

5.1 Minutes of the Whangarei District Council meeting held on 27 November 2025

Moved By Cr Scott McKenzie

Seconded By Cr Brad Flower

That the minutes of the Whangarei District Council meeting held Thursday 27 November 2025, having been circulated, be taken as read and now confirmed and adopted as a true and correct record of proceedings of that meeting.

Carried

6. Information Reports / Ngā Pūrongo Kōrero

6.1 2025 Remuneration of Non Elected Members

Moved By Cr Phoenix Ruka

Seconded By Cr Deborah Harding

That the Council notes the report on the status of non-elected member remuneration.

Carried

6.2 Cr David Baldwin – Notice of Motion – Supporting Information

Moved By Cr David Baldwin

Seconded By Cr Matthew Yovich

That the Council notes the supporting information to the Notice of Motion brought by Cr David Baldwin.

Carried

7. Decision Reports / Whakatau Rīpoata

7.1 Cr David Baldwin - Notice of Motion - Position on Fast Track Approvals Bill Application - Bream Bay Sand Extraction

Moved By Cr David Baldwin

Seconded By Cr Matthew Yovich

That the Council:

1. Adopts the following current position statement in respect to the Fast Track Approvals Bill Application - Bream Bay Sand Extraction Project (FTA082):

Whangarei District Council has received significant concerns from the residents of Bream Bay regarding the Fast Track Approvals Bill Application - Bream Bay Sand Extraction Project (FTA082). These include concerns over:

- A lack of detailed supporting information in the application at the time of listing.
- A lack of robust analysis relating to the economic benefits of the project to the people of Bream Bay, the wider District and the Region.
- Potential risks to the ecological, geographical and topographical stability and wellbeing of the wider Bream Bay, its beaches, shorelines and surrounds.

Council strongly encourages the involvement of stakeholder groups within the Fast Track process, notably the Bream Bay Guardians, so that the process has the benefit of input from these parties, along with reports that they have commissioned.

On the motion being put Cr David Baldwin called for a division:

	For	Against	Abstain
Mayor Ken Couper	X		
Cr Marie Olsen	X		
Cr Deborah Harding	X		
Cr Stephen Martin	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Tangiwai Baker	X		
Cr Simon Reid	X		
Cr David Baldwin	X		
Cr Brad Flower	X		

Cr Phoenix Ruka	X		
Cr Matthew Yovich	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Crichton Christie	X		
Cr Paul Yovich	X		
Results	14	0	0

The Motion was Carried (14 to 0)

Unanimous

Declaration of Interest:

Cr Deborah Harding declared an interest as Chair of the Patuharakeke Trust Board.

A break was taken from 9:47am to 9:59am.

7.2 Triennial Agreement 2026 - 2028

Moved By Cr Tangiwai Baker

Seconded By Cr Deborah Harding

That the Council:

- a) approve the Mayor and Chief Executive to sign the Triennial Agreement on behalf of Council.
- b) authorises the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments and edits identified as being necessary (substantive changes will be reported back to Council).

Carried

7.3 Adoption of Whangarei District Council Standing Orders 2025-2028

Moved By Cr Scott McKenzie

Seconded By Mayor Ken Couper

That Council:

- a. Notes the Whangarei District Council Standing Orders in **Attachment 1**.
- b. **Approve** changes as included in **Attachment 1**.
- c. Agree to **retain** clause 13.7 in the Standing Orders to allow members to attend meetings by audio visual link as set out in clauses 13.7 to 13.16 of the Standing Orders.
- d. Agree to **retain** clause 19.3 in the Standing Orders, for providing for a Chair's Casting Vote.

- e. Agree to **retain** Option A (clause 22.2 of the Standing Orders) as the default option for dealing with motions and amendments, with the option to agree at the start of the meeting to use either Option B or C, as set out in clauses 22.3 and 22.4 of the Standing Orders.
- f. Adopt the Standing Orders as included in **Attachment 1**, incorporating recommendations b), c), d) and e) as resolved.
- g. Delegate to the Chief Executive the ability to make minor typographical and/or editorial changes to the Standing Orders.

On the motion being put Mayor Ken Couper called for a division:

	For	Against	Abstain
Mayor Ken Couper	X		
Cr Marie Olsen		X	
Cr Deborah Harding	X		
Cr Stephen Martin	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Tangiwai Baker	X		
Cr Simon Reid	X		
Cr David Baldwin		X	
Cr Brad Flower	X		
Cr Phoenix Ruka	X		
Cr Matthew Yovich	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Crichton Christie	X		
Cr Paul Yovich	X		
Results	12	2	0

The Motion was Carried (12 to 2)

7.4 Reestablishment of the Poroti Springs Working Group

Moved By Cr Simon Reid

Seconded By Cr Brad Flower

That the Council:

1. Agrees to reestablish the Poroti Springs Working Group
2. Agrees that the following elected members proposed by the mayor shall be appointed:
 - a. Simon Reid

- b. Deborah Harding
 - c. Brad Flower
3. Approves the attached terms of reference for the working group

Carried

7.5 Reestablishment of the Kiwirail Marsden Point Rail Link Working Group

Moved By Cr Phoenix Ruka

Seconded By Cr Stephen Martin

That the Council:

1. Agrees to the re-establishment of the Project Working Group to support the planning for the Marsden Point to Whangarei Corridor.
2. Agrees to following membership proposed by the Mayor
 - a. Cr Brad Flower
 - b. Cr Paul Yovich
 - c. Cr Matthew Yovich
 - d. Cr Simon Reid
3. Agrees to the attached Terms of Reference and delegates to the Chief Executive to amend with any changes required by the Working Group.

Carried

7.6 Update to RiskPool Trust Deed

Moved By Mayor Ken Couper

Seconded By Cr Brad Flower

That Council:

- a. Notes the purpose and effect of the proposed amendments as outlined in this report and the attached papers;
- b. Approves the amendments to the Riskpool Trust Deed, as set out in the attached letter dated 21 August 2025; and
- c. Authorises the Chief Executive to sign and return the attached consent form on behalf of Council.

Carried

7.7 Maunu Road Central Avenue Intersection Upgrade – Decision to Uptake NZTA Funding Assistance

Moved By Cr Brad Flower

Seconded By Cr Stephen Martin

That the Council:

1. Notes that the Maunu Road / Central Avenue Intersection project (PJ00315) is included in Years 4 and 5 (2027/28 – 2028/29) of the adopted Long Term Plan as part of improvements to the Maunu Corridor.
2. Notes that the Maunu Road / Central Avenue Intersection project is included in Years 2-3 (2025-27) of the adopted Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) for Northland.
 1. Notes that property purchase to enable the improvement at 58 Water Street (Palmers Garden Centre) has already been undertaken and agreements made with both the landowner and tenant.
 2. Agrees to bring forward a total of two million, three hundred and seventy-five thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight dollars (\$2,375,188.00) funding from years 4 (\$275,125.00) and 5 (\$2,100,063.00) of the LTP, including associated subsidy income, from Local Road Improvements, Intersection Improvements (PJ00315) to years 2 and 3 to fund the Maunu Road / Central Avenue Intersection.
 3. Notes that \$1,258,849.64 will be funded by NZTA and \$1,116,338.36 will be funded by Council through debt, which will be managed within existing debt parameters.

Carried

7.8 Further Appointments to Outside Organisations 2025 – 2028

Moved By Cr Nicholas Connop

Seconded By Cr Phoenix Ruka

That Council:

1. Approves the appointment of Elected Members as Council representatives to outside organisations as follows:
2. a) NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party - Cr Brad Flower
3. b) Northland Athletics and Gymnasium Stadium Trust - Cr Deb Harding

4. Notes the appointment made at Northland Mayoral Forum of Cr Phoenix Ruka as Mayoral Forum appointed representative to Sport Northland.
5. Notes the 2024 change to the Northland Chamber of Commerce (NorthChamber) constitution removing the requirement for elected member representation on the NorthChamber board.

Carried

7.9 Temporary Road Closure - Northland Car Club (January to April Events)

Moved By Cr Simon Reid

Seconded By Cr Tangiwai Baker

That the Council:

1. Approves the temporary closure of the following roads to ordinary traffic for the Northland Car Club Motor Sport Event Series (January – April 2026) on the following date's in accordance with section 342 (1)(b) and Schedule 10 Clause 11 of the Local Government Act 1974.

Sunday 25th January 2026

Kaiikanui Road, 1km from the Mimiwhangata Road and Webb Road intersection to 8kms from Pigs Head Road intersection/roundabout

Period of Closure: 8am to 5pm.

Sunday 15th February 2026

Crows Nest Road, from the Paiaka Road intersection to 2km's from the State Highway One intersection.

Period of Closure: 8am to 5pm.

Sunday 15th March 2026

Mangapai Caves Road, from the Roundtree Road intersection to the McDonnell Road intersection.

Period of Closure: 8am to 5pm.

Sunday 12th April 2026

Sime Road, 100m from the Marsden Point Road intersection to 100m from the Te One Street intersection.

Kepa Road, complete closure.

Period of Closure: 8am to 5pm.

2. Approves the temporary closure of the side roads off the roads to be closed for up to 100 metres from the intersection for safety purposes.
3. Delegates to the Chair of the Infrastructure Committee and General Manager Transport & Community Infrastructure the power to give public notice of these proposed temporary closures, to consider any objections and to either approve, cancel or amend any or all of the temporary road closures if applicable.

Carried

7.10 Proposed Rates Increases for 2026-27 Annual Plan

Moved By Cr Scott McKenzie

Seconded By Mayor Ken Couper

That the Council approves staff proceeding to draft the 2026-27 Annual Plan and associated Consultation Document and Supporting documents based on the following directions:

1. In setting General Rates consults on three options:
 - a. Option 1: Continue with the overall increase shown in Year 3 of the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP) of 10.1% plus Growth, and
 - b. Option 2: Reduce the overall increase for 2026-27 from 10.1% in the 2024-34 LTP to 5% plus Growth in recognition of the financial challenges facing ratepayers, and
 - c. Option 3: Reduce the overall increase for 2026-27 from 10.1% in the 2024-34 LTP to 5% plus Growth in recognition of the financial challenges facing ratepayers and better support economic growth and job creation across the district, by adjusting the sector splits to:
 - Residential 68.5% (from 67.3% previously)
 - Rural 8.8% (from 8.6% previously)
 - Commercial & Industrial 22.7% (from 24.1% previously)
2. Proceeds with the planned increases in the LTP for the water and wastewater targeted rates to provide the necessary revenue to support important water resilience projects and meet increased regulatory compliance costs from Central Government.

3. Increases the district-wide universal stormwater targeted rate to \$124 (including GST) per separately used or inhabited parts of a rating unit (SUIP) from \$79 to move towards fully funding the maintenance and improvement of stormwater systems which protect homes, roading, community assets, and businesses everyone relies on across the District.
4. Proceeds with the planned inflationary increase in the LTP of 2.6% (Local Government Cost Index) for the flood protection targeted rate to cover costs and maintain the effectiveness of the scheme.
5. Applies growth allowances set in the LTP of 1.3% for general rates and the stormwater targeted rate; and 1% for water and wastewater targeted rates.

Amendment

Moved By Cr Crichton Christie

Seconded By Cr Nicholas Connop

That the Council approves staff proceeding to draft the 2026-27 Annual Plan and associated Consultation Document and Supporting documents based on the following directions:

1. In setting General Rates consults on three options:
 - a. Option 1: Continue with the overall increase shown in Year 3 of the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (LTP) of 10.1% plus Growth, and
 - b. Option 2: (Preferred Council option) Reduce the overall increase for 2026-27 from 10.1% in the 2024-34 LTP to 5% plus Growth in recognition of the financial challenges facing ratepayers, and
 - c. Option 3: Reduce the overall increase for 2026-27 from 10.1% in the 2024-34 LTP to 5% plus Growth in recognition of the financial challenges facing ratepayers and better support economic growth and job creation across the district, by adjusting the sector splits to:
 - Residential 68.5% (from 67.3% previously)
 - Rural 8.8% (from 8.6% previously)
 - Commercial & Industrial 22.7% (from 24.1% previously)
2. Proceeds with the planned increases in the LTP for the water and wastewater targeted rates to provide the necessary revenue

to support important water resilience projects and meet increased regulatory compliance costs from Central Government.

3. Increases the district-wide universal stormwater targeted rate to \$124 (including GST) per separately used or inhabited parts of a rating unit (SUIP) from \$79 to move towards fully funding the maintenance and improvement of stormwater systems which protect homes, roading, community assets, and businesses everyone relies on across the District.
4. Proceeds with the planned inflationary increase in the LTP of 2.6% (Local Government Cost Index) for the flood protection targeted rate to cover costs and maintain the effectiveness of the scheme.
5. Applies growth allowances set in the LTP of 1.3% for general rates and the stormwater targeted rate; and 1% for water and wastewater targeted rates.

On the amendment being put Cr Scott McKenzie called for a division:

	For	Against	Abstain
Mayor Ken Couper		X	
Cr Marie Olsen		X	
Cr Deborah Harding		X	
Cr Stephen Martin		X	
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Tangiwai Baker	X		
Cr Simon Reid		X	
Cr David Baldwin		X	
Cr Brad Flower		X	
Cr Phoenix Ruka		X	
Cr Matthew Yovich		X	
Cr Nicholas Connop		X	
Cr Crichton Christie	X		
Cr Paul Yovich		X	
Results	3	11	0

The amendment was Lost (3 to 11)

On the motion being put Cr Simon Reid called for a division:

	For	Against	Abstain
Mayor Ken Couper	X		
Cr Marie Olsen	X		
Cr Deborah Harding	X		
Cr Stephen Martin	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Tangiwai Baker	X		
Cr Simon Reid		X	
Cr David Baldwin	X		
Cr Brad Flower	X		
Cr Phoenix Ruka	X		
Cr Matthew Yovich	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Crichton Christie	X		
Cr Paul Yovich	X		
Results	13	1	0

The Motion was Carried (13 to 1)

Extra ordinary business

Subsequent to the agenda being circulated Item 7.11 Decision making over the Christmas recess period 2025-2026 was distributed separately but not within the timeframe specified in LGOIMA.

The report was omitted from the agenda due to staff error. Council are asked to consider this matter at today's meeting to ensure continuity of council business over the 2025-2026 Christmas recess period.

Moved By Cr Simon Reid

Seconded By Cr Nicholas Connop

That council consider Item 7.11 Decision making over the Christmas recess period 2025-2026 at today's meeting.

Carried

7.11 Decision making over the Christmas recess period 2025-2026

Moved By Cr Nicholas Connop

Seconded By Mayor Ken Couper

That Council:

1. Delegates the power to make urgent decisions on behalf of Council or its Committees between the last scheduled meetings in December 2025 and the first meeting of Council or its Committees in 2026 (the 2025-26 Christmas recess period) to:
 - any two of either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, and the Chairperson of either the Finance, Infrastructure, Strategy Planning and Development, Community Development, or Te Kārearea Strategic Partnership Standing Committees
2. In the event the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are both absent from Council at the same time, delegates the power to make urgent decisions on behalf of Council or its Committees over the 2025-26 Christmas recess period to:
 - any two Chairpersons of either the Finance, Infrastructure, Strategy Planning and Development, Community Development, or Te Karearea Strategic Partnership Standing Committees.
3. Approve the increase of the Chief Executive's financial authority to \$10million (excluding GST), for the period between the last scheduled Council meeting in December 2025 and the first meeting of Council or other relevant Committees in 2026. Any contracts over the Chief Executive's usual delegated authority (\$3.5million GST excl), be in written consultation with any one of the Mayor the Deputy Mayor, or any Committee Chair.
4. Notes that if it is considered necessary, an extraordinary meeting of Council will be called during the 2025-26 Christmas recess period.
5. Notes that if the urgent decision-making process is exercised, the instances will be reported to the first Council or relevant Committee meeting in 2026.
6. Designates Councillor Nicholas Connop the authority under section 25(5) of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 to declare a state of local emergency in the event the Mayor is unavailable over the 2025-26 Christmas recess period.

Carried

Cr Paul Yovich left the meeting at 10:38am during Item 7.11 and returned at 10:50am via Teams, during the Public Excluded portion of the meeting.

8. Public Excluded Business / Rāhui Tangata

Moved By Cr Matthew Yovich

Seconded By Cr Deborah Harding

That the public be excluded from the following parts of proceedings of this meeting. 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	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for passing this resolution
1.1	Appointment of Independent Chair	Good reason to withhold information exists under Section 7 Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987	Section 48(1)(a)
1.2	Trust Capital Grant Changes		
1.3	WDHL – SoE and Director Recruitment		

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

Item	Grounds	Section
1.1	To protect the privacy of natural persons including that of a deceased person.	S7(2)(a)
1.2	To protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or it the subject of the information.	Section 7(2)(b)(ii)
1.3	To enable Council to carry on without prejudice or disadvantage commercial activities. To enable Council to carry on without prejudice or disadvantage negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).	Section 7(2)(h) Section 7(2)(i)

Carried

A break was taken from 10:42am to 10:49am.

9. Closure of Meeting / Te katinga o te Hui

The meeting concluded with karakia at 11:20am.

Confirmed this 24th day of February 2026

Mayor Ken Couper (Chairperson)