

From: Annika Hamilton <Annika.Hamilton@waikatoregion.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 April 2026 12:52 pm
To: haveyoursay
Cc: Charmaine Ellery; Jane Apperley
Subject: Submission from Waikato Regional Council to Waitomo District Council's Annual Plan consultation.
Attachments: Submission from WRC to Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan. 30 March 2026.docx.pdf

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Kia ora,

Please find attached a submission from Waikato Regional Council to Waitomo District Council's Annual Plan consultation.

Please could you confirm receipt.

We would also like to attend your hearing, to present in support of our submission. Could you please let us know what time slots and dates are available for the hearing, and we will liaise with our Councillor to confirm attendance.

Let me know if you require any further information.

Ngā mihi,
Annika

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28 April 2026

Waitomo District Council
160 Rora Street,
Te Kūiti

Email: haveyoursay@waitomo.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam

Waikato Regional Council Submission to Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan. Please find attached the Waikato Regional Council's submission regarding the consultation document. The submission was formally endorsed by the Submissions Subcommittee on **24 April 2026**.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact Annika Hamilton, Senior Corporate Planner, directly on (07) 859 0990 or by email Annika.Hamilton@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Maher".

Warren Maher
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris McLay".

Chris McLay
Chief Executive

Submission from Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on the Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan

Introduction

1. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission on Waitomo District Council's 2026-27 Annual Plan and acknowledge the collegial relationships between our councils.
2. We recognise that local government is currently managing the cumulative impacts of multiple reforms, and we understand the importance of continued partnership as we navigate through this period of change.
3. We also acknowledge the challenging financial environment in which the 2026/27 Annual Plan is being developed and recognise the careful trade-offs your council has made to present a rate increase that balances affordability for the community with the delivery of key outcomes.
4. Our Council endorsed the statements outlined in the Mayoral Forum letter to central government on the reform proposals. We acknowledge that each council in the region is diverse and has challenges unique to their communities, however at the core is the need to individually and collectively serve our combined Waikato ratepayers well.
5. With this in mind, we have focussed our feedback on topics that highlight the importance of continued collaboration.

Community resilience

6. Over the past few months, the Waikato region has experienced four extreme weather events, with impacts across the region. We also recognise the impacts of previous storm events in your district, which caused significant damage to roading networks and communities.
7. These increasingly frequent weather events highlight the importance of investing in community resilience as we continue to experience the impact of natural hazards.
8. We acknowledge your investment in stormwater modelling for Te Kūiti to improve the resilience of the stormwater network. We encourage you to continue identifying and planning for how your assets, communities and delivery of council services will be impacted by a changing climate.
9. We also encourage the proactive identification of communities that would benefit from long term adaptive planning within your district. We encourage territorial authorities to fund these adaptation planning activities, with technical support and collaboration from WRC when appropriate, to understand, manage and reduce your district's natural hazard risk.
10. To guide how WRC prioritises its activities and resources in response to natural hazard risk and how we work with others on this, we are developing a Framework and Plan for Resilience to Natural Hazard Risk. When the Framework's prioritisation approach is implemented, it is also intended to support the identification of priority locations for adaptation, anticipated by the resource management system reforms.
11. We encourage you to consider our Framework and Plan which is expected to be publicly available later in the year to understand our approach and to know what information and support can be expected from Waikato Regional Council.

Data

12. WRC is committed to a programme of work to support understanding and adapting to natural hazards in the region. This includes region-wide flood modelling that will improve the understanding of flood risk, low flows, droughts, and catchment performance. This work aims to support proactive decision making, land use planning and regional resilience for both the current and future climate.

13. We rely on the data sets held by territorial authorities to inform this important work. This includes information relating to infrastructure assets, stormwater and flooding events. We also note that territorial authorities have a critical role in communicating natural hazards information to communities through land information memoranda (LIM). We therefore encourage Waitomo District Council to continue to maintain and invest in this data.

Waters

14. We emphasise the importance of prioritising infrastructure alongside growth, to progressively improve wastewater compliance.
15. Acknowledging that your council will be transitioning its wastewater and drinking water functions to Waikato Waters Ltd, we encourage you to set aside sufficient budget and resourcing to ensure a smooth transition to this new entity and to ensure that a continuous programme for wastewater compliance is maintained.

Regional spatial strategies

16. Through our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, we made a commitment to invest in the future of spatial planning; to drive the efficient provision of infrastructure and services needed for growth in the region. In 2025 we completed a [regional spatial inventory](#) and framework. The inventory provides a snapshot of the information currently held by WRC, other local authorities in the region, and key stakeholders. The framework sets out a potential roadmap for the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Waikato Region.
17. Since then, the government has introduced the new Planning Bill to Parliament. We are supportive of the proposed requirement for territorial authorities to jointly make and maintain a spatial plan for the region. We look forward to working together on this, following the establishment of a Regional Spatial Planning Committee.

Coastcare

18. WRC leads the Coastcare programme in the Waikato region. Restoring dunes and other coastal ecosystems has a multitude of benefits, increasing both community resilience and biodiversity values and strengthening community connections to place.
19. Restoration of coastal ecosystems is supported by the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010) as a natural defense against coastal hazards. Sand dunes provide habitat for many threatened flora and fauna species, and act as both a reservoir of sand for the beach and a buffer for property and infrastructure.
20. Coastcare works across both coasts of the Waikato and relies significantly on communities and volunteers to deliver much of the work programme on the ground. We encourage territorial authorities to work with Coastcare to restore and protect coastlines in their regions. With more partners, resources and funding, we can deliver more work in your communities and throughout the region.

Submitter details

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