



WHANGANUI PRE-ELECTION REPORT



WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Tēnā koutou katoa.

Local government has a noble purpose – to enable local democratic decision-making and to promote the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of our community, now and for future generations.

Shaping up a guiding vision of what that wellbeing looks like, and building a consensus around that vision, is one of the most important roles of elected members.

Every three years, local body elections are an important opportunity for our community to come together to explore, debate and shape that guiding vision.

So, if you are a passionate member of our community and have an exciting vision of the future potential of Whanganui, and for how we can enhance our wellbeing, then I encourage you to stand in the 2022 election.

Equally, if you are a voter, I encourage you to think about what is important to you, including the people and places you care about. Talk with your whānau, including the younger members who may not be eligible to vote yet! Ask questions and challenge election candidates on what their vision for our future is. And finally, make sure you get out and vote for the candidates that you feel will help your council create the best future for Whanganui.

Whatever your vision and your role in the election – I guarantee you it is important!

This pre-election report is a guide to help you weigh up the key issues. It looks at the past three years – the electoral term leading up to this year's election – and touches on key issues and challenges facing our district, and the council's planned work and aspirations for the community and district in the coming three years (the next electoral term).

There is no doubt that the past few years have been challenging and we are faced with serious and complex challenges. Climate change, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and the rising costs of living, the effects of the housing shortage, and the significant reforms to local government that will see legislation to replace the Resource Management Act, Three Waters reform and the Future for Local Government review.

Despite these challenges, there are also exciting and transformative opportunities on the horizon.

Whanganui's reputation as a great place to live, with quality local venues and local attractions, continues to go from strength to strength. The council is working across the board to support this, and to support future economic and employment opportunities for our people.

This includes major projects like the redevelopment of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua, and Te Pūwaha: Whanganui's port revitalisation. We're also addressing the housing shortage on a number of fronts, and supporting a whole host of upcoming initiatives as part of our strategy to mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change.

We also have an incredible opportunity to embrace Te Awa Tupua – the legislation that recognises the unique relationship Whanganui Iwi have with the Whanganui River – in all we do. Strengthening the role that the river plays in shaping the place we live, and recognising its intrinsic connection to the wellbeing of the whole community, are key to affirming our sense of identity.

To help our community navigate the challenges and make the most of the opportunities, we need a clear vision for what we want the place we live in to be like, now and in future, to guide our progress. I call on candidates with vision, and everyone in the community to take part in the elections.

Stand for your council, stand for your community, stand for your future Whanganui.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

A pre-election report is for people thinking about standing in the October 2022 local body elections for the Whanganui District Council and community boards.

It's also a source of information for the wider public. It aims to help voters understand the role of elected members and the work of the council when considering what the important issues are for their community.

The report looks at the past three years — the electoral term leading up to this year's election — and outlines some of the key issues facing the district during the next three years (the next electoral term).

Details about the council's major projects, financial strategy and planned spending are also included in this report. These indicate the council's current position and the work coming up.

This report is a legislative requirement of the Local Government Act 2002, which requires that the chief executive of each council prepare it independently of their mayor and councillors. It includes information sourced from a variety of council planning and reporting documents.

If you want to stand in the Whanganui District 2022 local body elections on Saturday 8 October, or would like to know more, please contact us on 06 349 3003 or at elections@whanganui.govt.nz.

Candidate nominations are open now and close on 12 August 2022 at 12 noon.

The voting period is three weeks (Friday 16 September 2022 to noon Saturday 8 October 2022).

Find out more: votewhanganui.nz

WHAT IS THE WHANGANUI DISTRICT COUNCIL?

Whanganui District Council is the local government territorial authority for the Whanganui district.

The purpose of the council is to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, our community; and to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future.

Twelve elected members (councillors) and a mayor are elected every three years by voters in the Whanganui district to represent them.

Councillors provide strategic direction for the district, presenting their vision and direction with the guidance of the views and interests of the community. Elected members are known as the “governance” part of the council. They make high-level decisions about the way we should operate in the district.

Decisions are often delegated or passed through council committees, which are divided by subject. These enable elected members to receive updates and sometimes make decisions in a more targeted format.

The elected members employ a chief executive to run the everyday business of the council. The chief executive employs the council staff who manage the day-to-day running of the organisation and the practical aspects of achieving the elected members’ visions.

The council provides facilities, infrastructure and services to the people of the district, including but not limited to:

- Parks, open spaces, and playgrounds
- Recreational and sporting facilities
- Libraries
- Splash Centre
- Housing units for older people
- Roads, footpaths, and water pipes
- Cultural facilities
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Emergency management and mitigation of natural hazards
- Water services and solid waste disposal
- Resource and building consents
- Property services and rates
- Dog and animal control
- Street cleaning and maintenance.

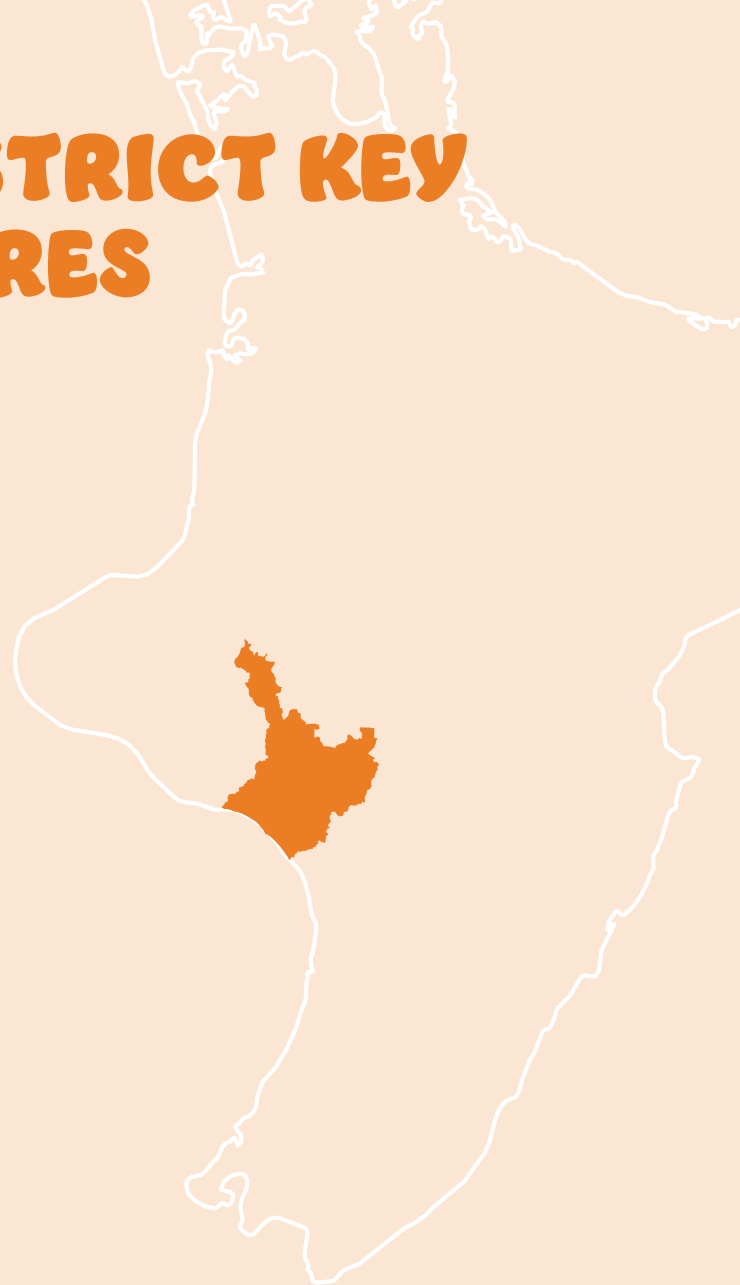
Our staff maintain and operate these facilities and services and are responsible for the day-to-day running of the district.

WHANGANUI DISTRICT KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

The Whanganui district has an area of 2,373km² and is bounded by the Ruapehu district to the north, the Rangitikei district in the east, the Tasman Sea in the south, and the South Taranaki and Stratford districts in the west.

Te Awa Tupua o Whanganui (the Whanganui River) is a taonga to Whanganui Hapū and Iwi.

It holds deep cultural and spiritual significance. It is recognised as a legal person and protected by law through Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017. The Awa is at the centre of our district, and our wellbeing as a community.



Whanganui is. . . .

Growing

Whanganui is a great place to live and the word is out! We have seen a significant growth trend in our population since 2014. Estimates indicates it will rise to 51,200 by 2031 and approximately 55,500 by 2050. We've also seen growth in GDP, filled jobs and average earnings.

Total estimated resident population

48,400

up +1.0% from 2020.

GDP

+1.7%

2.11 billion in 2021
(+11 million since 2020)

Filled jobs

20,970

(+1.5% since 2020)

Mean earnings

\$54,386

(+3.6 % since 2020)

Average household income

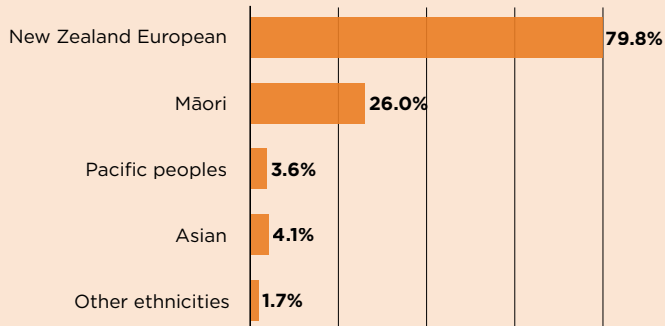
\$88,718

(as at January 2022)

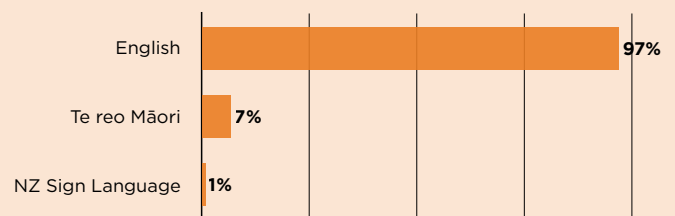
Diverse

We are a diverse community. People from many different cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities and age groups live here and study or work in a variety of areas, from students to technicians and trade workers, professionals and more.

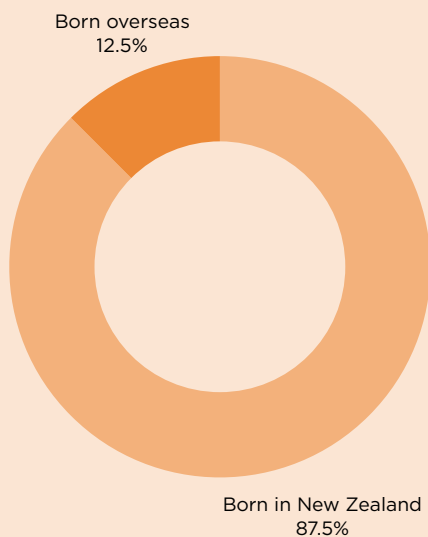
Ethnicities



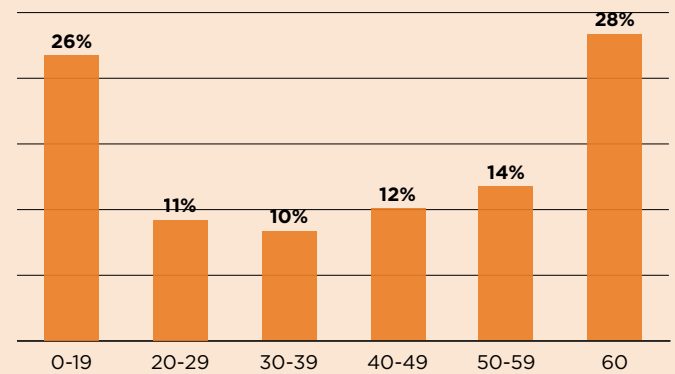
Language speakers



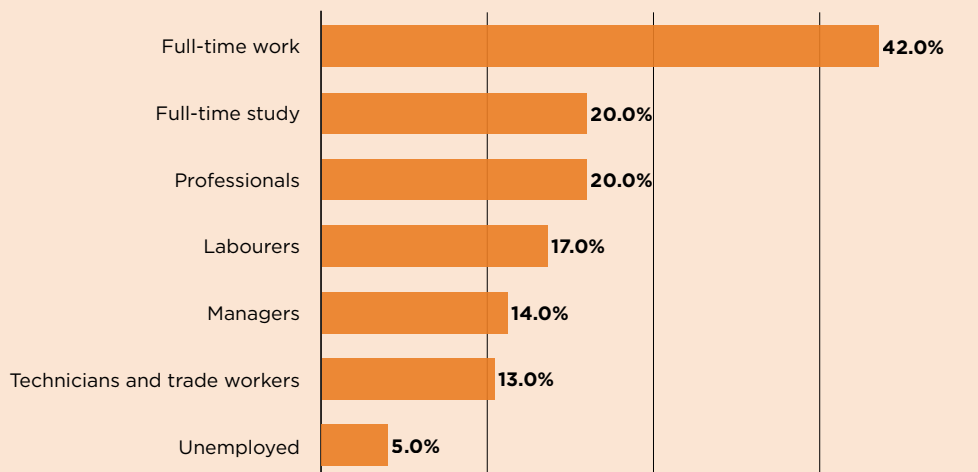
Born in New Zealand



Age distribution



Occupations



Connected

The Whanganui River stretches for 290km, drawing on numerous tributaries and connecting marae, papakainga and communities along the way. Most of our population live in the central urban area of Whanganui, with smaller rural settlements at Kai Iwi, Mowhanau, Fordell, Upokongaro, Pākaraka and Mangamahu. The Mountains to Sea Ngā Ara Tūhono cycle trail offers scenic journeys, while key infrastructure keeps communities connected and moving.

Marae 19	Roads 850 km	Footpaths 340 km	Bridges 73
Retaining walls 290	Parking spaces 5,200 m²	Public bus routes 9 managed by Horizons Regional Council	Shared pathways 6
Port 1 currently being revitalised as a future community asset	Airport 1 offering daily flights to Auckland		

Creative, energetic and packed full of things to do!

Whanganui is celebrated in New Zealand and recognised internationally as a UNESCO designated City of Design, for our city's contributions to design, art and creativity, and our rich tradition of arts and culture. We are home to the nationally renowned Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua, a regional museum, acclaimed built heritage and popular venues like the Royal Whanganui Opera House and War Memorial Events Centre.

Our open spaces and premium parks

Reserves 155	Neighbourhood parks 52	Sport and recreation facilities 13	Off-leash dog areas 20 Woof!
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Community facilities

Public swimming pools 2	Tākaro Play trailer 1	Libraries 5 including community and mobile libraries.	Designated freedom camping sites 9
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Facing challenges ahead

Despite our growth trends, like much of New Zealand, Whanganui is facing challenges to our community's social and economic wellbeing.

Housing

Whanganui is currently experiencing a housing shortage. Factors influencing this are a decline in home ownership (particularly for Māori and Pasifika), increasing rents and a shortage of rental properties. A growing number of residents are now seeking urgent housing support services

230

people on the Kainga Ora emergency housing waitlist

275

units of council social housing for older people across 16 complexes

Climate change

Climate change remains a critical challenge for the Whanganui community moving into the future.

In 2020 Whanganui District Council declared a climate emergency.

Temperatures in Whanganui are set to rise by 0.8°C by 2031-2050, bringing more hot days >25°C

Rainfall will increase with annual precipitation up 1% and winter rainfall up 6% by 2031-2050. This means the frequency and magnitude of storm-related events will increase, bringing increased erosion, flooding risks and river sedimentation.

Sea levels affecting Whanganui are predicted to rise 0.2-0.5m by 2060 and 0.3-1.0m by 2100, adding to increased coastal erosion and flooding.

Sources:

Statistics and figures provided on these pages are from a variety of sources, including national Census data, central government departments, Infometrics, and Whanganui District Council strategies and planning documents.

[Place Summaries](#) | [Whanganui District](#) | [Stats NZ](#)



THE LEADING EDGE STRATEGY

In 2014, the council undertook significant community consultation, with the aim of identifying the strategic aims and priorities of local residents and bringing them together in a document that reflected our shared vision for the future of Whanganui.

The Leading Edge Strategy is divided into five categories – Community, Connectivity, Creativity, Environment and Economy – with each category providing a strategic intention and a goal written in broader terms, influenced by our community, to guide our activity in that area. This is followed by a list of more concrete aims, and then a set of strategic targets and actions we will take to complete them.

The vision from the Leading Edge Strategy is:

“an energised united and thriving district offering abundant opportunities for everyone.”

The strategy was updated in 2018 and small changes were made, but it was agreed the overall strategy was serving its purpose as an overarching strategy to guide the council’s work and focus.

Ahead of the next Long-Term Plan 2024, the council will undertake a comprehensive review of the strategy and work closely with the community and Whanganui Iwi to develop a strategy for the next 10 years. It is anticipated that this will align with the future for local government reforms and include an increased focus on the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of our district.

Read the full strategy on the council website: www.whanganui.govt.nz/leading-edge.

KEY PARTNERS AND RELATIONSHIPS

At Whanganui District Council we value our relationships and partnerships with key groups and organisations.

The opportunity to work together, and to understand and acknowledge what is important for different groups across the community, is crucial to the council's role in promoting the environmental, cultural, social, and economic wellbeing of our community now and in the future.

The council values its relationships with Tāngata Whenua (Whānau, Hapū and Iwi). The Local Government Act 2002 provides for Māori to participate in the decision-making processes; and for the council to contribute to capacity building so that Māori participation is effective.

Our relationships with Tāngata Whenua include partnership agreements with the Hapū collectives Te Rūnanga o Tūpoho (Tūpoho) and Te Rūnanga o Tamaupoko (Tamaupoko), and encompass the papakainga settlements of Te Awa Tupua o Whanganui.

Council has a responsive, issue-focused, working relationship with the collective Hapū of Tamaupoko, Tūpoho, and with post-settlement governance entities which are identified below. To maintain consistency in working together, regular meetings are scheduled throughout the year with Hapū and statutory Iwi authorities.

Statutory Iwi relationship activity is with:

- Ngā Tāngata Tiaki
- Te Kaahui o Rauru
- Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa
- Ngāti Rangī
- Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiation Trust.

Te Awa Tupua o Whanganui is a tupuna and a vital taonga to Whanganui Hapū and Iwi, recognised and protected in Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017. The Act reaffirms the inextricable link between Whanganui Iwi and the Awa, and as the whakataukī “Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au” says, Iwi and Awa are considered indivisible from each other.

In accordance with this, our relationship with Te Awa Tupua is centrally important in the work of the council and in the way we conduct our relationships.

Other key relationships are with Whanganui Police, Safer Whanganui, Te Whatu Ora Whanganui (previously the Whanganui DHB), and a wide range of regional and local organisations focused on environmental, cultural, social and economic development at the national, regional and local levels. These relationships help ensure that the council can draw on insights from partners and operate effectively and efficiently in the running of the district.

Elected members have an important role to play supporting relationships that are respectful, collaborative and constructive. This means listening to and working to understand the needs and priorities of different groups in the Whanganui community.

Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui Whanganui District Council

Tangata Whenua partnership

Uphold our obligations arising from Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017
Transparency and accountability • Inclusion • Diversity • Intergenerational thinking

Our Leading Edge Strategy Vision

An energised, united and thriving district offering abundant opportunities for everyone.

Our goals



Community

Community spirit – a united community that champions cultural diversity



Connectivity

A connected district that is accessible



Creativity

Humming with cultural personality



Environment

Safeguarding our natural resources and unique environment



Economy

Employment and development opportunities for everyone

Key strategies and plans

Overarching plans: Long-Term Plan, District Plan, Infrastructure Plan

- Welcoming Communities
- Youth places
- Safer Whanganui
- Housing

- Digital
- Active Transport
- Urban Transport
- Rural communities

- Public art
- Arts and culture
- Town Centre Regeneration

- Climate change
- Open spaces and physical activity
- Heritage
- Waste management
- Coastal management

- Economic development
- Finance and infrastructure
- Urban growth
- Port

Current priorities and challenges

- Improving community wellbeing and celebrating diversity
- Working with other agencies on addressing our housing crisis
- Civil defence emergency preparedness, response and recovery

- Supporting active and healthy communities
- Supporting digital equity – including in the rural area

- Growing Whanganui's reputation as an arts destination
- Affirming and supporting traditional art, culture and our unique heritage

- Protecting our unique environment and maintaining infrastructure in the face of climate change
- Upholding our obligations under Te Awa Tupua

- Rising costs and limited income. Keeping rates affordable and managing growth well

Delivering on our work for the community

Providing quality services on the ground – libraries, parks, roads, emergency management and more

Engaging with our community and ensuring we gain a diversity of views and voices

Partnering with Tangata Whenua and the community to deliver effective plans

Listening and changing our plans to meet future needs

Communicating back on our activities – feedback, accountability and monitoring

Making fair and effective **decisions** informed by a diverse community

OUR BROADER STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The strategic framework is the set of documents that guides us in both our day-to-day and longer term work. It informs our planning and sets our priorities across a specified period of time, and can include concrete actions and specific targets, such as expenditure, as well as more high-level community goals. Together they set the direction for the council. These are reviewed as necessary to make sure they're current and relevant.

The long-term plan

The long-term plan (LTP) sets out what the council intends to do in terms of services, describes how it will be managing its finances, and sets its strategic objectives for the LTP period. The LTP plans our activities for the next 10 years, although it is replaced with a new LTP every three years. It is divided into three volumes – volume 1 is an overview including community outcomes and detailed financial information, volume 2 details council activities and performance framework, and volume 3 contains the infrastructure strategy. You can see the volumes of our current LTP on our website:

www.whanganui.govt.nz/long-term-plan

The annual plan

An annual plan is put in place every year we do not do an LTP. The annual plan budgets activities and services for the upcoming financial year and allows the council to adjust finances forecast in the LTP, based on more accurate information. You can find our current annual plan on our website: www.whanganui.govt.nz/annual-plan-2022-23

The district plan

The district plan regulates the way land is used and developed across the district. You can find the current district plan on our website: eplan.whanganui.govt.nz

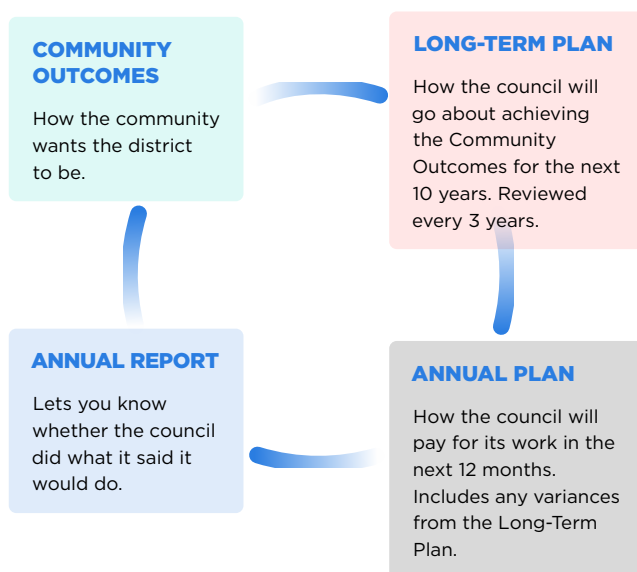
You can find all of our current strategies on our website: www.whanganui.govt.nz/strategies

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Regular performance monitoring ensures the council knows how well it's doing its job under the Local Government Act 2002.

While the council is not a commercially driven business, there are many ways that performance is measured. This includes integrating performance measures into our planning, such as the targets we set in our LTP. To make sure that our commitments are manageable, or that we have the resources to achieve them, our planning cycle also includes our annual plan. Each year, our annual report looks at what we have achieved and independently audits our financial performance.

The Planning Cycle



Getting feedback directly from the community is also extremely important to us. One way we encourage this is through our annual community views survey. This asks people how satisfied they are with our facilities, services, elected members and council staff. It also asks about general perceptions about the standard of living in our district, and how people feel about their opportunities to be heard by the council. We conduct other surveys too, for example, with people who have recently used our services or facilities to see how they have found their experience, or more targeted surveys on a particular community-wide issue.

Find annual community views survey results on our website at: www.whanganui.govt.nz/research

Another way we try to ensure the community can provide feedback on our performance is through consultation. Consultation regularly seeks community feedback on council-related issues such as the development of new strategies, policies, bylaws, plans and projects. It can be part of a formal council consultation process or an informal community conversation to get indication of how people feel about a particular issue or topic.

When we run a formal consultation, every response given is reviewed by council staff. Survey answers and comments are collated and analysed before being presented to councillors so they can make decisions. When we're doing a formal consultation on a policy or a bylaw, all submissions are brought together into a single document that's available to the general public on our website.

Elected members are not required to follow what the largest number of community members say, but they are required to weigh up all feedback and relevant information available.



KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Housing

Whanganui is currently experiencing a housing shortage and has a growing number of residents seeking urgent housing support services. Around New Zealand, increasing demand for houses, low and poor quality supply, and the sale of state housing have all contributed to the housing crisis. In our district, increased population growth in recent years, coupled with a lower socioeconomic community compared to other regional centres, means more people are now in need of social housing options in Whanganui.

Whanganui District Council recognises that the housing shortage in Whanganui requires urgent and long-term action. Our vision is that everyone in Whanganui has the right housing opportunities and a great neighbourhood to live in.

In 2019 the council developed a housing strategy to provide a framework to address housing issues. It focuses on the issues of homelessness, declining home ownership rates, increasing rents and increasing need for government assistance.

The council's work to address housing needs in Whanganui includes:

- Planning for sustainable residential growth that matches infrastructure growth and Whanganui's needs
- Promotion of infill housing and urban consolidation, including through initiatives like our Town Centre Regeneration Project and support for residential conversion of town centre buildings
- Increasing housing land supply by looking at under-used land for development, completing the Springvale Structure Plan rezoning process and rezoning land around the Castlecliff Golf Club
- Retaining council housing stock for older people
- Working collaboratively with social support agencies through Safer Whanganui to explore solutions and support for social housing and people experiencing homelessness
- Working with government to advance housing initiatives in Whanganui.

Local government reforms

The government has proposed a set of changes and reforms across local government. These focus on changing how water is regulated and managed, changes to the Resource Management Act, and further local government reforms. These changes are outlined below. What they may look like once enacted will be determined in the coming years, with some legislative changes coming into effect in the coming electoral term.

Three Waters

Currently, on behalf of their communities, 67 different councils own and operate the majority of the drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services.

In 2021 the government announced that it would proceed with proposals to change the way that drinking water, wastewater and stormwater, collectively termed Three Waters, are regulated, managed and delivered.

Safe and well-managed water services are crucial to our environment and to the wellbeing of our communities, now and in future, and Three Waters reform is a significant issue for our council.

The government's proposal is that all three waters assets and liabilities are consolidated and transferred from local territorial authorities to a separate body. This transfer is currently expected to happen on 1 July 2024.

Under the reform, the government plans to manage three waters through two pieces of law. The first is the Water Services Entities Bill. If passed, this will create four publicly owned water services entities that will provide water services in place of local authorities. Each water services entity will take on responsibility for delivering water services to a specific geographical area, and the bill sets out how the water services entities will operate and how they will be accountable to the public.

On 22 March 2022, Whanganui District councillors elected not to support the Three Waters reforms, feeling that they do not represent the best interests or wishes of our community. Councillors voted to look into options for enabling our community's voice to be heard on the Three Waters issue.

More recently, the council has surveyed the community for their views on Three Waters and other central government reforms. Responses were used to inform a council workshop and a submission from the council to the government's Water Services Entities Bill.

A second bill, expected to enter Parliament in September 2022, will provide further details on the powers and duties of the water services entities. It will also allow the government to regulate service charges. This bill will also provide more detail on how water services entities will demonstrate that their services are cost-effective and providing value for money. This means the newly elected council may have the opportunity to comment on this bill as it makes its way through Parliament into law.

This is a significant issue for our council. Three waters comprises approximately a third of our income from rates, a third of our total assets and approximately \$100 million of debt.

Find out more about the Three Waters reform on our website:

www.whanganui.govt.nz/three-waters-reform

Resource Management Act changes

The second area of significant reform proposed by the government is to the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991. The government plans to repeal the Act and replace it with three new pieces of legislation: the Natural Built Environment Act, the Strategic Planning Act and the Climate Adaption Act.

The proposed changes aim to create a system that better protects the environment, while also making it easier for residential development and house building to occur. The changes also propose to better recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori, and to better prepare for adapting to climate change.

One of the key proposed changes is that councils will no longer produce district plans to direct how urban development occurs. Instead, new committees will be responsible for making strategic plans at a regional level.

These reforms may impact the council through future governance arrangements, functions, structure, decision-making, operations and investment priorities. Additionally, the resource requirements and costs of transition cannot be underestimated, particularly as councils transition to the new resource management system while fulfilling essential requirements under the current one.

The current council is concerned that the needs of smaller districts will be left out and the priorities of bigger cities will dominate these new regional plans. The council is surveying the community for their views about these reforms, and the results will help inform any opportunities to make submissions on the proposed law changes.

The Natural and Built Environments and Strategic Planning bills will be introduced into Parliament in 2022, around or shortly after the local body election period. The Climate Adaption Bill is likely to be introduced in 2023.

The incoming council will need to consider whether and how it wishes to respond to these bills very soon after it takes office.

More details about the reform of resource management can be found on the Ministry for the Environment website at <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/key-initiatives/resource-management-system-reform/overview>

Local government review

Three Waters and the RMA reforms call into question the sustainability of smaller local councils. Since the last local government reorganisation in 1989, councils have been given a lot of new functions and responsibilities by central government. These have stretched local government and its funding.

The relationships between central government, local government and Māori need to be re-examined as the country progresses on its Treaty of Waitangi journey. The wellbeing of some parts of our communities has not improved in line with the rest of the community. Inequity and poverty issues are likely to worsen without change.

There is no firm proposal yet for what these changes will look like. Instead, a review by an independent panel is looking to address five key questions:

- How should the system of local government be reshaped so it can adapt to future challenges and enable communities to thrive?
- What are the future functions, roles and essential features of the local government system?
- How might a system of local government better embody authentic partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi?
- What needs to change so local government and its leaders best reflect and respond to the communities they serve?
- What should change in local government funding and financing to ensure viability and sustainability, fairness and equity?

The panel's interim report, *Ārewa te ake kaupapa: raising the platform* can be found at https://www.futureforlocalgovernment.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/DIA_16724_Te-Arotake-Future-of-Local-Government_Interim-report_22.pdf

A draft report and recommendations for public consultation will be released by the panel after the local government elections. The final report will be presented to the government by 30 April 2023. With parliamentary elections likely in late 2023, the government may take some time to decide what, if any, of the panel's recommendations it wishes to take up.

The new council will need to respond to the panel's recommendations soon after being elected, and then consider the panel's recommendations to Parliament. As with the other local government reforms, central government decisions may change the council's role, functions and structure in future.

COVID-19

Since the COVID-19 global pandemic began in 2020, the council has navigated an ever-changing environment, with a focus on protecting the community and our staff and keeping our critical services and infrastructure operating.

Over time, the health and welfare response to COVID-19 has been led by different agencies. This has seen the our emergency management and community welfare staff work directly to support the early response led by Civil Defence and Ministry of Health. This included support with planning, welfare support to those isolating, food parcel delivery and the community vaccination campaign. More recently, the council has played a supporting role in communicating health and welfare messages from organisations supporting the care in the community approach.

Throughout the pandemic, monitoring risks and the development and implementation of risk minimisation strategies across all areas of the organisation, infrastructure, facilities and services has been key to maintaining our business continuity and the safety of our staff. Our crisis management team, convened by the council's chief operating officer and reporting to the chief executive, has regularly reviewed plans as the situation evolved and determined what steps to take in response.

This has included acting early to put health and safety measures in place for staff and the community and signing up in 2022 to the government's Close Contact Exemption Scheme (CCES) for critical workers. We've also adapted things like our policies, entry requirements and venue capacity in response to government decisions as part of the national response. And we've changed the way we do things day-to-day, including through promotion of online services and virtual options for council meetings and events.

COVID-19 is expected to remain a key challenge for the council and the community in the coming electoral term. We will continue our approach to risk management and business continuity, along with our responsiveness to adapt the way we work or deliver services in the face of necessary health measures.

Currently, along with the rest of New Zealand, Whanganui is subject to the traffic light system (COVID-19 Protection Framework) which remains in place to protect people, critical services and infrastructure and the health system from COVID-19.

Emergency preparedness

Whanganui has a history of flooding, particularly around the Whanganui, Whangaehu and Mangawhero Rivers. In future, climate change is expected to bring more frequent storm-related events of a greater magnitude, and increased rainfall intensities. This will increase the flooding risks to our district. In addition to flooding, emergencies and natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic eruptions, hazardous chemical spills or influenza pandemic could occur at any time.

When an emergency is declared under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, Civil Defence Emergency Management Whanganui, led by Whanganui District Council, coordinates a wide range of groups and agencies like Iwi, Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand and Red Cross to support the community and organise the response.

An emergency declaration can only be made by the mayor or their elected and appointed delegate (of the area where the emergency has happened or may happen), the regional council chair, or the Minister of Civil Defence. Once an emergency is declared the agencies responsible for coordinating any response at the national, regional and local level are in charge. A formal recovery period may also follow after the response phase is over.

In smaller emergencies or events not requiring a declaration, council emergency management may attend in support of other response agencies.

Helping the community prepare for emergencies is as important as being ready to respond when they occur. This remains a key area of focus for our emergency management staff in the coming electoral term.

For councillors, involvement in the council's emergency preparedness work is currently through the infrastructure, climate change and emergency management committee meetings. At these meetings councillors may hear updates about recent or ongoing emergency responses or training initiatives, or about work to encourage the community to be prepared, through things like tsunami hiko for school children, resilience building work in communities or household emergency survival kits.

Find out more about our emergency management and emergency preparedness work:
www.whanganui.govt.nz/civil-defence

Improving Māori wellbeing / outcomes

In accordance with recognising and working to honour the Te Awa Tupua Act and the values of Tupua Te Kawa, the council aims to work effectively with Tāngata Whenua, Hapū and Iwi to support and encourage Māori participation in local government decision-making, and the wellbeing of Māori in the community. This approach is especially important in infrastructure planning, environmental management and development. The council's policy direction and planning processes takes into account effective engagement with Hapū and Iwi entities – as well as marae and whānau as required.

The enactment of the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 has provided legislative responsibilities for the council, including an appointment to the strategy group, Te Kōpuka. A council officer also attends regular hui of the Te Awa Tupua technical advisory group (TAG) that helps support Te Kōpuka.

There is an ongoing commitment towards an organisational understanding of the Te Awa Tupua Act, and the intrinsic values of Tupua te Kawa through the relationships being built with Iwi, and the council's internal Collaborative Culture programme.

Of equal significance is the treaty settlement being negotiated between the Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiations Trust (WLSNT) and the Crown. While the council is not directly involved in the negotiations, it has provided the council with the opportunity to support WLSNT in some of their settlement aspirations as well as continuing to build on our relational trust. Te Tomokanga ki te Matapihi guides our commitment to each other and establishes meaningful ways for Hapū and Iwi to better connect to local decision-making.

The council has endeavoured to strengthen and develop its strategic relationships with Māori through Māori statutory entities including Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui; Te Kaahui o Rauru; Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, and Ngāti Rangī.

A long-standing Treaty grievance for mana whenua was addressed in February 2022 when the New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa formally changed the name of Maxwell to Pākaraka.

The council worked alongside Ngāti Maika of Ngaa Rauru Kītahi to undertake consultation to inform their application to the Geographic Board. The Ngaa Rauru Deed of Settlement encourages conversations between Ngaa Rauru and the council in relation to the naming and renaming of streets and place names, and specifically refers to Maxwell (Pākaraka).

Internally, a three-year Collaborative Culture programme, developed for the organisation, has been progressively rolled out to staff in the 2020/21 reporting year, with more than 50% of staff having participated in the programme to date. The 2022/23 reporting year will provide continuity of Collaborative Culture for staff and the executive leadership team, and an introduction for the new elected members.

The purpose of the programme is to build culturally competent council staff with effective community engagement strategies and an increased understanding of Whanganuitanga, Te Awa Tupua and Tupua Te Kawa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi in a modern day context, and local whānau, Hapū and Iwi. It is also intended to inform the council's development of a cultural tool kit and content for the council's staff induction process.

The programme includes te reo, tikanga and cultural activities. It has proven to be very valuable in providing staff with the tools to navigate worldviews, provide insight into the importance of Hapū and Iwi engagement and to develop knowledge so that we can become more responsive in a way that achieves a positive outcome for everyone.

Climate change

Climate change remains a critical issue for the Whanganui community moving into the future. In 2020 the Whanganui District Council declared a climate emergency. We then worked collaboratively with key stakeholders and Tāngata Whenua to develop a draft climate change strategy for the district, which was approved in 2021. This strategy brings together te ao Māori and the New Zealand Pākehā world views to address climate change in a uniquely Whanganui way.

You can find the climate change strategy on our website:
www.whanganui.govt.nz/climate-change-strategy

Reducing our own carbon footprint is a key part of the council's commitment to mitigating climate change. The council's climate change advisor is leading a work programme across five priorities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The areas we are focusing on are:

- Leadership and collaboration
- Home and building energy
- Transportation and urban form
- Sustainable food systems
- Waste

As the district council, we want to lead by example in this space. We are measuring our own organisational carbon emissions and will create a roadmap to reduce them over the coming years. We also want to empower our community to take action. To this end, we are setting up a community climate action fund to be launched in 2022.

This year we have completed energy audits of assets, to identify energy efficiency measures to reduce costs and emissions. A report on the findings is in progress but it is likely that future work will focus on gas use and conversion to electricity. We also have plans to install solar panels on at least two council sites over the next few years to reduce energy costs and carbon.

The council has voted to bring in a kerbside recycling service from mid-2023 and a food waste collection service from mid-2024. A strong factor in this decision was the connection between food waste in landfill and climate change. We will support the creation of education materials for the community on food waste and how to use the service.

We want to make it easier for people to use public transport in Whanganui. We are supporting a high-frequency bus trial launching in 2023 with a bus route connecting Castlecliff and Aramoho, during which time buses will run more frequently and later into the evening. Public transport is managed through Horizons Regional Council, which is looking into opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of our local buses. Horizons has set a draft target of a 70% reduction, at least, in greenhouse gas emissions per kilometre for public transport bus services by 2032.

We are working with the community to create a coastal action plan for Castlecliff and Kai Iwi. Earlier this year we hosted a number of successful, well-attended drop-in sessions for both Tāngata Whenua groups and the wider community to hear from coastal scientist Jim Dahm about the issues facing our coastal areas, and the options for managing and improving them. There is very strong community interest and engagement on this project and work is ongoing to decide on the actions to move forward.

Many other initiatives, whether council-led or supported, focus on issues connected to protecting our environment and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Coastal erosion and coastal action plan

The Whanganui coast is a dynamic environment. Kai Iwi beach has significant erosion issues, while Castlecliff is facing issues with sand accretion and ecological degradation. Our aim is to make Whanganui's coast more resilient in the face of natural processes, which are affected by climate change.

Through our Long-Term Plan 2021-2031, the council committed to developing a draft coastal action plan with Tāngata Whenua, coastal communities, local environmental groups and the wider community. The final coastal action plan will span 10 years and be a living document, to be edited and updated over time. In coming years we envision that community groups will lead many of the actions in the plan. Read more about our coastal action plan:

www.whanganui.govt.nz/coastal-action-plan

Read more about challenges and opportunities, and the major projects and initiatives we have underway on our website:
www.whanganui.govt.nz/initiatives

MAJOR PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES FOR THE COMING TERM

We have several projects and initiatives underway, and more planned over the next several years. Below are some key projects. You can read about all our current projects on our website:

www.whanganui.govt.nz/projects

Port revitalisation

Te Pūwaha, the Whanganui Port Revitalisation project, will create a Whanganui port that will be a community asset for the next 50 years and beyond.

Te Pūwaha is a collaborative partnership between Whanganui Hapū and Iwi and four other groups invested in the development: Whanganui District Council, Horizons Regional Council, boat builders Q-West and the Whanganui District Employment and Training Trust.

Upon completion, Whanganui will have a modern marine precinct, rebuilt wharves and boat-building facilities for Q-West, and employment opportunities for the community.

Te Pūwaha is governed by Tupua te Kawa, the values that guide all decision-making in respect of the Whanganui River and represent the natural law and value system of Te Awa Tupua.

Whanganui District Council's owned CCO, Whanganui Port Limited Partnership, is rebuilding Wharves 2 and 3 to enable commercial marine activities to safely operate. Work includes building a hardstand and runway suitable for a 360-tonne vessel hoist to enable boats to be lifted in and out of the water, improving dredging capabilities to enhance the local boat building and marine industry, and salvaging historic materials from the port precinct to be repurposed or restored where possible. Resource consents have recently been granted to complete the wharf and hardstand builds.

The council project team has been engaging the community in a conversation around proposed dredging and a reclamation area for community use. The application for dredging consent is set to be filed in August. If consent is approved in September 2022, dredging is anticipated to begin in the first few months of 2023. The tender for the contract to build the wharves is set to go out to market when all consents have been granted, with work anticipated to start building the wharves set to begin towards the end of 2022.

Find out more about the council's portion of work as part of Te Pūwaha:

www.whanganui.govt.nz/te-puwaha

The Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment

Whanganui's Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua holds a permanent collection of more than 8,300 art works of national and international significance, covering four centuries of European art history and all of New Zealand's art history. With an ongoing programme of exhibitions and events, the Sarjeant Gallery is an important community asset that can be accessed by locals and visitors alike.

The existing 100-year-old Sarjeant Gallery building at Pukenuamu Queen's Park is a category one heritage listed building. As part of the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project this building is being earthquake-strengthened, restored and extended, with the construction of a new, modern extension wing named Pataka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Tairaoa well underway. The restoration and construction phase of the project is now forecast to be completed in late 2023, with a period of installation and then the opening exhibitions to follow. In the interim, the Sarjeant Gallery has been operating out of temporary premises at 38 Taupo Quay.

The Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project is a partnership between Whanganui District Council, Whanganui Iwi, central government, large and small private donors, and trusts.

The funding for this project comes from a combination of sources: Whanganui District Council, Ministry for Culture & Heritage, Significant Projects Fund (DIA), New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, Provincial Growth Fund (MBIE), public and private trusts, and a multitude of individual donations both large and small.

Find out more about the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project:
www.whanganui.govt.nz/sarjeant-redevelopment

Youth hub

Engagement during our most recent LTP supported the community's desire for more focus on our rangatahi (youth). As a result, a feasibility study has been conducted to determine the need for and viability of youth places and spaces in the Whanganui District.

Through research and engagement, the study identifies options that would benefit local rangatahi. This was informed by listening to and learning from rangatahi (as well as parents and people who work in the youth sector) to understand the underlying needs as well as what is currently available and what has worked successfully elsewhere. Decisions on the next steps for this project will be made in the new term of council.

For more details about our major projects and initiatives, read our Annual Plan 2022/2023, available on our website:
www.whanganui.govt.nz/annual-plan-2022-23

FINANCES

Funding impact statement

	Annual Report	Annual Report	Forecast Annual Report	Annual Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
General rates, uniform annual general charges, rates penalties	30,401	31,043	35,148	40,190	38,092	39,216	40,390
Targeted rates	32,858	32,812	31,425	30,346	35,882	37,893	39,798
Subsidies and grants for operating purposes	5,323	6,426	10,509	4,941	5,614	5,508	5,714
Fees and charges	8,940	9,695	9,446	8,749	9,091	9,383	9,629
Interest and dividends from investments	805	488	896	690	1,190	1,190	1,190
Local authorities fuel tax, fines, infringement fees and other receipts	2,845	3,282	4,632	2,558	2,987	3,173	3,339
Total operating funding (A)	81,172	83,745	92,056	87,474	92,857	96,362	100,059
Application of operating funding							
Payments to staff and suppliers	60,402	62,244	63,506	67,619	69,210	71,142	73,686
Finance costs	5,088	4,629	4,522	4,721	4,994	5,095	5,044
Other operating funding applications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total application of operating funding (B)	65,490	66,873	68,028	72,339	74,204	76,237	78,730
Surplus (deficit) of operating funding (A - B)	15,683	16,873	24,028	15,135	18,653	20,125	21,329
Sources of capital funding							
Subsidies and grants for capital expenditure	17,109	13,436	11,392	7,066	6,392	6,552	5,524
Development and financial contributions	59	269	106	1,003	1,015	1,144	857
Increase (decrease) in debt	2,500	0	(405)	15,745	4,611	(147)	(4,640)
Gross proceeds from asset sales	110	90	0	0	0	0	0
Lump sum contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Annual Report	Annual Report	Forecast Annual Report	Annual Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan
Other dedicated capital funding	1,303	18	4	29	29	29	29
Total sources of capital funding (C)	21,081	13,814	11,097	23,842	12,046	7,577	1,770
Application of capital funding							
Capital expenditure							
— to meet additional demand	449	1,465	1,842	3,155	5,153	2,877	1,657
— to improve the level of service	10,672	20,832	22,115	12,217	11,314	10,472	6,510
— to replace existing assets	9,841	12,466	11,168	23,705	14,332	14,503	14,883
Increase (decrease) in reserves	15,801	(4,076)	0	(100)	(100)	(150)	50
Increase (decrease) of investments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total application of capital funding (D)	36,763	30,686	35,125	38,977	30,699	27,702	23,099
Surplus (deficit) of capital funding (C - D)	(15,682)	(16,872)	(24,028)	(15,135)	(18,653)	(20,125)	(21,329)
FUNDING BALANCE ((A - B) + (C - D))	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Statement of financial position

	Annual Report	Annual Report	Forecast Annual Report	Annual Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Assets							
Current assets							
Cash and cash equivalents	6,560	5,386	8,560	7,012	6,758	6,716	6,882
Receivables	9,129	6,339	7,346	6,640	8,459	8,670	8,896
Inventory	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Non-current assets held for sale	-	31,821	-	-	-	-	-
Total current assets	15,691	43,547	15,907	13,652	15,217	15,387	15,777
Non-current assets							
Other financial assets:							
— Investment in CCOs and other similar entities	20,188	21,996	48,608	60,888	60,380	60,380	60,380
— Investment in other entities	8,302	9,500	10,039	680	723	723	723
Total other financial assets	28,490	31,496	58,647	61,568	61,102	61,102	61,102
Property, plant and equipment	988,861	1,074,794	1,092,031	1,146,693	1,098,602	1,099,935	1,158,629
Intangible assets	1,557	1,971	3,101	1,901	1,470	1,454	1,443
Investment property	27,993	13,454	16,913	14,537	10,613	10,879	11,161
Total non-current assets	1,046,901	1,121,715	1,170,693	1,224,699	1,171,788	1,173,370	1,232,336
TOTAL ASSETS	1,062,592	1,165,263	1,186,600	1,238,351	1,187,005	1,188,757	1,248,113
Liabilities							
Current liabilities							
Payables	11,495	13,984	9,391	10,694	10,949	11,210	11,488
Borrowings	17,500	13,500	17,500	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000
Employee entitlements	2,094	2,295	2,306	2,372	2,425	2,479	2,537
Total current liabilities	31,089	29,779	29,197	27,066	27,373	27,689	28,025
Non-current liabilities							
Borrowings	84,750	88,750	89,750	122,884	125,361	125,214	120,574
Deferred tax liability	84	23	23	50	50	50	50
Derivative financial instruments	12,808	7,446	476	2,000	12,808	12,808	12,808

	Annual Report	Annual Report	Forecast Annual Report	Annual Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan	Amended Long Term Plan
Employee entitlements	137	133	133	154	158	162	166
Total non-current liabilities	97,779	96,351	90,382	125,088	138,378	138,235	133,599
TOTAL LIABILITIES	128,868	126,130	119,579	152,154	165,751	165,924	161,624
NET ASSETS (ASSETS MINUS LIABILITIES)	933,724	1,039,133	1,067,020	1,086,197	1,021,253	1,022,833	1,086,489
Equity							
Accumulated funds	558,611	584,070	610,067	617,726	611,668	613,398	614,795
Revaluation reserves	295,004	377,329	377,101	419,466	357,316	357,316	419,525
Restricted reserves	78,912	76,081	76,056	47,353	51,071	50,921	50,971
Other reserves	1,197	1,652	2,796	1,652	1,197	1,197	1,197
TOTAL EQUITY	933,724	1,039,133	1,066,020	1,086,197	1,021,253	1,022,833	1,086,489

Compliance with financial strategy

This following information is required by section 99A of the Local Government Act 2002 and compares some key debt, rates and investment return parameters with the limits and targets set out in the council's financial strategy. The debt and rates parameters have been prepared on the same basis used to prepare the council's annual reports and in accordance with the Local Government (Financial Reporting and Prudence) Regulations 2014.

Prudent debt ratios

Council's limits on borrowing identified in the financial strategy of the relevant Long-Term Plan	Limit	Actual 2019/20	Actual 2020/21	Forecast 2021/22
Net debt as a percentage of total revenue	<200%	92%	87%	90%

Investment ratios

Council's target for investment identified in the financial strategy of the relevant Long-Term Plan	Target	Actual 2019/20	Actual 2020/21	Forecast 2021/22
Target = Return on investment				
Harbour Endowment	6.5%	5.5%	5.1%	N/A
City Endowment	6.5%	5.8%	4.0%	2.9%
Target = Dividends paid				
Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited		\$0	\$0	\$0.5M
Budgeted Return		\$1M	\$1M	\$0.5M

Rates

The council limits an increase of total rates revenue from all existing ratepayers (excluding water by meter, trade waste and penalties) of no more than the local government inflation rate plus 2%.

Rates (income) affordability	Limit	Actual 2019/20	Actual 2020/21	Forecast 2021/22
Total Rates (excluding water by meter, trade waste and penalties) as a percentage of total revenue	75%	58%	55%	59%
Rates (increase) affordability				
Actual rate increase		3.8%	1.1%	5.7%
Limit		5.3%	4.3%	5.7%

