

Summary Annual Report

For the year ended 30 June 2024



**WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Our summary report

Welcome to this summary of the 2023/2024 Annual Report. It provides an overview of Council's performance during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, telling you what we worked on, highlighting our key achievements and what it has all cost.

You can find more detailed information in our full Annual Report which outlines our overall financial position and performance for the 2023/24 financial year, measured against key goals set out in our Long-Term Plan 2021/31.

The Council adopted the audited 2023/24 Annual Report on 10 December 2024.

You can find our 2023/24 Annual Report on our website: <https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Research-Reports/Reports>

This Summary Annual Report was authorised for issue by the Mayor, Andrew Tripe, and Chief Executive, David Langford, on 20 December 2024.



Andrew Tripe
Mayor of Whanganui



David Langford
Chief Executive

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive

Tēnā koutou katoa

We're pleased to present Whanganui District Council's Annual Report for 2023/24. This report summarises our financial performance and sets out the council's activities over the past year, including how we've progressed key projects and strategies.

Challenging times

The 2023/24 financial year saw our council, like others, navigating through rough waters as we faced arguably the most difficult time in local government history in a generation. In addition to understanding and adapting to the coalition government's reform packages that impact on our business and communities, the period has been characterised by intensified financial pressures for councils around New Zealand, and indeed around the world. Like households, interest on borrowing is becoming more expensive, and we have experienced considerable price increases due to inflation pushing up costs.

Despite these challenges, Whanganui District Council is in good shape relative to many other councils. In past years we have invested well in infrastructure and our prudent management of debt and cash flows were recently acknowledged by global credit rating agency, Standard and Poor's. Our district is growing too – an increase in the number of people choosing to live here saw our population continue to rise in 2023.

The work programme

While the tough economic times have called for fiscal restraint and the deferral of some projects, the council team has accomplished a substantial amount of work in the 2023/24 financial year.

Work continued on upgrading our waters infrastructure (water supply, wastewater and stormwater) to make our district more resilient in the future. We also focused on our short and long-term transport connectivity. Our roading work programme included a significant project along a key transport route that involved repairing the dropout or slip along Somme Parade caused by the Cyclone Dovi weather event in 2022. To ensure our direct link to Auckland for business and travel is maintained, we resurfaced the airport runway laying a total of 11,000 tonnes of asphalt at night to enable the continued operation of the airport for all users during the project.

We made a number of improvements to recreation facilities for our community to enjoy. As well as playground upgrades at Castlecliff Domain, we laid a concrete basketball pad at Williams Domain in Whanganui East, undertook a refresh of Splash Centre facilities, and we worked on a combined project alongside multiple contributors at Lorendale Park in Gonville to add new play equipment that has a strong focus on accessibility.

Significant preparatory work was carried out behind the scenes to get ready for the launch of kerbside recycling in July 2024 – this service will reduce our district's environmental impact and provide a more convenient way to recycle. The council also provided grant funding to enhance heritage buildings and Guyton Street was revitalised in a project 90 percent funded by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

A significant focus for our council during the year was in preparing the draft Long-Term Plan 2024-34. As always, our efforts were aimed at how we can deliver services in a considered and cost-effective way while ensuring that we're investing in Whanganui so people here can flourish now and into the future. As part of this preparation, we implemented a new business case approach to ensure our work fits with the council's key objectives and initiated a six-point plan to keep costs down. We received a record

number of more than 1600 submissions through our consultation with a wide range of views and ideas put forward from the community.

Successful collaboration

We are grateful to the many groups and organisations that have been key in delivering a number of projects of benefit to the community. These collaborative efforts not only result in enhancing wellbeing but also help to spread the costs and workload.

We also wish to take the opportunity to thank our elected members, staff and contractors for their hard work during the financial year.

We know the year ahead will present challenges and we'll keep the economic circumstances top of mind as we make decisions around delivering the services our community relies on. Although times are tough, Whanganui is a fantastic district with a lot going for it and we are optimistic about the future.



Andrew Tripe
Mayor of Whanganui



David Langford
Chief Executive

Our Strategy

The Leading Edge Strategy is the council's overarching strategic document. It's an umbrella document which sets the vision for the district and outlines high level objectives supported by a series of actions.

The vision from the Leading Edge Strategy is: *"an energised, united and thriving district offering abundant opportunities for everyone."*

The Leading Edge Strategy is divided into five categories (community outcomes):

1. Community – a deeply united community
2. Connectivity – a connected district
3. Creativity – innovative and creative
4. Environment – safeguarding our place
5. Economy – works for everyone.

Each category provides a strategic intention and goal. These are influenced by our community and guide our activity in that area. The strategy also includes a list of more concrete aims, followed by a set of strategic targets and actions needed to fulfil them.

Our 2021-2031 Long-Term Plan outlines how we are delivering on the five community outcomes for each activity group: [long-term-plan-2021-2031-amended-volume-2.pdf \(whanganui.govt.nz\)](#)

Review of the Leading Edge Strategy

This financial year, we started a comprehensive review of the Leading Edge Strategy and are working closely with the community and Whanganui Hapū to develop a new strategy for the next 10 years. This will include an increased focus on the wellbeing of our district and community – the things we can build-on or change to make a positive difference to everyone's experience of living in Whanganui.

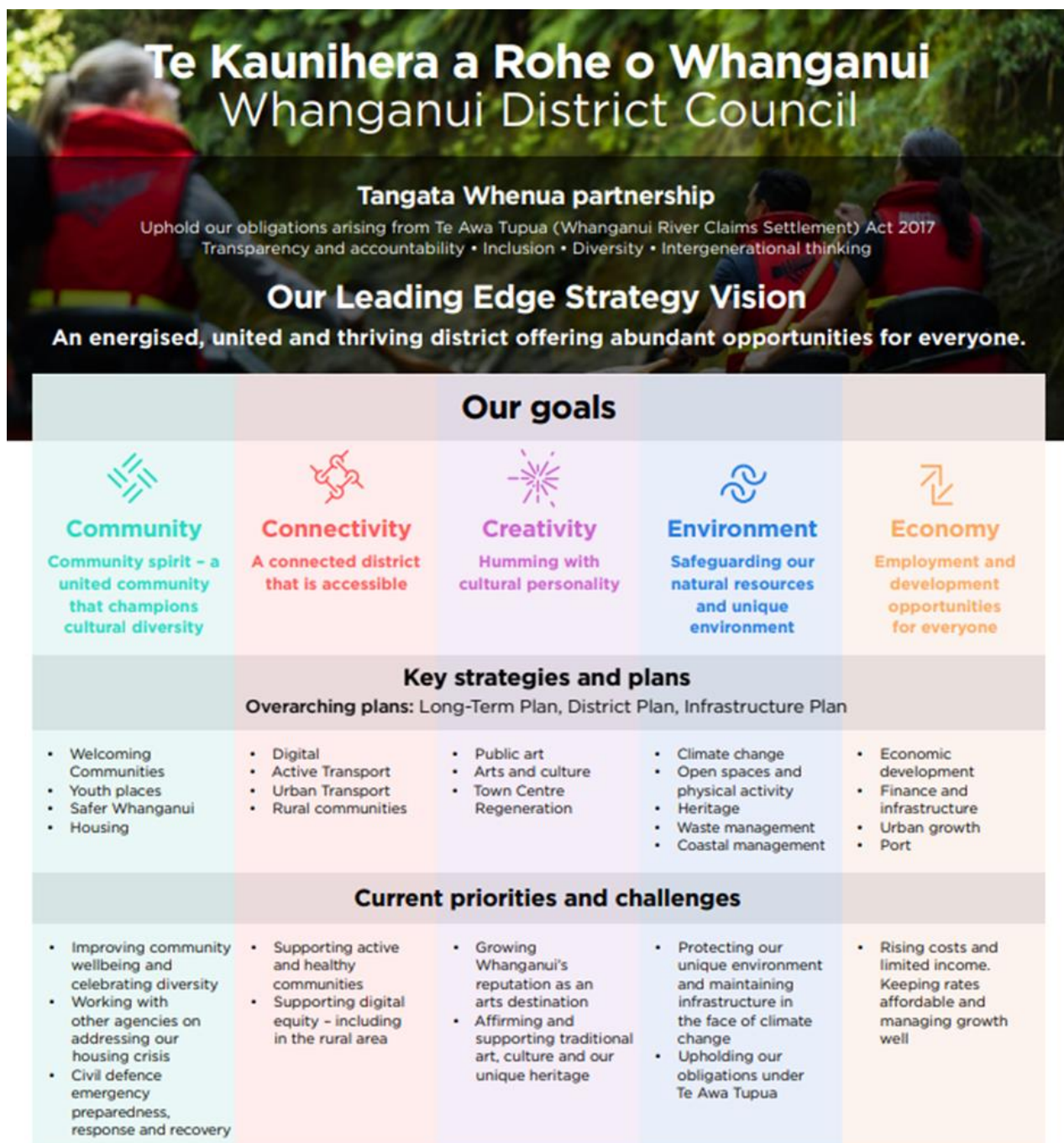
As part of this process we reviewed the Leading Edge Strategy to see what it had achieved and what actions were still outstanding. This document outlines our review: [Leading edge refresh \(whanganui.govt.nz\)](#)

Future focus

Our new strategy is still in development and is scheduled to be adopted in the 2024/25 financial year. More information about this work can be found on our website: [Vision for Whanganui](#)

Our Vision

The following diagram outlines the Whanganui District Council’s Leading Edge Strategy vision and goals; supporting plans and strategies to achieve the goals in broad terms over the medium to long term; our current priorities and challenges, and how we will deliver on our work for the community.¹



¹ At the time of writing this report it is expected that the Leading Edge Strategy will be retired in the 2024/25 year.

Our communities' wellbeing

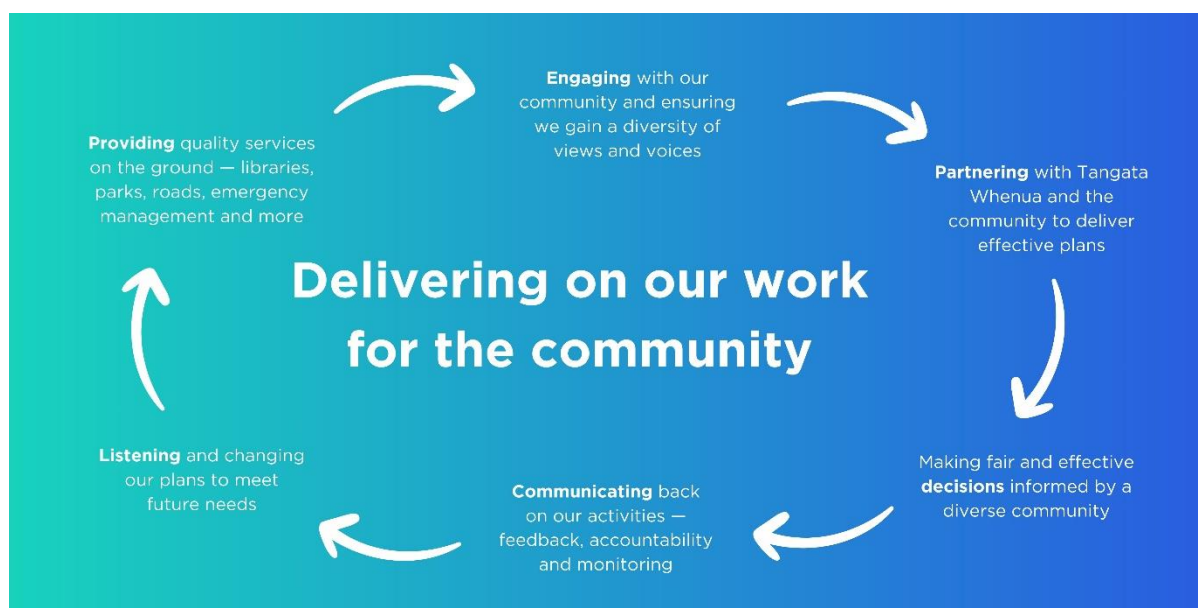
Improving our communities' quality of life is at the core of our organisation's purpose. Whether we are providing platforms for community participation, implementing initiatives to improve business success, providing valuable infrastructure and services or showcasing Whanganui on the national and international map – all facets of what we do, we do to promote healthy and resilient communities now and into the future.

Section 3 of the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019 provides that local authorities should play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach.



How we deliver for the community

The following diagram shows the different ways in which we may deliver and work for the community.



Along with delivering or providing services and facilities, the council may carry out its work through various roles and functions, including: partnering and collaborating, supporting community-led initiatives, providing support, funding or grants, advocating for the district, planning, protecting, maintaining and upgrading, regulating, investing and promoting the district.

Our role

Whanganui District Council is the local government authority for the Whanganui district. It is governed by representatives elected by community to make decisions on behalf of the Whanganui district.

The Mayor and 12 elected members are responsible for setting the strategic direction for the community and the district, engaging with the public to gather their feedback, and participating in local decision-making processes,

Separate to the council are the council officers (or staff), who are responsible for providing advice to the elected members to support their decision-making. They also complete the work and projects that arise from the decisions made by elected members and manage the day-to-day operations and services provided by the council.

The council has responsibilities for a wide range of services including roads, water reticulation, sewerage, libraries, parks, recreation services, local regulations, community and economic development, and district wide planning.

Our performance and planning

The Long-Term Plan (LTP) is council’s 10-year plan that is reviewed every three years. It outlines the council’s direction and sets out the work the council will deliver and how it will be funded. Annual Plans are developed for Years 2 and 3.

We have obligations to report back to the community every year on our progress against the LTP. This also allows us to seek feedback on council services and make changes to our levels of service over time.

The following diagram outlines the cyclic nature of council’s performance and planning framework:

The planning cycle



HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The following pages outline key highlights and achievements for the reporting period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024. These activities contribute towards the council achieving its high-level goals and objectives.

Three Waters

Water Quality

Alongside the existing chlorination and robust testing we have in place, we undertook scoping and design work during the year to have ultraviolet (UV) treatment installed by the end of 2025. This work will protect our community and provide extra protection for our drinking water supply against bacteria and viruses.

Stormwater

We completed a project to replace a stormwater outfall from Talbot Street to the Whanganui River in June 2024. The site is awaiting landscaping with the design developed in collaboration with Hāpu and allows for native riparian planting to complement the riverbank environment. The design gave specific consideration to viewing lines for rowing on the Whanganui River as it coincides with the rowing race 1,000 metre milestone.

Wastewater

We continued work on the \$3.8M Nixon Street wastewater renewal project. Stage 1 of the project to renew 549 metres of sewer main from Anzac Parade to Moana Street using micro-tunnelling was 99% complete at the end of the financial year. In November 2023 we commenced Stage 2 of the project involving 326 metres renewal work from Moana Street to Raine Street. This work was 80% complete at the end of the financial year.

Roading

We repaired a drop-out in Somme Parade that had initially occurred during the Cyclone Dovi weather event in 2022 and deteriorated in subsequent weather events. We also stabilised the gas main that supplies a significant number of properties in Aramoho and Whanganui East. The \$6.6M project was completed in July 2024.

In collaboration with Horizons Regional Council, we secured \$1.1M from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi through the Transport Choices programme to improve the local bus network. As well as constructing 15 new bus shelters at key locations across the city, the upgraded bus stops feature bike racks, digital information boards and improved accessibility and lighting.



Parks and Recreation

We supported a community project to upgrade Lorendale Park in Swiss Avenue with a strong focus on accessibility. The upgrade was truly a collaborative project between multiple contributors including Stone Soup Community, the council, Sport Whanganui, Whanganui Community Foundation, Te Ora Hou, Department of Internal Affairs and the Playground Centre.

We also made improvements at Castlecliff Domain's playground including the installation of a new tunnel slide, a shelter, picnic tables that feature wheelchair access and a new drinking fountain.

We completed the new track at the Cooks Gardens velodrome with the replacement wooden track having a 50-year warranty.

We completed a refresh of the Splash Centre in the second half of the financial year with maintenance works and a number of improvements to the pools, sauna, changing areas and the gym.

Community and Cultural

We supported community groups to develop play programmes such as the Play Lab at Hakeke Community Centre and Library and more opportunities were created for families and tamariki at public events such as Artists Open Studios and Streets for People launch. The Play Trailer continues to be a highly utilised resource in our community and was booked on 240 days throughout 2023/24.

Artist in Residence, Vicki Fanning, spent July 2024 working with the local glass community, including younger practitioners who gained invaluable experience and exposure to a professional artist. Her residency exhibition ran from 14 March - 19 May 2024 with NZG receiving approximately 7,000 visitors over this period.

The Castlecliff Library and Hakeke Community Centre and Library celebrated their fifth anniversaries and continue to thrive as essential community-run hubs.

Economic Development

Our UNESCO City of Design tohu was designed in collaboration with Iwi and the wider community. The tohu, launched in May 2024, will become the region's dominant brand for use as a quality mark for Whanganui-made products that meet guidelines and agree to tohu principles.

Whanganui's consumer spend in the twelve months to 30 June 2024 was up 5.1% on the previous year. While it has been a challenging time for businesses, this figure compared favourably to the Manawatu-Whanganui region (2.1%) and New Zealand (2.0%) over the same period.

Our work as the Regional Tourism Organisation saw us attend TRENZ for the first time in May 2024, selling the Whanganui experience to international travel operators at the biggest tourism trade event on New Zealand's calendar.



Community Facilities and Services

We revitalised two blocks of central Guyton Street and improved the public transport hub on St Hill Street under the Streets for People programme. The project was 90% funded by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and is aimed at trialling streetscape improvements to make them more vibrant and people-friendly.

The council formally took over the operations of the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre from the centre's trust from June 2024, coinciding with the new kerbside recycling service that launched in the first week of July 2024.

Along with Horizons Regional Council, we delivered information packs to Anzac Parade residents on how they can be informed, prepared and ready to act in the event of a large flood. The information packs were part of the recommended actions in a strategy prepared by Massey University, alongside residents and both councils, to improve community resilience and build awareness in an area that has a history of flooding.

We maintained our 100% legislative compliance for food audits and verifications under the Ministry for Primary Industries' Quality Management System (QMS).

We provided financial assistance to building owners to undertake heritage enhancement work. Twelve successful applicants received funding for heritage enhancement projects.



Transportation

We resurfaced the airport runway as part of its ongoing maintenance. The project, carried out at night between October to December 2023, was undertaken in successive stages to enable approximately 600 tonnes of asphalt to be laid each night over 130 metres of the 1,270m runway without disrupting the Air Chathams passenger flight schedule. With a total of 11,000 tonnes of asphalt laid the new surface will ensure the continued operation of the airport for all users for the next 15 years.

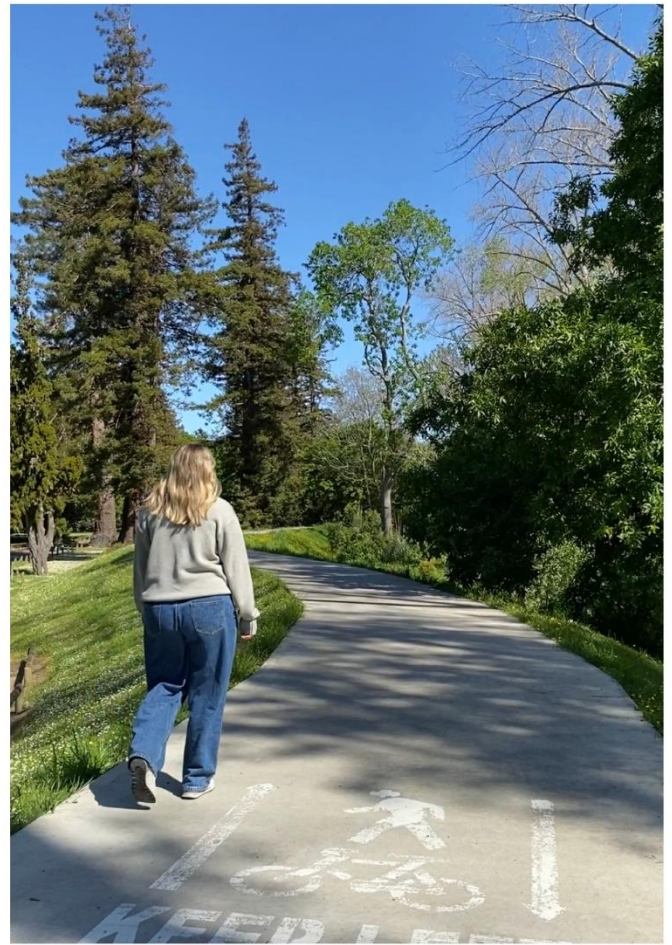
The Te Pūwaha Stage One Whanganui Port civil construction works commenced in September 2023. Stage One involves the construction of a heavy-pavement vessel hardstand and concrete structures out over the water capable of carrying Q-West Boat Builder's 380 tonne-capacity mobile boat hoist. A specialist water treatment plant to service the vessel maintenance heavy pavement is also to be built.

In anticipation of its 105th birthday in August 2024, we collaborated with Whanganui Connection to make improvements to the Durie Hill elevator and entrance. As well as new design throughout the physical spaces of the elevator, there is now new signage and wayfinding, an underground plant wall, innovative projection-based displays and new, wirelessly controlled lighting throughout the length of the tunnel.

Corporate

Our Call Centre team received 46,380 calls over the reporting period including the after-hours service.

A key focus during the year was the preparatory work on the Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 and its associated strategies and policies. We received an unprecedented 1608 submissions, an increase of 163% compared to the previous LTP, and heard from 111 submitters who presented in person at the hearings held in May.



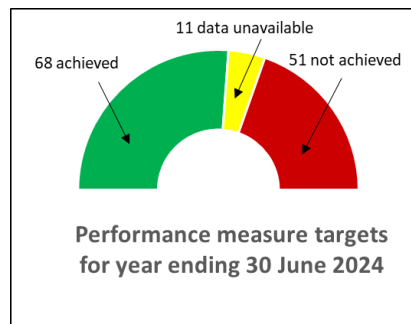
Our activities and performance

Our projects and work programmes are structured around 11 groups of activities. Each activity contributes to community outcomes through our Leading Edge strategic aspirations; and promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the Whanganui community.

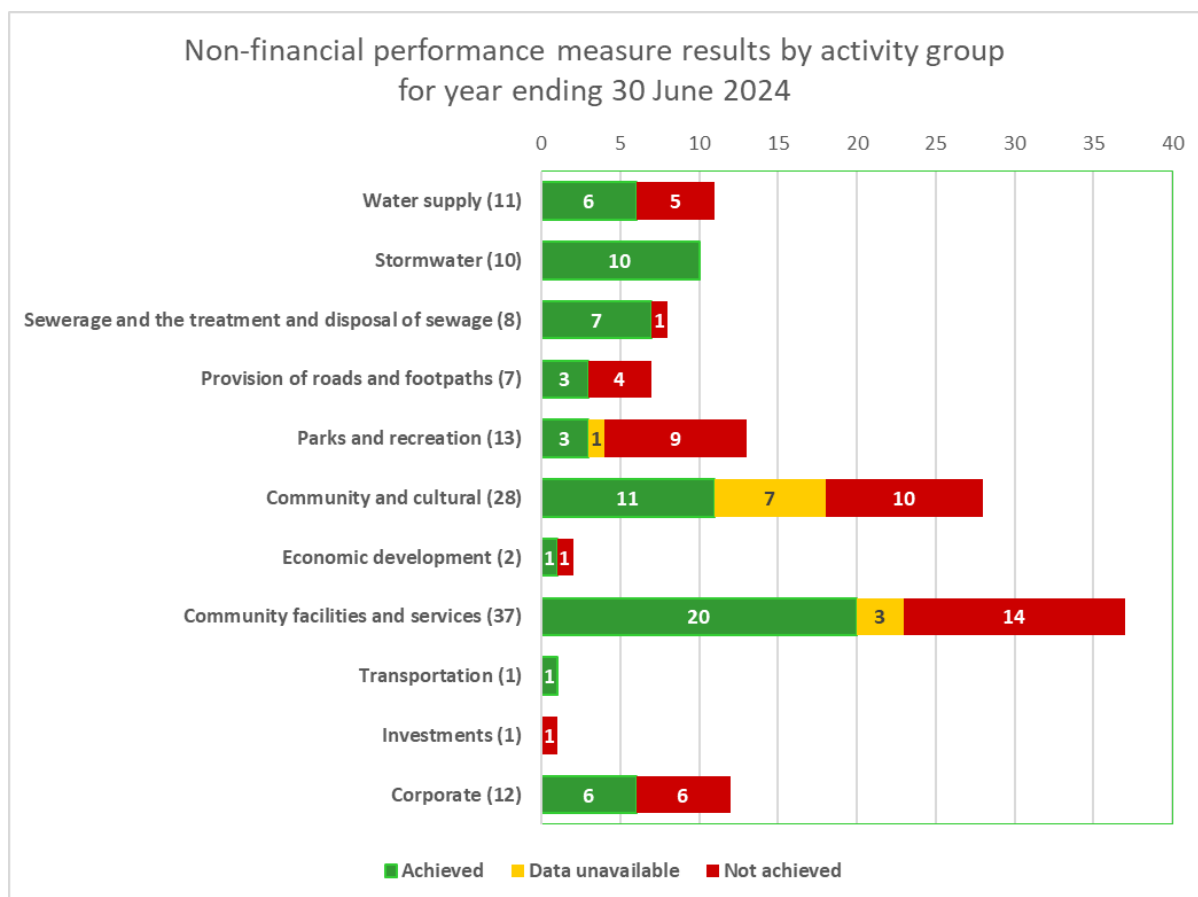
Under the Long-Term Plan 2021-2031, the council reports on 130 non-financial performance measures across its 11 activity groups. A more detailed explanation of the ways in which council’s performance is measured can be found on pages 16-17 of the full Annual Report 2023/24.

Of the 130 measures that we used to track performance during 2023/24, the graphs shows that:

- We achieved the target for 68 measures.
- We did not achieve the target for 51 measures.
- We did not have data available for 11 measures.



The summary chart below summarises the results per activity:



Summarising our performance

The following section provides a summary of our performance against the measures. Detailed information on the performance targets, results and narrative can be found in the full Annual Report 2023/24.

Water supply

Every local authority has a general responsibility to improve, provide and protect public health. Good-quality water systems play a vital role in this. Our priority is to supply water that is safe to drink and to ensure the security of the city's water supply. The most successful approach to this is by regularly monitoring the water quality and maintaining the infrastructure that supports it.

We are responsible for the provision and management of five water supply systems:

- Whanganui urban water supply scheme
- Fordell rural water supply scheme (now partially connected to the city water supply)
- Pākaraka (Maxwell) rural water supply scheme
- Mowhanau rural water supply scheme
- Westmere rural water supply scheme.

The systems comprise of service lines, pipe networks, pump stations, treatment plants and reservoirs.

What we did in 2023/24

Water upgrades

- We completed the installation of 254 metres of new 180mm polyethylene pipe (PE) watermain along Heads Road from Cavell Place to the Whanganui Hospital entrance.
- We replaced 520 metres of 180mm PE watermain on Eastown Road from Rangitikei Street to Lenihan Street.
- We completed watermain upgrades of 196 metres along Collingwood Street from Rangitikei Street to Tipai Street.
- We completed an upgrade to the trunk water main from Symes Road to State Highway 3 (Stage 1) in May 2024.

3 Waters and Rooding

A joint project contract was awarded to Fulton Hogan in February 2024 to commence enabling works for the Carson Street extension. This work was successfully completed in June 2024 and will facilitate future development in the area.

Hapū Engagement

We remain committed to maintaining strong relationships and collaboration with Hapū, adhering to Te Awa Tupua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles. We are working with Iwi / Hapū to develop appropriate ways to build

relationships and carry out mahi together. This approach allows us to build trust, meaningful exchange and the partnerships that are essential and core to any Kaupapa within the Te Ao Māori framework.

We have continued throughout 2023/24 to progress the global water take consent with Horizons Regional Council and continue ongoing partnership with Hapū and Iwi, recognising the interconnectedness of the groundwater system and the wider environment.

Emergency works

In April 2024, we made network improvements by eliminating the watermain running from Iwiroa Terrace / Moray Place to Burtts Road. This ran through private property and required the installation of a new main, connecting the existing main in Burtts Road to the Portal / N^o2 Line main. Resident feedback was positive with noted improvements in water pressure and quality.

Water Quality

We took the initiative to put in extra protection for our drinking water supply to protect the community against bacteria and viruses, alongside the existing chlorination and robust testing regimes that we currently have in place. Accordingly, we undertook scoping and design work during the year in order to

have ultraviolet (UV) treatment installed by 31 December 2025.

Kai Iwi Bore 4 had a positive total coliform result in April 2024 which means that it is now a Class 2 bore and requires a protozoa (i.e. UV) barrier. Taumata Arowai were satisfied that UV treatment is planned, but will be monitoring the risk in the interim.

The Pākaraka bore is currently interim Class 1 due to a positive E.coli result in February 2024. We will be required to undertake significantly more sampling for the next 1-2 years, and have no positive results, before the bore can be reclassified as Class 2. UV treatment and minor chlorine system upgrades are planned to reduce risk for this water source.

Our performance

We met our targets for receiving less than 90 complaints per 1000 connections about the water, the percentage of real water loss from the network reticulation system (Result: 25%, Target: <40%), and the average amount of water consumed per resident per day (Result: 286L Target: <350L).

As well as complying with all of our consent conditions from Horizons Regional Council, 143 fire hydrants in the district were tested, flushed and inspected, and complied with the New Zealand Fire Service's code of practice for water supply and pressure.

Although we met our target for resolving urgent callouts within 22 hours, our attendance of urgent callouts exceeded the one hour median response time and work has been undertaken to improve the accuracy of reporting times. Priority has been given to addressing urgent callouts which impacted on our ability to respond to non-urgent requests as quickly as desired.

We did not meet the 100% target for bacterial (94.68%) or protozoal (75.6%) compliance with the new drinking water quality assurance rules (DWQAR). This was due to the requirement to

meet the higher standards of treatment and monitoring introduced by DWQAR in January 2023 and not because bacteria or protozoa was detected in our drinking water. The safety of our water has not changed.

As well as the ongoing sampling and monitoring regime, work is underway to install ultraviolet treatment on all water supply sources to provide an operational protozoal barrier. Together with the existing chlorination systems, these solutions will mean water will be compliant with the new protozoal and bacterial treatment rules as it leaves each plant.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Symes Road to State Highway 3 watermain upgrade: Initially planned to be undertaken as one project, it was decided to implement this project in stages due to budgetary constraints and coordination requirements with other utilities such as Chorus. Stage one was completed in 2023/24 with stage two scheduled for the 2024/25 financial year.

Somme Parade watermain replacement: Scheduled for the 2023/24 fiscal year, this project was postponed to the 2024/25 year due to budgetary limitations.

Surrey Road watermain replacement stage two: This project was postponed from the 2023/24 year to the 2024/25 year due to budgetary constraints, groundwater level considerations and resource availability.

Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue link road: As part of the Springvale Structure Plan that enables new housing in this area, a project to construct a new link road between Fox Road and Fitzherbert Avenue had been scheduled to start in the 2023/24 fiscal year. Stage one – installation of utilities (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water) has been deferred to 2024/25 and also includes an upgrade to the Fox Road watermain due to housing growth in this area.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	1,945	1,499
Operating expenditure	5,771	7,060

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Stormwater drainage

The stormwater system is the piped network which services the Whanganui urban area. The stormwater activity operates in conjunction with the waterways and natural drainage activity which is responsible for the non-piped stormwater assets such as open drains, streams, attenuation areas and storm flow paths. Together these activities form the council's urban stormwater drainage system.

Stormwater

Stormwater collection and its disposal are necessary within urban areas in order to protect people, their land, and their property from wet weather inundation, land instability and public health issues. The system also assists to provide access and safe navigation to properties and across the city during periods of wet weather and reduces maintenance on the roading network.

Waterways and natural drainage

The main objective for Whanganui's waterways and natural drainage is to ensure they behave effectively and efficiently. These systems are critical to allow or mitigate flooding impacts within the urban area. Natural water systems must be managed to meet environmental and amenity standards for the district's wellbeing.

What we did in 2023/24

Stormwater upgrades

Our \$1.4M stormwater upgrade of Raupo Street to Puriri Street saw 108 metres of pipe installed in Raupo Street from Hinau to Matipo Street. An additional 583 metres was laid from Matipo Street up to Kowhai Street and along Raupo Street. This work was 95% completed by the end of the financial year.

We also completed an upgrade project in Sandcroft Drive that included the installation of check valves, air emittance valves, control valves, along with a siphon charging point and manholes.

Talbot Street Stormwater Outfalls

A project to replace a 600mm and a 450mm stormwater outfall from Talbot Street to the Whanganui River was completed in June 2024. The site is awaiting landscaping with the design developed in collaboration with Hapū and allows for a native riparian planting pallet to complement the riverbank environment. The design gave specific consideration to viewing lines for rowing on the Whanganui River as it coincides with the rowing race 1000 metre milestone.

3 Waters and Roding

A joint project contract was awarded to Fulton Hogan in February 2024 to commence enabling works for the Carson Street extension. This work was successfully completed in June 2024 to facilitate future development in the area.

Stormwater drainage

Work commenced on a \$2.5M drainage project to upgrade Smithfield Road from N^o 23 Smithfield Road up Moore Avenue to London Street and up to Konini Street. This involved upgrading the existing 475 metres of stormwater pipe to 900mm and 200 metres of sewer main to 225mm. The project is 75% completed with the remainder on hold until the new financial year.

Community and Iwi/Hapū engagement

We have been focusing on community engagement to ensure good outcomes in relation to our waterways with a number of smaller catchment groups starting to emerge such as Kokohuia/Titoki, Putiki/Durie Hill, Turoa Road and Aramoho.

We remain committed to maintaining strong relationships and collaboration with Hapū,

adhering to Te Awa Tupua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles.

Wetland projects

The formation of the Mokoia Catchment Roopu (MCR) in late 2023 presented an opportunity to lead the way globally with a Hapū-led approach in wetland development. MCR will be guided by Hapū and the community they represent, with involvement from council and other Hapū and community stakeholders, in accordance with Te Awa Tupua Settlement Act 2017. This is to support the development of the Kokohuia and Titoki wetlands in Castlecliff.

As well as positive ecological, recreational and cultural outcomes, the wetland developments will help to reduce flooding in the Heads Road area and provide robust treatment of stormwater run-off before it discharges into the tidal reaches of the Whanganui River. This project is contained in a programme of works in the council's long-term plan 2024-34.

Waterways and natural drainage

Stream restoration and riparian planting projects were delivered in partnership with Hapū, community groups, Horizons Regional Council and the Department of Conservation. This work included fish passage surveys and whitebait spawning.

Our performance

There were no flooding events this year therefore all measures regarding flood events and response times were met.² The Whanganui River Flood plan did not need to be activated during the year.

The number of urban floor-levels at risk during the flood design-event remained below target. This measure provides a qualitative assessment of the potential impact of flooding in an unusually large rain event of urban

buildings, enabling better planning and mitigation strategies.

We met and held compliance for all of our stormwater activity resource consents, and also met the target for the number of complaints received about the performance of the stormwater system.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue link road: As part of the Springvale Structure Plan that enables new housing in this area, a project to construct a new link road between Fox Road and Fitzherbert Avenue had been scheduled to start in the 2023/24 fiscal year. Stage one – installation of utilities (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water) has been deferred to 2024/25.

Emerson Street stormwater upgrade: A new stormwater main and outfall structure will be installed on Emerson Street, extending from Brunswick Road to Kaikokopu Stream and will be undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 includes the construction of the outfall structure and new stormwater pipe from the outfall structure to the kerb at N^o 7 Emerson Street and is planned for the 2024/25 fiscal year. Stage 2 will commence within the upcoming 3-year block of work. The new stormwater pipe aims to mitigate the flooding issues on Emerson Street and downstream of Brunswick Road.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	2,040	4,942
Operating expenditure	3,520	5,297

² A flooding event is defined by the Department of Internal Affairs as an event which inundates one or more habitable floors

*These are summary figures from the group
Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual
Report 23/24 for details.*

Sewerage and the treatment and disposal of sewage

We provide and manage two wastewater systems that comprise of service lines, pipe networks, pump stations, treatment plants and outfalls.

The urban service transfers domestic and trade wastewater through its network of wastewater pipes and pumping stations before being treated to public health and environmental standards and then discharged to sea through the ocean outfall.

A separate scheme serves the Mowhanau community where wastewater is collected and treated using a sand filtration system before being discharged to land.

What we did in 2023/24

Wastewater renewals

Work continued on the \$3.8M Nixon Street wastewater renewal project. Stage 1 of the project to renew 549 metres of sewer main from Anzac Parade to Moana Street using micro-tunnelling was 99% completed as at the end of the financial year. In November 2023 we commenced Stage 2 of the project involving 326 metres renewal work from Moana Street to Raine Street. This work was 80% completed as at the end of the financial year.

A contract for the Eastown Road wastewater renewal was awarded to Downers NZ Ltd with work commencing in May 2024 and completed by financial year-end.

Also commencing in May 2024, and 75% completed at financial year-end, was the upgrade of an existing 250 metres of wastewater main on Karamu Street from Attrill Place to Totara Street with depths between two and five metres.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

We replaced the biological-filter media. This filtration material helps to increase the surface

area for biological processes and enhances the efficiency of the water treatment process.

Maintenance on the dryer was carried out in early 2024 to make it fully operational.

Pump Stations

The power generator feed to the Beach Road pump station failed in early 2024 requiring the plant to run on a generator for three days. We successfully rebuilt one of the screens at the plant with the other screen being scheduled for similar maintenance to ensure the continued functionality of the plant.

3 Waters and Roading

A joint project contract was awarded to Fulton Hogan in February 2024 to commence enabling works for the Carson Street extension. This work was successfully completed in June 2024 and will facilitate future development in this area.

Hapū Engagement

We remain committed to maintaining strong relationships and collaboration with Hapū, adhering to Te Awa Tupua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles.

Discharge consent

The team made good progress and meaningful engagement with Hapū/Iwi towards a collaborative approach on assessing options for the renewal of our discharge consent to sea which expires in mid-2026.

Discharges during the 2023/24 reporting period were compliant with consent limits.

Our performance

Our median response times for attending and resolving sewerage overflows resulting from blockages or other faults were within target, as was the number of dry weather sewerage overflows from the system.

We met and held compliance for all of our wastewater discharge resource consents.

We received 188 complaints related to the sewerage system and did not meet the target of less than five per 1000 connections. Ongoing analysis of complaint data and results will be essential to reduce complaint numbers and improve customer satisfaction.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue link road: As part of the Springvale Structure Plan that enables new housing in this area, a project to construct a new link road between Fox Road and Fitzherbert Avenue had been scheduled to start in the 2023/24 fiscal year. Stage one – installation of utilities (stormwater, wastewater and drinking water) has been deferred to 2024/25.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	1,457	3,698
Operating expenditure	10,745	12,690

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Provision of roads and footpaths

Roading

The roading activity manages the district's roads, bridges, traffic management and control systems, and streetlights, and contributes to our economic and social enhancement.

Footpaths and berms

The footpaths and berms activity provides a network of urban and rural footpaths and walkways, berms and street furniture (seats / benches, bus shelters, rubbish bins).

What we did in 2023/24

Roading

Maintenance and Renewals

Forestry activities ramped up in 2023/24, particularly up Tokomaru West Road, Koatanui Road, Thompson Road, Longacre Road, Rangitatau East Road, and Kauarapaoa Road. These areas have at least 8 months to 2 years of harvesting still to be completed.

Maintenance attention was focussed onto these roads with the metalling of Tokomaru West Road, Koatanui Road, Kauarapaoa Road and completion of over 4000 square metres of stabilisation and road repair prior to a first-coat seal of Longacre Road.

We undertook a risk-based assessment of roading pavement faults to ensure that we could maximise the delivery of our work within the significantly restricted budget available.

Our road resealing programme was completed with 3.98% of the network completed. The reseal programme was completed in April 2024.

Somme Parade drop-out

We repaired a drop-out in Somme Parade that had initially occurred during the Cyclone Dovi weather event in 2022 and deteriorated in subsequent weather events. We also stabilised the gas main that supplies a significant

number of properties in Aramoho and Whanganui East. The \$6.6M project was completed in July 2024. Works included enclosing the slip site with sheet pile walling and reinstatement of the road, kerb and channel, and replacing the footpath with a walking and cycling pathway. The project was 60/40 split funded by New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) Waka Kotahi (\$3.96M) and Council (\$2.64M). Managing the traffic diversion around the site was challenging with over 100,000 vehicles a week using the detour. We also mitigated the noise and vibration generated from the site using sound absorbent screens around the noisy machinery units and a high-frequency driving head for the sheet pile work which reduced the noise outside of the site to under guideline levels.

Roading improvements

Modifications were made to optimise the Victoria Avenue / Guyton Street traffic lights and the Guyton Street / Wicksteed Street roundabout was installed as part of the Streets for People project. A temporary roundabout was also installed at the Ingestre Street / Wicksteed Street intersection to test how it impacts on safety.

Mountains to Sea trails

Progress was made on a number of shared pathways. The extension from Gilbert Street to Wharf Street was 80% completed as at 30 June 2024. The Somme Parade shared

pathway from the Dublin Street Bridge to Spier Street was completed as well as the section at the cemetery. New walking and cycling counters were installed at the Dublin Street / Somme Parade pathway and at Aramoho Rail Bridge / Anzac Parade.

Erni's Bridge / Wakefield Street Bridge

The contract for Erni's Bridge (Bridge 15) was awarded with detailed design being worked through. The contractor began the bridge renewal in early July 2024 and is programmed to complete by 30 October 2024. A design contract was awarded for the Wakefield Street Bridge and geotechnical investigations completed.

A new bridge at the 1 kilometre mark was completed in early July 2024 on Creek Road and is now open to the public. Substantial forestry activity is expected to use that bridge immediately to boost GDP in the region.

Footpaths

The footpath renewal programme was constrained by budget with any renewals being prioritised based on condition. Maintenance work was completed on the eastern side of the river.

Road Safety Promotion

A total of 23 schools (3,054 students) took part in the Mā Ake Let's Go Cycle Skills programme during the year. The programme is targeted at cycle and scooter skills with multi-level training levels and has been delivered by Whanganui Multisport Club Ltd trading as GrowZone.

We delivered a number of small-scale traffic calming and safety improvement projects during the year. This included the installation of speed cushions around identified school sites and on Harper Street / Swiss Street in an accident hotspot. A number of central splitter islands and raised pedestrian platforms were installed under the Road to Zero programme and a guardrail was installed on Virginia Road (Christies Hill). A temporary roundabout is also being trialled at the Dublin Street / Bell Street intersection to improve traffic safety and improve across-town traffic flow.

Flood damage recovery

During 2023/24 approximately \$7.5M was spent rectifying damage following emergency events. We have applied to NZTA Waka Kotahi to have funding carried forward and the remaining work will be completed during 2024/25.

Bus shelters

In collaboration with Horizons Regional Council, we secured \$1.1M from NZTA Waka Kotahi through the Transport Choices programme to improve the local bus network. As well as constructing 15 new bus shelters at key locations across the city, the upgraded bus stops feature bike racks, digital information boards and improved accessibility and lighting.

Progress on Dublin Street Bridge Replacement

The Strategic Transport Model has been calibrated and verified and the first of the model output reports produced for the assessment of the Dublin Street Bridge replacement business case.

Preliminary discussions with Iwi have started as part of the development of the Dublin Street Bridge business case preparation.

Our performance

We experienced one fatality and 17 serious injury crashes on the local road network during the year. There has been a significant change in direction regarding the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport. Funding of the previous Road to Zero projects that were developed to reduce deaths and serious injuries by 2030 are being reprioritised into core roading maintenance and renewal activities. It is expected that there will be less targeted funding being allocated to implement improvements in road safety for the district.

Ride quality on the urban road network remained constant compared to last year but reduced on the rural road network with cost escalations and ongoing resource limitations having affected the maintenance programme.

We exceeded our 90% targets for roading and footpath-related customer service requests being actioned within five working days.

In July 2023 we replaced the footpath condition rating assessment (defect scores) with a new condition rating scale. 81% of the district’s urban footpaths met the standard of being in excellent to fair condition in a survey undertaken in February 2023 with 19% rated as priority 4 (poor condition). Our footpath repair programme was reviewed during the year to focus on the most serious faults and prioritise the less significant ones.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Renewal construction of the Aramoho pedestrian bridge will be delayed until appropriate funding is secured. Tender prices exceeded the funding cap of the NZTA Waka Kotahi Low Cost Low Risk category and require a business case to be submitted to NZTA as a result. Temporary repairs to the surface and handrails of the bridge were undertaken as a priority.

Design has now been finalised to consenting drawings for Culvert #49 Kauarapaoa Road. Resource consent has been lodged with Horizons Regional Council with the design and consenting teams responding to questions and working to confirm the culvert sizing so that production of the box culvert sections can commence. Hapū engagement is continuing with work on the landscaping plan due to commence shortly. This project will be delivered in the 2024/25 financial year.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	13,216	11,401
Operating expenditure	9,691	19,813

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Parks and recreation

We provide a range of services and facilities that offer access to sports and recreation opportunities for residents. These include parks, open spaces, reserves, sports grounds and swimming pools. These facilities encourage quality of life and healthy lifestyles, and are important for the wellbeing of the district.

What we did in 2023/24

Parks and reserves

We supported an upgrade of Lorenzdale Park in Gonville with a strong focus on accessibility. The playground was formally opened for use in April. The upgrade was truly a combined project between multiple contributors including Stone Soup Community, council, Sport Whanganui, Whanganui Community Foundation, Te Ora Hou, Department of Internal Affairs and the Playground Centre.

We made improvements at the aviary with enrichment and activity promotion for the birds and made changes to the feeding regime. This was to address concerns raised in an independent zoologist report regarding the health and wellbeing of the birds.

We installed core boards at Kowhai Park to help people with verbal communication and encourage active and inclusive participation in play.

Improvements were made at Castlecliff Domain's playground including the installation of a new tunnel slide, a shelter, picnic tables that feature wheelchair access and a new drinking fountain. As part of a larger project designed to revitalise the Domain, the Painting up the Park! project received partial funding from council's Public Art Fund to transform the local basketball court into a colourful and vibrant canvas.

A tender process was undertaken to replace the flying fox at Mowhanau. This work is intended to be undertaken before the end of September 2024.

In conjunction with Sport Whanganui who are procuring a basketball hoop, we laid a concrete pad for basketball at Williams Domain.

We undertook drainage works on field 2 at Wembley Park which helped to improve playing conditions during the 2024 season.

Construction was completed on the new track at the Cooks Gardens velodrome with the replacement wooden track having a 50-year warranty. The track has been formally certified as a category 3 venue for cycling and is designed for use by local community members, local, regional and national elite cyclists and future NZ Masters Games participants. Along with track cycling, we actively promoted the inner circle of the Velodrome as a venue for bookings such as car shows, concerts, fairs and markets.

With concerns raised over the cost of the Pukenuamu Queens Park landscaping project, steps were taken to revise the scope and look at how the project could be staged over time. Landscaping to the immediate surrounds of the redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery building will be undertaken ahead of the gallery's opening in November 2024.

Cooks Gardens

Alongside regular users of the facility, we hosted a number of sporting events and bookings throughout the year including Heartland Rugby, Tough Kids, Cooks Classic, Relay for Life and a number of school athletics during Term 4 (2023) and Term 1 (2024).

Swimming pools

We have continued to make a number of improvements to service delivery since bringing the swimming pool operations back in-house in September 2022. Following an initial large recruitment drive for qualified lifeguards and instructors, the Splash Centre was fully staffed at year-end with adequate staffing levels to run the facility in full from February 2023.

A number of technical improvements have been made during 2023/24. We implemented Envibe – a leisure centre point of sale system that includes an online booking system for Learn to Swim and fitness classes, shows live lane availability, and can manage memberships and concessions.

Alongside the earlier introduction of Ezidebit for direct debit payment functionality, these systems have proven successful in streamlining bookings, payments, and can show real-time information of users and financials.

A recreational refresh was undertaken in the second half of the financial year with planned maintenance works and a number of improvements made. These included making spaces such as the hydrotherapy pool more accessible with larger entry gaps and fire egress doors being on automatic releases. We also installed lockable lockers, privacy cubicles in the men's changing rooms, repainted the pools and walls, and made improvements to the sauna and to the flooring and balustrade in the recreational side of the facility to open up the space for use and birthday bookings.

Our Performance

Parks and reserves

Use of the river shared pathway and Te Tuaiwi shared pathway increased by 6.7% with a collective total of 271,282 cyclists and pedestrians over the reporting period.

While not meeting their targets, community satisfaction levels with our sportsgrounds and the maintenance and presentation of our open spaces increased from last year. Satisfaction with the toilet facilities (standard and adequate facilities to meet user needs) declined however. There are significant upgrades and replacements to a number of public toilets scheduled to start in 2028.

The percentage of households within 800 metres walking distance of a premier or passive park remained constant at 74%. The provision of open space remains a significant part of the actions included in the Open Spaces and Physical Activity Strategy adopted in 2022.

Cooks Gardens

Cooks Gardens Function Centre has been well used throughout the year and exceeded its target with 94 functions held. Track and field use, although consistent during the year, did not meet the target of 120 days usage. Results only record bookings made and do not capture informal use. Of the eight surveys completed, 100% of the hirers were either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience.

The percentage of the community surveyed who have used, visited or attended an event at Cooks Gardens increased by 12% however the result of 36% is not considered to be reflective of total usage of the venue.

Swimming pools

Survey data indicates that 80% of Splash Centre users (9,535 total responses) were positively satisfied with their experience. Of these responses, further feedback provided indicated 59% satisfaction that our aquatic facilities provide value for money. Data was unavailable for the Whanganui East pool user satisfaction as it was not captured this season.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Tiered seating and shelter at Springvale Park – this concept was proposed following feedback

from user surveys however was not developed in time to proceed within the reporting period.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	2,016	2,148
Operating expenditure	11,788	12,125

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Community and Cultural

Supporting community services and facilities as well as promoting cultural enrichment encourages a tolerant and strong community. The council oversees the management of key cultural facilities, ensures appropriate stewardship of nationally important collections, works closely with central government departments, and focuses on collaboration to achieve shared objectives for improving outcomes and wellbeing across a culturally and socially diverse community.

What we did in 2023/24

Community

Community Grants

Council allocates \$150,000 annually for community contracts with \$50,000 set aside for projects of significance that deliver or support long-term plan outcomes. The remaining \$100,000 funded saw 26 of the 31 applications successfully receive funding that will benefit the community and are linked to Safer Whanganui's strategic direction. Safer Whanganui is a community-led coalition of agencies and groups working in partnership to provide leadership and direction for the promotion of community safety in Whanganui.

Arts and culture

We saw a number of events delivered from the 2023 funding round of the Creative Communities Scheme and another ten successful applicants for the 2024 funding round. The scheme is a partnership with Creative New Zealand to promote local arts projects. One-off festival funding was made available during the year by Creative NZ to help alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on the arts sector.

We funded four applications to the public art fund. Artworks already delivered in 2023/24 include murals for the Toy Museum and Castlecliff playground.

We worked closely with Tamaupoko and Tupoho arts representatives to co-design our public spaces and integrate artworks. This work included the Streets for People upgrade

of Guyton Street and the bus shelter designs at the new transport hub on St Hill Street.

Our annual joint initiative with Chorus saw four local artists funded to beautify telecommunication cabinets with their small-scale murals.

The town centre played host to a free community event marking the Matariki and Puanga season. This was a collaborative effort with Mainstreet Whanganui and Whanganui Māori Regional Tourism Organisation and supported by Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Safer Whanganui

We continued to advocate for a Safer Community through the work of the seven reference groups. Our safety & wellbeing annual Family Fun Day at Springvale Stadium enabled the community to have a day of free fun along with engaging with services and learning how to keep safe at home and in the community.

With support from council, Safer Whanganui ran a water safety promotion in November at Castlecliff Beach with fun activities and information from supporting agencies. This was in conjunction with a video competition for local students about safe swimming practices.

Play

Community groups have been supported to develop play programmes such as the Play Lab at Hakeke Community Centre and Library. More opportunities were created for families and tamariki at public events such as Artists

Open Studios and the Streets for People launch. The Play Trailer continues to be a highly utilised resource in our community and was booked on 240 days throughout 2023/24.

Youth

The Youth Council continued to meet and look for opportunities to increase youth voice. They supported the Youth Services Trust consultation on a name change (Whatever), conducted their own survey and volunteered at their Street Party / open day.

The Youth Council funded six projects as part of their 600ships. These included a range of projects supporting professional development and leadership, and increasing youth access to sport and arts.

Housing

Work was undertaken in the initial months of the financial year to seek resource consent to establish an interim homeless hub at 83 Taupo Quay and the fit-out of two containers for an ablution block and kitchenette. As a result of the collaborative efforts by a number of agencies to provide wrap-around support services, the number of homeless living within the freedom camping sites, and at the homeless hub, reduced significantly.

Council then changed its approach and resolved to halt further spending on the Taupo Quay homeless hub and instead reinvest towards ongoing support services. We continued to work with Tupoho and Kainga Ora to support the delivery of new social housing to Whanganui.

Climate Change

With the energy efficiency audits of council facilities completed, we worked on a plan to prioritise efficiency savings.

The Community Climate Action Fund saw 8 of the 13 applications receive funding from a total funding round pool of \$100,000. The initiative is designed to empower local residents to turn their climate action ideas into reality.

Work was undertaken on the climate change risk and threats analysis for the district to inform the upcoming long-term plan.

The Office of the Auditor General selected us as one of four councils nationwide to complete an audit of our climate change response.

Welcoming Communities

We provided support to the annual 'Welcoming Week' in September and continued to support initiatives for making Whanganui more welcoming for newcomers with the Welcoming Activities Fund.

New Zealand Glassworks (NZG) Te Whare Tūhua o Te Ao

Our Artist in Residence, Vicki Fanning, spent July 2024 working with the local glass community, including younger practitioners who gained invaluable experience and exposure to a professional artist. Her residency exhibition ran from 14 March – 19 May 2024 with NZG receiving approximately 7,000 visitors over this period.

One of the highlights of the NZG calendar was Art Glass 2023. Opening in August 2023, the exhibition featured the largest number of exhibiting artists to date. Fifteen of New Zealand's leading glass artists, including those based in Australia, showcased their exceptional works.

Our one-year long internship programme commenced in April 2024 with two successful applicants. Supported by Creative NZ, the educational work-placement is an opportunity to gain experience in glassmaking and glass education and skills to pursue a career in glass.

Following a planned maintenance shut-down, two unplanned furnace outages had a significant impact on hiring income between January – April 2024 with the furnace/studio unavailable for use over a 3½ week period. Appropriate measures have been put in place to minimise the likelihood of a similar event happening again.

Libraries

A number of events and activities were run at library venues throughout the year, often in conjunction with community groups and organisations. Amongst others, these included:

Festival of Adult Learning (Sep 2023) – 8 events including sewing and exercise classes, poetry group, craftwork, and sessions promoting library online resources.

La Fiesta (Feb-Mar 2024) – 17 events including exercise classes, craft activities, creative writing and talks by library staff.

Fern Fever month – a combination of talks from well-known local botanists and exhibition items from the Alexander Heritage & Research Library.

Pohutukawa Project – information on Gonville services and businesses in co-operation with Stone Soup, Kainga Ora, Council and Gonville Library.

Lego Club – a newly introduced after-school activity at the Davis Library held once a week.

Appy Seniors, Cyber Smart and Tech Week – digital training sessions and events continue to attract strong demand.

Justice of the Peace – JP services were made available at the Alexander Library on a weekly basis.

As well as regular groups using the library venues for activities such as scrabble, chess, knitting, arts and craft, writing, geneology, and waiata, the Davis library hosted 12 school librarians from St Johns Hill School to learn about the resources available and St Mary's School invited their whole school community to a night tour of the library with more than 70 people attending.

Castlecliff Library and the Hakeke Community Centre and Library celebrated their fifth anniversaries and continue to thrive as essential community-run hubs.

We undertook a public engagement programme in August 2023 surveying the entire adult membership. The near-900 responses informed library activity and the proposed library extension.

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery

Work continued on the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment project throughout the year with most interior building works for Te Pātaka o Tā Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa wing, the heritage building and the link between the two, completed on 30 June 2024. From 1 July 2024, the gallery team will commence their fit-out of the new and restored facilities and install the inaugural exhibition in readiness for the opening on 9 November 2024.

Completion of deferred works, including the external facades of both buildings, the café fit-out and the exterior landscape works will continue into the next financial year.

The Sarjeant Gallery's temporary location on Taupo Quay closed to the public on 30 June 2023 after nine years of operation. We used the gallery spaces for storage, processing, packing and preparation of the 9000+ collection items move back to Pukenamu Queen's Park.

Despite the closure of Sarjeant on the Quay, most of the gallery's back-of-house functions continued as usual. Collection cataloguing, research and enquiries continued and some exhibitions were made available online.

Special events, talks and other activities took place in a range of community locations to maintain interest and continuity. These included monthly talks at the Backhouse with visiting artists, collaborating with the NZ Opera School on performances, collaborating with libraries' Fern Fever project for an online exhibition, hosting three Literary Festival events, and supporting the Awa Rere Roa Whanganui Māori visual arts collective to present a Puanga programme.

As well as continuing our Tylee Residency programme, we continued to build on our partnerships and collaborations with other institutions including a partnership with the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt on an exhibition by Paul Maseyk.

Royal Whanganui Opera House (RWOH)

We hosted a number of performances and events throughout the year including *Performing Arts Festival*, *Alice the Musical* (Mosston School production), *Credence*, *Clearwater Revival*, *Great Opera Moments*, comedians *Bill Bailey* and *Russell Howard*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Six60* with the latter event selling out within minutes of tickets going on sale. Many of these bookings are for multiple days with several hirers using the facility for 7-16 days.

A number of risks identified in an earlier CHASNZ health and safety report continued to be a major focus during the year with lighting changes and the testing and tagging of equipment. The fly floor and rigging system have been decommissioned with options identified in the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 for a suitable replacement subject to a satisfactory business case and confirmed external funding.

We were licenced to operate a bar during the year with its revenue tracking well.

Whanganui War Memorial Centre

Event highlights included *Māori Business Awards*, *NZ Choral Federation*, *Literary Festival*, *Diwali Festival*, *The Harmonic Resonators*, *The Warratahs*, *3 Days Deep* (music festival), *Pride Ball*, *UCOL Graduation*, *International Traumatic Brain Injury Conference*, *Chamber Music (Liam Wooding)* and the *ANZAC Day* ceremony.

These events were in addition to a multitude of other events such as citizenship ceremonies, meetings, workshops, and the *Operatunity* daytime variety concerts held

every 2-3 months for seniors that are near sell-outs every time.

Whanganui Regional Museum

Event highlights included the *Spring Lecture Series 2023*, two sessions of *Ngā Hakinakina Outdoor Games* held at Pākaitore Moutoa Gardens featuring traditional Māori games, School holiday programmes included *Night at the Museum* and craft activities such as making lanterns and traditional Chinese drums. Exhibitions included *Between skin & shirt* (portrait photographs by William Harding), *Fortune* (a knitted yum cha banquet exhibit), and our popular *Outfit of the Month* exhibits and talks. Our atrium has been used for musical performances such as *Music in the Museum* (piano with Rick Baum), and a recital by NZ opera school artists during Whanganui Opera Week. We were also a New Zealand host Museum for the premiere of *The War to End All Wars – The Movie* that coincided with Armistice Day, and hosted a crew from TVNZ filming for an episode of *Country House Hunters*.

We collaborated with the Dowse Art Museum to loan some taxidermied animals for an exhibition and we repatriated some Egyptian remains that have been in our care for over 100 years to the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Wellington.

Our unique exhibition *He Awa Ora – Living River* that tells the story of Te Awa Tupua, the Whanganui River and its people, was recognised as the winning project in the Community Impact category at the Architecture Now Interior Awards 2024.

Council, as a primary funder of the Museum (that is operated by an independent Trust) provided a one-off funding grant of up to \$250,000 to address a forecast deficit that arose during the financial year. A review is to be undertaken to ensure the Museum's sustainability into the future.

Our performance

Community

Despite 75% of survey respondents in our Community Views Survey 2024 who think Whanganui is a creative place (a 5% decline from last year), the percentage of residents participating in creative activities increased by 7% to 32%.

Data to measure the contribution that creative arts and industries made to the district's economy was unavailable for the fiscal year however Infometrics data shows that creative industries contributed \$66.1 million for the 2023 calendar year – an increase of \$8.76 million from the previous calendar year.

The council provides a weekly report to mana whenua of all resource consent applications received and met the 100% target.

New Zealand Glassworks (NZG)

Visitor numbers exceeded target figures by 7% with 31,607 visitors during the year.

The NZG facility was booked for 1,089 hours by practising glass artists in the reporting year. Session availability was significantly impacted due to unplanned furnace maintenance and crucible change in quarters two and three.

User and customer satisfaction were not consistently recorded during the year and was unavailable for the reporting period.

Libraries

The total number of items issued reached 582,018 – a 6% increase compared to last year although the rate of collection 'turn over' declined. There was evidence of a return to consistent visits of our libraries with a 6.5% increase in physical visits since 2022/23. The Davis Library saw a significant decline in activity in June 2024 due to public access restrictions associated with the final phase of the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment.

Annual community views survey responses regarding library use has remained consistent over the past five years with results indicating that 53% of the Whanganui population use the library. Of these respondents, 85% were satisfied with the service provided.

The target for the number of public internet sessions was not met. The library has reduced the total number of access points reflecting the trend of library patrons shifting to alternative access methods although there was a 2.1% increase in the number of public internet sessions when compared to the previous year.

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery

As noted, Sarjeant on the Quay closed permanently to the public at the end of June 2023 so use and satisfaction with the Gallery could not be measured.

Work continued with cataloguing collection items (5,013 items) to best practice international standards. The redeveloped Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery will open on Pukenua Queen's Park in November 2024.

Royal Whanganui Opera House (RWOH)

As well as a 100% satisfaction rating from hirers, 75% of the community users surveyed were satisfied with facilities when attending an event. Reported attendance at one or more events remained constant this year at 35% meeting its target.

The total number of days that the venue was hired during the year was also consistent with last year and users continue to be on-site for multiple days per event (3+ days on average). The limited operation within the stagehouse continues to be challenging. 26 of the events hosted at RWOH were locally produced, community events.

Whanganui War Memorial Centre

The Whanganui War Memorial Centre has been consistently well utilised by community groups (65 locally produced events held) and has hosted some large scale and key events throughout the year.

Hirer satisfaction from 49 survey responses was 100% positive and the annual community views survey results indicate that 74% of the community were satisfied with the facilities.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Design work on the Davis Library extension has not yet been completed and construction has been postponed until 2027.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	14,467	25,826
Operating expenditure	13,582	11,934

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Economic development

Whanganui & Partners is the council’s dedicated economic development unit. While its funding and strategic direction is decided on by the council, its operation as a council-controlled organisation (CCO) was reviewed during the year and a decision was made to bring it in-house. The transition was completed by 30 June 2024.

Whanganui & Partners’ mission is to lead and drive opportunity through business, education and lifestyle. They promote Whanganui as a destination to live, visit, work, study and invest. Their activities include supporting new and existing businesses, bringing events to Whanganui and providing the latest economic data, analysis and commentary on the Whanganui district.

Whanganui & Partners ensure visitors are informed, impressed and ready to return. The activities included in the group are:

- Whanganui & Partners – economic development
- Whanganui i-SITE Visitor Information Centre

What we did in 2023/24

Economic development

For detail on the activities and financial performance reporting for economic development and the Whanganui i-SITE Visitor Information Centre, please refer to Whanganui & Partners’ statement of service performance on pages 131-151 of our full Annual Report.

Our performance

i-SITE

Visitors to the i-SITE totalled 17,260, an overall increase on the previous reporting year but not meeting its target figure of 25,500. There were increases in international visitor numbers (+ 55%) and local visitors (+5%) but a decline in domestic visitor numbers (-5.5%). Visitor numbers are nearly identical to last year indicating a potential new reality in the tourism sector. Work is underway to explore other opportunities to grow bookings and support reciprocal relationships with local businesses.

Customer satisfaction with i-SITE service received an average rating of 4.9 out of 5 (53 reviews received).

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	0	0
Operating expenditure	3,187	3,522

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Community facilities and services

The council provides services and facilities that help to sustain the safety and welfare of our community, preserve our exceptional heritage and infrastructure, and protect our environment and awa.

What we did in 2023/24

Cemeteries

With the current cemetery at Pākaraka having reached its capacity, we established a new fence line within the cemetery area and installed a new beam for burials.

As a requirement for resource consent we completed testing of the cremator stack in April.

We installed a new gas radiator heater system in the Crematorium Chapel.

CBD maintenance

We undertook a revitalisation project of two blocks of central Guyton Street and enhancement of the public transport hub in St Hill Street under the Streets for People programme. The project was 90% funded by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and is aimed at trialling streetscape improvements to make them more vibrant and people-friendly.

Changes to the two locations included seating, greenery, lighting and street art that reflect Whanganui's history and culture. Traffic calming measures were also installed in Guyton Street to improve safety to pedestrians and cyclists.

As part of the project, Richard White, a local property owner, offered some of his land for use. Corwen Park, as it is now known, was able to be integrated into the project design for Guyton Street.

Waste minimisation

We undertook a rigorous tender process which saw us review 11 different options from businesses across New Zealand before confirming Low Cost Bins as the contractor for the new kerbside recycling service starting in the first week of July 2024. Three crates were delivered to each household within the collection zones alongside a successful communications and marketing campaign.

Our food scraps trial progressed well with over 200 households participating. We are planning to launch kerbside food waste collection in July 2025.

Council formally took over the operations of the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre from the centre's trust from June 2024, coinciding with the new kerbside recycling service that will launch in the first week of July 2024.

We consulted on and adopted a new Solid Waste Bylaw that regulates waste services in our district.

A finalised report of the Territorial Authority Waste Levy Audit conducted in May 2023 was received in January 2024 and identified full compliance with our obligations under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008.

We held another popular Household Hazardous Waste Day in April. 76 people registered and 686 kilograms of disused products were collected and environmentally disposed of.

Older persons' council housing³

We completed roof replacements at the Eugene Crotty complex and Insulflu insulation was installed in the Nixon Street/Kawakawa complex.

Community buildings

We maintained Building Warrant of Fitness requirements for all community buildings in accordance with current Building Compliance Schedules and carried out minor reactive maintenance as required.

Emergency management

As part of the national annual ShakeOut preparedness exercise, the Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM) team supported students, staff and helpers at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O te Atihaunui-A-Paparangi, Putiki Wharanui Te Kohanga Reo and Putiki Kindergarten through earthquake and tsunami drills.

Along with Horizons Regional Council, we delivered information packs to Anzac Parade residents on how they can be informed, prepared and ready to act in the event of a large flood. The information packs were part of the recommended actions in a strategy prepared by Massey University, alongside residents and both councils, to improve community resilience and build awareness in an area that has a history of flooding.

Animal management

Due to proactive work of the animal management team, the known dog population (as opposed to those registered) continued to rise during the year with 8609 known dogs compared with 8437 recorded in 2022/23.

Limited rental housing in the district and 'no pets' clauses in tenancy agreements has led to increased challenges for us to rehome animals.

Our animal education continued with the responsible dog owner programme and

informal discussions with dog owners to improve barking and dog behaviour.

Building control

Our bi-annual International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) Audit was programmed for January and successfully achieved. This audit determines if Council can continue to certify under the Building Act 2004. We were considered a low-risk and high-performing organisation.

Consent applications remained high in the first part of the financial year and at a level higher than resourced for. Nationally there was a drop in consent numbers.

As required by regulations under the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016, we have been identifying potential earthquake-prone buildings within the city's priority building and thoroughfare group in advance of relevant notices being distributed to business owners by the end of 2024.

Environmental health

We maintained our 100% legislative compliance for food audits and verifications under the Ministry for Primary Industries' Quality Management System (QMS).

We implemented changes to the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 objection timeframes, public notifications and changes around the rules for creating and administering local alcohol policies.

Resource management

Consent applications remained high during the financial year with some extremely complex applications. A consent monitoring officer joined us in May 2023 to actively manage these.

Environmental policy

As part of a regular review of the District Plan, we undertook consultation, and adopted, a

³ Previously referred to as Pensioner Housing, this term was replaced in 2022 with Older Persons' Housing when the *Older Persons' Council Housing Policy* was adopted.

number of proposed minor changes to Plan Change 60 – Miscellaneous 2.

We sought nominations for buildings, sites and structures that the community values for heritage significance. This work helped to inform our work when reviewing the District Plan’s historic heritage chapter. Further feedback from the community was sought in May on our intended direction with regard to new rules that might apply to Plan Change 63 – Historic Heritage.

Council provides financial assistance to building owners to undertake heritage enhancement work. Twelve successful applications received funding for heritage enhancement projects.

Parking services

We undertook pre-engagement for the review of the parking bylaw and parking controls prior to public consultation in March 2024. The revised parking bylaw and controls were adopted in June.

Our Performance

Cemeteries

A park survey to measure satisfaction with cemetery facilities was not undertaken this year and therefore no results are available to report. A number of improvements were undertaken throughout the year including the installation of additional concrete edging to the rose gardens and a heating upgrade in the chapel. A specific area that will allow cultural observance for Hindu burials is to be constructed in the 2024/25 financial year.

Future burial and cremation needs of the community continue to be met with adequate capacity across all cemeteries for 2500 interments. 495 burial spaces and 1091 cremation plots were available as at 30 June 2024.

All cemetery records since 2007 have been digitised and are available to the public online.

The project to have the remainder of historical burial and cremation records available online continues but other digitisation projects have taken priority.

CBD maintenance

There were six complaints regarding cleanliness (5) or hygiene (1) of public toilets. All toilets were cleaned on a regular schedule and maintenance issues addressed promptly.

Satisfaction with the town centre’s contribution to the image of Whanganui (73%) and with its standard of presentation (75%) did not meet respective targets but both results increased by 3% from the previous year. The revitalisation projects in Guyton Street and St Hill St areas were completed in May 2024 and after the community views survey was undertaken. We would expect to see improvement in results going forward.

58% of residents indicated that they felt safe in the CBD during the evening. This was an increase of 5% from 2022/23 and we continue to work with NZ Police and other partners to ensure our CBD is safer at night. As well as CCTV cameras, regular community patrols are undertaken and the CBD has a liquor ban which all contribute to community safety.

Waste minimisation

Fifteen iconic events were held in public parks and reserves during the year with appropriate waste minimisation plans in place, a total attendance of 22,150 people and 25.5 cubic metres of waste diverted from landfill.

Education on waste minimisation continued to be a focus with a total of 10 schools (involving 40 classes) having had Zero Waste Education visits during the year.

The amount of product recycled through the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre (WRRCC) totalled 2384.4 tonnes. A fire in the OJI Fibre Solutions building at the facility in early

December 2023 required a full closure of WRRC followed by limitations on the products accepted. This impacted significantly on the amount of product recycled through the centre during a period that is usually the busiest time of the year.

Data to measure customer satisfaction with the centre was unavailable. There were four complaints received during the year and an average 545 visitors to the WRRC per day (approximately 198,925 visitors per year).

Older persons' housing

An annual survey of Council's older persons' housing service indicated a high level of satisfaction with the welfare services provided and with the service overall.

Occupancy of the older persons' housing units averaged 96.6% during the reporting year.

Emergency management

National weather events and pandemic response has heightened public interest in emergency management with 90% of the survey respondents indicating that they could cope for at least three days during an emergency event. Council's pandemic response resurgence plan was reviewed quarterly and remains aligned to the national plan.

A focus on community training or engagement saw 51 events held with community groups, schools and resthomes. Outreach activities were also undertaken in the communities prone to flooding such as Anzac Parade and Putiki.

A 24/7 duty roster shared amongst our most experienced Civil Defence emergency management staff ensured that calls were responded to within 15 minutes. There were also seven activations of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) including four exercises.

Ongoing difficulties with technical tsunami siren providers delayed repairs during the year and the target of rectifying any identified fault within 10 working days was not met. As well as 24/7 cover being provided by on-call staff, there is continued coverage from four Stinger mobile systems in the event of an emergency.

Animal management

The number of known dogs increased over the reporting year and is the highest recorded due to the proactive work undertaken by the animal management team. As a result, it was more difficult to achieve the target rate of 97% registration with a result of 91% however work continues to bridge this compliance gap. The target for responsible dog owners was exceeded. Having this status entitles dog owners to a discount on their annual dog registration fee.

Community satisfaction with animal control services increased by 6% this year (Result: 44%, Target: >52%). Regulatory services generally tend to score low satisfaction ratings due to the nature of the work.

An average of 99% Priority 1 (urgent) callouts were attended within one hour with 100% of callouts attended within the 60-minute timeframe in the last reporting quarter. Priority 1 callouts include dog attack (bite), dog rushing, policy/agency request, secured dog or wandering stock (if a state highway).

Building control

Although there was a significant improvement on the previous year's results, the percentage of building consents processed within statutory timeframes did not meet the 100% target. 749 of 822 building consent applications and clause 2 territorial authority exemptions were processed within 20 working days. Six out of the seven responses measuring customer satisfaction with the building

consent services indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied.

Council's building consent authority accreditation was renewed in May 2024 and will remain current until January 2026.

Environmental health

Inspections of all health-licenced and alcohol-licenced premises, as legislatively required, were inspected during the reporting year and education sessions were held with alcohol licensees on an ad-hoc basis. All requirements and warrants were maintained in accordance with council policy and Ministry for Primary Industry legislation relating to the Food Act 2014.

Processing times for alcohol licence applications averaged 62% over the year. There were 350 applications received during 2023/24 and processing times were impacted by legislative changes that took effect earlier in the reporting year, requests for further information, and approval delays by third parties. Internal process changes resulted in improvements to processing times with the 100% target having been met in the last six weeks of quarter four.

All excessive noise complaints were attended but not always within the 30 minute target timeframe (Result: 80%, Target: >95%). This can be attributed to external factors such as the number of complaints, internal resourcing and the availability of assistance from external organisations.

The environmental health team received only compliments, and no complaints, about the services provided.

Parking services

Community satisfaction with the availability of on-street parking increased by 3% from the previous year and remained consistent with 2021 and 2022 results (Result: 56%, Target: >60%).

Resource management

A total of 201 resource consents (land use) and subdivision consents were issued, with 115 of these approved within the statutory timeframe of 20 working days. Some large, complex and long-running applications increased the average consenting days across the third and fourth quarters however their approval will see significant additions to housing stock in Whanganui.

A total of 407 resource consents were being actively monitored at the end of the reporting year with significant progress being made on last years' results.

A satisfaction survey for planning services was not undertaken this year and therefore no results were available to report.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

Aramoho Crematorium – painting of the rear wall has been deferred to the 2024/25 year.

Repertory Theatre – stabilisation of the Queens Park slope behind the theatre was not completed. This work will be undertaken subject to sale of the building to a community group as resolved through the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 deliberations.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	32	1,338
Operating expenditure	14,385	16,380

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Transportation

Transport provides and maintains connections both within the district and beyond. It is essential for economic prosperity and social connectedness. The transportation group includes:

- Whanganui Airport – The council has a joint venture with the Crown for the provision of a provincial airport. The airport provides sealed and grass runways and passenger terminal facilities for scheduled aircraft services and for commercial and private aircraft. It also provides property and infrastructure for aircraft storage and allied aviation service businesses. In addition, commercial leases are provided for non-aeronautical commercial activities.
- Whanganui Port and Whanganui River – We manage a commercial port and berthing facilities for shallow-draft coastal freight vessels, commercial vessels and pleasure boats. The port and associated river control structures offer a safe, navigable river bar harbour and confine the coastal portion of the Whanganui River to its existing alignment. Whanganui Port is operated by the Whanganui Port Operating Company Limited with council having transferred its port-related assets in 2022 to a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) called Whanganui Port Limited Partnership. The Port Operating Company manages day-to-day aspects of the port, along with the Whanganui Port infrastructure project under the Te Pūwaha revitalisation project.
- Durie Hill elevator – This provides access for pedestrians and cyclists (locals, particularly schoolchildren and tourists), linking the central business district to the suburb of Durie Hill and a city lookout area. It is New Zealand's only public underground elevator and a unique tourist attraction.

What we did in 2023/24

Airport

Airport terminal maintenance

As part of the ongoing maintenance of airport infrastructure, we replaced the airport's terminal roof and gave the building an exterior repaint. The maintenance work was co-funded through the Whanganui Airport joint venture between Council and Ministry of Transport Te Manatū Waka.

Airport runway resurfacing

We resurfaced the airport runway as part of its ongoing maintenance. The project, carried out at night between October to December 2023, was undertaken in successive stages to enable approximately 600 tonnes of asphalt to be laid each night over 130 metres of the 1,270 m runway without disrupting the Air Chathams passenger flight schedule. With a total of 11,000 tonnes of asphalt laid the new surface will ensure the continued operation of the airport for all users for the next 15 years.

Aeronautical charges

An increase in aeronautical fees – the first increase since 2009 – was approved by the Minister of Transport and came into effect 1 June 2024. A review of landing fees is required by the Airport Authorities Act every five years. The aeronautical charges contribute to the operating costs of the airport.

Whanganui Port Limited Partnership

Please refer to the Whanganui Port Limited Partnership's statement of service performance on pages 152-153 of our full Annual Report for more detail on the activities and financial performance reporting for the Whanganui Port.

Durie Hill elevator

In anticipation of its 105th birthday in August 2024, we collaborated with Whanganui Connection to make improvements to the Durie Hill elevator and entrance. As well as new design throughout the physical spaces of the elevator, there is now new signage and

wayfinding, an underground plant wall, innovative projection-based displays and new, wirelessly controlled lighting throughout the length of the tunnel. The elevator remains a valued means of transport between Whanganui and Durie Hill for residents and visitors.

Our Performance

Durie Hill elevator

User satisfaction with the Durie Hill elevator experience was 99% and exceeded target. Visitors and users of the elevator were incredibly positive about their experiences and complimentary of the service provided.

Projects that were not completed in 2023/24

The construction of the parallel taxiway has been delayed due to funding constraints with the priority being the resurfacing of the main runway. Funding has been provided to allow the project to be completed in 2024/25 and is subject to confirmation that Ministry of Transport can fund its half-share.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	5,190	14,899
Operating expenditure	2,913	2,742

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Investments

The portfolio of investments provides income to support the work of the council. The Investments activity intends to enhance the development of our district and provide an acceptable financial return to the community. The activity has the following major components:

- Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited (WDCHL), which owns 100 percent of the shares in GasNet Limited, the New Zealand International Commercial Pilot Academy (NZICPA) and the Whanganui Port General Partner Limited.
- City Endowment property portfolio
- Waitahinga Quarry.

What we did in 2023/24

Council-controlled organisations

Following a review of our council-controlled organisations (CCOs) undertaken to identify cost and efficiency savings, the decision was made in March 2024 to close down Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited.

Work was undertaken in subsequent months to put this decision into effect and closure of WDCHL will be completed in the 2024/25 financial year.

Management, oversight and performance monitoring of council's commercial organisations including GasNet Limited, the New Zealand International Pilot Academy (NZICPA), and Whanganui Port General Partner Limited (WPGPL) will report directly to the council's CCO and Economic Development Committee.

Property purchases

We purchased 33 Victoria Avenue to add to our city endowment portfolio. This portfolio had funds available and is intended to generate non-rates revenue.

We commenced a feasibility assessment to demonstrate the business case for a hotel in Whanganui. This will assist in attracting potential private operators and hotel developers.

Waitahinga Quarry

The Waitahinga Quarry is currently inactive. Funding was approved in the Long-Term Plan 2024-33 to complete the resource consent necessary to operate this in the future.

Our Performance

The forecast net income from Council's City Endowment property portfolio totalled 1.9% (Target: >5%). The overall portfolio result was largely affected by three underperforming properties at 101A Manuka Street, 125 Grey Street and 8 Gilmour Street. These properties represent 55% of the total portfolio value.

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	288	0
Operating expenditure	263	567

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Corporate

The council's group of corporate activities provides support for its staff and elected members to work together for the benefit of our community. The group includes:

- Governance – delivered by the Mayor and 12 councillors with support from staff. The elected members make decisions for the district through formal meetings, considering issues of policy, strategy and budget. The decision-making process is guided by the Local Government Act, with a focus on the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities today, and into the future.

Whanganui's rural community is represented by the Whanganui Rural Community Board consisting of seven members from three subdivisions (Kaitoke, Whanganui and Kai Iwi), and two councillors appointed by the Council. The board makes recommendations to the Council on policy and services of particular interest to the rural community.

- Corporate management – these activities contribute toward the internal running of the council and include financial management and advice, strategy and policy, legal services, risk management and health, safety and wellbeing, information management and services, human resources, communications and customer services.
- Community and operational property – this portfolio contains property that the Council holds for either a community use (such as parks, sportsgrounds, the art gallery, and the museum), or for operational use (such as the municipal building, the water reservoir site, Beach Road pump station and the water bore sites). These properties are managed to provide value to the community through their efficient use rather than an investment return. Rentals are, however, charged to community organisations who occupy community land or buildings. This helps with the equitable allocation of properties and these rentals are discounted by 40-90% to encourage the tenants to maximise the value they deliver to the community.

What we did in 2023/24

Governance

Māori Wards

In October a resolution was passed to establish Māori wards for the 2025 and 2028 local government elections. Since that decision, the Coalition Government announced that councils must either conduct a binding referendum during the 2025 local elections or reverse their decision to establish a Māori ward. Council was not able to make any decision under these provisions until the bill was enacted (the legislation passed in late July 2024).

Representation Review

We undertook community engagement on possible representation arrangements, including a district-wide survey, targeted survey of the rural community, a Facebook live event and a Community Kōrero information session. Following a council decision, public consultation on the future make-up of Whanganui District Council will commence in July 2024. Legislation requires us to review representation arrangements at least once every six years.

Corporate management

Customer service

Our Call Centre team received 46,380 calls over the reporting period including the after-

hours service. In total, 4455 of these were related to animal management and 1273 for noise complaints. We continued to see a high demand for property information such as building and planning advice, and requests for scanned property files.

Long-Term Plan 2024-2034

A key focus during the year was the preparatory work on the Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 and its associated strategies and policies including the Development Contributions Policy, Parking Bylaw and Controls, Revenue and Financing Policy, Infrastructure Strategy and the Financial Strategy amongst others. This project of work involved input from many staff across the organisation and over several months.

We received an unprecedented 1608 submissions, an increase of 163% compared to the previous LTP, and heard from 111 submitters who presented in person at the hearings held in May.

We implemented a business case process to bring consistency and transparency to how projects are evaluated and ensure all projects align with council objectives prior to resources being assigned.

Environmental Scan

We completed an environmental scan to provide an overview of potential trends and influences in the district over the next 10 years. The environmental scan is considered best practice to obtain statistics and information that help to ensure our planning is keeping current with any changes in the district.

Wellbeing survey

In commencing a refresh of our Leading Edge Strategy, people were asked about what they love and what is unique about Whanganui as well as identifying what they think are the big challenges coming up for Whanganui and where council should be focusing its efforts over the next few years. More than 660 people responded to our survey about

wellbeing and hundreds more shared their ideas with the council at a number of engagement events held during September 2023. Some key themes emerged that will feed into the development of a new vision for Whanganui with this work to re-commence later in 2024.

Policies, strategies and bylaws

In addition to the Long-Term Plan's associated consultations, we reviewed a number of policies and bylaws throughout the year. Community feedback from stakeholder engagement helped to shape the Public Places Bylaw, Naming and Numbering Policy, the Solid Waste Bylaw and the Traffic and Speed Limits Bylaw (currently on hold pending central government policy changes).

Submissions to Government consultations

Legislative changes and policy decisions, reviews and inquiries made by central government have required us to actively monitor policy changes and make a number of submissions throughout the year. These include, but are not limited to, the Water Services Entities Amendment Bill, inquiry into Climate Adaptation, Civil Defence and Emergency Management Bill, and the proposed National Policy Statement for Natural Hazard Decision-making.

Corporate and operational property

We continued to manage community and operational property in a responsible manner, incorporating good business practice into our decision-making, and taking into account the needs and wellbeing of our community.

Our Performance

Governance

Participants in the independent Community Views Survey were asked to rate how well they felt the Mayor and Councillors had responded to the community's needs and issues. This year, 30% of respondents thought the council

had responded well or very well. This was a 3% decrease from the previous year's results and there has been a consistent decline in results since 2018. The Mayor has led continued community kōrero sessions throughout the year and a number of engagement activities have been attended or led by elected members. Survey results showed an increase in the percentage of the public who had met with a councillor or staff member at an event in the last year. There has been a general trend of decreasing satisfaction with the performance of local government across the country.

In a similar question to the rural residents, 22% rated the performance of the Whanganui Rural Community Board as being good or very good, an increase of 11% from the previous year (Target: >50%). Insights gathered from the Board's own engagement survey conducted during the reporting year will be used for the promotion of future rural initiatives.

All council and committee agendas were made available to the public within two working days before the meeting.

Corporate management

Overall feedback on council service and staff was 90% positive (682 responses). Satisfaction with the performance of Council staff was 66%, an increase of 9% from the previous year. Positive ratings of staff performance are now 27% higher than in 2022. This is likely due to a number of continuous business improvements and a focus on organisational excellence.

Fifty-eight percent of the community surveyed agreed that the council website was easy to navigate and they could find what they were looking for. This did not meet the 70% target but it was an increase of 5% from the previous year. A survey of website users was undertaken in 2023/24 and a refresh of the website is underway.

There was also an increase (+16.7%) in the percentage of the community satisfied that they have had an opportunity to have their say. This increase is likely due to targeted engagement events aimed at capturing a diverse range of community groups. There was also strong interest and participation with council's pre-engagement of its overarching wellbeing strategy undertaken earlier in the reporting year.

Targets were met for reported workplace accidents and responding to archive requests within 24 hours. We received an unmodified audit opinion on our 2024-34 Long-Term Plan. The 2023/24 annual report received a qualified opinion with respect to the statement of service provision and an unmodified opinion on the remainder of the information. Of the three bylaws due for review within five years of having been made, two were reviewed within the required timeframe. The bylaw reviews were completed alongside the development and introduction of the new Solid Waste Bylaw. The review of the Trade Waste 2018 Bylaw has been on hold due to the government's change in approach to the Three Waters legislation.

Community and operational property

Fifty-eight of the 69 community organisation tenants (84.1%) are receiving the maximum subsidy available (this means that the services they deliver provide the maximum benefit to the community).

	Budgeted for 2023/24 (\$000)	Actual spend 2023/24 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	525	281
Operating expenditure	17,824	20,823

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 23/24 for details.

Financial summary

The following pages provide a summary of Council's financial performance for 2024.

Whanganui District Council

Summary statement of comprehensive revenue and expense

For the year ended 30 June 2024

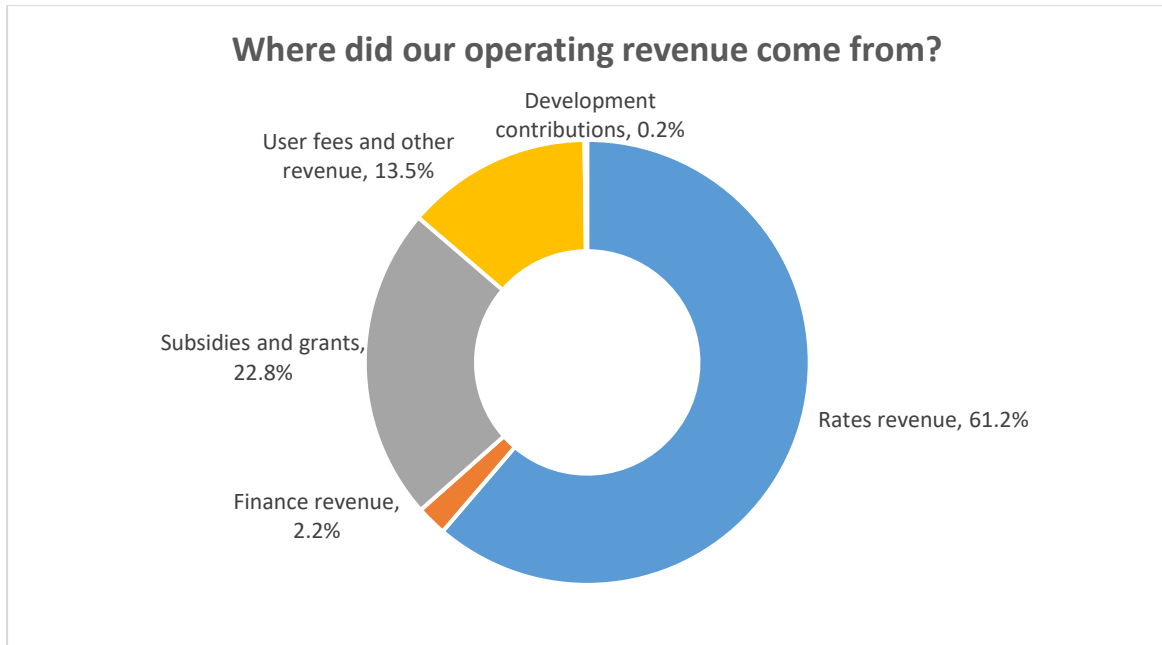
	Council			Group	
	Budget 2024 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000
Rates	76,669	76,562	70,309	76,562	70,309
Other revenue	30,626	48,049	42,569	63,065	55,791
Total revenue	107,295	124,611	112,878	139,628	126,100
Finance costs	(7,063)	(8,760)	(5,597)	(9,636)	(6,450)
Other operating expenses	(102,551)	(120,588)	(101,642)	(137,568)	(111,175)
Total operating expenses	109,614	129,348	107,240	147,204	117,624
Surplus/(deficit) before tax	(2,319)	(4,737)	5,638	(7,576)	8,476
Share of associate surplus/(deficit)	-	(2)	(5)	(2)	(5)
Income tax (expense)/benefit	-	5	-	32	(833)
Surplus/(deficit) after tax	(2,319)	(4,735)	5,633	(7,546)	7,636
Surplus/deficit attributable to:					
Whanganui District Council	(2,319)	(4,735)	5,633	(7,546)	7,636
				(1)	
Other comprehensive revenue and expense					
Gain on property plant & equipment revaluations*	12,992	76,903	27,867	80,007	25,074
Gain on carbon credits revaluation	-	323	(1,221)	323	(1,221)
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive revenue and expense	-	35	(22)	66	(22)
Adjustments from CCO through retained earnings	-	(292)	-	(292)	(57)
<i>Total other comprehensive revenue and expense</i>	<i>12,992</i>	<i>76,969</i>	<i>26,624</i>	<i>80,104</i>	<i>23,774</i>
Total comprehensive revenue and expense attributable to:					
Whanganui District Council	10,672	72,236	32,256	72,559	31,677
Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-	(265)
	10,672	72,236	32,256	72,559	31,412

*Gains on property plant & equipment revaluations are presented net of taxation.

Explanation of major variances:

Other revenue

Subsidies and grants are \$15.6M higher than planned. The main drivers are the timing of Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment grants and additional roading emergency works subsidy from NZ Transport Agency.

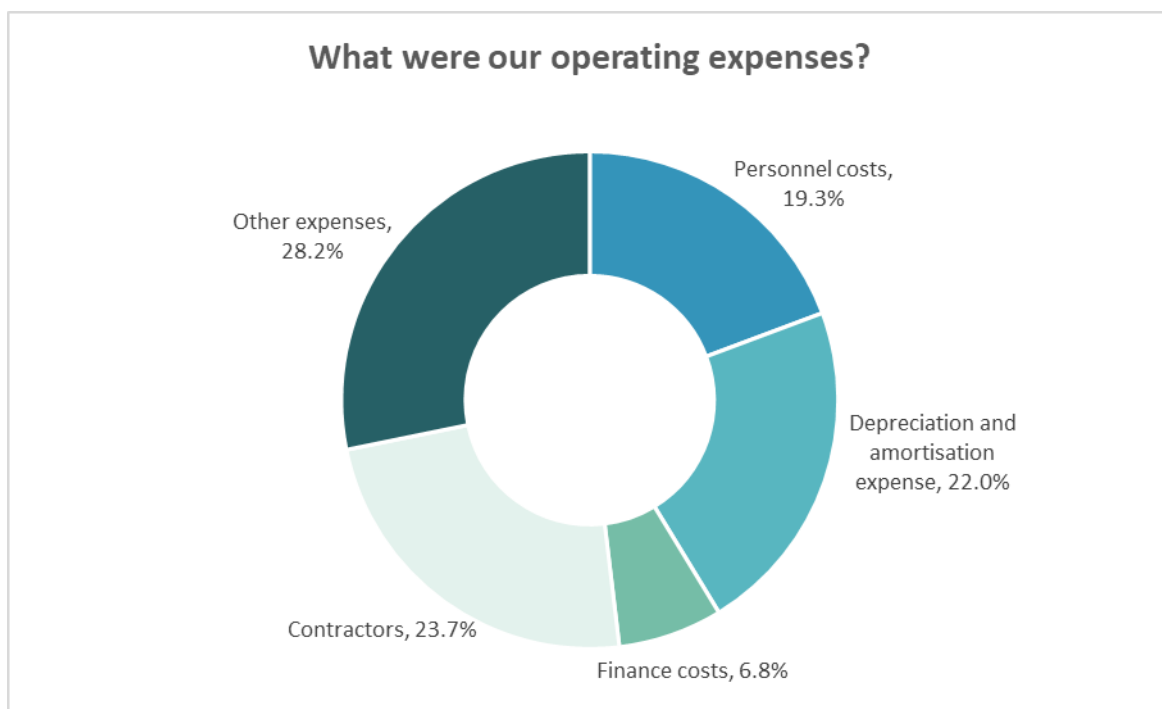


Council receives revenue from a number of different sources, as shown on the graph above. Rates are the primary source of revenue for the Council accounting for 61% of the total.

Other operating expenses

Other operating expenses are \$18 million higher than budget. This is driven by:

- depreciation was \$1.2 higher than planned, driven by higher depreciation on infrastructure and property assets after the revaluation in 2021/22.
- Higher maintenance and response costs (\$9.7M) on roading assets, driven by emergency works and additional sealed pavement maintenance.
- higher insurance premiums (\$1.5M) and unplanned excess deductions (\$166k)
- finance costs are \$1.7M higher than budgeted, driven by higher interest rates
- unplanned Streets for People programme expenditure (\$1M). This is 90% subsidised by NZ Transport Agency.



In order to provide the services for the community Council incurs costs as illustrated above.

Whanganui District Council Summary statement of changes in equity

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Council		Group		
	Budget 2024 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000
Balance at 1 July	1,246,327	1,275,949	1,243,749	1,314,169	1,284,257
Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year	10,672	72,236	32,200	72,559	31,412
Non-Controlling interest - funds introduced	-	-	-	-	(1,500)
Balance at 30 June	1,256,999	1,348,185	1,275,949	1,386,727	1,314,169
Components of equity					
Retained earnings	611,373	612,246	617,662	642,135	650,333
Restricted reserves	66,722	68,719	68,328	68,719	68,328
Revaluation reserves	576,064	665,265	588,362	673,918	593,911
Other reserves	2,840	1,955	1,597	1,955	1,597
Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June	1,256,999	1,348,185	1,275,949	1,386,727	1,314,169

Whanganui District Council

Summary statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2024

	Council			Group	
	Budget 2024 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000
Total current assets	13,550	56,093	33,766	54,993	38,229
Total non-current assets	1,409,682	1,497,511	1,377,729	1,562,477	1,439,022
Total current liabilities	(28,012)	(41,433)	(43,321)	(48,146)	(49,012)
Total non-current liabilities	(138,221)	(163,986)	(92,225)	(182,597)	(114,070)
Net assets	1,256,999	1,348,185	1,275,950	1,386,727	1,314,169
Total equity	1,256,999	1,348,185	1,275,949	1,386,727	1,314,169

Explanation of major variances:

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents are \$6M lower than budget, driven by timing of significant payments.

Receivables is \$7.8M higher than planned, however fluctuates regularly due to timing of invoicing and workloads.

Total non-current assets is \$87.8M higher than budget (6.2%), mainly due to a valuation increase (\$78M) for Councils infrastructure assets. Investment property is also higher than budget (\$4M), due to revaluation and the purchase of additional property.

Liabilities

Payables is \$7.1M (62%) higher than planned, however fluctuates regularly due to the timing of invoicing and workloads.

Total borrowings are \$31.2M higher than budget (20%), mainly due to higher capital expenditure and refinancing of subsidiary debt.

Whanganui District Council

Summary statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Council		Group		
	Budget 2024 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000	Actual 2024 \$000	Actual 2023 \$000
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	7,683	14,834	8,566	21,872	18,385
Net cash from operating activities	24,720	20,162	30,714	19,433	29,433
Net cash from investing activities	(41,509)	(99,662)	(34,446)	(99,531)	(36,523)
Net cash financing activities	16,456	66,000	10,000	73,368	10,577
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	7,350	1,334	14,834	15,141	21,871

Explanation of major variances are:

Operating Activities

Cash flows from operating activities is an indication of whether an entity is able to finance its normal operations from short-term funds. Council generated a \$20.2M cash surplus from operating activities. This is an unfavourable variance to budget of \$4.6M (18%), mainly due to higher payments to suppliers. This is partially offset by higher subsidies.

Investing Activities

Cash flows from investing activities show net asset purchases to be \$99.7M, which is \$58.1M (140%) more than budget. The main reason for this relates to higher than planned Capital Expenditure. Capital variances to budget are discussed in detail in the 'Groups of Activities' section of this Annual Report.

Financing Activities

Cash flows from financing activities shows a net debt increase of \$66M, with greater borrowings than repayments. This is \$49.5M higher than budgeted, driven by a combination of higher capital expenditure and on lending to subsidiaries requiring greater debt than planned.

Whanganui District Council

Summary funding impact statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Annual Plan 2024 \$000	Annual Report 2024 \$000	Annual Plan 2023 \$000	Annual Report 2023 \$000
Sources of operating funding				
Rates	76,669	76,563	70,536	70,309
Other income	21,719	31,190	16,938	23,316
Total operating funding (A)	98,388	107,753	87,474	93,625
Application of operating funding				
Payments to staff and suppliers	75,254	91,797	67,619	75,097
Finance costs	7,063	8,760	4,720	5,597
Total application of operating funding (B)	82,317	100,557	72,339	80,694
Surplus (deficit) of operating funding (A - B)	16,071	7,195	15,135	12,931
Sources of capital funding				
Subsidies, grants and development contributions	8,620	12,654	8,069	10,895
Increase (decrease) in debt	16,456	66,000	15,745	10,000
Gross proceeds from asset sales	-	107	-	23
Lump sum contributions	-	-	-	-
Other dedicated capital funding	28	2,646	28	3,200
Total sources of capital funding (C)	25,104	81,407	23,842	24,118
Application of capital funding				
Capital expenditure				
-to meet additional demand	4,172	1,122	3,155	508
-to improve the level of service	23,502	37,791	12,217	24,426
-to replace existing assets	13,835	17,631	23,705	15,809
Increase (decrease) in reserves	(334)	20,646	(100)	(3,694)
Increase (decrease) in investments	-	11,412	-	-
Total application of capital funding (D)	41,175	88,602	38,977	37,049
Surplus (deficit) of capital funding (C - D)	(16,071)	(7,195)	(15,135)	(12,931)
Funding balance ((A - B) + (C - D))	-	-	-	-

Notes to the Summary Financial Statements

Events after the balance date

The water services legislation (namely the Water Services Entities Act 2022, the Water Services Legislation Act 2023 and the Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Act 2023), was repealed on 17 February 2024. The Government has recently enacted the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024. The new legislation requires Council to deliver a Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) to the Secretary for Local Government by 3 September 2025. The plan must include the anticipated or proposed model or arrangements and implementation plan for delivering water services. Council will not know what the model or arrangements are likely to be until the WSDP is approved by the Secretary. The new legislation has not had an impact on the 30 June 2024 financial statements or performance information.

At its meeting on 26 March 2024 the Whanganui District Council resolved to disestablish Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited. The disestablishment process will include the transitioning of the Company's operations into Council. As a result, the WDCHL financial statements have been prepared on a disestablishment basis. Prior to 30 June 2025 we expect all rights, assets and liabilities will have been transferred to Whanganui District Council. The subsidiaries of WDCHL will continue to operate but will consolidate directly into Whanganui District Council group accounts.

Additional information about this Summary

This Summary Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with PBE FRS 43: Summary Financial Statements. It has been extracted from the full Annual Report and is designed to give an overview of the Council and Group⁴ operations. This summary does not include all the disclosures provided in the full financial statements and cannot be expected to provide as complete an understanding as the full financial report of the Council. The full Annual Report contains detailed information on the finances and service performance and was adopted by the Council on 10 December 2024.

The Council has designated itself a Public Benefit Entity (PBE) for financial reporting purposes. The full financial statements were prepared in accordance with New Zealand Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (NZ GAAP) and comply with Tier 1 Public Benefit Entity (PBE) accounting standards. The financial statements are for the year ended 30 June 2024 and all figures are in New Zealand dollars and are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.

This summary has been examined by Audit New Zealand for consistency with the full Annual Report.

The Summary Annual Report was authorised for issue on 20 December 2024 by the Mayor, Andrew Tripe, and Chief Executive, David Langford.

To view the comprehensive version of the 2023/24 Annual Report please refer to our website: <https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Research-Reports/Reports>

⁴ The Whanganui District Council group (WDCG) consists of the ultimate parent Whanganui District Council (WDC) and its subsidiaries, Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited (100% owned) which in turn owns 100% of GasNet Limited and the New Zealand International Commercial Pilot Academy (NZICPA), and Whanganui Airport Joint Venture (50%). Its 49% equity share of New Zealand Masters Games Limited, its 15% interest in the Manawatu Whanganui LASS Limited and its 33% interest in the Whanganui River Enhancement Trust are equity accounted. All WDC subsidiaries and associates are domiciled in New Zealand.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the readers of Whanganui District Council and group's summary of the annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024

The summary of the annual report was derived from the annual report of the Whanganui District Council and group (the District Council) for the year ended 30 June 2024.

The summary of the annual report comprises the following information on pages 13 to 54:

- the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024;
- the summaries of the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2024;
- the notes to the summary financial statements that include other explanatory information; and
- the summary statement of service performance, included in the 'Our activities and performance' and 'Summarising our performance' sections.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- the summary of the annual report represents, fairly and consistently, the information regarding the major matters dealt with in the annual report; and
- the summary statements comply with PBE FRS-43: Summary Financial Statements.

However, the summary statement of service performance includes a limitation in scope to the equivalent extent as the full audited statement of service performance. This limitation is explained below in *The full annual report and our audit report thereon* section.

Summary of the annual report

The summary of the annual report does not contain all the disclosures required by generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand. Reading the summary of the annual report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the full annual report and the auditor's report thereon.

The summary of the annual report does not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our auditor's report on the full annual report.

The full annual report and our audit report thereon

We expressed a qualified opinion on the statement of service performance and an unmodified opinion on the other audited information in the full annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 in our auditor's report dated 10 December 2024. The basis for our qualified opinion on the statement of service performance is explained below.

Statement of service performance: Our work was limited with respect to the response times for water supply and wastewater faults, and the average quality of ride on the sealed local road network

The District Council is required to report against the performance measures set out in the Non-Financial Performance Measure Rules 2013 (the Rules) made by the Secretary for Local Government. These include mandatory performance measures relating to:

- The time taken to attend and resolve water supply and wastewater faults.
- The average quality of ride on the sealed local road network, measured by smooth travel exposure.

These performance measures are important as they are indicative of the quality of service provided to the community.

We identified significant issues with these performance measures as described below. As a result of these issues, our work was limited and there were no practicable audit procedures we could apply to obtain assurance over the reported results for these performance measures.

Our opinion on the time taken to attend and resolve water supply and wastewater faults was also qualified in the 2023 performance year.

The time taken to attend and resolve water supply and wastewater faults

Our audit testing of these performance measures identified significant issues with the District Council's systems and processes for completely and accurately recording the time taken to attend and resolve faults. ***The average quality of ride on the sealed local road network, measured by smooth travel exposure***

We were unable to obtain assurance over the reliability of estimated traffic volumes used in the calculation of this performance measure. This is because the majority of these estimates are not sufficiently up to date, as described on page 50 of the full annual report. The actual average quality of ride on the sealed local road network may therefore differ materially from the result reported.

Council's responsibility for the summary of the annual report

The Council is responsible for preparing the summary of the annual report which includes preparing summary statements, in accordance with PBE FRS-43: Summary Financial Statements.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary of the annual report represents, fairly and consistently, the information regarding the major matters dealt with in the full annual report and whether the summary statements comply with PBE FRS 43: Summary Financial Statements.

Our opinion on the summary of the annual report is based on our procedures, which were carried out in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Professional and Ethical Standards and the International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

In addition to our audit and our report on the disclosure requirements we have performed an assurance engagement over the 2024-34 Long-term plan and limited assurance engagement related to the District Council's debenture trust deed. These engagements are compatible with those independence requirements.

Other than these engagements, we have no relationship with, or interests in, the District Council or its subsidiaries and controlled entities.



Chris Webby,
Audit New Zealand
On behalf of the Auditor-General
Palmerston North, New Zealand
20 December 2024