

The year ahead

ANNUAL PLAN 2016-2017

Consultation Document



PUTTING NORTHLAND FIRST

**NORTHLAND
REGIONAL
COUNCIL**



HE ANGA WHAKAMUA

He anga whakamua

Whakatakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakatakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki ūta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te ātākura
He tio, he huka, he hau hū

Te mea tuatahi, ko ngā mihi ki tō tātou Kaihanga, Tēnā hoki o tatou mate huhua o ngā tau, ngā marama, ngā wiki me ngā rā e pahure.

Tino hari, tino koa a matou e hoatu kia koutou te Whakamahere-a-tau 2016 – 2017 a Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Te Tai Tokerau.

Hore kau etahi mea e rereke ana ki ta tatou Rautaki Whakamahere 2015 – 2025. Nga rereketanga ki enei nga kaupapa, e mahia nga mahi.

Ngā pūtake hou o tēnei Whakamahere a tau:

- He hononga ki nga hapori whanui
- He manaaki taonga me nga whaitua
- He manaaki awa
- Haere nga ma te rohe
- He mahi tautoko.

Tetahi o enei putake hou e korerotia kei roto i tenei Whakamahere. E whakamanawa ana matou ma koutou e tuku o koutou whakaaro e pa ana nga kaupapa kei roto i tenei whakamahere-a-tau.

Tirohia ki te mutunga o tenei Whakamahere me pehea e tuku ou whakaaro.

Na reira, e nga mana, e nga reo, e nga hapori, tena koutou katoa.

FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Want to talk to a councillor about our Annual Plan? For locations and registration details, phone 0800 002 004 by Friday 22 April 2016.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Do it online www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016 or fill in a feedback form at the back of this document and return it to us by 4pm Friday 6 May 2016.

DOING MORE WITH LESS Annual Plan 2016/17

Whether you've been involved in previous plans, or if this is the first time you've had anything to do with an annual plan – welcome.

The concise nature of this document is due in part to the thoroughness of the work and deliberation that went into the Long Term Plan 2015-2025. It set out our programme of work for the next 10 years and explains how it will be paid for.

This consultation document is the first of its kind following changes to the Local Government Act. Annual plans now follow a more streamlined process, so this document looks and feels different to the annual plan summaries we've produced in the past. It's all about simplifying the process, getting rid of any duplication between long term and annual plans, and keeping the costs to you, as ratepayers, as low as we can.

Our key focus throughout this year's annual plan was to seek ways to do more for our residents and ratepayers without increasing your costs, and we have found a number of innovative ways to do this. The following pages explain the key differences between what we are planning to do in the coming

year and what we said we were going to do in the long term plan – how we can do more with less.

The long term plan set out a 2.34% rate increase for the 2016/17 year. We have worked hard to ensure that all existing services can be maintained without any further rates increase. We have brought in a range of new initiatives to be funded from either this pre-set rates increase, or from our cash and other reserves. Work that is funded from cash reserves does not result in a rate increase meaning that your rates are kept as low as possible. Reduced interest costs have enabled us to make some savings that we have passed on to ratepayers.

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation document and we look forward to hearing your feedback on whether you think we're on the right track.



Bill Shepherd
Chairman



Malcolm Nicolson
Chief Executive

WHAT WE DO



UPDATING YOU It's business as usual

The Long Term Plan 2015-2025 set out our key levels of service – what we plan to achieve over the next 10 years, how our performance will be measured and how council services will be paid for.

There are no significant changes from the Long Term Plan 2015-2025 proposed in this year's annual plan.

What will the Annual Plan 2016-2017 show you?

Although it's largely "business as usual" we are proposing some changes in the coming year including:

- Some new initiatives that tie into our existing council services;
- Changes to some of our targeted rates; and
- Minor changes to our charging policy and treasury management policy.

NEW INITIATIVES

Changes are proposed in the following council activities:



Community representation and engagement



Resource and catchment management



River management



Transport



Harbour and safety navigation



Support services

Each of these areas is discussed in this document. We are also changing the way in which some targeted rates are set. While these changes only affect a small number of ratepayers, we have outlined them here as well, to keep you informed.

Formal hearings are no longer required but we'd still love to hear from you. Fill out the feedback form and make sure you return it to us by **4pm Friday 6 May**. If you want to talk to a councillor at a feedback session about our Annual Plan

2016/17, phone 0800 002 004 by **Friday 22 April 2016** for locations and registration details. Thank you for your interest in our work. We look forward to hearing what you think.

Supporting information

In our supporting information we've provided more detail about our proposals, and our financial statements. You can read this information online at **www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016** or contact our regional offices on 0800 002 004.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT Annual Plan 2016/17

As part of the Long Term Plan 2015-25, the council budgeted a 2.34% rate increase for the 2016-2017 financial year – and we're not planning to change this.

Read on to learn more about the improved services and new initiatives we are proposing for the coming year. We've outlined this new work in the same activity groups that were used in the long term plan to make it easier for you to compare and see the differences.

You can view a copy of the Long Term Plan 2015-25 at www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2015



Community representation and engagement

Northland has one of the highest levels of participation in the national Enviroschools programme of any region in the country. There are currently 30 schools on a waiting list to join and an extra \$32,500 of funding will allow all of them to join, over time.

This change relates to activity 1.1.3 on p.24 of the long term plan.

The council supports the development of regional facilities. As a result, we are proposing to contribute \$24,000 towards the completion of the Turner Centre in Kerikeri.

This change relates to activity 1.1.5 on p.24 of the long term plan.

Through its Māori Advisory Committee, council provides opportunities for Māori to gain knowledge of council processes and participate in decision-making. In response to a change in national policy, it is proposed to set aside an additional \$11,500 to fund meeting allowances for this committee.

This change relates to activity 1.1 on p. 23 of the long term plan.

Council wants to work more closely with, and help Northlanders. One of these areas is the management of mangroves. We are proposing to make \$5000 available in the form of staff time and resources to help community groups with mangrove management projects.

This change relates to activity 1.1.5 on p.24 of the long term plan.

How much more is being spent on community representation and engagement?

\$73,000

\$73,000

Funded from rate increase

\$0

Funded from other reserves

What does this mean for your rates?

An extra 80c per SUIP/rating unit



One of the Enviroschools students setting traps for Project Possum.



Resource and catchment management

Controlling pests is key to protecting Northland's unique biodiversity and the council is actively involved in a wide range of pest control projects throughout Northland. We are proposing to contribute an extra \$50,000 to a joint project with the Department of Conservation and the Ministry for Primary Industries to undertake a large-scale pest control exercise in Northland's iconic Waipoua Forest.

This change relates to activities 2.5.1, 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 on p.36 of the long term plan.

Helping to keep Northland's rivers and lakes as clean and healthy as possible is also a key priority. The council is proposing to spend \$187,000 to update technical equipment and the other resources required for monitoring of farm dairy effluent, water quality, pests, and lakes.

This change relates to activities 2.2.1 on p.31 and 2.2.7 on p.32 of the long term plan.

The council is also supporting erosion planting in Northland's hill country through our highly successful poplar and willow nursery. Due to increasing demand, it is proposed to spend \$30,000 to expand the nursery.

This change relates to activities 2.3.1 on p.34 and 3.1.5 on p.42 of the long term plan.



Monitoring Northland's extensive river network.



River management

Council has steadily placed more emphasis on reducing the risks to life and property from floods. This has seen us working more closely with local communities to reduce flood risk in the most at risk areas throughout the region. In response to increased expectations of residents – coupled with the added pressure of climate change – the council is proposing to spend an extra \$131,500 to match this increase in demand for our river management work. This includes upgrading some of the equipment used for flood-forecasting and river level monitoring.

This change relates to activities 3.1.3 and 3.1.8 on p.42 of the long term plan.

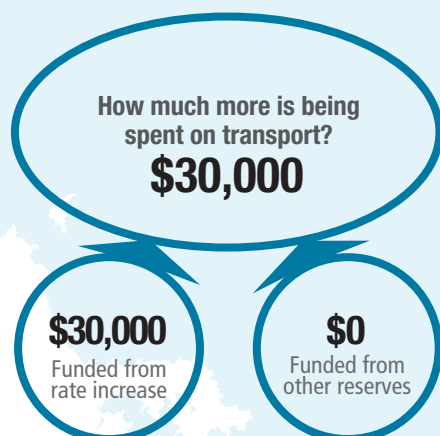




Transport

The demand for reliable and effective bus services in Northland continues to grow. In order to meet this demand from residents, the council is proposing to budget an extra \$30,000 in the transport area.

This change relates to activity 6.1.2 on p.57 of the long term plan.



What does this mean for your rates?
An extra 40c per SUIP/rating unit



Harbour safety and navigation

Northland's extensive and world-renown coastline is one of our biggest assets. The council provides and maintains an extensive network of navigation and safety aids so that Northlanders and visitors alike can safely enjoy our waters. However, this network is ageing and needs to be replaced to ensure the future safety of people and the coastal environment. As a result, we are proposing to spend \$152,000 on new buoys and beacons.

We are also proposing to spend \$30,000 to remove a rock on the approach to the Waipapa Landing pontoon in Kerikeri. This will remove a serious navigation hazard to vessels operating in the area.

These changes relate to activity 6.2.2 on p.58 of the long term plan.

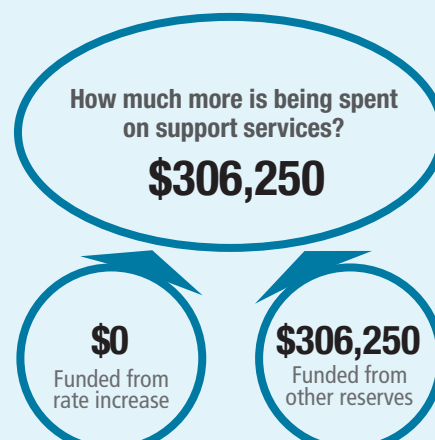


What does this mean for your rates?
No extra per SUIP/rating unit



Support services

The council is constantly looking to improve the services offered to residents and ratepayers. In order to provide the best value we can, we are investing more in our support services. This includes a wide range of efficiency-related initiatives such as, automating our agenda and minute system, digitising our historical aerial photography, and improving remote access for field staff. There is also a one-off legal expense related to the rates dispute within the Kaipara district. The legal expense will be funded from council reserves and will therefore not impact directly on the amount residents pay in their rates.



What does this mean for your rates?
An extra 15c per SUIP/rating unit

MONEY MATTERS

Charging policy

In the Long Term Plan 2015-2025 we said that we would increase our fees and charges by 2.34% for the 2016/17 year, and that is what we are doing. There are also some updates and clarification required to our charging policy, and we will be making these changes. The updated policy that tells you about our fees and charges can be found in our supporting information, available online at www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016

Local Government Funding Agency borrowing

From time to time, council borrows money from external sources to fund infrastructure projects. In our Long Term Plan 2012-2022, we reserved the right to borrow externally from the Local Government Funding Agency as a non-guaranteeing local authority, where it is the most cost-effective funding source available. Accordingly, minor editorial changes have been made to our Treasury Management Policy to reflect this. More information is available in our supporting information.

Savings on targeted rates

One of the ways we have managed to do more with less, is by making savings across several of our targeted rates and then passing these savings on to ratepayers. These savings have come about because we have been able to negotiate lower interest rates for money we have borrowed to fund various projects.

The changes are summarised here and further information can be found in the supporting documentation. Changes will be reflected in the funding impact statement of the final annual plan.

Regional recreational facilities rate

This rate is applied 100% to the development of the regional events centre. We expect to fully pay for the events centre in the 2017/18 financial year, which is when the rate is due to end. Lower costs of borrowing mean that by keeping the rate at its current amount, we will pay off the loan earlier than expected and therefore reduce the official term of the rate. We will then consult further with the community about whether the rate should continue and enable us to support other recreational facilities in Northland.

Regional infrastructure rate

This rate was established in 2007/08 to fund activities relating to the development of regional infrastructure

projects, beginning with land for the proposed Marsden Point rail link. As with the regional recreational facilities rate, due to lower costs of borrowing keeping the rate at its current amount means we'll repay the loan sooner than expected, therefore reducing the term. This means that other infrastructure projects can be identified and started sooner.

Monitoring our region's rivers.



Whāngārei urban rivers management rate

This is a targeted rate applied to residential and commercial properties that fall within the Whāngārei central business district flood and contributing water catchment areas. It was established to fund the capital and operational costs of the Kotuku detention dam. Lower costs of borrowing mean that this rate can be reduced by 14% compared with

what was projected in the Long Term Plan 2015-2025, while maintaining the payback period of 20 years.

Kerikeri-Waipapa rivers management rate

This rate is applied to properties that are identified in the contributing catchments within the Kerikeri-Waipapa area, to fund the Kerikeri-Waipapa rivers flood management scheme works. The rate was set on a uniform basis in the long term plan, with the intention of consulting further on whether a differential rate should be applied.

We'll be contacting the affected land owners directly with a proposal to set a differential rate. This is being considered due to the fact that flood modelling has shown some properties will benefit directly from the flood scheme, whereas other properties in the catchment will only benefit indirectly. A differential rate would see those properties that stand to benefit the most, pay more than the remaining beneficiaries, at a rate of three to one.



Placing more emphasis on reducing risk to life and property from flooding.



Council staff at Kotuku dam.

Awanui river management rate

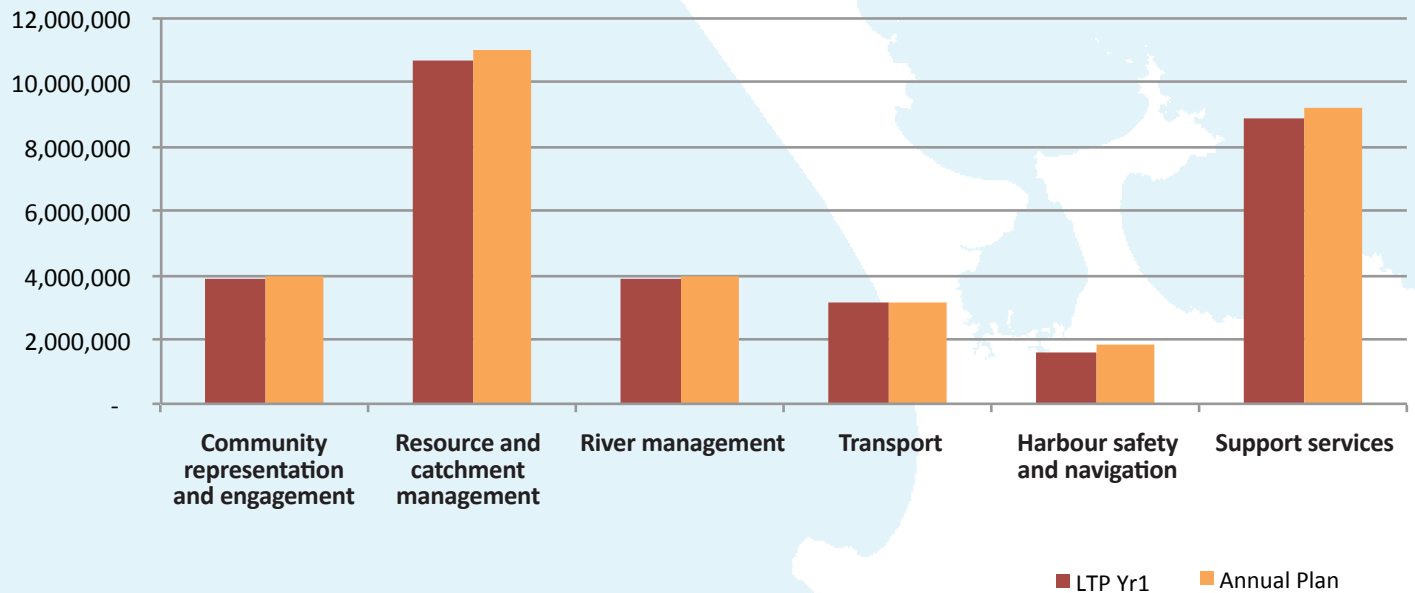
This rate is applied differentially by location and area of benefit, as defined in the Awanui River flood management scheme. This rate is now going to be less than expected due to lower interest rates and a favourable result from the tender process.

Work is currently being done on the way that this rate is set – differentially and by location – to ensure that this is the fairest way of paying for the flood management scheme. We will contact the affected land owners directly with any proposal to change the way that the rate is set. This will happen outside of this annual plan process.

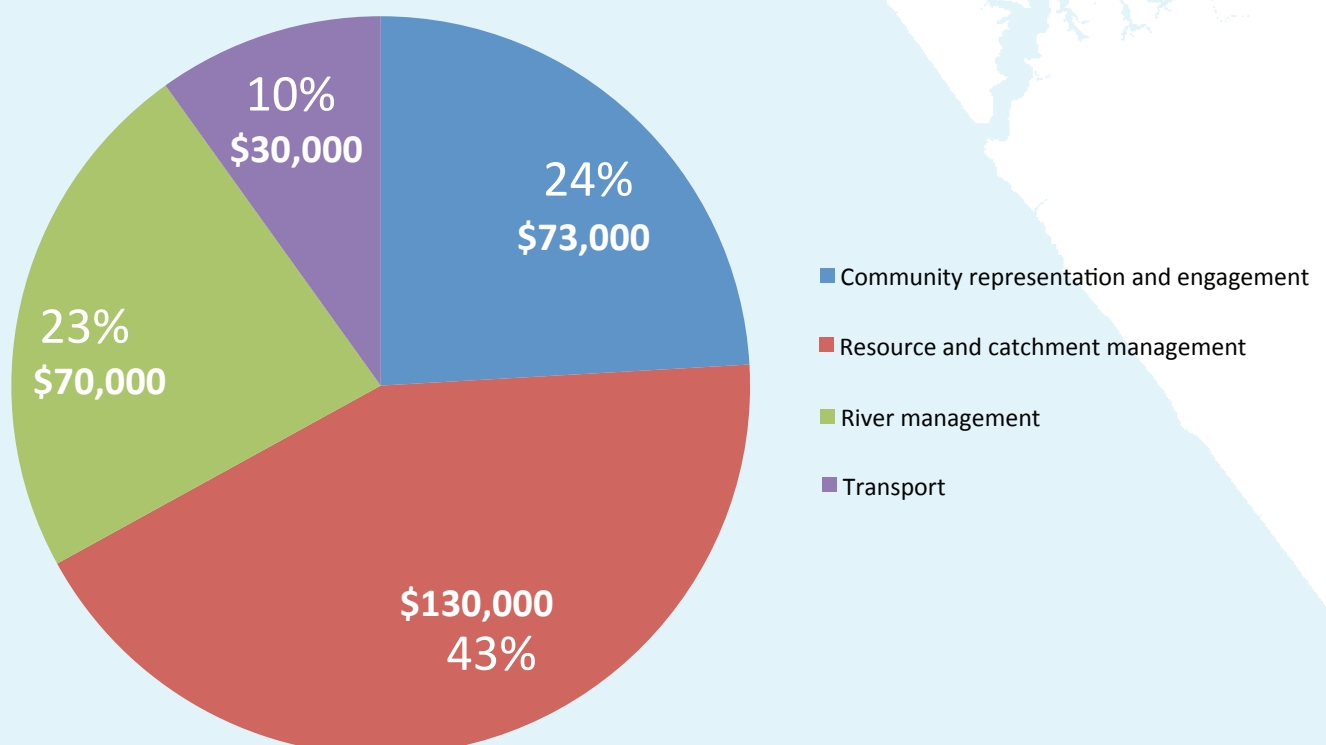
Planned spending

These graphs show the differences in spending between what was indicated in the long term plan and what will be in the Annual Plan for 2016/17, and how your rates increase will be spent.

How has our budget changed?



Where is your rates increase being spent?



Tell us what you think

This annual plan is very much business as usual and there are no significant changes from our Long Term Plan 2015-2025. We'd like to know if you agree or disagree with the new initiatives we're proposing to fund from the 2.34% rate increase, and our other reserves - and the reasons why. **Closing date for submissions is 4pm Friday 6 May.** If you'd prefer, you can fill in a feedback form online at www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016

Your name, township and feedback will be published in public documents.

First name:

Surname:

Organisation (if applicable):

Postal address:

.....

Email address:

Phone:

If you supply an email address, we will use this as our method of communicating with you, to reduce paper use and minimise costs.

Please complete this form and return it to us as outlined below.

POST: Annual Plan 2016-2017
Northland Regional Council
Freepost 139690
Private Bag 9021, Whāngārei Mail Centre,
Whāngārei 0148

EMAIL: mailroom@nrc.govt.nz

FAX: 09 470 1202

**NEED HELP WITH YOUR FEEDBACK?
CALL US ON 0800 002 004**

What's your view on the proposed changes to our activities and adjustments to our targeted rates?

Please tick any you'd like to give feedback on.

Community representation and engagement	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Provide \$32,500 so all schools waiting can join Enviroschools, over time	[]	[]	[]
Contribute \$24,000 towards the Turner Centre in Kerikeri	[]	[]	[]
Provide \$11,500 to fund the Māori Advisory Committee	[]	[]	[]
Provide \$5000 to support community initiatives to manage mangroves	[]	[]	[]
Comments			

Resource and catchment management	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Contribute \$50,000 towards a large-scale pest control project in Waipoua Forest	[]	[]	[]
Spend \$187,000 to upgrade technical equipment used for environmental monitoring	[]	[]	[]
Spend \$30,000 to expand the poplar and willow nursery	[]	[]	[]
Comments			

River management	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Spend an extra \$131,500 on flood risk reduction work	[]	[]	[]
Comments			

Please be aware when providing personal information that all submissions are part of a public consultation process. As such, information provided will be made publicly available, including submitters' names and addresses.

Transport	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Spend an extra \$30,000 on providing reliable and effective bus services	[]	[]	[]
Comments _____			

Harbour safety and navigation	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Spend \$152,000 on replacing buoys and beacons	[]	[]	[]
Spend \$30,000 removing a rock on the approach to the Waipapa Landing pontoon in Kerikeri	[]	[]	[]
Comments _____			

Support services	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Spend \$106,250 to improve efficiency and value of a range of support services	[]	[]	[]
Pay \$200,000 legal fees for rates dispute in Kaipara district	[]	[]	[]
Comments _____			

We are also proposing several minor alterations to targeted rates that are reflected in the Annual Plan 2016/17. These will result in small changes to the funding impact statement.

	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
Regional recreational facilities rate – reduce term of the loan by three months (SUIP).	[]	[]	[]
Regional infrastructure rate – reduce term by two years.	[]	[]	[]
Whāngārei urban rivers management rate – reduce rate by 14%.	[]	[]	[]
Kerikeri-Waipapa rivers management rate – change to 3:1 differential.	[]	[]	[]
Awanui River management rate – lower rate.	[]	[]	[]
Comments _____			

Remember: Formal hearings are no longer required but if you would like to talk to a councillor about your feedback, please contact us on 0800 002 004 to book a date and time before 4pm Friday 22 April.

ISSUE: 2016 Local Body Triennial Elections

ID: A822083

To: Council Meeting, 15 March 2016

From: Chris Taylor, Governance Support Manager

Date: 26 February 2016

Report Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision
Purpose:	<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public service	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory function
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislative function	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual\Long Term Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> Triggered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Triggered	



Executive summary:

The triennial local body election will be held by postal voting from 16 September 2016, culminating in Election Day on 8 October 2016.

The purpose of this report is to:

- i. Outline key election period dates and community awareness initiatives;
- ii. Provide the opportunity for council to choose by resolution the order of candidate names appearing on voting documents; and
- iii. Familiarise councillors with pre-election protocols during the three month pre-election period.

Legal compliance and significance assessment:

The relevant legislation in relation to this issue is the Local Electoral Act 2001 *[and the Local Electoral Regulations 2001]*. The information provided in this report and the recommended resolution complies in all respects with relevant legislation. In relation to section 79 of the Local Government Act 2002, when assessed against council policy this matter is deemed to be of low significance.

Recommendations:

-
1. That the report '2016 Local Body Triennial Elections' by Chris Taylor, Governance Support Manager, and dated 26 February 2016, be received.
 2. That council resolves to adopt the alphabetical order of candidate names on voting documents for the 2016 Local Body Triennial Elections (in accordance with Regulation 31 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001).
-



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Report:

Planning is well underway for the 2016 triennial local body elections. Dale Ofoske of Independent Election Services Ltd has been reappointed as Electoral Officer for the Northland Regional Council. A report from the Electoral Officer is included as **Attachment 1** which outlines the election process and also provides a timetable and a fact sheet (pages 7 and 8 of the report, respectively); both of which are available on NRC's website.

Raising awareness

With voter turnout continuing to decline across the country, Local Government New Zealand has embarked on a communication campaign, #Vote16NZ, from January – October with an aim to:

- promote the value and importance of local government and encourage quality people to stand; and
- raise the percentage of voters to more than 50%.

Staff are currently considering how council can best leverage this programme to support our own communications initiatives. A further report will be provided to council shortly outlining our intended communications initiatives to increase voter turnout in Northland.

Order of candidate names on voting documents

The Local Electoral Regulations 2001 (s31) provides the opportunity for council to choose by resolution the order of candidate names appearing on the voting documents from three options – alphabetical, pseudo random or random. If no resolution is made by council the default position is alphabetical order.

Of interest, the Northland District Health Board (NDHB), Whangarei District Council and Kaipara District Council recently resolved to adopt the alphabetical option. Far North District Council is yet to consider the matter. For the triennial elections in 2007, 2010 and 2013 NRC resolved to adopt the alphabetical listing of names.

The Electoral Officer's report provides greater detail on each option but in summary:

- Random Order – all candidate names are randomly selected by computer and the order of surnames is different on every voting paper.
- Pseudo-Random Order – the order of candidate names is randomly selected and appear on all voting documents in that order.
- Alphabetical – candidates are simply listed alphabetically by surname and is the order traditionally used in local authority and parliamentary elections.

There is no cost difference between the three options.

The alphabetical order for the voting documents is recommended for the following reasons:

- Voters are easily able to find candidate names for whom they wish to vote for.
- The order of candidates on the voting documents match the order of candidates listed in the candidate directory that accompanies voting documents.
- This will be consistent with the NDHB, WDC and KDC on voting documents.



Pre-election period

All elected members are impacted by the three month 'pre-election period' which comes into effect on 8 July 2016. This period is the subject of guidelines 'Good Practice for Managing Public Communications by Local Authorities'¹ produced by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG).

Members are encouraged to be familiar with this document, to ensure their own conduct during the pre-election period does not result in the guidelines being breached (or being perceived as having been breached). Relevant sections are as follows:

Principle 12 - A local authority must not promote, nor be perceived to promote, the re-election prospects of a sitting member. Therefore, the use of council resources for re-election purposes is unacceptable and possibly unlawful.

Subsections (4.45 – 4.49)

Promoting the re-election prospects of a sitting member, directly or indirectly, wittingly or unwittingly, is not part of the proper role of a local authority.

A council would be directly promoting a member's re-election prospects if it allowed the member to use council communications facilities (such as stationery, postage, internet, email, or telephones) explicitly for campaign purposes.

Other uses of council communications facilities during a pre-election period may also be unacceptable. For example, allowing members access to council resources to communicate with constituents, even in their official capacities as members, could create a perception that the council is helping sitting members to promote their re-election prospects over other candidates.

For this reason, we recommend that mass communication facilities such as –

- Council-funded newsletters to constituents; and*
- Mayoral or members' columns in council publications –*

be suspended during a pre-election period.

Promoting the re-election prospects of a sitting member could also raise issues under the Local Electoral Act 2001. For example:

- Local elections must be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in section 4 of the Local Electoral Act². The principles apply to any decision made by a council under that Act or any other Act, subject only to the limits of practicality. A breach of the principles can give rise to an 'irregularity' which could result in an election result being overturned.*
- The publication, issue, or distribution of information, and the use of electronic communications (including web site and email communication), by a candidate are 'electoral activities' to which the rules concerning disclosure of electoral expenses apply.*

Principle 13 – A council's communications policy should also recognise the risk that communications by or about members, in their capacities as spokespersons for council, during a pre-election period could result in the member achieving electoral advantage at ratepayers' expense. The chief

¹ <http://www.oag.govt.nz/2004/public-communications>

² <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0035/latest/DLM93308.html>



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executive officer (or his delegate) should actively manage the risk in accordance with the relevant electoral law.

(Subsections 4.52, 4.53)

Curtailing all council communications during a pre-election period is neither practicable nor (as far as mandatory communications, such as those required under the LGA, are concerned) possible. Routine council business must continue. In particular:

- Some councils publish their annual reports during the months leading up to an October election, which would include information (including photographs) about sitting members.*
- Council leaders and spokespersons need to continue to communicate matters of council business to the public.*

However, care must be taken to avoid the perception, and the consequent risk of electoral irregularity. Two examples are:

- Journalistic use of photographic material or information that may raise the profile of a member in the electorate should be discontinued during the pre-election period; and*
- Access to council resources for members to issue media releases, in their capacities as official spokespersons, should be limited to what is strictly necessary to communicate council business.*

This means that councillors should not be quoted in media releases or other council communications during this period unless it is for a statutory purpose. Councillor columns and councillor attendance at council public events (e.g. Enviroschools) will also need to cease. The Chief Executive Officer or other senior council staff will provide necessary messaging where required during this period.

Council staff will be briefed prior to the pre-election period to ensure they are familiar with the requirement for both councillors and staff. If you have any questions surrounding this period please feel free to contact the Chief Executive Officer, Group Manager – Strategy and Governance, or Governance Support Officer, for further clarification.

Election Services

Level 2, 198 Federal Street, Auckland

PO Box 5135, Wellesley Street

Auckland 1141

Phone: 64 9 973 5212

Email: info@electionservices.co.nz

Report to the
Northland Regional Council
regarding the

2016 Triennial Elections

From the
Electoral Officer

11 February 2016



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Outline

The 2016 triennial Council elections will occur on Saturday 8 October 2016. An update on preliminary matters relating to the election is provided to Council, including consideration of the order of candidate names to appear on the voting documents.

Background

The 2016 triennial elections for most local authorities are due to occur on Saturday 8 October 2016, and are required to be undertaken according to the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Local Electoral Regulations 2001, the New Zealand Public Health & Disability Act 2000 and, to a limited extent, the Local Government Act 2002.

Certain pre-election information and tasks are outlined in this report for Council's information and attention.

The Local Electoral Regulations 2001 provides for Council to resolve the order of candidate names to appear on the voting documents (alphabetical, pseudo-random or random order). If no decision is made, the order of names defaults to alphabetical.

Narrative

2016 Elections

Elections will be required for the following positions:

- Councillors (9)
 - Coastal Central Constituency (1)
 - Coastal North Constituency (2)
 - Coastal South Constituency (1)
 - Hokianga-Kaikohe Constituency (1)
 - Kaipara Constituency (1)
 - Te Hiku Constituency (1)
 - Whāngārei Urban Constituency (2)

2016 Election Timetable

With an election date of **Saturday 8 October 2016**, the following key functions and dates will apply:

Nominations open/roll open

Friday 15 July 2016

Nominations close/roll closes (noon)

Friday 12 August 2016

Delivery of voting mailers

From Friday 16 September 2016

Close of voting

Noon Saturday 8 October 2016

A more detailed timetable is attached [Appendix 1](#) and has been placed on Council's website.

2016 Election Fact Sheet

A 2016 Election Fact Sheet summarising the key functions of the election ([Appendix 2](#)) is attached and has also been placed on Council's website.

Compilation of non-resident Ratepayer Roll

As the 2016 non-resident Ratepayer Roll must be compiled by each constituent territorial authority (Far North District Council, Kaipara District Council and Whangarei District Council) the regional council is not required to undertake anything in this regard.

For Council's information however, the following will apply:

- an insert detailing the qualifications and procedures for enrolment as a ratepayer elector is to be included with each constituent territorial authority rates instalment notice ([Appendix 3](#)) by September 2016;
- a national Ratepayer Roll inquiry hotline will operate between 11 April and 26 August 2016;
- a confirmation letter will be issued to all current constituent territorial authority ratepayer electors in March/April 2016;
- a national advertising campaign on the qualifications and procedures for enrolment as a ratepayer elector will occur during May 2016.

Order of Candidate Names

Regulation 31 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 provides the opportunity for Council to choose the order of candidate names appearing on the voting documents from three options – alphabetical, pseudo-random (names drawn out of a hat in random with all voting documents printed in this order) or random order (names randomly drawn by computer with each voting document different).

Council may determine which order the names of candidates are to appear on the voting documents, but if no decision is made, the order of names defaults to alphabetical order.

Council resolved to adopt the alphabetical order for previous triennial elections.

Alphabetical Order

Alphabetical order is simply listing candidate surnames alphabetically and is the order traditionally used in local

authority and parliamentary elections.

Comments regarding alphabetical order are:

- voters are easily able to find candidate names for whom they wish to vote for. Some candidates and voters over the years have argued that alphabetical order of candidate names may tend to favour those candidates with names in the first part of the alphabet, but in practice this is generally not the case – most voters tend to look for name recognition, regardless of where in the alphabet the surname lies;
- the order of candidates on the voting document matches the order of candidates listed in the candidate directory (candidate profile statements).

Pseudo-Random Order

Pseudo-random order is where candidate surnames are randomly selected and the order selected is the order appearing on all voting documents relevant to that issue. The names are randomly selected by a method such as drawing names out of a hat.

Comments regarding pseudo-random order are:

- the candidate names appear in mixed order (not alphabetical) on the voting document;
- possible voter criticism/confusion as specific candidate names are not easily found, particularly where there are a large number of candidates;
- the order of candidates on the voting document does not match the order of candidates listed in the candidate directory (candidate profile statements).

Random Order

Random order is where all candidate surnames are randomly selected and the order of surnames is different on every voting document. The names are randomly selected by computer so that the order of surnames is different on each voting document.

The random order enables names to be placed on each issue in a completely unique order on each voting document.

Comments regarding random order are:

- the candidate names appear in mixed order (not alphabetical) on the voting document;

- possible voter criticism/confusion as specific candidate names are not easily found, particularly where there are a large number of candidates;
- the order of candidates on the voting document do not match the order of candidates listed in the candidate directory (candidate profile statements).

There is no longer any price differential in printing costs between the three order of candidate name options.

Pre-Election Report

Section 99A of the Local Government Act 2002 requires each local authority to prepare a pre-election report, whose purpose is to provide information to promote public discussion about the issues facing the local authority. The pre-election report is prepared by the Chief Executive, must contain financial and major project information, and must be completed by 30 June 2016.

Online Voting Trials

Government has agreed to consider trialling online voting (in conjunction with postal voting) for certain territorial authorities for the 2016 triennial elections.

Expressions of interest from territorial authorities was called for by Local Government New Zealand in June 2015 and 8 territorial authorities have agreed to participate. The 8 territorial authorities to potentially trial online voting are Masterton District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, Palmerston North City Council, Porirua District Council, Rotorua District Council, Selwyn District Council, Wanganui District Council and Wellington City Council.

The trials are subject to compliance to a comprehensive Department of Internal Affairs requirements document and to Government's final approval, expected in March 2016.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

Council resolves for the 2016 triennial elections, to adopt *either*:

- (i) the alphabetical order of candidate names; *or*
- (ii) the pseudo-random order of candidate names; *or*
- (iii) the random order of candidate names

as permitted under regulation 31 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.

Author:



Dale Ofoske
Electoral Officer // Northland Regional Council
Election Services

APPENDIX ONE:



SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER 2016

Wednesday 2 March - Saturday 30 April 2016	Ratepayer roll enrolment confirmation forms sent by constituent territorial authorities [Reg 16, LER]
Wednesday 2 March - Wednesday 6 July 2016	Preparation of ratepayer roll by constituent territorial authorities [Reg 10, LER]
May 2016	National ratepayer roll qualifications and procedures campaign [Sec 39, LEA]
Monday 27 June 2016	ES enrolment update campaign commences
Wednesday 13 July 2016	Public notice of election, calling for nominations, rolls open for inspection [Sec 42, 52, 53, LEA]
Friday 15 July 2016	Nominations open / rolls open for inspection [Sec 42, LEA]
Friday 12 August 2016	Nominations close (12 noon) / rolls close [Sec 5, 55, LEA, Reg 21, LER]
Wednesday 17 August - Wednesday 24 August 2016 by Monday 12 September 2016	Public notice of candidate names [Sec 65, LEA] Electoral officer certifies final constituent territorial authority electoral rolls [Sec 51, LEA, Reg 23, LER]
Friday 16 September 2016	ES letter sent to unpublished roll electors
Friday 16 September - Wednesday 21 September 2016	Delivery of voting documents [Sec 5, LEA, Reg 51, LER]
Friday 16 September - Saturday 8 October 2016	Progressive roll scrutiny [Sec 83, LEA] Special voting period Early processing
by 12 noon, Friday 7 October 2016 Saturday 8 October 2016	Appointment of scrutineers (noon) [Sec 68, LEA] Election day [Sec 10, LEA] Voting closes 12 noon - counting commences [Sec 84, LEA] Preliminary results (FPP) available as soon as practicable after close of voting [Sec 85, LEA]
after 12 noon, Saturday 8 October - Thursday 13 October 2016	Official count [Sec 84, LEA]
Saturday 15 October - Wednesday 19 October 2016	Declaration/public notice of results [Sec 86, LEA]
Mid-December 2016	Return of election expenses & donations form [Sec 112A, LEA]



Dale Ofoske
Electoral Officer
Northland Regional Council
November 2014

LEA = Local Electoral Act 2001
LER = Local Electoral Regulations 2001
ES = Enrolment Services, Electoral Commission
FPP = First Past the Post

APPENDIX TWO:



GENERAL

Triennial elections for elected members of all local authorities throughout New Zealand are to be conducted, by postal vote, on Saturday 8 October 2016.

The elections will be conducted under the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001 and the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 and will be administered under contract, by Election Services, for the Northland Regional Council.

The elections are undertaken on behalf of the regional council by its three constituent territorial authorities (Far North District, Kaipara District and Whangarei District). In addition to their own elections (Mayor, Council etc), each constituent territorial authority is required to undertake the regional council and district health board elections.

POSITIONS

Elections will be required for the following positions:

- *Councillors (9)*
 - Coastal Central Constituency (1)
 - Coastal North Constituency (2)
 - Coastal South Constituency (1)
 - Hokianga-Kaikōhe Constituency (1)
 - Kaipara Constituency (1)
 - Te Hiku Constituency (1)
 - Whāngārei Urban Constituency (2)

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the above positions will open on Friday 15 July 2016 and close at noon on Friday 12 August 2016.

Nomination forms will be available during this period from:

- Council's Whāngārei Office, 36 Water Street, Whāngārei
- Council's Dargaville Office, 61B Victoria Street, Dargaville
- Council's Kaitiāia Office, 192 Commerce Street, Kaitiāia
- by accessing www.nrc.govt.nz
- by telephoning the electoral office on 0800 922 822

To be eligible to stand for election, a candidate must be:

- enrolled as a Parliamentary elector (anywhere in New Zealand); and
- a New Zealand citizen.

Detailed candidate information handbooks will be available from the electoral office (phone 0800 922 822) from May 2016.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Those eligible to vote at the election are all resident electors and non-resident ratepayer electors whose names appear on the constituent territorial authority electoral rolls when they close. The preliminary constituent territorial authority electoral rolls will be available for public inspection at the respective territorial authority offices and libraries within their districts from **Friday 15 July 2016 to Friday 12 August 2016**.

Resident Roll. All parliamentary electors, including those on the Māori Electoral Roll, are automatically enrolled on the Resident Roll, at the address where they live.

Any alterations to the Resident Roll (eg change of address details, including new postal addresses) should be made by:

- completing the appropriate form at any post shop;
- telephoning 0800 ENROLNOW (0800 367 656)
- accessing the Enrolment Services (Electoral Commission) website on www.elections.org.nz

Ratepayer Roll. If a person is on the parliamentary roll in one area and pays rates on a property in another area, this person may be eligible to be enrolled on the non-resident ratepayer roll. A firm, company, corporation or society paying rates on a property may nominate one of its members or officers as a ratepayer elector (providing the nominated person resides outside of the area). Ratepayer Roll Enrolment Forms are available at respective constituent territorial authority offices, or by phoning the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The first past the post (FPP) electoral system will be used for the Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council and Whangarei District Council elections. For the Kaipara District Council and the Northland District Health Board, the single transferable voting (STV) electoral system will be used.

VOTING PERIOD

Voting documents will be sent to all eligible electors, by post, from **Friday 16 September 2016**.

The voting period is three weeks (**Friday 16 September 2016 to noon Saturday 8 October 2016**). Electors may post their completed voting documents back to the electoral officer using the orange pre-paid envelope sent with their voting document. Polling places for the issuing of special voting documents and for the receiving of completed voting documents will be available from Friday 16 September 2016 to noon Saturday 8 October 2016 at:

- Far North District Council's Main Office (Memorial Avenue, Kaikohe)
- Kaipara District Council's Main Office (42 Hokianga Road, Dargaville)
- Whangarei District Council's Office (Forum North, Rust Avenue, Whangarei)

To be counted, all completed voting documents must be in the hands of the electoral officer or an electoral official by **noon Saturday 8 October 2016**.

Progress results will be known early afternoon, and preliminary results will be known late evening, on **Saturday 8 October 2016**. These will be accessible on Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz



For further information regarding this election, please contact the electoral office:


// The Electoral Officer, Northland Regional Council

PO Box 5135, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141

Email: info@electionservices.co.nz

Phone: 0800 922 822

APPENDIX THREE:



**Local Elections 2016
YOUR VOTE
YOUR COMMUNITY**

**Wherever you pay rates
it pays to vote**

DO YOU LIVE IN ONE AREA AND PAY RATES ON A PROPERTY IN ANOTHER?

**Then you may qualify to vote more than once at the
local authority elections on 8 October 2016**

- If you live and vote in one council district, but also pay rates on a property in another district, you may be eligible to enrol as a non-resident ratepayer elector in that other council district.
- A firm, company, trust, corporation or society which pays rates on a property may nominate one of its members or officers as a non-resident ratepayer elector, provided that the nominator and the person nominated are both registered as Parliamentary electors at addresses which are outside the council district within which the property is situated.
- In the case of partners, joint tenants and tenants in common, who collectively pay rates on a property, one of the group may be nominated to be entered on the ratepayer electoral roll. Again, the nominated person and the nominator must be registered as Parliamentary electors at addresses which are outside the council district within which the property is situated.

Note: The term "council district" includes a city, district and regional council area and where established, a community board area. The term also includes the area of the Auckland Council and the areas of its local boards.

Eligibility to enrol or be nominated will depend on individual circumstances

In each case only one ratepayer elector can be nominated, irrespective of the number of properties owned by the firm, company, society, trust, partnership or ratepayer in a council district.

New Ratepayer Electors

If you think you may be eligible to enrol or to nominate a person for the ratepayer electoral roll, you will need to obtain an Enrolment Form for Ratepayer Electors from the city or district council to which you pay your rates.

ENROL NOW – THE RATEPAYER ELECTORAL ROLL CLOSES ON 12 AUGUST 2016

**If you are on the Parliamentary electoral roll you will automatically be on the
local authority residential electoral roll**

If you want further information please phone toll free
0508 08 10 16 (from 11 April 2016 to 26 August 2016)
Brought to you by New Zealand Local Authority Electoral Officers



**Local Elections 2016
YOUR VOTE
YOUR COMMUNITY**

**Wherever you pay rates
it pays to vote**

