

Northland Regional Council Minutes

Meeting held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Tuesday 25 March 2025, commencing at 10.15am

Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, Geoff Crawford

Councillors:

John Blackwell

Joe Carr *(Via audio-visual link)*

Jack Craw

Peter-Lucas Jones *(Via audio-visual link)*

Amy Macdonald

Marty Robinson

Tui Shortland *(Via audio-visual link)*

Rick Stolwerk *(Via audio-visual link. Left at 11.27am)*

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting

Independent Risk Advisor

Independent Tangata Whenua Advisor (x2)

Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer

Pou Taumatua – GM Corporate Services

Pou Whakaritenga - GM Regulatory Services

Pou Tiaki Taiao - GM Environmental Services

Pou Manawhakahaere - GM Governance and Engagement

Group Manager - Community Resilience

Deputy Pou Tiaki Pūtaiao - GM Biosecurity

Translator

Digital Experience Support

Māori Engagement and Governance Support Administration

Governance Specialist

Part Meeting

Finance Manager

Transport Manager

Policy and Planning Manager

Strategic Projects and Facilities Manager

Policy Specialist

Principal Advisor

Secretarial Note: The Chair declared the meeting open at 10.15am and proceedings commenced with a karakia by the Independent Tangata Whenua Advisor.

Ngā whakapāha/Apologies (Item 1.0)

Moved (Macdonald/Blackwell)

That the apology from Councillor Stolwerk for early departure be received.

Carried

Nga whakapuakanga/Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Item 2.0)

It was advised that councillors should make declarations item-by-item as the meeting progressed.

At this time it was declared that:

- The two Independent Tangata Whenua Advisors and the Independent Risk Advisor had a conflict of interest in terms of Items 7.3 'Fast Track Approvals Act – Council Processes and Delegations' and 7.5 'Applications to be added to council's list of approved RMA Hearing Commissioners'.
- Councillor Jones had been appointed the Chair Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri.

Confirmation of Extraordinary Council Meeting Minutes 19 February 2025 and Council Meeting Minutes 25 February 2025 (Item 5.1)

Report from Meloney Tupou, Māori Governance and Engagement Support Admin

Moved (Craw/Macdonald)

That the minutes of the extraordinary council meeting held on 19 February 2025, and the ordinary council meeting held on 25 February 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record *(subject to the correction for the attendance of the Independent Tangata Whenua Advisor at the 25 February 2025 council meeting)* and that these be duly authenticated with the Chair's electronic signature.

Carried

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.2)

Report from Chris Taylor, Governance Specialist

Moved (Crawford/Robinson)

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

Financial Report to 28 February 2025 (Item 6.1)

Report from Taka Skipwith, Financial Accountant

Moved (Blackwell/Macdonald)

That the report 'Financial Report to 28 February 2025' by Taka Skipwith, Financial Accountant and dated 10 March 2025, be received.

Carried

Secretarial Note:

- Assurance was provided that the Executive Leadership Team was closely monitoring the impact of staff vacancies on the delivery of workstreams and any significant issues would be highlighted to council.
- Concern was raised that there was insufficient funds to progress LIDAR surveying for the Kerikeri/Waipapa Flood scheme. The following motion was proposed:

Moved (Jones/Carr)

That up to \$50k be reallocated from the current surplus to enable the LIDAR survey of the Kerikeri/Waipapa catchment to be resourced within the required timeframe.

Clarification was provided that, in accordance with Standing Order 9.12 'Items of business not on the agenda which cannot be delayed', a meeting may only deal with an item of business that is not on the agenda if it was supported by a report that met the provisions of Part 6, Local Government Act 2002 with regard to consultation and decision making.

Assurance was provided that a memorandum was being prepared as a matter of priority to facilitate the approval of the funding to undertake the LIDAR surveying under the Chief Executive Officer's delegated financial authority. The Chief Executive was committed to its approval as an effective way to progress the matter.

- The Chief Executive undertook to confirm whether the Rivers Engineer role built into the Long Term Plan had been recruited.
- In line with Audit approval, 2.5% of councils total salary budget from the prior financial year (excluding any funded positions) was set as a turnover saving in the 2024-25 financial year budgets.
- Clarification was provided that the 'Unplanned gain on sale of carbon credits of \$218k' was an informed decision of council but from an accounting perspective was unplanned when reported against the Annual Plan budget.
- Assurance was provided that the Executive Leadership Team were giving careful consideration to the potential reduction in central government grants/subsidies and the impact this could have on delivering workstreams.
- Further assurance was provided that staff annual leave balances were actively monitored to ensure they did not exceed the cap within the Leave Policy.

Withdrawal of the Planned 2024-25 Annual Funding Contributions from the Managed Investment Fund Portfolio (Item 6.2)

Report from Simon Crabb, Finance Manager

Moved (Craw/Crawford)

1. That the report 'Withdrawal of the Planned 2024-25 Annual Funding Contributions from the Managed Investment Fund Portfolio' by Simon Crabb, Finance Manager and dated 17 February 2025, be received.
2. That \$2,983,642 is withdrawn in March 2025 from the fund managers recommended by EriksensGlobal and invested into Short Term Fund term deposits maturing in August 2025.

Carried

Secretarial Note: Council's Independent Investment Advisor had reaffirmed the recommendation that council continue with the 'De-risking Strategy' as presented in the report.

Private Share Revenue Increase on Contracted Bus Services. (Item 6.3)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council

Moved (Stolwerk/Craw)

1. That the report 'Private Share Revenue Increase on Contracted Bus Services.' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and dated 5 March 2025, be received.
2. That the Northland Regional Council approve a fare increase to bus services based on the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi approved Private Share Revenue Ratios, as follows:
 - a. that CityLink fares are returned to pre-2018 levels with an increase of \$3.00 per trip for adults and \$2.00 per trip for children.
 - b. that the Far North Link, Mid North Link, Hokianga Link, Hikurangi Link and Bream Bay Link services are increased by 0.50c per trip.

Secretarial Note:

- *The proposed fare increase was in response to the direction from the Minister of Transport to increase farebox recovery. It was stressed that if council did not take heed of the direction within the GPS on Land Transport there was a risk of losing the government subsidy.*
- *NRC staff had 'fought hard for Northland' and put forth the argument of the region's socio-economic status to reduce the percentage increase originally proposed by Waka Kotahi.*
- *Concern was raised regarding the impact of the fare increase on low income families, elderly and youth.*
- *Assurance was provided that council received granular data regarding bus patronage with 'a system in place to determine who boards at every stop'. This data was presented to the Whangārei Public Transport Working Party at every meeting and would be closely monitored to determine if there were any impacts of the fare increase.*
- *It was stressed that council needed to carefully consider all avenues available to reduce the impact of the fare increase on the vulnerable within the community.*
- *The staff recommendation was to commence the fare increase at the start of the 2025/26 financial year.*
- *In accordance with Standing Order 23.4 Substituted Motion, with the approval of the mover and seconder, the original motion was substituted with the following:*

Moved (Stolwerk/Craw)

1. That the report 'Private Share Revenue Increase on Contracted Bus Services.' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and dated 5 March 2025, be received.
2. That the Northland Regional Council approve a fare increase to bus services based on the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi approved Private Share Revenue Ratios, as follows:
 - a. that CityLink fares are returned to pre-2018 levels with an increase of \$3.00 per trip for adults and \$2.00 per trip for children.

- b. that the Far North Link, Mid North Link, Hokianga Link, Hikurangi Link and Bream Bay Link services are increased by 0.50c per trip.
3. That staff investigate further options for assisting public and school transport affordability and a workshop be held for council.

Carried

(Councillors Jones and Shortland voted against the motion)

Reallocation of Remaining Fanworm Removal Funding to Wider Caulerpa Surveillance (Item 7.1)

Report from Kaeden Leonard, Biosecurity Manager - Marine

Moved (Craw/Stolwerk)

1. That the report 'Reallocation of Remaining Fanworm Removal Funding to Wider Caulerpa Surveillance' by Kaeden Leonard, Biosecurity Manager - Marine and dated 10 March 2025, be received.
2. That council approve the reallocation of the remaining \$124,000 originally designated for fanworm removal in Ōpua to fund an expanded surveillance programme for Caulerpa throughout Northland.

Carried

(Councillor Robinson voted against the motion)

Secretarial Note:

- *Councillor Stolwerk left the meeting at 11.27am.*
- *Given the discontinuation of MPI funding and the expansion of Fanworm in Ōpua, the reallocation of the remaining funding would allow a 'strong effort into managing vectors' through increased hull surveillance and education.*

Adoption of the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland (Item 7.2)

Report from Michael Payne, Policy Specialist

Moved (Shortland/Macdonald)

1. That the report 'Adoption of the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland' by Michael Payne, Policy Specialist and dated 4 March 2025, be received.
2. That council adopts the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland and affixes the seal of council as set out in **Attachment 1** of the supporting information to the council agenda.
3. That the provisions of the Proposed Regional Plan relating to the management of the Coastal Marine Area, as set out in **Attachment 2** of the supporting information to the council agenda be referred to the Minister of Conservation for approval in accordance with Clause 18(3) Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act.
4. That council notes:
 - a) that the Minister of Conservation has a function requiring the Minister to approve the proposed regional coastal plans or parts of regional plans that relate to the coast, in accordance with Clause 19 Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991; and

- b) that approval by the Minister will follow the council's adoption of the Proposed Regional Plan provisions set out in **Attachment 2** of the supporting information to the council agenda and may include requirements from the Minister for the provisions to be amended.
5. That following approval of the Minister of Conservation, staff publicly notify the date that the Regional Plan for Northland becomes operative, in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Carried

Secretarial Note: Appreciation was extended to all involved in the development of the Regional Plan for Northland, which was described as an 'important milestone' and provided a strong base and 'shared understanding' to move forward.

Fast Track Approvals Act - Council Processes and Delegations (Item 7.3)

Report from Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager; Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist and Julian Hansen, Kaiārahi Kaupapa Māori - Senior Māori Technical Advisor

Secretarial Note: The two Independent Tangata Whenua Advisors and the Independent Risk Advisor declared a conflict of interest and refrained from participating in the debate. Councillor Jones, in his role as Chair Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri, stated he must be 'mindful of the paper'.

Moved (Robinson/Craw)

1. That the report 'Fast Track Approvals Act - Council Processes and Delegations' by Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager; Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist and Julian Hansen, Kaiārahi Kaupapa Māori - Senior Māori Technical Advisor and dated 4 February 2025, be received.
2. That the council approves the delegations associated the Fast-track Approvals Act processes set out in **Attachment 1** pertaining to Item 7.3 of the 25 March 2025 council agenda.

Carried

(Councillor Carr abstained from voting on the motion)

Secretarial Note: Clarification was provided that council's previous decision to transfer \$100,000 from salary savings to provide a budget for engaging professional services to review applications processed under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 was agnostic and could be in support or opposition of an application. Furthermore this funding was to support council obtaining information and not available to proponents.

Retrospective Approval - Gene Technology Bill Submission (Item 7.4)

Report from Michael Payne, Policy Specialist

Moved (Robinson/Shortland)

1. That the report 'Retrospective Approval - Gene Technology Bill Submission' by Michael Payne, Policy Specialist and dated 3 March 2025, be received.
2. That council retrospectively approve the submission on the Gene Technology Bill (included as **Attachment 1** pertaining to Item 7.4 of the 25 March 2025 council agenda).

Carried

(Councillor Carr voted against the motion)

It was further moved (Robinson/Craw)

3. That council seeks confirmation on the position from the GMO Inter-council Working Party member councils on strategic points raised within NRC's submission on the Gene Technology Bill.

Carried

Applications to be added to council's list of approved RMA Hearing Commissioners (Item 7.5)

Report from Colin Dall, Pou Whakaritenga - Group Manager Regulatory Services

Secretarial Note: The two Independent Tangata Whenua Advisors and the Independent Risk Advisor declared a conflict of interest and refrained from participating in the debate.

Moved (Robinson/Craw)

1. That the report 'Applications to be Added to Council's List of Approved RMA Hearing Commissioners' by Colin Dall, Pou Whakaritenga - Group Manager Regulatory Services and dated 10 March 2025, be received.
2. That council approves Gavin Palmer to be added to its list of approved Applications for consent hearings.
3. That council approves Troy Brockbank to be added to its list of approved Applications for consent hearings.
4. That council approves Amy Robinson to be added to its list of approved Applications for consent hearings upon confirmation that she has been recertified as an RMA Hearing Commissioner after 30 June 2025.

Carried

Agreement with Fire and Emergency NZ on the Multi-Agency Joint Emergency Coordination Centre (Item 7.6)

Report from Phil Heatley, Strategic Projects and Facilities Manager

Moved (Blackwell/Crawford)

1. That the report 'Agreement with Fire and Emergency NZ on the Multi-Agency Joint Emergency Coordination Centre' by Phil Heatley, Strategic Projects and Facilities Manager and dated 11 February 2025, be received.
2. That council approve the Chief Executive entering into a Heads of Agreement and Development Agreement (the Agreements) with Fire and Emergency New Zealand for a Multi-Agency Joint Emergency Coordination Centre, subject to him being satisfied that:
 - a. Council has complied with all statutory, regulatory (and policy) obligations that relate to the Agreements; and
 - b. The Agreements include any conditions deemed to be reasonable and appropriate in his view having taken legal or other professional advice, if required.

3. That council approve expenditure of up to \$8,070,000 plus GST to undertake Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 of the Multi-Agency Joint Emergency Coordination Centre Project (the Project), noting that this sum includes contingency, if required.
4. That council approve the expenditure in 3 above on the Project, including the contingency, to be drawn down from the Multi-Agency Joint Emergency Coordination Centre capital budget code 220404.
5. That council agree that the Chief Executive will provide:
 - a. Intermediate milestone reporting to the Northland CDEM Group Joint Committee; and
 - b. A Tranche 1 completion report and a Tranche 2 completion report direct to council.

Carried

Secretarial Note:

- *Appreciation was extended to all involved in progressing the project to this stage.*
- *The next step was to finalise the Binding Development Agreement between NRC and FENZ that would give effect to the Heads of Agreement.*

Chair's Report to Council (Item 8.1)

Report from Rae Hetaraka, Executive Assistant to the Chair

Moved (Crawford/Craw)

That the report 'Chair's Report to Council' by Rae Hetaraka, Executive Assistant to the Chair and dated 10 March 2025, be received.

Carried

Chief Executive's Report to Council (Item 8.2)

Report from Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer

Moved (Blackwell/Crawford)

That the report 'Chief Executive's Report to Council' by Jonathan Gibbard, Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer and dated 28 February 2025, be received.

Carried

Secretarial Note: Appreciation was extended to the Comms and Engagement Team for the successful design and running of the NRC display at the Northland Field Days.

Receipt of Committee Minutes (Item 9.1)

Report from Meloney Tupou, Māori Governance and Engagement Support Admin

Moved (Macdonald/Craw)

That the unconfirmed minutes of the:

- Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Meeting - 4 March 2025 and
- Investment Committee - 4 March 2025

be received.

Carried

Secretarial Note: The CDEM Group Manager, Graeme Macdonald who was finishing his 25 year tenure with council, was acknowledged.

Working Party Updates Report (Item 9.2)

Report from Meloney Tupou, Māori Governance and Engagement Support Admin

Moved (Robinson/Blackwell)

That the report 'Working Party Updates Report' be received.

Carried

Kaupapa ā Roto/Business with Public Excluded (Item 10.0)

Moved (Robinson/Blackwell)

1. That the public be excluded from the proceedings of this meeting to consider confidential matters.
2. That the general subject of the matters to be considered whilst the public is excluded, the reasons for passing this resolution in relation to this matter, and the specific grounds under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution, are as follows:

Item No.	Item Issue	Reasons/Grounds
10.1	Confirmation of Confidential Extraordinary Minutes - 19 February and Confidential Council Minutes 25 February 2025	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, as stated in the open section of the meeting .
10.2	Receipt of Confidential Committee Minutes	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, as stated in the open section of the meeting .
10.3	Proposed sale of Awanui Flood Scheme Properties	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, the withholding of which is necessary to enable council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities s7(2)(h).

3. That the Independent Advisors be permitted to stay during business with the public excluded.

Confirmation of Confidential Minutes in Open Meeting

The confidential resolutions confirmed in open meeting were as follows:

Propose sale of Awanui Flood Scheme Properties (Item 10.3)

Report from Joseph Camuso, Rivers & Natural Hazards Manager

Moved (Carr/Jones)

3. That council notes the correct section under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for addressing Item 10.3 in business with the public excluded is 7(2)(h) 'The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, the withholding of which is necessary to enable council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities'.¹

Carried

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm with a karakia by the Independent Tangata Whenua Advisor.

¹ The table included in the resolution to Item 10.0 has been amended to reflect the correction.