MINUTES

Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting

Wednesday, 24 June 2026

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MINUTES OF TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL
TANGATA WHENUA / TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2026 AT 9:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mr Anthony Fisher, Mayor Mahé Drysdale, Cr Hautapu Baker, Cr Kevin Schuler, Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular, Cr Hēmi Rolleston, Mr Puhirake Ihaka, Mr Whitiora McLeod, Mr Steve Te Kani, Ms Kura Martin
ALSO IN ATTENDANCE	Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Members: • Cheryl Hayes – Ngati Hangarau • Arthur Flintoff (online) – Nga Potiki • Des Heke – Ngati Ranginui • Manu Pene (online) – Ngāti Whakaue ki Maketu • Cilla Nepia (online) - Ngati Kuku Hapu • Buddy Mikaere (online) - Ngāti Pukenga
IN ATTENDANCE:	Marty Grenfell (Chief Executive), Christine Jones (General Manager: Strategy, Partnerships & Growth), Gareth Green (Head of Office - Manager of the Mayoral Office), Charlie Rahiri (Recovery Manager), Emma Joyce (Open Space & Community Facilities Planner), Keren Paekau (Acting Head of Strategic Māori Engagement), Cynthia Hamel (Acting Team Leader: Takawaenga Māori), Leonie Cairns (Kaiārahi Māori), Tuana Kuka (Kaiārahi Māori), Yolande Gallagher (Kaiarahi Māori), Ryan Russell (Team Leader Communications: City Development and Partnerships), Sarah Holmes (Team Leader: Governance & CCO Support Services), Caroline Irvin (Governance Advisor).

Timestamps are included at the start of each item and signal where the agenda item can be found in the recording of the meeting held on 24 June 2026 at Council's YouTube Channel.

1 OPENING KARAKIA

Cr Hēmi Rolleston opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

APOLOGY

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/1

Moved: Mr Whitiora McLeod
Seconded: Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular

That the apology for absence received from Ms Matire Duncan be accepted.

CARRIED

3 PUBLIC FORUM

Nil

4 ACCEPTANCE OF LATE ITEMS

Nil

5 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS TO BE TRANSFERRED INTO THE OPEN

Nil

6 CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

Nil

7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

7.1 Minutes of the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/2

Moved: Mr Puhirake Ihaka
Seconded: Cr Hautapu Baker

That the Minutes of the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

8 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil

9 DEPUTATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, PETITIONS

Timestamp: 20 minutes and 5 seconds

9.1 Discussion topics: Tangata Whenua Engagement Review Update and Simplifying Local Government Head Start Pathway

Tangata Whenua Engagement Review Update – Christine Jones, General Manager: Strategy, Partnerships & Growth

Main points

- The review found that the relationship was generally strong, built on goodwill and good faith, but there were opportunities to improve how it operated. It was "not broken", but after 20 years it was timely to refresh and refine the arrangements.
- Tangata whenua priorities had changed since the early 2000s, with more focus now on strategic involvement and future development rather than Treaty settlement negotiations.
- Council had engaged Jocelyn Mikaere to facilitate discussions between tangata whenua representatives and elected members to develop practical improvements.
- The work would focus on improving structures, communication, roles and responsibilities, and governance arrangements, including strengthening connections between tangata whenua representatives and their iwi/hapū communities.
- A key objective was to clarify expectations and update existing protocols where necessary, as some expectations had evolved beyond what was currently documented in the signed agreements.
- The outcomes of this work were scheduled to be reported back to Council by 1 September 2026.

Jocelyn Mikaere introduced herself, outlined her Tauranga Moana connections and background, and acknowledged her role in supporting the tangata whenua engagement review process.

In response to questions

- The review did not identify a need for major structural change, as the existing relationship between Council and tangata whenua was built on a strong foundation developed over many years. Instead, the focus was on enhancing, clarifying and strengthening existing arrangements rather than replacing them.
- The main change since the early 2000s was that iwi leadership was seeking a greater strategic role, reflecting the shift from a focus on Treaty settlements to a focus on future planning and development. This had created a need to better define how iwi, hapū and Council worked together.
- The review was intended to:
    - Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations.
    - Build on existing protocols and successful engagement practices rather than discard them.
    - Resolve areas where expectations had evolved beyond what was currently documented in signed protocols.
    - Improve communication and governance arrangements between Council, tangata whenua representatives, and their iwi and hapū communities.
- Ms Mikaere also confirmed that a key issue for the review would be determining how the stronger role now being played by iwi chairs and iwi leadership could be integrated alongside Tauranga Moana's traditionally hapū-based engagement model.

Simplifying Local Government Head Start Pathway – Mayor Mahé Drysdale

Main points

- Local government reform was expected to result in unitary councils, combining regional and territorial council functions, with the status quo no longer considered an option. Tauranga City Council would not continue in its current form under either pathway.

- The Head Start process would allow councils to shape their own future structure and obtain bespoke legislation, rather than having a model imposed by central government.
- Potential governance options discussed included:
  - A single Bay of Plenty unitary council.
  - Three sub-regional unitary councils (Western Bay, Rotorua, and Eastern Bay).
  - Variations that included neighbouring areas such as Thames-Coromandel or Taupō.
- Mayor Drysdale indicated that Tauranga and Western Bay were closely integrated economically and functionally and would likely need to work together in any future model.
- The importance of ensuring that Treaty obligations, tangata whenua representation, partnership arrangements, and Māori participation in governance were protected throughout the reform process was emphasised. Concerns were raised about retaining the gains made over the past 25–30 years in Māori engagement and representation.
- The Mayor acknowledged these concerns and advised that representation arrangements remained uncertain, but tangata whenua feedback would be incorporated into the development of any proposal.

In response to questions

- Tangata whenua involvement and representation would be a key consideration as governance reform progressed, and Council was seeking feedback on how representation arrangements should work in any future structure.
- There was still uncertainty around future representation models, including Māori wards and tangata whenua appointments, and Council was seeking clarification from central government on some of these matters.
- The Head Start process provided flexibility, with bespoke legislation potentially allowing governance arrangements to be designed to meet local needs rather than simply carrying over current structures.
- Concerns about retaining the gains made in Māori participation and Council–tangata whenua relationships were acknowledged. These issues would be incorporated into the design of any future governance model.
- The reform presented an opportunity to create a better system by combining the strengths of existing organisations while maintaining local voice and community representation.

10 BUSINESS

Timestamp: 1 hour and 1 minute

10.1 Tangata Whenua - Tauranga City Council Committee - Chairperson's Report - June 2026

Chair Tony Fisher

- The report focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with the Māori Ward referendum, with a need for emphasising a coordinated voter education and participation strategy, greater community engagement, and regular updates on Council's plans to support informed voter participation across the community.

Comments

- Despite the challenges highlighted in the report, members stressed there was still an opportunity for a successful Māori Ward referendum if efforts were focused on voter engagement, registration and turnout.
- A strong education and communications strategy was seen as essential, particularly to engage younger voters and improve understanding of the benefits of Māori representation.

- It was noted that engagement should not be limited to Māori communities; non-Māori voters also need information and education about the referendum.
- Members requested updates on Council's voter education programme, including who was leading the work and how progress would be reported back to the committee.
- Chair Tony Fisher clarified his report was intended to present analysis and voter data rather than conclude that the referendum could not succeed, emphasising the importance of understanding voter behaviour and turnout patterns.

Actions Requested:

- That staff provide the Committee with updates on Council's voter education programme, including who was leading the work and how progress would be reported back to the committee.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/3

Moved: Mr Puhirake Ihaka
Seconded: Mayor Mahé Drysdale

That the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee:

(a) Receives the report "Tangata Whenua - Tauranga City Council Committee - Chairperson's Report - June 2026".

CARRIED

Timestamp: 1 hour and 21 minutes

10.2 Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Report - June 2026

Mr Whitiora McLeod spoke on behalf of Ms Matire Duncan in her absence.

Main points

- Mr Whitiora McLeod emphasised the importance of continuing to strengthen the Council–tangata whenua relationship and acknowledged the value of tangata whenua involvement in Council policy development.
- He advocated for tangata whenua participation in local government reform and Regional Deal discussions, highlighted the community resilience role of marae, and noted the importance of maintaining strong Māori representation within emerging governance arrangements.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/4

Moved: Mr Whitiora McLeod
Seconded: Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular

That the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee:

(a) Receives the report "Te Rangapū Mana Whenua o Tauranga Moana Report - June 2026".

CARRIED

Timestamp: 1 hour and 27 minutes

10.3 Tangata Whenua Presentation Updates - June 2026

Staff Keren Paekau, Acting Head of Strategic Māori Engagement

At 10.47am, Mr Puhirake Ihaka withdrew from the meeting.

The Head of Strategic Māori Engagement spoke to the report noting the following points:

- There was ongoing work with marae and iwi to identify and address issues, with efforts being made to align this work with wider resilience and recovery programmes and avoid duplication.
- The Papakāinga Fund had recently closed, with seven applications received and progress being made on some of the projects previously highlighted through the committee.
- The upcoming changes to the National Environmental Standards for Papakāinga would significantly increase housing opportunities on Māori land from 1 July 2026. Ngāti Hangarau and Matapihi were areas likely to be particularly affected by the changes.
- Council staff were working through the implications of the new rules, including infrastructure requirements and how future development could align with hapū aspirations and management plans.

In response to questions

- For Ngāti Hangarau, the current limit of 50 homes across the development area could increase substantially because the new rules applied on a per-block basis.
- Council was still working through the practical implications of the new National Environmental Standards rules, including infrastructure requirements and how growth could be managed appropriately.
- Staff were conscious of the need to balance increased housing opportunities with hapū aspirations, including maintaining rural character and outcomes identified in hapū management plans.
- Completed items were now identified separately in the report and would be removed from future tracking once finished. Any updates added to the report table would be entered in red font.

Mr Whitiora McLeod

- Mr McLeod advised that the upcoming reconsenting of the municipal water take would require engagement between Council staff and the relevant tangata whenua groups. He noted that some matters remained unresolved through Treaty settlement processes and emphasised the need for early discussions with affected hapū and iwi as the consent work progressed.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/5

Moved: Mr Whitiora McLeod
Seconded: Cr Hautapu Baker

That the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee:

(a) Receives the report "Tangata Whenua Presentation Updates - June 2026".

CARRIED

11 DISCUSSION OF LATE ITEMS

Nil

12 CLOSING KARAKIA

Mr Steve Te Kani closed the meeting with a karakia.

The meeting closed at 10.54am.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed as a true and correct record at the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting held on 26 August 2026.