DRAFT MINUTES

Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting

Wednesday, 26 August 2026

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MINUTES OF TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL
TANGATA WHENUA / TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE MARAE
ON WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST 2026 AT 9:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mr Anthony Fisher (Chair), Mayor Mahé Drysdale, Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular, Cr Hautapu Baker, Cr Kevin Schuler, Cr Hēmi Rolleston, Ms Matire Duncan, Mr Whitiora McLeod, Steve Te Kani (online)
ALSO IN ATTENDANCE	Cr Tod Taylor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Jeremy Boase (Head of Strategy, Governance & Climate Resilience), Keren Paekau (Head of Strategic Māori Engagement), Cynthia Hamel (Acting Team Leader: Takawaenga Māori), Leonie Cairns (Kaiārahi Māori), Tuana Kuka (Kaiārahi Māori), Yolande Gallagher (Kaiarahi Māori), Emma Joyce (Open Space & Community Facilities Planner), Ryan Russell (Team Leader Communications: City Development and Partnerships), Caroline Irvin (Governance Advisor), Quinn Tawaka (Governance Advisor).
EXTERNAL:	Mr Kevin Lavery (Establishment Chief Executive – Water Organisation)

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 26 August 2026 at Council's You Tube Channel.

1 OPENING KARAKIA

Cr Hēmi Rolleston opened the meeting with a karakia.

2 APOLOGIES

APOLOGY

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/1

Moved: Cr Hēmi Rolleston
Seconded: Ms Matire Duncan

That the apology for absence received from Member Puhiraki Ihaka and Kura Martin be accepted.

CARRIED

3 PUBLIC FORUM

Nil

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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 24 June 2026

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/2

Moved: Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular
Seconded: Cr Hautapu Baker

That the Minutes of the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting held on 24 June 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED

8 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Member Whitiora McLeod advised he was a trustee of Mangatawa Pāpāmoa Blocks Incorporation.

9 DEPUTATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, PETITIONS

9.1 Presentation: Mr Kevin Lavery – Establishment Chief Executive – Water Organisation

Mr Kevin Lavery

Mr Lavery introduced himself to the Committee and provided the following points:

- An outline of his background in local government, health, water reform, and establishing new organisations.
- Safe drinking water and sanitation had been among the most important public health improvements in history and emphasised the critical importance of water services.

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- The Bay of Plenty region already had strong water operations, capable staff, good infrastructure, and positive relationships with communities and marae.
- The new water entity's ambition was to be the country's leading water organisation, delivering safe, reliable, and affordable services.
- Relationships with Tangata Whenua would be central to the organisation and that a Marae Partnerships Lead would report directly to him. Engagement with Tangata Whenua should be embedded across the organisation rather than being the responsibility of one person.
- Highlighted the importance of maintaining focus on key projects, Te Mana o te Wai outcomes, workforce development, and succession planning.
- A successful and stable transition to the new water entity was the immediate priority.
- The new entity would have greater borrowing capacity than councils, enabling increased investment in water infrastructure and renewals.
- Borrowing was appropriate for long-life water assets because it spread costs more fairly across current and future users.
- Stronger public education on water conservation and sustainability was supported, while noting that water metering and digital technology could help reduce consumption.
- Collaboration with marae, iwi, trusts, councils, and communities to help deliver sustainable water solutions and future investment was encouraged.

Mr Lavery then played a video to further introduce himself (this video can be seen on the livestream).

Mr Lavery in response to questions

- The new water entity would be able to borrow more than councils, enabling greater investment in infrastructure, renewals, and compliance.
- The key benefit for communities would be the ability to do more, deliver services efficiently, and build on the strong foundations already established by Tauranga and Western Bay.
- The Māori Partnerships Lead reported directly to him because the relationship with Tangata Whenua was a priority and needed leadership from the top of the organisation.
- Responsibility for engagement with Tangata Whenua should sit across the executive leadership team, not with one individual.
- The new entity would work closely with the existing Māori teams at Tauranga City Council and Western Bay through ongoing collaboration and service level agreements.
- The preferred candidate for the senior iwi partnership role was undergoing reference checks and that iwi representatives would be invited to meet the candidate before the appointment was finalised.
- Concerns about borrowing were acknowledged. Efficiencies, careful capital programme management, and performance improvements would be needed to minimise costs to customers.
- Borrowing for long-life infrastructure was appropriate because it spread costs fairly across current and future generations who would benefit from the assets.
- Balancing growth with environmental protection was supported. High environmental standards and development could be achieved together.
- Stronger regulation by Te Mana o te Wai was driving improved drinking water and wastewater standards.
- Tauranga and Western Bay were starting from a strong position with generally good water compliance and performance.
- Water conservation education was supported. Digital technology, metering, and behavioural change would help reduce water consumption.
- Agreed that alternative approaches such as greywater use should be considered as part of future water sustainability efforts.
- Less money should be spent on regulatory and consent processes where possible, and more should be directed towards environmental improvements.

The Chair thanked Mr Lavery for his attendance, presentation and answering questions.

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9.2 Discussion Topics: Tangata Whenua Engagement Review Update and Simplifying Local Government Head Start Pathway

Tangata Whenua Engagement Review Update

The Manager, Head of Strategy, Governance & Climate Resilience provided the committee with an update, making the following points:

- The original engagement review had gone to Council on 26 May 2026, and Council had requested further work before a final decision was made.
- Consultant Jocelyn Mikaere had completed a report which identified key principles, components, and areas of focus for an integrated engagement model. The report emphasised the need for clearly defined roles, responsibilities, communication pathways, decision-making processes, and any hierarchy within the engagement framework.
- The consultant's report was not the final answer, and further work was required before recommendations could be considered by Council.
- Christine Jones and Ms Matire Duncan had begun working through how to progress the recommendations and implementation approach.
- Additional work would be undertaken quickly, with a further report planned for the meeting on 28 October 2026. The recommendations from the committee would then be incorporated into a report to Council scheduled for 10 November 2026.
- The intention was to bring the review process to completion and establish a new engagement structure.
- Feedback from Tangata Whenua had been considered and that implementation would provide further opportunities to refine the model and continue consultation.
- The Committee's feedback would help shape the final recommendations and implementation process before matters returned to Council.

Questions, comments and responses

- Members supported further work on the integrated engagement model.
- Member Whitiora McLeod advised that Māori Land Trust representation was identified as a gap requiring further discussion.
- The need to involve iwi chairs and Te Rangapū together during implementation was emphasised.
- Staff confirmed further refinement and consultation would occur during implementation.
- Future hui involving iwi chairs, Te Rangapū, the Combined Tangata Whenua Forum and SmartGrowth representatives were planned.
- The committee was advised it would receive a further report on 28 October 2026 before recommendations went to Council in November.

Simplifying Local Government Head Start Pathway

Mayor Mahé Drysdale provided the Committee with an update, making the following points:

- Discussions had focused on debt, governance, and Tangata Whenua representation.
- Tauranga City Council supported the Head Start proposal, while Western Bay did not.
- Tauranga and Rotorua had jointly submitted a compliant Head Start proposal to Government.
- The proposal would reduce the number of councils and create more efficient regional governance arrangements.
- There could be opportunities for improved Tangata Whenua engagement and representation, but some details still needed to be worked through.

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- Cabinet would decide in September whether the proposal would proceed to the next stage.
- The proposal presented both risks and significant opportunities for the region.

Questions, comments and responses

In response to questions from Member Whitiora McLeod, Ms Matire Duncan advised that:

- Planning for the Māori ward referendum was still uncertain due to the proposed council reorganisation, noting that a joint approach was being considered. She advised the committee was waiting for more clarity on the Head Start process before progressing further.
- Mr Des Heke and Ms Destiny Leaf had been appointed as Ngāti Ranginui representatives to Te Rangapū, noting they had been temporarily withdrawn during a representation review. Ngāti Ranginui were looking to appoint representatives back onto Te Rangapū.
- In response to a question, Mayor Mahé Drysdale advised that the six territorial authorities identified were Ōpōtiki, Kawerau, Whakatāne, Rotorua, Tauranga, and Western Bay of Plenty.

10 BUSINESS

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

Chair Tony Fisher

Chair Tony Fisher spoke to his report and invited questions and comments.

Ms Matire Duncan

- The report raised important questions about Tangata Whenua representation and Treaty obligations under local government reform.
- Increased Māori participation would require additional capacity and capability support for iwi and hapū.

Deputy Mayor Jen Scoular

- The Deputy Mayor supported the report and suggested it be used as an ongoing guide or work programme for the committee, suggesting that the reports key issues and questions could be regularly monitored.
- Ms Matire Duncan suggested focusing on the six key questions at the end of the report as a starting point.

Mr Whitiora McLeod

- Mr McLeod asked whether a specific Treaty policy should be developed and sought clarification on whether the Te Ao Māori Framework was a policy or guidance document.
- He suggested Māori Land Trust forums should be considered when discussing future Māori representation.
- The Chair, Mr Anthony Fisher, agreed there was value in clarifying how Te Ao Māori considerations were being applied in council reports and decision-making.

Head of Strategy, Governance & Climate Resilience

- The Te Ao Māori Framework formed part of Council's strategy and was intended as a foundation for ongoing capability building and organisational improvement.
- It was acknowledged that while current practice was not perfect, it represented improvement

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compared with previous years

Action Requested:

- That staff ensure that the sentiments of the Chairperson's report, and in particular the questions posed on the final page, are incorporated into (a) the development of structures and processes in response to the tangata whenua engagement review, and (b) the development of future local government structures under the Head Start Pathway process, if Tauranga City Council is selected for that process by Cabinet. Both processes to report back to this Committee accordingly.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/3

Moved: Mr Whitiora McLeod
Seconded: Cr Hēmi Rolleston

That the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee:

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

CARRIED

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

Ms Matire Duncan

In response to questions

Progress on a strategy to support a potential Māori ward referendum and whether there was an update on the planning work being undertaken:

- Ms Duncan advised that a joint approach had been considered, however, there was still uncertainty due to the proposed local government merger process, and it was unclear whether a Māori ward referendum would still be required. She noted that the committee was effectively waiting for more certainty before progressing further.
- The Head of Strategic Māori Engagement advised that the focus at the moment had been on the general election, and that a draft plan around who would be reached out to when the process started had begun. This was on hold until 7 November 2026. Following this there was a plan to start a campaign around Māori wards.

Cr Hēmi Rolleston

- The uncertainty around local government reform affected Māori ward referendum planning.
- Council needed to prepare for multiple scenarios and be ready to pivot once Government decisions were known.
- It was important to continue preparatory work rather than waiting for certainty

Action Requested:

- That staff to continue developing the Māori Ward education, engagement and participation plan and provide the communications and networks relating to this to the Committee.

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COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/4

Moved: Ms Matire Duncan
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 - August 2026".

CARRIED

10.3 Tangata Whenua Presentation Updates - August 2026

Staff Keren Paekau, Head of Strategic Māori Engagement

The Head of Strategic Māori Engagement provided report updates and answered questions.

In response to questions

Taylor Reserve:

- The matter needed to come back for further discussion with elected members and mana whenua representatives.
- Staff had prepared a report previously, but the next step was likely to be a workshop or briefing with elected members before a Council report was considered.
- The Taylor whānau had been involved in discussions and would continue to be involved.

Wikitorea Street Property:

- Council was awaiting a proposal from Ngāti Hē.
- Correspondence had recently been received requesting a meeting and expected discussions to continue.
- Engagement with iwi representatives would continue and a future update would be provided once a proposal has been received and considered.

Waimapu Marae:

- Staff were preparing a report for a November Council meeting on support for marae that would cover insurance, water, emergency management, and other support requested by marae.
- Staff were developing a comprehensive package of current support, future options, and how the new water services entity could contribute.

Actions Requested:

That staff:

- Prepare a Papakāinga Taskforce update for the Committee to be brought back to the next committee meeting.
- Progress Taylor Reserve naming discussions and report back.
- Provide an update on the Wikitorea Street properties proposal.
- Prepare a November Council report on marae support (including insurance, water and emergency management).
- Bring unresolved issues requiring governance direction back to elected members and Te Rangapū

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COMMITTEE RESOLUTION TW/26/0/5

Moved: Cr Kevin Schuler
Seconded: Cr Hautapu Baker

That the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee:

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

CARRIED

11 DISCUSSION OF LATE ITEMS

Nil

12 CLOSING KARAKIA

Cr Hēmi Rolleston closed the meeting with a karakia.

The meeting closed at 11.16am

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed as a true and correct record at the Tangata Whenua / Tauranga City Council Committee meeting held on 2 December 2026.

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