

Pre-election Report 2025

Riipoata i mua i te Pooti 2025
**Information for all Hamilton Kirikiriroa
voters and candidates**



**Hamilton
City Council**
Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa



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Overview

Foreword from our Chief Executive

He karere naa Lance Vervoort, Te Tumu
Whakarae o Te Kaunihera o Kirikiriroa



An election isn't just about choosing who sits at the Council table - it's about shaping the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa. Whether you vote or stand for Council, your involvement will help set the direction of our city for years, or even generations, to come.

Hamilton Kirikiriroa is growing rapidly, with thousands of new residents joining us each year. This growth brings exciting opportunities for innovation, investment, and a stronger community - but also real challenges we must navigate together.

As the population grows, it's putting more pressure on local infrastructure like housing, transport, water networks, and community facilities. At the same time, it's becoming harder for households to keep up with rising costs. Borrowing is more expensive and global uncertainty is making things tougher for local businesses and industries.

Compounding these challenges, previous Council rate increases didn't keep up with significant cost pressures. This has led Hamilton City Council to implement substantial rate hikes over the past two years, with more significant increases planned for the next three years. We've also made considerable cuts to staff costs and contractor budgets to ensure we're operating as efficiently as possible. Our goal has been for the revenue we receive (mainly from rates) to cover the city's operating costs each year from 2026/27.

However, it's important to understand that cutting costs often means cutting services. Any decision to further cut spending - or to reduce the planned rate increases - must be made with a full understanding of the implications, not just for our finances but also for the services we provide to our community.

Meanwhile, Council is undergoing its most substantial transformation in decades. From 1 July 2026, a new organisation, IAWAI Flowing Waters, will deliver water services to our city. Water services represent around a third of what we currently do, so this is a significant shift in local governance and the way we operate. Navigating this monumental change requires strategic vision and strong leadership - to ensure the future Council remains effective in serving our community and supporting staff through this transition.

This year's election will also include a binding poll on Maaori wards. This binding poll, which is compulsory for most councils in Aotearoa New Zealand, is an opportunity for the community to determine the future of the city's Kirikiriroa Maaori Ward.

As Chief Executive, I am privileged to lead a team of professionals whose expertise keeps Hamilton Kirikiriroa running smoothly. Their dedication ensures efficient city operations and empowers Elected Members to make informed, strategic decisions. Thanks to our staff's commitment, we remain resilient, adaptable, and prepared for the challenges ahead.

However, resilience is more than facing challenges – it's also about embracing opportunity. We are a city of diverse communities, a thriving business hub, and a centre for world-class education. Flowing through the city is the Waikato River, a taonga that reflects our deep cultural roots and enduring partnership with Waikato-Tainui, hapuu, and maataawaka (urban Maaori), and our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi.

To protect and enhance what makes Hamilton Kirikiriroa so special, we need Councillors who will look to the future with vision and courage. Strong leadership, clear thinking, and bold decisions will shape what comes next. We need people who look beyond today – who lead with purpose and put tomorrow's city at the centre of today's choices.

Hamilton Kirikiriroa is at a pivotal juncture. If you, or someone you know, has the vision and drive to help shape the future, now's the time to step forward and stand for Council. The decisions we make today will define the city for generations to come.

Hamilton, the time to act is now. Our future depends on you!

Lance Vervoort
Chief Executive
Hamilton City Council



About this report

Mo teenei riipoata

The Pre-election Report isn't just a legal requirement - it's your window into how Council is shaping Hamilton Kirikiriroa. Independently prepared by the Chief Executive, this report provides an objective snapshot of Council's impact, free from political influence.

Council plays a vital role delivering essential services, maintaining critical infrastructure, creating thriving communities, and driving key initiatives that affect all Hamiltonians. From maintaining roads and transport systems, to fostering economic growth, supporting environmental sustainability, and creating vibrant public spaces, Council's work touches every corner of the city.

This report isn't just for election candidates; it's a valuable resource for all residents, offering insights into how Council's decisions shape the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

Over the past three years, Council has tackled major projects, from infrastructure upgrades to community initiatives, that have helped make Hamilton Kirikiriroa a better place to live, work, and play. This report highlights these accomplishments, demonstrating how investments have brought real impact to the city. It looks ahead to the key projects planned for the next three years, as well as the key challenges and opportunities Council faces as we embark on a period of significant change.

A strong financial foundation is key to effective service delivery and long-term sustainability.

This report breaks down Council's financial position, covering revenue sources, expenditure trends and debt management. You'll find a clear overview of financial performance from the past three years leading up to the 2025 election, along with forecasts for the next three years, including planned investments, expected challenges, and strategies to keep Hamilton Kirikiriroa growing sustainably.

At its core, this report is about empowering Hamilton Kirikiriroa residents with knowledge. Whether you're a voter or a future leader, these insights should help you understand the scope and impact of Council's work, so together, we can shape the city's future.

Audit of information

Paarongo tatari kaute

While the Pre-election Report itself hasn't undergone an audit, most of the financial data has already been independently reviewed. This includes figures from previous annual reports and the 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan.

At the time of preparing the report, Council is finalising its accounts for 2024/25 and Audit New Zealand is reviewing the financial data. Therefore, the financial data provided for 2024/25 is based on Council's forecast 30 June 2025 position.

Election 2025

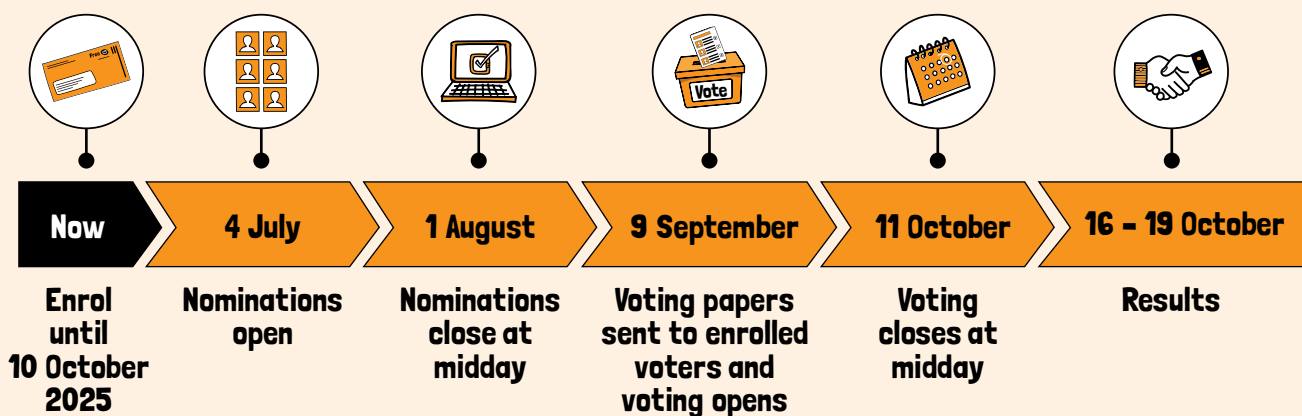
– all you need to know

Pootitanga 2025 – ngaa mea katoa e hiahia ana koe ki te moohio

The next Hamilton City Council election will be held between 9 September – 11 October, alongside a binding poll on the future of the Kirikiriroa Maaori Ward. This is your opportunity to help shape the future of our city.

In the 2022 local election, only 29.4% of eligible Hamiltonians voted. We can, and we must, do better. If you are reading this report and you haven't enrolled yet – it's not too late. Please go to vote.nz to enrol or update your details.

Local election 2025 key dates



Enrol

Whakauru



To vote in the election, you must be enrolled. You can enrol, check, or update your details at vote.nz.

Who can enrol to vote

You can enrol to vote as a resident if you:

- are 18 years or older on or before **10 October 2025**; and
- are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident; and
- have lived in New Zealand continuously for 12 months or more at some time in your life.

If you're enrolled to vote for the parliamentary elections, then you're automatically enrolled for Council elections too.

How to enrol

It's easy to enrol to vote or update your enrolment details:

- enrol online at vote.nz
- call the Electoral Commission on 0800 36 76 56
- Freetext your name and address to 3676
- download and complete an enrolment form from hamilton.govt.nz/enrol and email it to enrol@vote.nz or post it to:

Electoral Commission
Freepost 2 Enrol
PO Box 190
Wellington 6140



Māori roll

The Māori Electoral Option is a choice for Māori about which electoral roll to be on – the Māori roll or the general roll.

If you would like to change your roll type in time for the local elections, you need to do so by midnight, **Thursday 10 July**. You can't change rolls in the three months before the local elections.

Visit vote.nz to find out more, and to choose either the Māori roll or the general roll.

When to enrol

The Electoral Roll closes on **Friday 1 August 2025**. Enrolling by 1 August 2025 ensures you receive your voting papers in your letterbox. If you enrol after this date, you will need to cast a 'special vote' in person at the election.

The final deadline for enrolling to vote in the election and binding poll is **10 October 2025**.

How to enrol if you are a ratepayer for Hamilton Kirikiriroa but you don't live here

If you own property in Hamilton Kirikiriroa but live elsewhere you may be able to enrol as a Non-Resident Ratepayer Elector and vote in both areas.

Simply download an Enrolment Form for Ratepayer Electors from hamilton.govt.nz/enrol, fill it in and email it to ratepayer@electionservices.co.nz or post it to:

Electoral Officer
PO Box 5135
Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142

Stand

Kia tuu



Thinking of standing for Council?

Learn about the nomination process, eligibility, and what it means to be an Elected Member at hamilton.govt.nz/stand.

To stand as a Councillor, candidates must be:

- a New Zealand citizen (by birth or naturalisation ceremony); and
- enrolled as a Parliamentary elector (anywhere in New Zealand); and
- nominated by two electors whose names appear on the Electoral Roll for the ward in which you are standing as a Councillor.

Nominations open **Friday 4 July 2025** and close at **midday on Friday 1 August 2025**.

Maaori Ward Poll 2025

Pooti Waari Maaori 2025

Have your say on Maaori representation in Hamilton Kirikiriroa

Alongside the election for the Mayor and Councillors, Hamiltonians will be asked to vote in a binding poll on whether the Kirikiriroa Maaori Ward should continue beyond the 2028 election.

Why is there a poll?

Hamilton's Kirikiriroa Maaori Ward was established after community engagement in 2021. This year's poll is a central government requirement. The binding poll on Maaori Wards is compulsory for most councils in New Zealand. Its purpose is to enable communities to decide whether they want Maaori wards. Your decision will shape the 2028 Hamilton City Council Election.

When can you vote in the poll?

You can vote in the poll from **Tuesday 9 September 2025 to midday on Saturday 11 October 2025.**

More information

Go to hamilton.govt.nz/poll to find out more.

Don't forget, you need to vote by midday on Saturday 11 October or it won't count.

Vote Pooti



Your voting pack

Voting papers will be delivered to your home from **9 September 2025**. You'll need to complete and return them by **midday on Saturday 11 October 2025**. Don't leave it too late – votes received after this time won't be counted.

How to vote – a simple guide to STV

Me peewhea te pooti – he aratohu ngawari ki te STV

Hamilton Kirikiriroa uses the **Single Transferable Vote (STV)** system. Instead of ticking a box, you rank candidates in order of preference – 1 for your favourite, 2 for your second choice, 3 for your third choice, and so on.

Another way of describing this voting system is "Rank and Return."

- Rank as many or as few candidates as you like – just make sure to start with 1, then 2, then 3, and so on.
- Return your completed voting paper.

STV gives you more say in who gets elected. Your vote can still count even if your top choice doesn't win, because your preferences are transferred to other candidates based on your rankings.

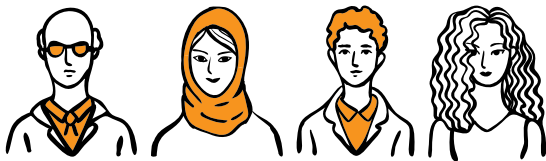
A full guide to STV will be included with your voting papers and is also available at hamilton.govt.nz/election.

Hamilton Kirikiriroa

- a look at our great river city

Kirikiriroa – he tirohanga ki too taatou taaone awa nui

Who we are – our people

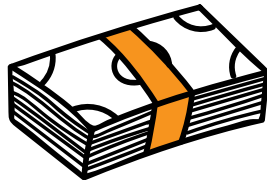


Population (2024):
189,700



52,000+
Hamiltonians (30.1%) were born overseas (vs 27% nationally)

74% of Hamiltonians agree or strongly agree that Hamilton is a great place to live. (Pulse survey 2025)



Average total household income
\$124,953

Hamilton Kirikiriroa is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most diverse cities, with residents from more than 160 ethnic backgrounds.

- **European: 57.4%** (vs 67.2% nationally)
- **Māori: 24.9%** (vs 17.5%)
- **Asian: 24.8%** (vs 18.7%)
- **Pacific peoples: 6.8%** (vs 8.9%)
- **Other ethnic groups: 2.8%** (vs 2.2%)

For a more detailed snapshot of Hamilton's people, economy and development and a look at the year ahead, see Council's 2024 [Hamilton Annual Economic Report](#) (May 2025).

Median age
33
years

Home ownership

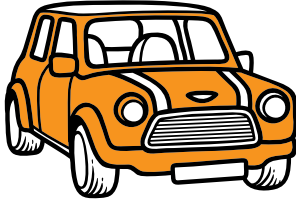
41% 

own or partly own their own home, or hold in a family trust.

 **25%**

of Hamiltonians speak more than one language (vs 21% nationally)

What keeps our city running — our infrastructure



729km
of roads

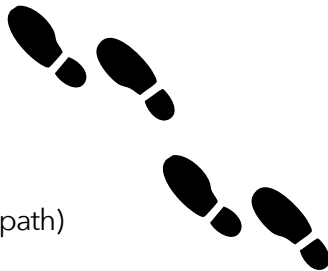


187km
of cycleways

- 119km on road
- 68km off road (cycleway or shared footpath)

1145km
of footpath

(1084km footpath + 61km shared path)



20,141
street lights



294
bus stops
with a bus
shelter



750

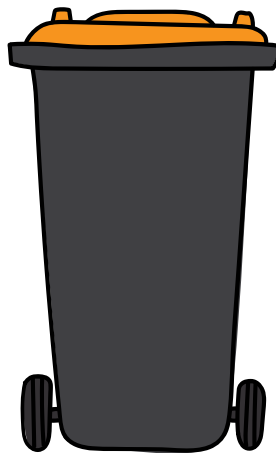
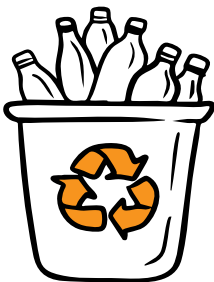


litres of drinking
water processed
every second

17 million kg
of general
waste collected
each year

10

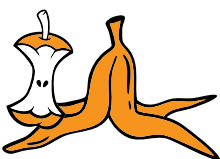
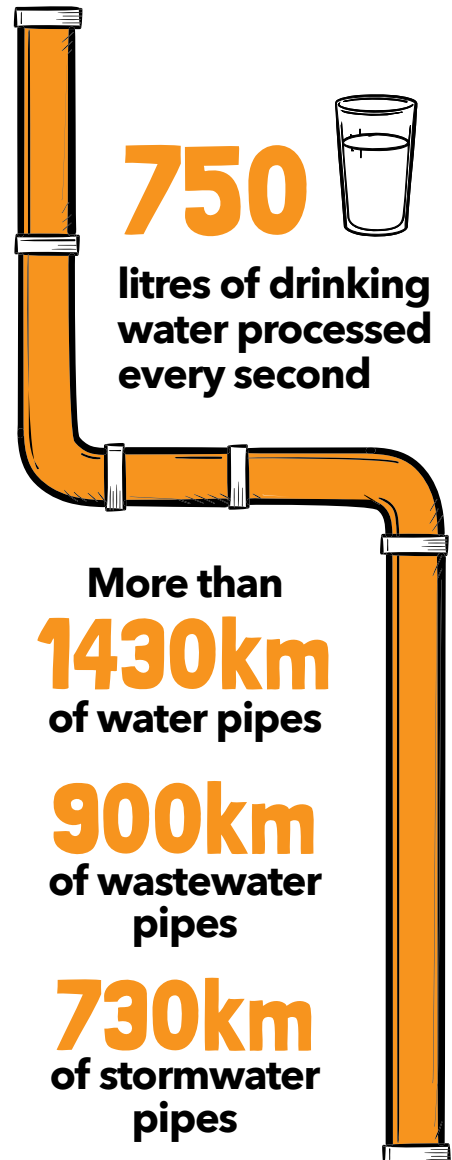
million kg
of recycling
collected
each year



More than
1430km
of water pipes

900km
of wastewater
pipes

730km
of stormwater
pipes



4.5 million kg of food
scraps turned into
compost each year

What we do – our services



2 aquatic facilities
375,000+ visits each year

Hamilton Gardens
hosts hundreds of
thousands of visitors to our
18 unique enclosed
gardens each year

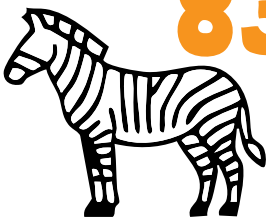
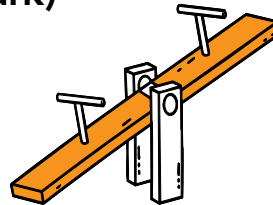


3 major venues

900+

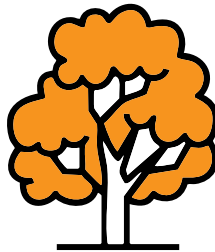
events each year at H3 Venues
(Claudelands, FMG Stadium
Waikato and Seddon Park)

80+
playgrounds
including
8 destination
playgrounds

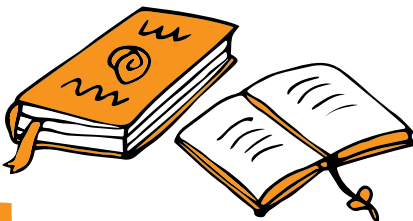


New Zealand's largest
urban restoration project
- Waiwhakareke Natural
Heritage Park

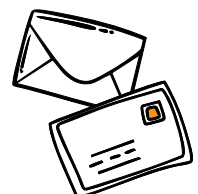
200+ parks and
reserves



7 libraries with **750,000+**
visits and **1.7 million** online
visits each year



222,000+
customer enquiries
handled each year



How we're growing – our economy

**Part of
the Golden Triangle:
Auckland, Hamilton,
Tauranga**

The economic and
logistics heart of
New Zealand.



**Population of
Hamilton Kirikiriroa is
projected to exceed**

200,000

**by 2028 and double
within 50 years**



**New Waikato
Regional Theatre**
with a total capacity of
1300 for arts and events

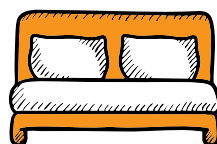
15.5% average rates
increase in
2025/26

(about \$10 a week for the typical
household) to help cover rising costs
and keep essential services running



**Aotearoa New Zealand's
fastest-growing city** for the past two years

5 key growth areas:
Peacocke, Rototuna,
Rotokauri, Central
City, and Ruakura



2 hotel projects
underway in
the CBD

The basics of Council

Ngaa ratonga tuuaapapa o te Kaunihera

How is Council made up?

Ko te hanganga o te Kaunihera

Hamilton City Council is made up of two key parts:

- governance (the Mayor and Councillors, who set the strategic direction and make key decisions)
- the organisation (the Chief Executive and a team of around 1300 full-time staff who keep the city running and plan for its future).

Council is made up of 15 Elected Members – the Mayor and 14 Councillors. Councillors are elected from three wards: East General Ward (six Councillors), West General Ward (six Councillors), and the city-wide Kirikiriroa Maaori Ward (two Councillors). Regardless of which ward the Councillors represent, all Councillors share the responsibility of representing, and voting on behalf of, Hamilton Kirikiriroa as a whole.

The Chief Executive, who is appointed by the Mayor and Councillors, oversees daily operations to ensure the city functions smoothly.

From delivering functional services like roading and waters, to shaping long-term plans that set the direction of the city over a

ten-year period, Council plays a vital role in the lives of all the city's residents.

Unlike central government, which makes laws for the entire country, Council creates its own bylaws, which are local rules designed specifically for Hamilton Kirikiriroa. These bylaws can decide everything from where your dog can be let off-lead, to whether you can place a dining table on a footpath outside a restaurant or cafe.

Major decisions are made in Council meetings and committee sessions, where staff provide expert advice, data and research-led information to Councillors, as well as staff recommendations for a way forward. However, it's the Elected Members (the Mayor and Councillors) who have the final say on the big issues shaping the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa. It's not their job to be experts themselves; it's their job to weigh up the expert advice and make the decisions.

Every three years, Hamiltonians vote to elect a full Council, shaping the city's leadership and ensuring community voices are heard in local decision-making.

Want to explore more?

Go to hamilton.govt.nz to check out everything Council does.



Council governance

Hamilton City Council is comprised of the Mayor and 14 Councillors (15 Elected Members in total) who represent the citizens of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

Elected Members make decisions, which the CE and staff then implement

Staff offer expert advice, data, and research-based recommendations to Elected Members

Our Council management

The Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team oversee seven key function areas of Council:

- **Customer and Community**
- **Destinations**
- **Finance**
- **Infrastructure and Assets**
- **Partnerships, Communication and Maaori**
- **People, Performance and Culture**
- **Strategy, Growth and Planning**

Council Controlled Organisations

- **Co-LAB (formerly Waikato Local Authority Shared Services)** Co-LAB is a collaborative initiative among Waikato region councils aimed at improving customer service, performance, and cost-efficiency. Hamilton City Council holds 16.01% of the total weighted value of issued shares and one of the 12 voting rights.
- **New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency** This agency provides efficient and diversified funding sources for local government. Hamilton City Council holds 8.3% of the shares.
- **Waikato Regional Airport Limited (WRAL)** operates Hamilton Airport and related property and tourism services. The Council holds a 50% shareholding in WRAL. Subsidiaries include Hamilton and Waikato Tourism Limited (regional tourism organisation), Titanium Park Limited (business park development), and Waikato Regional Airport Hotel Limited (Jet Park Hamilton Airport).
- **IAWAI Flowing Waters** In May 2025, Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council approved the establishment of a joint waters Council Controlled Organisation, IAWAI Flowing Waters. The new entity will own and manage drinking water and wastewater assets and services, and provide stormwater services for both councils, from 1 July 2026.



Our partnership with tangata whenua

Ko taa maatou ko tangata whenua hononga tahi

Hamilton City Council is committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi through its relationship with Kiingitanga, Waikato-Tainui, mana whenua, hapuu, and maataawaka (urban Maaori) within Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

Kirikiriroa had 700-800 years of Maaori stewardship prior to Europeans arriving here. Villages and gardens thrived along the Waikato River, which was a key route for trade and enterprise.

Descendants of those first caretakers of the land include today's mana whenua: Ngaati Maahanga, Ngaati Tamainupoo, Ngaati

Wairere, Ngaati Koroki Kahukura, and Ngaati Hauaa. The Council's commitment to working closely with mana whenua is in part expressed through a strategy called He Pou Manawa Ora – Pillars of Wellbeing. The strategy guides the Council to ensure that the voices of Maaori, along with all Hamiltonians, are heard in local decision-making. The strategy was developed with Waikato-Tainui, Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa, and mana whenua.

Partnership with tangata whenua is a central and enduring aspect of Council's commitment to honouring historic agreements and fostering a stronger, more inclusive and thriving city.

Our wider networks

O maatou hoa whaanui

Hamilton Kirikiriroa is at the heart of the upper North Island – the economic powerhouse of Aotearoa New Zealand. With more than half the country's population and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), this region thrives on connection, productivity, and opportunity.

But we can't do it alone. Our future depends on strong, collaborative partnerships – across councils, communities, and central government. Through the Upper North Island Strategic Alliance, Hamilton Kirikiriroa works with regional councils and national agencies – including the Department of Internal Affairs, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, and the Ministry for the Environment – to champion shared priorities and drive smarter, unified decisions.

At the sub-regional level, the Future Proof Growth Strategy brings local government, tangata whenua, and key partners together to plan for housing, infrastructure, transport, and climate resilience – ensuring our communities grow sustainably and strategically.

Locally, collaboration is just as essential – with Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Hato Hone St John, community houses, grassroots groups, and neighbouring councils working alongside us to support the wellbeing of Hamiltonians.

The success of Hamilton Kirikiriroa is a shared journey. By working collaboratively, we unlock the potential of our city, our region, and our future.



So, what does a Councillor do?

He aha te mahi a te Kaikaunihera?

Short answer – a lot. It's easy to be an armchair critic. It's a lot harder being the person who actually makes the hard decisions that not everyone will agree with, where every option comes with significant risks and downsides. But that's the reality of leadership: balancing what's best for the city – both now and for the future – while listening to the many voices of the community.

Being a Councillor is about more than attending meetings and voting on policies; it's about shaping the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa, representing residents, and making decisions that impact the daily lives of thousands. Some of these choices will be popular, others will be difficult. Sometimes the unpopular choice is to invest more rather than less – a tough call to make when you want to be voted back in. Every decision requires careful thought, engagement, and a commitment to long-term progress.

One of the biggest demands of the role is getting up to speed on some pretty complex issues. Councillors must read and absorb hundreds of pages of reports, proposals, and financial documents to prepare for meetings.

This background work is essential – it ensures Councillors make informed decisions on everything from infrastructure spending to environmental policies.

Once in the Council chamber, Councillors take part in rigorous debate, discussing policies that will shape the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

There is a formal process for meetings that all Councillors need to learn. It can be an intimidating environment at first. Some meetings are quick, while others run for hours, requiring patience, collaboration, and problem-solving. Sometimes these meetings even go on for days – particularly when it's long-term plan time, when big decisions need to be made.

Beyond meetings, Councillors are the bridge between local government and the people they represent. Residents reach out with concerns, ideas, and questions – whether through emails, phone calls, or social media. It

can be a 24/7 job. Listening, responding, and addressing community needs is at the heart of the role. This community contact is important and rewarding but it also creates tension because Councillors can easily be dragged into ground-level issues (like the location of a park bench, or dealing with a barking dog). Learning to operate at a governance level is a skill.

Councillors are public representatives, attending events like Anzac Day, Matariki, Chinese New Year, and Diwali. They build relationships with central government, local organisations, and stakeholders, ensuring the interests of Hamilton Kirikiriroa are always part of the bigger conversation. Networking, public speaking, and engaging with diverse communities are all part of the job.

The role comes with scrutiny. Council meetings are open to the public, the media listen closely, and Councillors may face tough questions or be quoted in the news. It requires resilience, adaptability, and the ability to take a level of criticism.

Above all, being a Councillor is about leading with integrity, making informed decisions, and ensuring Hamilton Kirikiriroa continues to grow and thrive. It's challenging, frustrating, rewarding, and a responsibility that carries real impact. Do you have what it takes?

What is the difference between an Elected Member and a Councillor?

An Elected Member is a general term for anyone elected to Council. We have 15 Elected Members – the Mayor and 14 Councillors.

What do our Maangai Maaori do? Maangai Maaori are external appointees who bring a Maaori voice to Council decision-making. They are not elected through public vote but are selected by Waikato-Tainui and Te Runanga o Kirikiriroa to sit on specific Council committees. Their role is grounded in the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and aims to ensure authentic representation of iwi, hapuu, and maataawaka perspectives.

And what about the Mayor?

Ko te mahi manu Kaahui/Koromatua?

The Mayor does everything that the Councillors do, and much, much more. It's not easy and it's not a job for the fainthearted. More often than not, it requires long days and weekend work.

Being the Mayor of Hamilton Kirikiriroa is more than a title – it's a pivotal leadership role that places you at the heart of the city's biggest decisions. But the Mayor can't make decisions alone. Like the rest of Council you only have one vote, so an effective mayoralty means leading through collaboration and influence. You chair the Council meetings, keep meetings on topic and running smoothly, and navigate controversial issues to hear all views of your Council respectfully before a vote.

You'll meet with government agencies, connect with city and business leaders, and ensure Council meetings run smoothly. When major issues arise, you'll be front and centre as the 'face' of Council – giving morning radio interviews, addressing the evening news, and representing Hamilton Kirikiriroa in national conversations.

You'll also be Council's direct link to government, advocating for the needs of Hamilton Kirikiriroa on the national stage. Whether it's securing funding, influencing policy, or ensuring local priorities are heard by ministers and officials, your ability to build

strong relationships with government is critical to the city's future success.

You'll deliver a multitude of event speeches, break ground on both big and small developments, and work closely with community leaders to shape the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

Staff will keep you briefed on key Council initiatives, but the responsibility of leading the conversation and setting the city's direction will fall on your shoulders.

Public scrutiny comes with the job. Your words will be quoted (sometimes out of context), your decisions debated, and your leadership ability tested daily.

But don't worry, you won't be stepping in unprepared. There's a robust induction programme that covers legislation, finance, and leadership development to ensure you're equipped and supported to succeed.

So, if you want to step into Council's main leadership role, do your homework: watch Council meetings, familiarise yourself with our challenges and opportunities, and understand the priorities of Hamilton Kirikiriroa. The city needs strong, informed leadership, someone who is prepared to make those sometimes tough and contentious decisions that will shape our future.

Are you willing to ask tough questions that won't always be popular?

Are you ready to be a visible leader in your community, not just during the campaign but throughout your term?

Are you prepared to make decisions where every option comes with significant risks and downsides?

How will you work collaboratively with people who have different views from your own?



Council committees and panels and what they cover

Ngaa komiti me ngaa paewhiri me aa raatou kaupapa

Hamilton City Council currently has several committees overseeing different aspects of governance and city development:

- **CE Review Committee** – evaluates the Chief Executive’s performance.
- **Community and Natural Environment Committee** – focuses on environmental and community wellbeing.
- **Community Grants Allocation Subcommittee** – allocates funding for local initiatives.
- **Dog Control Hearings Panel** – resolves disputes around dog regulations.
- **Economic Development Committee** – drives investment and business opportunities.
- **Finance and Monitoring Committee** – manages budgets and financial performance.
- **Infrastructure and Transport Committee** – oversees assets, investment and service delivery for transport, water, wastewater and stormwater.
- **Regulatory and Hearings Committee** – hears directly from the community following consultation.

- **Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee** – shapes urban development and future planning.
- **Strategic Risk and Assurance Committee** – oversees risk management and accountability.
- **Traffic, Speed Limits and Road Closure Hearings Panel** – reviews speed limits and road changes.

These committees and panels help shape policies, manage resources, and ensure Hamilton Kirikiriroa continues to grow and thrive. External appointees are included to bring independent expertise, diverse perspectives, or specialist knowledge that enhances a committee’s decision-making and governance. Council has two external appointees on the Strategic Risk and Assurance Committee, and Maangai Maaori on the Strategic Growth and District Plan Committee, the Infrastructure and Transport Committee, and the Economic Development Committee.

You can find more details at hamilton.govt.nz.



Council's purpose

**Te puutake nui
a te Kaunihera**

**Improving the wellbeing
of Hamiltonians**



Council's five priorities

Ko ngaa whakaarotau e rima o te Kaunihera

While developing the 2021-31 Long-Term Plan, Council asked the community what they love about Hamilton Kirikiriroa and how it could become an even better place to live. Their ideas shaped five key priorities to guide the city's future. As part of the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan, these priorities were reaffirmed, seeking to ensure that Hamilton Kirikiriroa continues to grow and thrive in ways that truly matter to its people.

1. Shaping a city that's easy to live in **Ahuahungia teetehi taaone e tau ai te noho ki roto**

What we will focus on:

1. We'll prioritise building connected and safe walkways and cycleways that allow us to move around our city quickly and easily and bring neighbourhoods together.
2. We'll revitalise our existing neighbourhoods and invest in the creation of our new neighbourhoods to make sure we have a liveable, sustainable city.
3. We'll encourage new developments in Hamilton Kirikiriroa to include a mix of

housing, including affordable housing options.

4. We'll enable and support strong public transport connections that help Hamiltonians get easy access to essential services such as education, health centres, and supermarkets.
5. We'll put more focus on our neighbourhoods having community identity and supporting community spaces across our city.

2. Shaping a city where our people thrive

Ahuahungia teetehi taaone e puaawai ai ngaa taangata katoa

What we will focus on:

1. We'll work with partners like central government and other councils to deliver fast and efficient transport connections to connect Hamilton Kirikiriroa quickly to places like Auckland and Tauranga.
2. We'll look beyond our borders and work with our regional partners to maximise the opportunities from Hamilton Kirikiriroa being the hub of the Waikato region.

3. We'll make sure our economic strength is further leveraged and that Hamilton Kirikiriroa is known as a great place to work and do business.
4. We'll empower and enable our diverse communities to share their voice, and shape their city.
5. We'll invest in the right infrastructure to make sure Hamilton Kirikiriroa is an attractive place for businesses to succeed.

3. Shaping a central city where people love to be

Ahuahungia te pokapuu o teetehi taaone e arohaina ai e te taangata

What we will focus on:

1. We'll strengthen the connection and access between the city centre and the Waikato River.
2. We'll promote daytime and evening activity.
3. We'll create performance spaces such as the new regional theatre and leverage existing central city spaces to support arts and culture initiatives which offer something unique to our city.
4. We'll support mixed inner-city living options in Hamilton Kirikiriroa which encourage people to live in the central city alongside vibrant retail, hospitality, and entertainment sectors.
5. We'll make it easy to get into and around the city through a range of alternative travel options.

4. Shaping a fun city with lots to do

Ahuahungia teetehi taaone ngahau e tini ai ngaa kaupapa papai hei whai

A city is more than infrastructure; it needs spaces and events for individuals, groups and whaanau.

What we will focus on:

1. We'll develop open community spaces like Korikori Park in Rototuna and Minogue Park in Forest Lake that are accessible to everyone to enjoy.
2. We'll invest in and enhance Waikato Museum, Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton Zoo and Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park to create new and unique experiences for our people and visitors.
3. We'll host and celebrate city events like the Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival and Balloons over Waikato.
4. We'll actively celebrate and promote a city where residents have the opportunity to have fun with their friends and family.
5. We'll support local sports events by investing in play spaces and we'll work hard to attract national and international sports events to our city.

5. Shaping a green city

Ahuahungia teetehi taaone tiaki taiao

What we will focus on:

1. We'll protect and restore our natural gully network and the biodiversity of Hamilton Kirikiriroa to increase how green our city is, making it healthier and stronger.
2. We'll reduce the carbon footprint of Hamilton Kirikiriroa and build a city that is resilient to the effects of climate change.
3. We'll mitigate the impact of the city on health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and Lake Rotorua (Hamilton Lake).
4. We'll encourage and enable alternative ways to move safely and quickly around our city.
5. We'll plan our future as a sustainable city – balancing the natural and built environments so they can live in harmony.

Our planning cycle

To maatou mahere huringa

Long-Term Plan

Every three years, Hamilton City Council charts the city's future through a long-term plan, a blueprint outlining priorities, funding, and service levels for the next decade, shaping how Hamilton Kirikiriroa grows and evolves.

The community plays a vital role in this process. Residents, businesses, and stakeholders contribute through consultations, submissions, and engagement sessions, ensuring the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of those who call Hamilton Kirikiriroa home. However, final decisions on what is included sit with Elected Members.

The current Long-Term Plan covers the period 2024-34. The community played a big role in shaping the plan, with nearly 3000 submissions helping to refine decisions. After months of discussions, Council approved the final Long-Term Plan on 4 July 2024.

To keep essential services running while managing rising costs, the Long-Term Plan included a 16.5% average rates increase for 2024/25 and 15.5% for 2025/26, with further planned 'double digit' rates increases for the next three years. In addition, savings were made by trimming staff costs and refining projects.

Anyone running for election should be familiar with the Long-Term Plan, as it guides major decisions impacting the city, defines the services Council will provide, budget expectations, and funding sources over the ten-year period. Over the next year we will be making a formal amendment to the Long-Term Plan to reflect the new approach to delivering water services.



Annual plans

In the years between long-term plans, Council produces annual plans, which allow for budget reviews and adjustments to address emerging needs. The most recent Annual Plan was adopted in June 2025, during the 2024/25 financial year.

Following each financial year, Council also releases an annual report, assessing how well it has met its commitments throughout the planning cycle. This report benchmarks performance, measures success, and evaluates whether budget targets have been achieved. The most recent Annual Report was published in December 2024, covering the 2023/24 financial year.

Council services

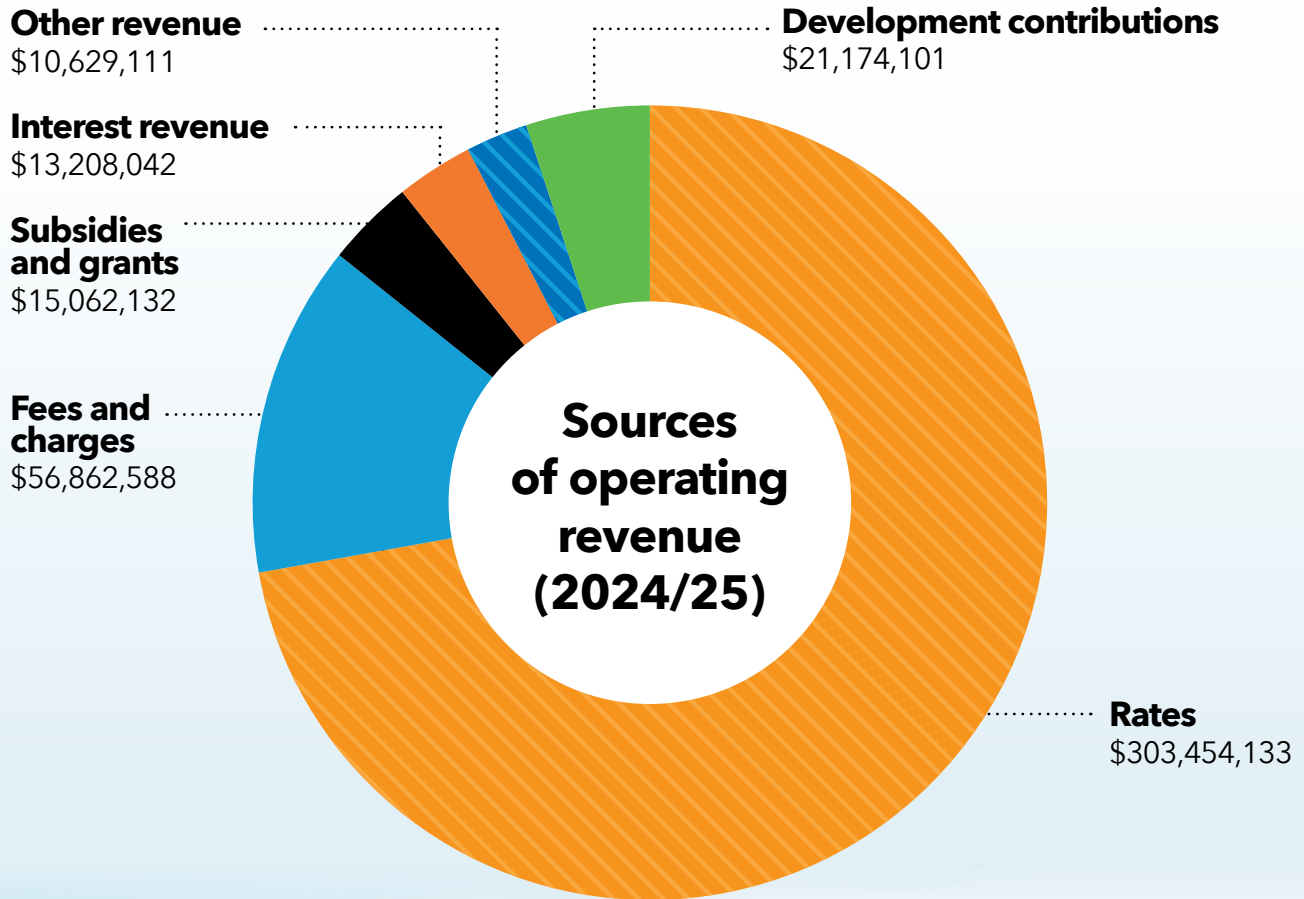
Ngaa ratonga Kaunihera

From parks and playgrounds to footpaths, pools, rubbish collection, and roads, Council's work is part of everyday life in Hamilton Kirikiriroa. We provide services for all our residents and the tens of thousands who visit the city every day. From 1 July 2026, a new waters company will be responsible for supplying drinking water and providing wastewater services across Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council. It will also provide stormwater services under contract to both Councils.

- **Animal education and control**
– registering your dog, reporting animal nuisances, and learning about responsible pet ownership in Hamilton Kirikiriroa.
- **Arts and culture** – our libraries, public art, history, and heritage, including Te Whare Taonga o Waikato Museum and Gallery and local theatres.
- **Cemeteries** – providing respectful end-of-life services and maintaining our heritage cemeteries.
- **Community facilities and visitor destinations** – managing aquatic centres, community houses, sports facilities and destinations such as Hamilton Gardens, FMG Stadium Waikato, Seddon Park, Claudelands, and Hamilton Zoo to promote recreation and connection.
- **Community support and funding**
– offering grants like the Welcoming Communities Fund, Event Sponsorship Fund, and Waste Minimisation Fund to support local initiatives.
- **Environment and sustainability** – leading efforts in climate action, waste reduction, and rubbish and recycling management to protect the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.
- **Parking and transport** – overseeing roads, public transport, parking, and road safety to keep Hamilton Kirikiriroa moving efficiently.
- **Parks, recreation, and community spaces** – maintaining our parks, sports fields, playgrounds, walkways, and cycleways for everyone to enjoy.
- **Property, rates, and building** – providing property information, handling rates, and overseeing building regulations for residents and businesses.
- **Regulatory and safety services** – handling building consents, compliance, regulations, public safety, civil defence and emergency, environmental health, and alcohol licensing.
- **Support services** – internal-facing functions of the organisation that support the delivery of Council services, including Business Services (finance, information services and risk and legal functions), and People, Performance and Culture, which includes safety and wellness for staff and contractors.
- **Water services** – managing our drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater systems. From 1 July 2026, the new Council Controlled Organisation, IAWAI Flowing Waters, will deliver water services across Hamilton Kirikiriroa and Waikato District, rather than the councils delivering the services. That's a huge change for Council, which we talk about in more detail later in this report.

How do we fund our services?

Me peewhea e puutea ai a maatou ratonga?





Pukete Wastewater Treatment Plant

Looking back over the last three years – projects to be proud of

Titiro whakamuri ki ngaa tau e toru – ngaa kaupapa hei whakahiihii

Pukete Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades

November 2022

Pukete Wastewater Treatment Plant underwent a significant \$56 million upgrade, and it remains one of the country's largest wastewater treatment facilities. The improvements enhanced the plant's ability to process wastewater (water flushed from homes containing solids and chemicals), by refining biological treatment systems, improving solids removal, and increasing pumping capacity.

The project, which began in 2018, introduced a new bioreactor, clarifier, and pump station to boost performance. The final phase to

modernise existing infrastructure and improve inlet screening is currently underway.

The upgrade formed a crucial part of Council's long-term renewal and upgrade programme, preparing the system to handle increasing demand while maintaining its compliance, efficiency, and safety.

Gully restoration takes flight

November 2022

Hamilton City Council launched the Mangaonua Gully erosion control project, marking a significant step in restoring this natural space.



Te Ara Pekapeka Bridge



Gully restoration



Te Kete Aronui Rototuna Library

Log dams and rocks were placed in the stream, tracks built, and over 40,000 native plants were planted to help restore the area. The project, which was part of a wider erosion control programme, was fast-tracked thanks to \$3 million in government funding.

Originally planned as a ten-year initiative, the project was completed within two years.

Shared entry precinct connects Hamilton Zoo and Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park

March 2023

Hamilton Zoo and Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park's new shared entry precinct, Te

Kaaroro Nature Precinct, officially opened in March 2024, with a blessing from Te Haa o te Whenua o Kirikiriroa. Located on Brymer Road, the entryway now connects two of the city's most loved destinations.

The precinct features a beautifully carved waharoa (entryway) and 39 pou adorned with artwork created by local tamariki. An elevated viewing platform offers stunning views of Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park, the city's largest restoration project.

Designed in collaboration with mana whenua and the local community, the precinct enhances visitor accessibility, providing a unique space to learn, experience wildlife, and connect with the natural environment.

Te Kete Aronui Rototuna Library **July 2023**

Te Kete Aronui Rototuna Library officially opened on 21 July 2023, marking a significant milestone for the Rototuna Village community. Designed as a hub for learning and connection, the space offers traditional library services alongside meeting rooms, a Makerspace, an accessible Changing Places bathroom, and an onsite café.

The library also provides Council services including general enquiries, rates payments, and dog registrations, making it a key resource for locals. The name, 'Te Kete Aronui', was inspired by local Maaori legend and reflects the library's role as a space for knowledge and discovery.

The Rototuna Village project was funded through Council's 2018-2028 Long-Term Plan, with construction beginning in 2022. The Village also features a skate space, play space, and roading upgrades.

Newcastle water supply upgrades **November 2023**

The \$19.5 million Newcastle water supply upgrade, first planned in 2019, was completed in November 2023, strengthening the community's water resilience. The project improved leak detection, water management, and supply consistency in Dinsdale's elevated streets.

By using gravity to distribute water where possible, the upgrade is expected to save more than \$3 million in electricity costs over the next three decades.

Most of the work took place underground, with 6.7km of new pipes laid between Gibson Road, Newcastle Road, and Avalon Drive. Pipe sizes ranged from 280mm to a massive 800mm, requiring careful installation along busy residential streets.

The most magical playground in Hamilton Kirikiriroa

December 2023

The Magical Bridge, our first fully accessible playground, officially opened in Claudelands Park in December 2023, creating an inclusive space for children of all abilities. Developed in partnership with the Magical Bridge Trust, the playground removes barriers for individuals and families with physical or neurological disabilities.

Spanning a massive 8000m², the fenced playground features 3500m² of themed zones, including slides, swings, balance areas, water play, retreat huts, and a stage. Designed for universal accessibility, it also includes shade, seating, and drinking fountains.

Funded through community grants, sponsorships, and Council's renewals budget, The Magical Bridge marked a milestone in making Hamilton Kirikiriroa a more inclusive city.



Te Ara Pekapeka Bridge

September 2024

Te Ara Pekapeka Bridge officially opened to vehicle traffic in September 2024, a week after being blessed and named. The name Te Ara Pekapeka was gifted by mana whenua and reflects the consideration given in the design of the bridge to protect pekapeka-tou-roa (long-tailed bat) that live in the Peacocke area. The bridge provides a new connection for vehicles, pedestrians, and people on bikes between Hamilton East and the growing Peacocke neighbourhood.

Construction continues on the bridge's southern side to enable new homes including Peacockes Road upgrades, Whatukooruru Drive development, and ongoing wastewater projects.

The Peacocke programme, supported by a \$180.3 million interest-free government loan and \$110.1 million in NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi subsidies, will deliver a well-integrated transport network, three waters networks, parks, environmental enhancements, and essential utilities to the southwest of the city. Once completed, Peacocke will be home for up to 20,000 residents, marking a significant step in our city's urban expansion.

New era blooms for Hamilton Gardens

September 2024

Hamilton Gardens entered a new era in September 2024 with the completion of its enhanced entry precinct and the introduction of paid entry to non-Hamiltonians to the Enclosed Gardens. The \$10 million development includes a new visitor hub, café upgrades, improved seating, and upgraded venue spaces, creating a more welcoming and accessible experience.

The design honours the site's cultural significance, incorporating elements inspired by traditional Maaori structures, symbols, and values. Tall timber features reflect fortified paa walls, while an embedded woven mat pattern in the design symbolises hospitality and inclusion.

The project was supported by grants from government and private donors, including Gallagher, which secured naming rights for the Gallagher Visitor Centre.

Revenue from paid entry to the Enclosed Gardens is projected to generate \$10 million over the next decade.

Hamilton Transport Centre - Te Taunga Waka o Kirikiriroa

November 2024

Hamilton Transport Centre - Te Taunga Waka o Kirikiriroa - reopened in November 2024 after a \$6.6 million upgrade, its first major refresh in 23 years.

The improvements include clear windows, new CCTV cameras, tactile mats, and brighter platform lettering for better visibility and security. Live arrival screens, upgraded bus shelters, and additional toilets improve comfort for commuters. Accessibility was a key focus of the project, with enhanced signage and tactile features supporting blind and low-vision users included.

Funded through Hamilton City Council's 2021-31 Long-Term Plan, with 51% covered by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, the upgrade reinforces the Transport Centre as a vital hub in our central city.



Hamilton Transport Centre –
Te Taunga Waka o Kirikiriroa



Te Whare Taonga o Waikato Museum and Gallery

Lake Domain Playground maintenance

November/December 2024

Hamilton Lake Domain Playground underwent some maintenance in late 2024, ahead of the busy summer period. The work saw the top section of the playground, including the tower and slides, closed for two weeks for cleaning and repainting. At the same time the much-loved concrete cars, boats, and walkthrough poles were also given a fresh coat of paint. The \$20,650 project was funded through the playground operations budget.

This work helps ensure the playground remains a vibrant and enjoyable destination for families, highlighting the importance of maintaining and enhancing spaces that the community loves and relies on.

Te Whare Taonga o Waikato Museum and Gallery reopening

December 2024

Te Whare Taonga o Waikato Museum and Gallery reopened in December 2024 after a \$7.2 million renovation. Upgrades to the Museum have improved climate control to safeguard taonga, introduced open gallery views of the Waikato River, and brightened the space with new flooring. A redesigned forecourt provides safer access and versatile gathering areas, strengthening the Museum's connection to the central city.



Key challenges ahead

Ngaa wero me ngaa whai waahitanga

Hamilton Kirikiriroa is growing fast, and it is easy to see the changes happening all around us. Council must manage the pressures of change while protecting what makes our city special. That means managing infrastructure needs, responding to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather, and strengthening trust with communities. It also means navigating rising living costs, global uncertainty, and shifts in local government. Crucially, it means upholding our responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation of genuine partnership and meaningful progress.

As we take on these challenges our financial resources are under pressure. This is not a problem unique to Hamilton Kirikiriroa. Like many other councils, we have had to introduce significant rates rises and cost reductions to ensure we are living within our means. There is more we can do to improve the efficiency of Council – smarter procurement, shared Council services, and better use of technology. But these steps alone will not be enough to meet the city's ongoing financial challenges. If we want to make a meaningful impact on the

projected rates increases, Council will need to decide which services to temporarily scale back or pause. We must rethink how we work, how we fund services, and how we collaborate to support a growing city.

It's not all bad. As Aotearoa New Zealand's fastest-growing city, we are seeing bold new developments take shape: international flights now arriving at our airport, a world-class theatre taking centre stage, and major government investment in the Eastern Transport Corridor that will help to unlock the full development of the Ruakura Inland Port. These new additions build on what Hamiltonians already treasure: our parks and playgrounds, the iconic Hamilton Gardens, and our much-loved awa.

How can we leverage these opportunities while at the same time meeting the financial, social and environmental challenges head-on?

Now more than ever, Councillors must make hard, and sometimes unpopular, decisions about what to prioritise. Many of these choices involve significant trade-offs for the community and will require thoughtful leadership. What follows is an honest look at the challenges ahead – pressures we can no longer defer, and decisions that will shape the future of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

Challenge

Water reform

Preparing for the most significant transformation in local government in a generation

Council is about to embark on its biggest change in decades. Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council have responded to new government legislation by deciding to establish a joint waters company. From 1 July 2026, IAWAI Flowing Waters will be responsible for providing water and wastewater services (and maintaining the relevant infrastructure) across both councils, as well as delivering stormwater services under contract to the councils.

The new, larger water organisation will bring key benefits – delivering essential infrastructure faster, and more efficiently, without the limitations of working across separate Council boundaries. With greater borrowing capacity than individual councils, the new organisation will also be able to spread costs more fairly. This means future ratepayers, who will benefit from the infrastructure being built today, will contribute to the costs over the coming years.

IAWAI Flowing Waters will play a key role in supporting the city's rapid growth and managing the increasing demands on our water systems. By 2034, it will serve an extra 49,000 people and will be responsible for a water and wastewater capital programme of over \$3.5 billion during the same period.

Over the next year Council will undertake an extensive programme of work as we get ready to transfer water services to the new organisation. Council will also need to support the new organisation as it establishes itself and prepares to begin delivering services. Council's top priority is ensuring a smooth transition, with no disruption to the services our residents and businesses rely on. That means placing this work ahead of other pressing issues.

Challenge

Designing the future Council

Rethinking how Council can best serve our purpose: improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Water services make up around a third of Council's current operations, so transferring these services to a new organisation represents a huge change for Council.

As well as updating our Long-Term Plan to reflect changes triggered by the new approach to waters delivery, Council must address a range of critical issues. Our 'future Council' must continue to serve our community effectively and uphold our core purpose – improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians – while also meeting our legislative obligations. Council will need to consider the services it focuses on and the size and structure it needs to deliver these services efficiently. Where appropriate, Council will also need to consider other ways to provide these services – such as working together with nearby councils or making greater use of technology.

The 2027-37 Long-Term Plan offers a rare chance to re-think how Council operates and will be central to shaping our future direction. For the incoming Council, it will be a defining focus – one of the most significant plans in Council's history. We are not starting with a blank canvas – there is a growing list of requirements we must meet. But the changes present us with an opportunity for bold and imaginative thinking about how Council can create the best outcomes for our community.

Challenge

Financial stability

Balancing the books without losing sight of community priorities and long-term needs

Councils across Aotearoa New Zealand – like all households and businesses – have been grappling with a challenging financial environment for some time. And if recent global events are anything to go by, the economic waters will continue to be challenging to navigate.

In the face of rising costs, and with the lowest median residential rates of any major city in Aotearoa New Zealand, Council made the difficult decision to increase our revenue to ensure we were funding services sufficiently through the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan. We introduced average rates increases of 16.5% for 2024/25 and 15.5% for 2025/26, with further ‘double digit’ increases due to follow over the next three years. The aim was for Council to ‘balance its books’ (everyday revenue meeting everyday expenditure) every year from 2026/27. This means the day-to-day costs of services like collecting rubbish and recycling, and running our venues and community facilities are funded through everyday revenue (primarily rates) rather than adding to our debt.

The Long-Term Plan also included staff and consultant savings of over \$125 million across the ten years to ensure we are working as efficiently as possible. We have also scaled back our work programme over the first three years of the Long-Term Plan by a further \$45 million after the government reduced the amount of co-funding it provides for transport projects.

Any further cost savings – like all decisions on spending and revenue – must be considered against the feedback we receive from Hamiltonians about the services they want to

receive, the community facilities they enjoy, and the city infrastructure they expect to be maintained and upgraded. And we need to consider how we fund any necessary investment to ensure costs are shared fairly with future ratepayers, not just today's residents.

One example of the pressures we are facing involves Council's water assets – particularly stormwater infrastructure, which will remain in Council's ownership rather than transferring to IAWAI Flowing Waters. Council is currently revaluing these assets to ensure we are setting aside enough funding for their maintenance and eventual replacement. While it is too soon to be certain about the outcome, rising costs and shifting standards suggest that replacement costs could be significantly higher than previously assumed. This won't affect Council's debt position over the next decade but, without other changes, it could delay our ability to ‘balance the books’. Full details on this issue, and its potential implications, are outlined in Council's 2025/26 Annual Plan.

These financial pressures are not unique to Hamilton Kirikiriroa. Councils across Aotearoa New Zealand are feeling the strain, and the way local government is funded simply isn't keeping up with what today's communities need. Over the past 60 years, rates revenue has remained constant at around 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) despite councils taking on significantly more responsibilities in that time. In contrast, over that time period central government taxation as a percentage of GDP has increased notably.

Global credit rating agencies recognise the challenges councils in Aotearoa New Zealand are facing. Like many councils nationwide, our credit rating was revised earlier this year from ‘A+ Negative’ to ‘A Stable’ – a rating still considered ‘strong’ under the Reserve Bank of New Zealand's framework.

Council now faces the ongoing challenge of continuing to meet its legislative duties and community expectations while staying within

the financial limits set by central government and the Local Government Funding Agency – and keeping rates affordable for Hamiltonians.

As stated earlier, there is more we can do to improve the efficiency of Council, which we are committed to. But these steps alone will not be enough to meet the city's ongoing financial challenges. If we want to make a meaningful impact on the projected rates increases, Council will need to decide which services to scale back permanently or pause temporarily until things improve. If the government introduces rates capping for 'non-core' services this will become even more necessary.

Challenge

Growth

Navigating rapid growth in a changing system

Hamilton Kirikiriroa is New Zealand's fastest growing city, set to surpass 200,000 residents by 2028. While this brings opportunity, it also puts serious strain on Council's ability to plan, fund, and deliver the infrastructure and services our communities need.

Historically, Council has managed growth through a staged, sequenced approach – prioritising infrastructure investment to ensure quality and affordability. However, central government reforms like Fast Track consenting and the Going for Housing Growth programme are reducing local control over where and when growth occurs. This undermines Council's ability to plan effectively and threatens the quality and consistency of the services we provide – such as ensuring every new growth area has the community facilities it needs, like playgrounds and sports fields.

If multiple development areas come online at once, Council risks spreading investment

too thin. This increases costs, lowers the return on infrastructure investment, and jeopardises service levels both for new developments and existing communities. The financial challenge we are facing is significant too. Without the ability to target investment, the cost per dwelling rises and our infrastructure may be underutilised. Council must now consider new funding and delivery models, including greater private sector responsibility or reassessing Council's levels of service.

Further compounding this, broader political and structural reforms – including changes to the role of local government (see next section) – are creating unprecedented uncertainty. Because of this, Council has formally elevated political reform to its highest level of strategic risk, recognising the sweeping impact on our ability to manage growth in alignment with community priorities.

These challenges are already playing out in our wastewater network. In some parts of the city, capacity has been reached, limiting further development without additional funding. While this has severe economic impacts on the wider community, overflows could result in environmental harm, legal breaches, and damaged trust with mana whenua, particularly given our shared responsibilities under Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato. While IAWAI Flowing Waters will take on wastewater infrastructure, Council will retain a key role in coordinating growth, guiding investment, and protecting what makes our city unique.

The challenge ahead is balancing the benefits of big-city status with the values, green spaces, and community identity that define Hamilton Kirikiriroa. That will require strategic adaptability and some tough but necessary decisions.

Challenge

Government reforms

The changing rules of local government - making it work for Hamilton Kirikiriroa

In recent years, successive central governments have rapidly introduced major legislative changes affecting local government – and that pace of change is continuing. As the environment changes around us, we must move swiftly to make the most of the opportunities that become available for Hamilton Kirikiriroa, and work with government and other partners to mitigate any negative impacts.

As well as the changes to how water services are delivered, there is a whole host of other government reforms that we must respond to, including:

- new legislation aimed at focusing councils on delivering the basics, which is expected to remove the requirement for councils to promote communities' economic, social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, and will define the 'core' activities it expects councils to focus on
- changes to how transport projects are funded. Until now, central government has generally met around half of the cost of work on our roads, footpaths and cycleways. The government has now significantly reduced the support it is providing councils. This change essentially means we either need higher rates or reduced levels of service
- the government's 'Going for Housing Growth' agenda, focusing on growth and deregulation, with a more flexible approach to development. This includes replacing the Resource Management Act with new legislation designed to make it easier to develop infrastructure and housing while still protecting the environment; and

- changes to how councils finance the infrastructure needed to support local housing growth. This allows for flexibility to introduce targeted rates on new developments or developable land, greater ability to capture increases in land value because of public infrastructure investment, and the replacement of Development Contributions – the key tool that contributes to the growth-related cost of our infrastructure network – with a new levy system.

Council will need to ensure these changes work for the city and think creatively about how we apply them in a way that positively impacts Hamilton Kirikiriroa for decades to come.

Challenge

Working in partnership

Partnering for better outcomes - locally, regionally, and nationally

Hamilton City Council has always worked in partnership locally, regionally, and nationally to deliver the best outcomes for Hamiltonians. Given the challenges, opportunities, and financial pressures we are facing, the need to work together has never been greater.

Our innovative approach to delivering water services, which is at the forefront of nationwide reform, shows the kind of bold thinking we need across all Council services. We cannot afford to rely on old models; instead, we must embrace smarter delivery through shared services and, where appropriate, public-private partnerships.

Council needs to continue demonstrating that it is a trusted partner of central government, other councils, and local, regional, and national partners and stakeholders. Our partnership with Waikato-Tainui sits at the heart of everything we do, but there is still more we can

do to strengthen the relationship and deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

With all the challenges we face, thinking differently about how we deliver services will not be optional – it will be a necessity.

Challenge

Trust and confidence

Delivering reliable, everyday services to strengthen Council's connection with the community

A strong relationship between Council and the community is built on trust and confidence. When that foundation erodes, so too does the connection between Council and the people it serves. Without public trust, Council decisions face resistance, progress slows, and community engagement drops away.

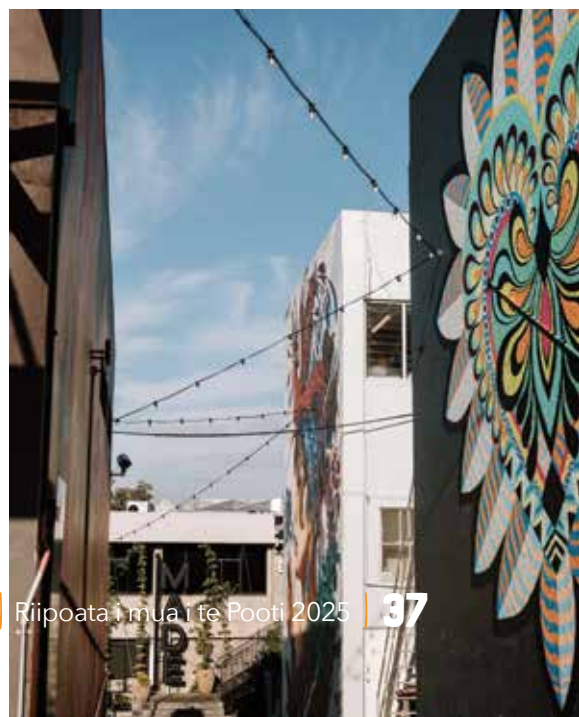
In Hamilton Kirikiriroa, that trust has been under pressure. Like many councils across Aotearoa New Zealand, Hamilton City Council has faced increasing public scepticism since the Covid-19 pandemic – driven by rising expectations, the ongoing cost of living crisis, and the rapid spread of misinformation. Together, these shifts have made it harder

for residents to feel confident in how Council operates, or in the value and reliability of the services they receive.

Trust in Council is not built through policy alone – it grows through everyday experiences. While Council strategies, plans, and decisions set direction and define priorities, it is in the delivery of core day-to-day services where residents decide whether Council is genuinely meeting their needs. Research from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission highlights that people's perceptions are shaped not only by what is promised on paper, but by the personal and practical touchpoints they encounter every day.

When Council services like rubbish collection, road repairs, or timely communication fall short, frustration grows. A lack of transparency or opportunities for genuine input can also leave people feeling excluded and unheard. And when investment is directed at initiatives that do not reflect community priorities or feedback, or are perceived as wasteful spending, it only deepens the sense of disconnect between Council and the community.

Trust is not built on words – it is earned through action. For Council, that means delivering the basics consistently and clearly, and where people can see impact. We must focus on the core services residents rely on every day, and make sure they see the difference in their streets, their neighbourhoods, and their city.



Key projects over the next three years

Ngaa kaupapa nui

Although Council's Long-Term Plan is focused on delivering the essentials and 'looking after what we've got,' Council retains a significant capital programme. The capital programme funds major construction projects or purchases – like land for parks or laying new roads. Council borrows (uses debt) to meet the cost of these, so that the cost is shared with future ratepayers who will benefit from the work.

Here are a few of the projects that are due to take place over the next three years.

Transport

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 – 2027/28)	When
Construction of Whatukooruru Drive, a minor arterial road that will connect Peacockes Road in the east and Ohaupo Road/State Highway 3 in the west The construction of Whatukooruru Drive improves vehicle connections and reduces travel times between Peacockes Road and Ohaupo Road. The project also provides the southern connection to 'Bikes on Pipes' and critical three-waters services necessary to support housing and infrastructure development. This is the final strategic infrastructure project needed to enable a new neighbourhood for up to 20,000 people in Peacocke. The project is partly funded by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.	\$22.9m	Due for completion in 2026/27
Morrinsville Road upgrade Following the opening of the Hamilton Kirikiriroa section of the Waikato Expressway, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) identified that the section of State Highway 26 between Cambridge Road and the Waikato Expressway no longer needs to be a state highway. They are now undertaking a revocation process to transfer this road to a local road that is controlled and managed by Hamilton City Council. Before this happens, road improvements to make it feel and look more like a local road are needed. These changes will make the road safer, easier to maintain, and will provide better travel options. Over the last 10 years, 70 crashes have been recorded between Cambridge Road and the Waikato Expressway. 23 of these crashes were at the Silverdale/Matangi intersection. The project is 100% funded by NZTA.	\$10.3m	Due for completion in 2026/27

Transport

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 - 2027/28)	When
Design of three sections of road for the Eastern Transport Corridor The project will enable the completion of the Ruakura Inland Port while also unlocking residential and commercial land for the Ruakura Superhub, delivering significant economic growth for the city and wider region. It will complete a strategic four-lane road between Wairere Drive and the Waikato Expressway, with some walking and cycling elements to connect into the existing network. It also includes a link over the East Coast Main Line railway line, connecting housing with the inland port, and the extension of Webb Drive, a two-lane minor arterial. The project is partly funded by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.	\$4.1m	Design is due for completion in 2026/27
Rotokauri strategic infrastructure designation - the protection of a corridor from inappropriate development This project ensures that Council's strategic growth and infrastructure outcomes and objectives can be realised. Designations also provide a degree of certainty for landowners and the development community regarding future infrastructure location and purpose. This will ultimately service and enable up to 3500 homes to be developed in the Rotokauri growth cell.	\$3.4m	Due for completion in 2025/26
Onion Road realignment This project will enable more efficient vehicle movements from Te Rapa North, on and off the Waikato Expressway. It will ultimately provide the transport infrastructure required for the land to be developed for industrial use. The project is partly funded by developers.	\$12.2 m	Design is due for completion in 2025/26

Water services

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 - 2027/28)	When
Rotokauri Greenway Construction Private Developer Agreement This work will unlock land for development of 3500 homes while meeting environmental requirements. It's the highest value Private Developer Agreement Hamilton Kirikiriroa has ever entered into and commits a Council contribution of around \$62 million towards a new arterial road and greenway stormwater assets in partnership with developers. The project is due for completion in 2030/31.	\$15.7m (waters and transport assets)	Construction is due to begin in 2025/26

Water services

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 - 2027/28)	When
Central city reservoir, pump station, and development of the Bulk Water Reticulation The upgrade allows an increased supply of potable water for the central city, ensuring it can support future growth and demand. This is part of a broader programme of work to accelerate infrastructure to enable around 4000 extra homes for up to 10,800 people in the central city. The project is due to be completed in 2028/29. The project is fully funded by the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund grant.	\$93.6m	Construction is due to begin in 2026/27
Upgrade of Pukete Wastewater Treatment Plant There is an ongoing programme of work to upgrade our sole wastewater treatment facility, to continue to meet the demands of a growing city and the environmental standards to protect our precious awa. The targeted plant upgrade projects will provide for the quality, capacity, and security of our city's wastewater treatment into the future. A portion of the treatment plant will be upgraded by 2026/27 and the rest of the upgrade will be implemented over the next 10 years.	\$164.4m	Work will take place over the next 10 years

As noted earlier in this report, from 1 July 2026, a new waters company, IAWAI Flowing Waters, will be responsible for supplying drinking water and providing wastewater services across Hamilton Kirikiriroa and Waikato District. It will also provide stormwater services under contract to both councils. We will work with the new organisation to ensure the smooth delivery of the water services projects listed above.

Parks and recreation

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 - 2027/28)	When
Pukete Neighbourhood House improvements Pukete Neighbourhood House provides a range of community services to the northwest of the city including food support, childcare, and community connections. Moving out of the Te Rapa Sportsdrome and into a purpose-built home will allow it to increase its services and create space for other groups to use the in-demand sports facility too.	\$5.4m	Due for completion in 2025/26
Play space refreshes and improvements Improvements will focus on creating play opportunities in the central city, particularly at Boyes Park and Garden Place. As part of the upcoming playground refreshes at Te Toetoe Reserve, Parana Park, and Brymer Glen Reserve, shade will also be included to enhance comfort and usability.	\$10.3m*	Ongoing



Recently renewed playground at Cullimore Park



Artist's impression - Pukete Neighbourhood House

Parks and recreation

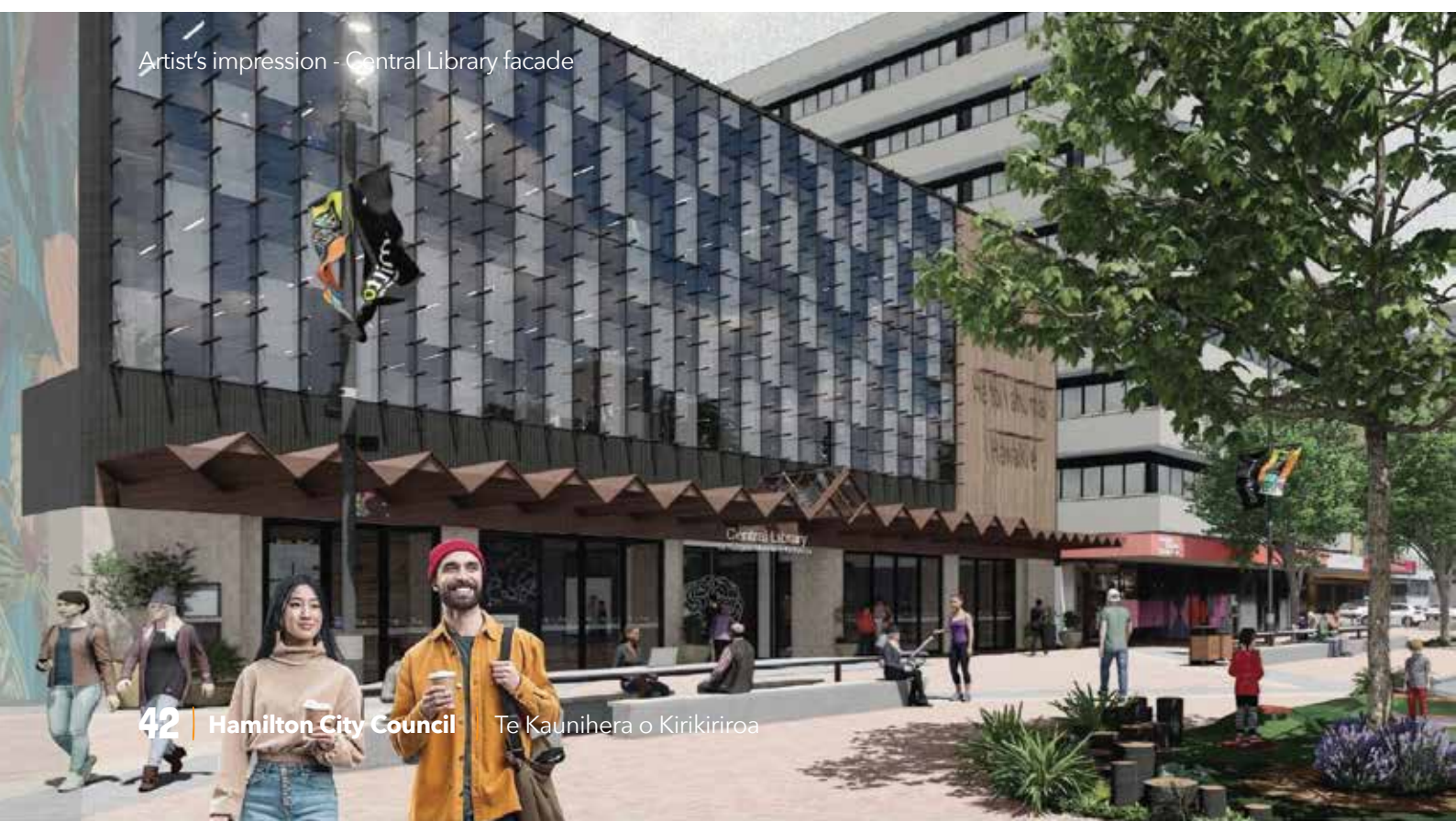
What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 - 2027/28)	When
Community facility refreshes This is an ongoing programme to look after buildings that are leased to community groups. Buildings range from former sports halls to gifted buildings and purpose-built facilities. Works range from minor renewals to thorough refreshes. Upcoming key projects include Te Papanui Enderley Community Centre, Norris Ward Park Arts Centre, and Celebrating Age Centre.	\$11.9m*	Ongoing
Parks and open spaces refreshes This is an ongoing programme to look after the parks across the city. Key upcoming projects include the refreshes of Parana Park, Taitua Arboretum furniture, and Swarbrick Landing.	\$10.1m*	Ongoing
Parks and recreation building refreshes This is an ongoing programme to refresh toilets, changing rooms, and facilities in parks, including Hamilton Park Cemetery, as well as upcoming renewals at key sport facilities – Glenview Park, St Andrews Park, and Swarbrick Park.	\$9.2m*	Ongoing
Sports field refreshes This is an ongoing programme to refresh sand carpets, field drainage, and lighting. Upcoming projects include sand carpets at Gower Park and Korikori Park, as well as field drainage at Enderley Park.	\$3.5m*	Ongoing
Artificial turf Working in partnership with Waikato Regional Sports Precinct Trust and external funders to install artificial turf surfaces following a regional supply demand study.	\$2.2m	Due for completion in 2026/27
Nature in the City Improving access to restore our gullies contributing towards the outcomes identified in the Nature in the City Strategy.	\$3m	Ongoing

*Renewal work for 2027/28 hasn't yet been approved so is excluded from the budget shown. The 2027/28 budgets will be confirmed through the 2027-37 Long-Term Plan.

Community services

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 - 2027/28*)	When
Upgrade of the Central Library facade The work will make the facade watertight, safeguarding the library's historical archives (a collection of more than 140,000 items), and one of the city's busiest community hubs – with more than 145,000 visits and 430 events hosted last year.	\$2.4m	Due for completion in 2025/26
Renewing dated and damaged areas at Waterworld This work, focused on looking after what we've got, will bring the changing rooms, function spaces, spa, sauna and steam facilities to modern standards, improving the customer experience, and will also fix some fire damage from 2023.	\$4.5m	Due for completion in 2025/26
Chartwell Library refresh Repairs to the Chartwell Library, while in the early planning stages, will focus on the roof, paving, and refreshing the outside area.	\$850k	Due for completion in 2026/27
Keeping the library collection up to date The library's print and digital collections must be current, relevant, and in good condition to ensure they are an accessible and useful resource for the community to use year on year. This requires consistent planning and annual investment over time to develop and maintain such collections.	\$5.4m*	Ongoing

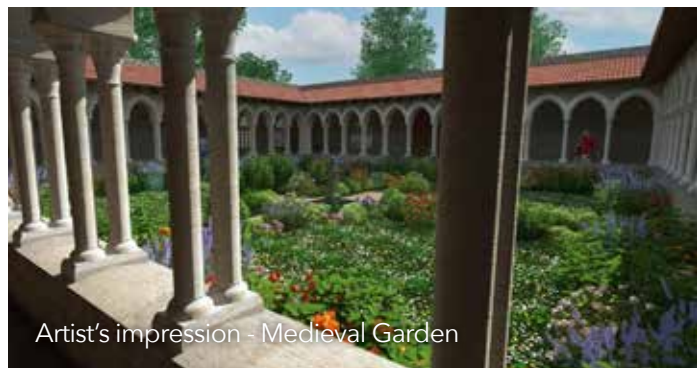
*Renewal work for 2027/28 hasn't yet been approved so is excluded from the budget shown. The 2027/28 budgets will be confirmed through the 2027-37 Long-Term Plan.



Artist's impression - Central Library facade



Nature in the City – gully restoration and development



Artist's impression - Medieval Garden

Destinations

What we're doing	Budget (2025/26 – 2027/28*)	When
Medieval Garden and building renewal at the Hamilton Gardens Ongoing development at the Gardens, with the Medieval Garden currently under construction. In addition, the cafe and toilet building renewals are currently in the planning stage. The Medieval Garden is due to be completed in 2025/26, and the building renewals are due to be completed in 2026/27.	\$4.5m	Due for completion in 2026/27
Te Kaaroro giraffe and rhino barn The giraffe barn design is currently underway. The rhino barn renewal and relocation is currently in early concept stages. These buildings are due for renewal and will ensure the animal accommodation meets modern zoological standards. The giraffe barn will be constructed in 2025/26. The rhino barn will be constructed in 2026/27.	\$5.5m	Due for completion in 2026/27
Predator-free fencing for Waiwhakareke Infrastructure to continue to protect the unique natural heritage area to ensure flora and fauna in Waiwhakareke are safeguarded for generations to come. We are currently in the procurement stage for construction, and there is a plan to secure some external funding for the project. \$1 million is to be funded by Council, with an additional \$2.2 million funding to be sought from external funders.	\$3.2m	Due for completion in 2025/26



Other city-changing projects to watch

In addition to these Council-led projects, the Waikato Regional Theatre is close to completion and two significant hotels are being developed in the central city. The central city will also see further development of the Union Square mixed-use development and other commercial refurbishments. While the Council does not own these projects, they will enhance our central city and uplift the local and regional economy. The benefits extend from corporate and business activity through to tourism and hospitality offerings, specifically helping to grow the night-time economy that activates the central city.

- The **Waikato Regional Theatre** is due to open later this year. The opening of this world-class facility, in the iconic Hamilton Hotel building, is a significant milestone for our central city and will attract thousands of visitors to Hamilton Kirikiriroa. It's the result of many years' work led by the Waikato Regional Property Trust. The construction of the Embassy Park open space environment is due to be completed to align with the opening of the Waikato Regional Theatre.
- The **Victoria on the River project** is a comprehensive redevelopment of the Council-owned land and buildings at 242-266 Victoria Street. In 2024, the Templeton Group was selected to develop part of the land with a mixed-use building incorporating food and beverage, apartments, and a 218 room hotel. Templeton intend to start construction in 2027. The adjoining property at 260-266 Victoria St will be retained by the council and used to expand public space.
- The **Pullman Hotel development**, being undertaken by a consortium of prominent Hamilton developers, involves refurbishing the Mistry Centre building to create a \$100 million, 191 room hotel. The project is scheduled for completion in 2026.

Financial information

Ngaa koorero puutea

Council's finances

To understand the position Council is in and the challenges and opportunities it faces over the next three years, it is essential to understand Council's finances.

By law we are required to include in this report financial statements for the last three years, as well as projections for the next three years. These forecasts are expected to be taken from our most recent Long-Term Plan. However, as explained earlier in the report, Council's recent decision to establish a new waters company with Waikato District Council, IAWAI Flowing Waters, is a game changer. The Long-Term Plan projections for 2026/27 onwards are no longer valid as they included funding for drinking water and wastewater. So, although we have included that information in the financial statements at the end of this section for completeness, the majority of the financial section is based on our most recent projections (from the 2025/26 Annual Plan), which exclude drinking water and wastewater costs from 2026/27. These take the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan as the starting point and apply changes caused by the separation of water services as well as any other changes that have taken place over the last year.

Because we have not yet formally amended the Long-Term Plan since the decision to establish a waters company was made (in May 2025), the updated finances have not been audited. However, they have been subject to considerable internal and external review. An audit will take place over the coming months, before water assets are transferred to IAWAI Flowing Waters and Council adopts its 2026/27 Annual Plan.

Financial Strategy

Our Financial Strategy outlines our overall approach to managing Council's finances and provides guidance for when we make spending decisions. The strategy is reviewed

every three years during the development of the long-term plan.

The guiding principles are:

- everyday expenses are funded from everyday revenues
- service levels and assets are maintained
- surpluses are generated to repay debt; and
- investment in community, infrastructure and growth initiatives is supported.

Credit rating

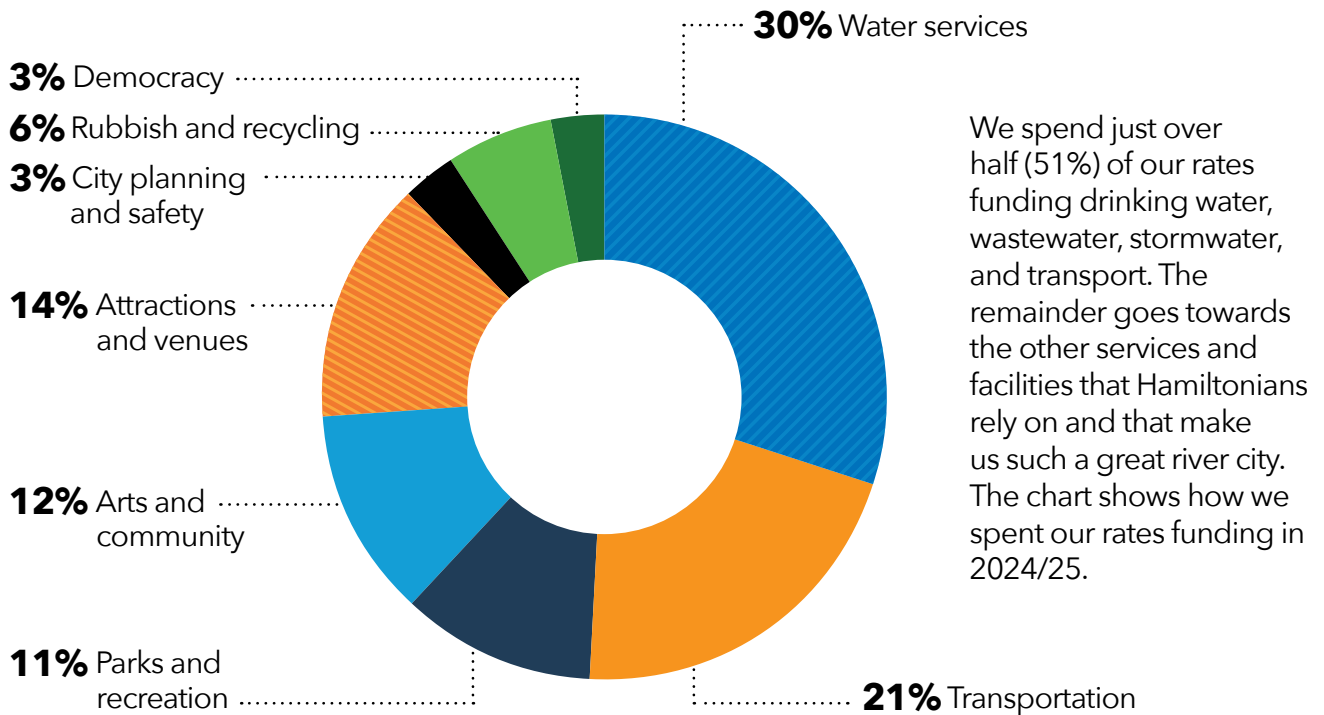
Council's credit rating is currently 'A Stable'. This is considered 'strong' under the Reserve Bank of New Zealand's framework, but is a lower rating than Council previously held. In February 2025, S&P Global lowered its institutional framework assessment for New Zealand local councils and Hamilton City Council was one of 18 councils to receive a lowered rate. Our previous credit rating was 'A+ Negative'. This change has not adversely impacted Council's Financial Strategy, but reflects the challenging financing environment in which we – and other councils around Aotearoa New Zealand – are operating.

Where does the money come from?

In 2024/25 we spent around \$439 million running our great river city. The vast majority of our funding comes from rates. The rest comes from:

- fees when people use certain council services like registering a dog or paying for a building consent
- money from developers to help cover the costs of any additional infrastructure that may be needed because of their development
- government, in the form of grants and subsidies from the likes of the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi; and
- loans and reserves – an emergency fund to cover unexpected costs.

Where do rates go?

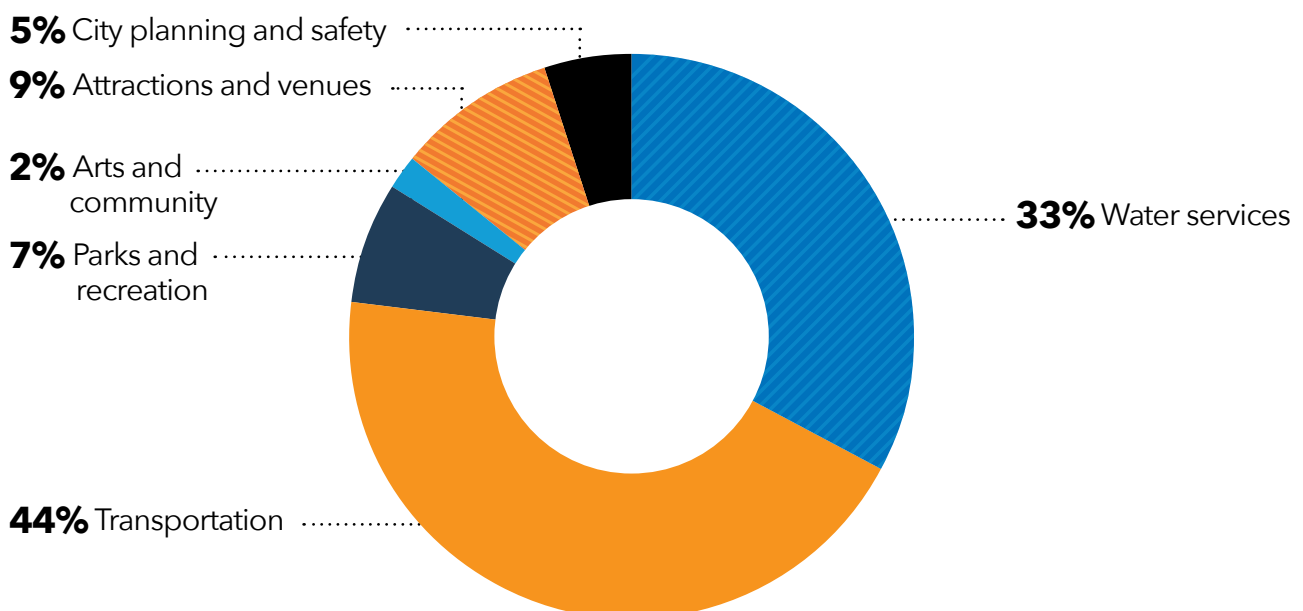


Capital programme

In addition to the costs of running the city and providing the everyday services that Hamiltonians rely on like collecting rubbish and recycling and maintaining sports parks and reserves, Council also has a significant capital programme. This is for major construction projects or purchases – like land for parks or laying new roads.

The below chart shows a breakdown of our capital programme in 2024/25.

Where do we spend our capital budget?



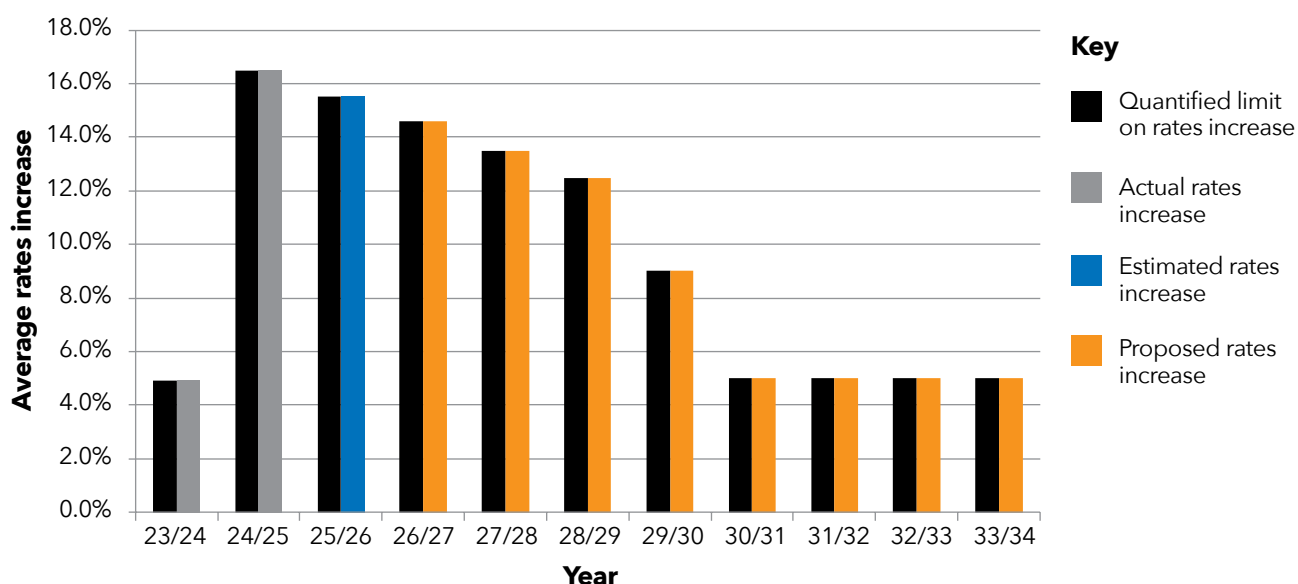
The capital programme is funded from debt so the cost is shared with future ratepayers who will benefit from the work. In addition, Council receives a subsidy for some of its transport programme from NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, and for infrastructure that benefits future residents, we collect development contributions, a one-off charge imposed on new developments.

Compliance with the Financial Strategy

The following information shows how we performed against our Financial Strategy limits in the last three years and provides forecasts until 2033/34. The 2022/23 and 2023/24 results are taken from our annual reports, which have been audited by Audit New Zealand. At the time of preparing this report, Council is finalising its accounts for 2024/25 and Audit New Zealand is reviewing the financial data. Therefore, the financial data provided for 2024/25 is based on Council's forecast 30 June 2025 position.

Rates

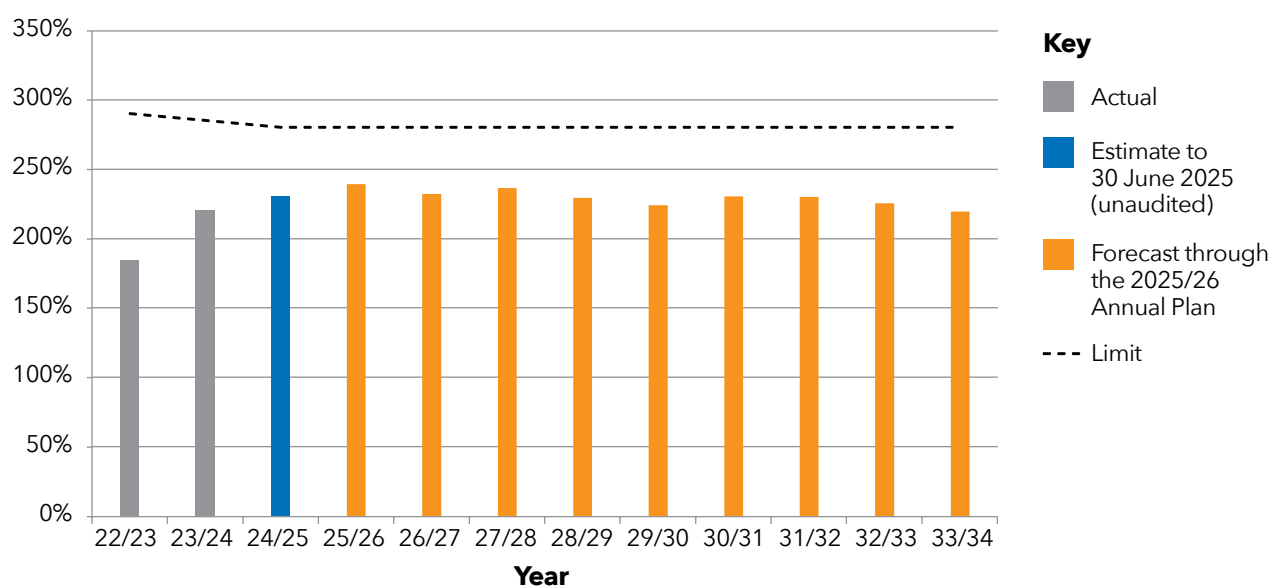
Council sets average rates increases for existing ratepayers when developing long-term plans and annual plans. These form the limits against which we report.



Debt

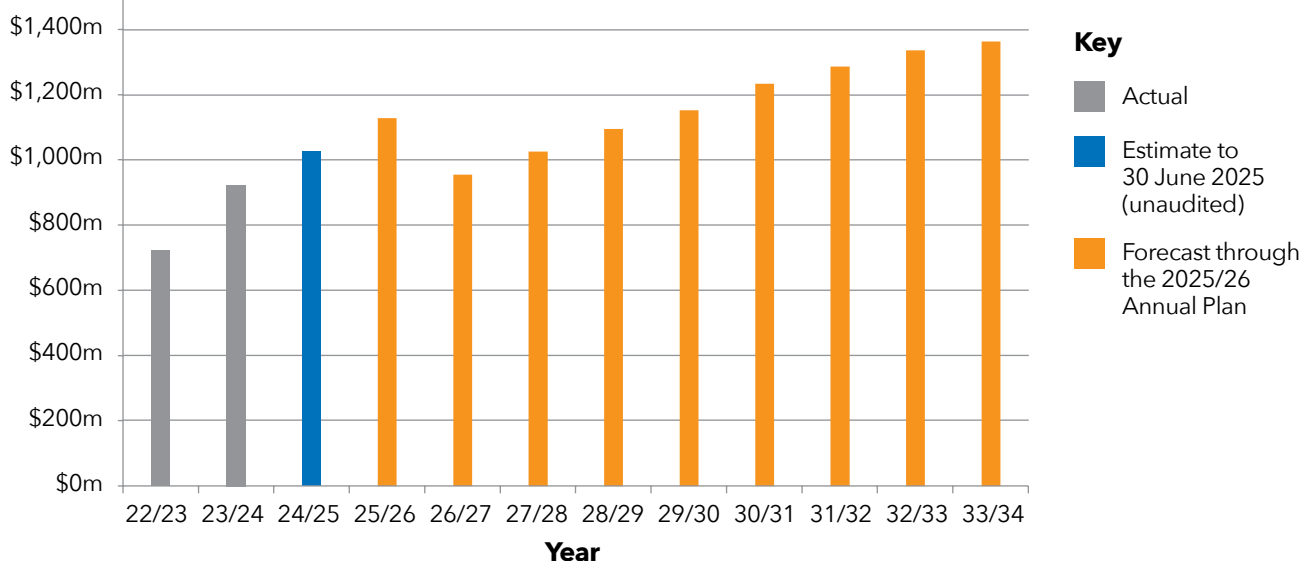
To keep debt to manageable levels, the Financial Strategy includes a cap on our net debt as a percentage of our revenue (net debt-to-revenue ratio). In line with rules set by the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA), Council's lender of choice, this has been gradually reducing from 300% in recent years and is now set at 280%. This means we can borrow up to \$2.80 for every \$1 collected in revenue. The LGFA allows for bespoke net debt-to-revenue ratios of up to 350% for high growth councils such as Hamilton City Council. Council has chosen to retain the 280% limit from 2025/26, with our net debt-to-revenue ratio projected to be well below that level each year. The option to move to a bespoke limit remains available to Council should the need arise.

Net debt-to-revenue



The graph below shows net debt (the total amount of external debt less cash and term deposits). Debt includes loans from banks and the LGFA as well as the interest-free loan from the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund.

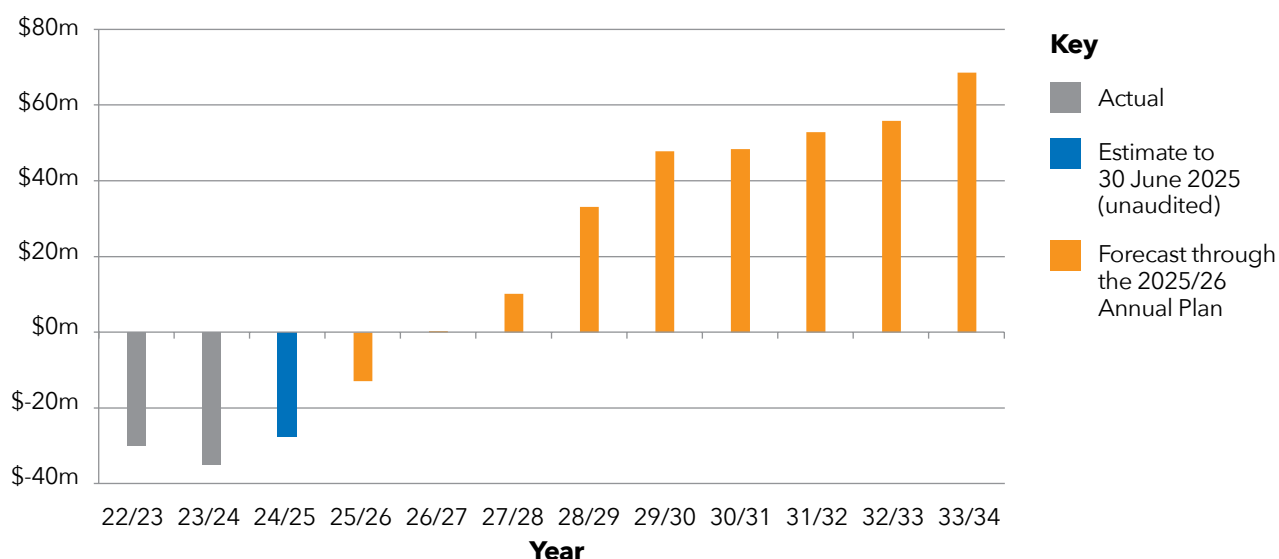
Net debt



Balancing the books

This measure tracks progress towards our goal of paying for the everyday costs of running the city from everyday revenues (rates, fees, and user charges) rather than borrowing to make up the difference. We call this balancing the books.

The graph below represents Council's recent and projected balancing the books results.



Investments

We currently hold investments in five companies. The principal reason for holding these investments is to achieve efficiencies and community outcomes rather than for a financial return on investment. The table below shows how our investments performed against targets in the three years before the 2025 Council election.

Entity	Shareholding / Control %	Principal reason for investment	Targeted return	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Estimate
Waikato Regional Airport Ltd	50.00	Economic development	Nil	\$250,000	\$250,000	Nil
Co-Lab	16.01	Efficient government	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
NZ Local Government Funding Agency Ltd	8.30	Borrowing	\$100,000 annually	\$90,873	\$127,820	\$137,523
Civic Financial Services Ltd	1.80	Risk management	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
IAWAI Flowing Waters	50.00 (From 1 July 2026 the share structure is expected to be adjusted to account for the transfer of water assets and related resources.)	To ensure the best and most cost-effective water service delivery for Hamiltonians	Nil	N/A (established 1 July 2025)		

Rates

As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of Council's revenue comes from rates. The below table details the various rates in 2025/26.

General rates

Name of rate	Explanation	Detail
General rate	Paid by all residential and commercial ratepayers, providing funding to most Council activities.	Set on the capital value (land and buildings) of each rateable property. It is 'differentiated', meaning commercial ratepayers pay more than residential for properties of the same value.
Uniform Annual General Charge	Paid by all residential and commercial ratepayers, providing funding to most Council activities.	A fixed rate (meaning all ratepayers pay the same), based on the number of Separately Used or Inhabited Parts (SUIPs) of each rateable property. Most properties are one SUIP. For residential property each additional area with a bedroom/living area, a bathroom, and a (kitchen) sink will be counted as an additional SUIP. For commercial property each separate tenancy or shop is counted as an SUIP.

Targeted rates

Name of rate	Explanation	Detail
Water	Set on the capital value of residential property where Council's water supply system is available for connection.	This rate will be discontinued from 1 July 2026, when IAWAI Flowing Waters begins providing drinking water.
Wastewater	Set on the capital value of all rateable property where Council's wastewater system is available for connection	'Differentiated' to residential and commercial categories, using the same factor as the general rate. This rate will be discontinued from 1 July 2026, when IAWAI Flowing Waters begins delivering wastewater services.
Citywide stormwater	Set on the capital value of all rateable property.	'Differentiated' to residential and commercial categories, using the same factor as the general rate.

Name of rate	Explanation	Detail
Metered water	A volumetric rate (with a minimum charge) set on property supplied with water by meter – mostly commercial and rural properties.	
Commercial non-metered water	A fixed rate for water supply set on commercial property with no water meter installed. It is set at the same level as the minimum charge on a water meter.	
Business Improvement District (BID)	Provides funding to the Hamilton Central Business Association.	This is comprised of two parts: a fixed rate per SUIP and a capital value rate set on all commercial property in a defined area of the central city.
Central city	Provides funding for transport activity and is linked to free parking initiatives.	A fixed rate per SUIP set on all commercial property in the BID area. This rate will be discontinued from 1 July 2026.
Pool safety inspection	A fixed rate set on all property requiring a Council pool inspection.	
Service use refuse	A fixed rate per SUIP set on properties that do not pay general rates and are provided with a Council rubbish and recycling collection. This includes properties that are legally non-rateable or receive Council's remission for not-for-profit community organisations (e.g. churches, schools, charities, etc.).	

'Differentiated' rates

When Council sets a rate, it may choose to group properties into categories (like residential or commercial) and charge each group differently. These categories and their factors, or multipliers, are called rating differentials.

Council has two primary rating categories: 'residential', which sets the base rate per dollar of capital value, and 'commercial' (including commercial property in a defined area of the central city, referred to as BID Commercial), which is set at a higher rate per dollar of capital value.

The multiplier that is applied changes each time there is a property revaluation, to ensure the proportion of the total rates collected from each rating category remains constant. This helps to protect ratepayers against large variations in property valuations compared to other rating categories.

The differential factor is currently 2.9877. This means a commercial property will pay about three times more than a residential property of the same value when the differential is applied.

Statement of financial position

The Statement of financial position shows Council's assets and liabilities for each financial year. This statement provides a snapshot of Council's financial position, at that point in time. The Council's forecast net worth for 2024/25 is \$5.97 billion. This is calculated as the difference between our total assets (items of economic value owned or controlled by the Council) and total liabilities (amounts owed to lenders and suppliers). The Council's overall equity position is forecast to have improved by \$495 million since 2022/23.

As at 30 June 2025	Annual Report ¹		Estimate* ²	Annual Plan ²	2024-34 Long-Term Plan ¹		2025-26 Annual Plan Forecast (excluding Water and Wastewater)	
	2022/23 \$000	2023/24 \$000	2024/25 \$000	2025/26 \$000	2026/27 \$000	2027/28 \$000	2026/27 \$000	2027/28 \$000
ASSETS								
Current assets								
Financial assets	260,129	233,558	245,112	260,077	241,849	245,806	193,063	197,063
Other current assets	8,042	7,981	4,356	4,483	4,348	4,496	3,562	3,689
Total current assets	268,171	241,539	249,468	264,560	246,197	250,302	196,624	200,751
Non-current assets								
Financial assets	39,864	40,368	17,076	38,449	49,712	50,711	15,161	15,161
Other non-current assets	6,205,004	6,483,875	7,006,529	7,441,668	7,870,382	8,609,029	6,121,877	6,438,812
Total non-current assets	6,244,868	6,524,243	7,023,605	7,480,117	7,920,094	8,659,740	6,137,039	6,453,974
Total assets	6,513,039	6,765,782	7,273,073	7,744,678	8,166,291	8,910,042	6,333,663	6,654,725
LIABILITIES								
Current liabilities								
Borrowings	144,059	136,041	115,000	89,100	137,335	137,335	89,284	90,076
Other current liabilities	94,839	79,659	82,360	85,281	110,833	114,829	72,961	75,581
Total current liabilities	238,898	215,700	197,360	174,381	248,167	252,164	162,245	165,657
Non-current liabilities								
Borrowings	780,773	971,197	1,080,874	1,234,159	1,634,836	1,781,885	1,006,409	1,078,416
Other non-current liabilities	13,506	18,761	20,299	19,326	13,966	12,547	17,978	16,964
Total non-current liabilities	794,279	989,958	1,101,173	1,253,485	1,648,802	1,794,432	1,024,387	1,095,380
Total liabilities	1,033,177	1,205,658	1,298,533	1,427,866	1,896,969	2,046,596	1,186,632	1,261,036
Net assets	5,479,863	5,560,124	5,974,540	6,316,812	6,269,322	6,863,446	5,147,031	5,393,688
EQUITY								
Equity	5,479,863	5,560,124	5,974,540	6,316,812	6,269,322	6,863,446	5,147,031	5,393,688
Total equity	5,479,863	5,560,124	5,974,540	6,316,812	6,269,322	6,863,446	5,147,031	5,393,688

* Estimate based on 30 June 2025 forecast position

¹ Audited

² Unaudited

Whole of council funding impact statement

The funding impact statement shows how Council will fund its budget each year. It includes where the money will come from, how much money will come from each available source, and where the money will be spent.

As at 30 June 2025	Annual Report ¹		Estimate* ²	Annual Plan ²	2024-34 Long-Term Plan ¹		2025-26 Annual Plan Forecast (excluding Water and Wastewater)	
	2022/23 \$000	2023/24 \$000	2024/25 \$000	2025/26 \$000	2026/27 \$000	2027/28 \$000	2026/27 \$000	2027/28 \$000
Sources of operating funding								
General rates, uniform annual general charges, rates penalties	217,572	233,401	277,429	237,280	377,285	434,510	269,944	296,974
Targeted rates	20,658	22,318	26,100	116,669	33,850	38,449	32,948	38,641
Subsidies and grants for operating purposes	12,103	27,638	12,532	11,009	11,709	11,806	11,651	11,695
Fees and charges	50,222	53,134	58,328	55,242	61,014	65,686	51,899	55,491
Interest and dividends from investments	11,702	18,099	13,208	11,252	12,725	12,863	10,155	10,350
Local authorities fuel tax, fines, infringement fees, and other receipts	7,559	8,522	8,450	7,788	6,872	7,128	8,249	8,558
Total operating funding	319,815	363,112	396,048	439,239	503,456	570,443	384,846	421,710
Application of operating funding								
Payments to staff and suppliers	248,717	272,426	273,099	310,805	331,671	347,016	266,634	283,973
Finance costs	38,839	55,368	54,496	42,430	68,006	75,649	37,332	41,640
Other operating funding applications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total applications of operating funding	287,556	327,795	327,595	353,235	399,677	422,665	303,966	325,613
Surplus/(deficit) of operating funding	32,259	35,318	68,453	86,004	103,779	147,778	80,880	96,097
Sources of capital funding								
Subsidies and grants for capital expenditure	72,204	55,020	9,194	31,856	69,477	63,644	26,110	12,428
Development and financial contributions	36,502	31,842	6,352	28,485	38,417	52,625	15,413	20,785
Increase (decrease) in debt	236,057	176,729	54,659	121,655	193,882	140,828	125,753	68,053
Gross proceeds from sale of assets	1,632	483	798	-	-	-	-	-
Lump sum contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other dedicated capital funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total sources of capital funding	346,395	264,074	71,004	181,996	301,776	257,097	167,275	101,266
Applications of capital funding								
Capital expenditure								
- to meet additional demand	193,332	200,102	96,794	100,241	202,636	199,835	86,490	62,849
- to improve the level of service	53,817	60,537	40,827	60,364	57,201	51,463	41,312	25,708
- to replace existing assets	75,662	76,786	68,302	93,309	142,980	151,051	136,283	106,645
Increase (decrease) in reserves	(33,447)	(19,049)	(105,523)	11,044	(1,333)	(197)	(19,177)	396
Increase (decrease) of investments	89,290	(18,984)	39,056	3,041	4,070	2,723	3,246	1,764
Total applications of capital funding	378,654	299,392	139,456	268,000	405,555	404,875	248,155	197,363
Surplus/(deficit) of capital funding	(32,259)	(35,318)	(68,453)	(86,004)	(103,779)	(147,778)	(80,880)	(96,097)
Funding balance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Estimate based on 30 June 2025 forecast position

¹ Audited

² Unaudited

Further reading

He paanui anoo

The following is a list of Council information and plans you may find useful if you're considering standing for Council in the 2025 election.

- **Long-Term Plan (LTP)** – Sets out Council's priorities, budgets, and key projects over a 10-year period. The current plan is the 2024–34 LTP.
- **Annual Plan** – Details Council's budget and work programme for the financial years between LTPs, including any changes from what was set out in the LTP.
- **Annual Report** – Reviews Council's performance against the Annual Plan and LTP, including financial results and service delivery outcomes.
- Key strategies and plans that guide Council, including our core strategic documents:
 - **He Pou Manawa Ora – Pillars of Wellbeing**
 - **Our Climate Future**
 - **Access Hamilton**
 - **Hamilton Urban Growth Strategy**
 - **Waste Management and Minimisation Strategy**
 - **Play Strategy**
 - **Community and Social Development Strategy**
 - **Nature in the City Strategy**
 - **Open Spaces Strategy**
- **Council projects** – Programmes and projects underway to carry our city into the future.
- **Hamilton Kirikiriroa Pulse Survey** – Captures community sentiment and feedback on Council services and priorities.
- **Council agendas and minutes** – Useful for understanding how decisions are made and debated.
- **Code of Conduct for Elected Members** – Expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of Councillors and the Mayor.
- **Standing Orders** – The rules that govern how Council meetings are run.

Access all these resources at: hamilton.govt.nz





Contact information

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