

# Climate Change Reform and the Impact on Local Government

## A guide for 2024 – 34 Long Term Plans

Prepared for Whakatāne District Council, Local Government New Zealand, and Northland Regional Council  
Prepared by Beca Limited

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# 1 Executive Summary

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As New Zealand starts to see the impacts of climate change through weather related events, addressing the causes and impacts of climate change is becoming more of a focus for the government at all levels. Central government has been reviewing the necessary policy settings for all actors over the last few years. The evolving legislative landscape means it can be difficult for local government to keep up with shifting roles and responsibilities.

Recent policy and legislative changes related to climate change range from fundamental reform through to minor changes. Collectively, these changes require significant and perhaps unprecedented shifts in the way councils plan for, fund, and carry out their activities.

We've assessed key policy and legislative changes in the following focus areas:

- Climate mitigation and climate related disclosures,
- Resource management,
- Adaptation, natural hazards, and emergency management,
- Water and transport,
- Waste and circular economy, and
- Social wellbeing.

This report outlines significant developments in each focus area, the anticipated impact on local government, key considerations for council strategies, and suggested actions for 2024-34 LTPs. A summary of key actions is listed in Table 1<sup>1</sup>. This report does not describe all current policy and legislative changes. Rather it focuses on key climate change reforms which have an impact on councils. It represents a snapshot in time (immediately prior to the 2023 general election) and aims to provide an informative resource for councils as they develop 2024 – 34 Long Term Plans (LTPs).

The incoming National-led New Zealand government has signalled it will make changes to several of the policy areas discussed in this report. This report does not forecast these changes, but it does acknowledge areas where there is likely to be swift change. It is intended that this report will be a 'living document' and will be updated in the coming months as there are further changes.

To help navigate the changing policy and legislative environment, we have identified six cross-cutting themes for councils to consider, regardless of which political parties form the government. These are:

1. Better understand and communicate climate information and climate risk.
2. Give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and embed te ao Māori, including mātauranga Māori.
3. Consider role of land use and spatial planning as tools to tackle climate change.
4. Integrate climate change into policy decisions and infrastructure design.
5. Work with partners and the community to embed climate change decisions.
6. Improve capacity and capability across the sector to proactively manage climate risk and deliver on the various changes.

Many councils have stand-alone climate change strategies for their organisations, districts, cities, or regions. A key takeaway from this work is that responding to climate change requires a holistic and integrated approach. This means climate change cannot be considered in isolation and needs to be a key consideration which influences **all** strategic, operational and project decisions and cuts across all aspects of a council's business.

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<sup>1</sup> Table 1 is a summary of the mandatory steps councils must take in response to legislative and policy changes (*'must do' actions*), as well as actions we advise taking as part of a proactive approach to the suite of changes (*'should do' actions*).

Table 1: Summary of key actions for councils.

Reform Area	Council 'must do' actions	Council 'should do' actions
<b>Climate Change Mitigation &amp; Climate Related Disclosures</b>		
Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019	'Must comply' with request for information related to climate adaptation (under s5ZW).	Understand organisational, district and regional carbon footprint, set reduction targets, act.
Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) 2022	'Have regard to' ERP in plans and policies under the RMA.	Partner with others to deliver ERP actions.
Climate-related disclosures (Amendment Act 2021)	Mandatory disclosures for Auckland Council and Christchurch City Holdings.	Consider voluntary climate-related disclosures (for non-mandated councils).
National Energy Strategy (expected 2024)	-	Understand role in renewable energy development.
Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)	Obligations for ETS participants.	Watching brief on ETS changes.
<b>Resource Management Reform</b>		
Spatial Planning Act 2023	Prepare for Regional Spatial Strategies, consider mitigation and adaptation, including relocation areas.	Develop climate change evidence base and risk assessment to feed into regional strategies.
Natural and Built Environment Act 2023	Develop Natural and Built Environment Plan which 'has regard to' national climate plans, understand hazard risk.	Have a clear investment decision-making framework, use Dynamic Adaptive Pathways Planning (DAPP) to manage increasing climate-related effects.
Climate Change Adaptation Bill (in development)	None until Bill takes effect.	Keep abreast of the Parliamentary inquiry, consider resilience and adaptation in LTPs.
<b>Adaptation, Natural Hazards, and Emergency Management</b>		
National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2022	'Have regard to' NAP in plans and policies under the Resource Management Act.	Align local climate strategies with NAP, use guidance developed under the NAP.
Local Government Information and Meetings Amendment Act 2023 (enactment expected Jan 2025)	Provide natural hazard information on LIMs, regional councils to share information with Territorial Authorities.	Prepare and budget for changes in 2025.
Emergency Management Bill (in development)	None until Bill takes effect.	Assess emergency management resourcing to recognise increased risk of severe events.
<b>Water &amp; Transport</b>		
Affordable Waters / Three Waters Reform (enacted 2023)	Compile asset information for the new WSE.	Understand and get ready for the transition to new WSEs.
Essential Freshwater Reforms (2020)	Partner with tangata whenua, embed Te Mana o te Wai in plans, implement Essential Freshwater policies.	Consider the staff resources necessary to undertake the 'must do' actions.
Government Policy Statement (GPS) Transport (due June 2024)	None until GPS 2024 takes effect.	Reflect GPS priorities in climate plans and LTPs.
ERP Transport chapter 2022	Work on VKT reduction programmes for deadlines (for Tier 1 & 2 councils).	Plan transport investments on expectation of needing to align with ERP.
<b>Waste &amp; Circular Economy</b>		
Te Rautaki Para   Aotearoa New Zealand Waste Strategy 2023	Currently need to 'have regard to' the strategy, new WMMPs will likely need to 'align with' the strategy.	Plan resourcing to support implementation, include waste management considerations in 30 Year Infrastructure Strategies.
Waste legislation reform (enactment expected 2025)	Councils will be bound by the new legislation's provisions once it takes effect (expected 2025).	Understand and get ready for the changes, which will require TAs to expand their current roles and services.
Waste Levy (increasing and expanding between 2021 – 2024)	Comply with the new levy regulations.	Plan waste-related spending from both levy and non-levy sources.
ERP Waste chapter 2022	-	Investigate how action on organic waste could reduce waste emissions.
Circular Economy and Bio-economy Strategy (to commence by 2025)	-	Consider if near-term waste investment aligns with a future circular economy.
<b>Social Wellbeing</b>		
Equitable Transitions Strategy (timeline and scope under consideration)	-	Keep abreast of Strategy as it develops, support 'equitable transition' via council activities.

## 2 Glossary

Table 2: Glossary of terms used in this report.

Term	Definition
Biogenic methane	Methane produced and released from living organisms like plants and animals.
Circular economy	A system in which materials are kept in circulation (rather than becoming waste) and nature is regenerated.
Climate change mitigation	Avoiding and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases to prevent the planet from warming to more extreme temperatures.
Climate change adaptation	Altering our behaviour and systems to protect people, economies, and the environment from the impacts of climate change.
Climate hazards	Climate-related events (such as floods or heatwaves), evolving trends, or their gradual physical impacts.
Climate risk	The potential for climate change to create adverse consequences for human or ecological systems.
Climate-related disclosures	Reporting regime by which companies or other entities make disclosures what climate change might mean for them.
Dynamic Adaptive Pathways Planning (DAPP)	A planning tool which explores different pathways and is based on the idea of making decisions as conditions change.
Emissions budget	A total quantity of emissions that is allowed to be released during an emissions budget period.
Land Information Memoranda (LIM)	A report summarising information that a territorial authority holds about a property.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge and understanding.
National Planning Framework	A body of national regulation to direct regional planning committees to prepare regional strategies and plans, and to local authorities to undertake consenting in the new resource management system.
Natural hazards	Occurrence (such as flooding, coastal erosion, volcanic activity, and tsunami), which may adversely affect human life, property, or other aspects of the environment.
Regional Planning Committee (RPC)	Body under the new resource management legislation comprising at least six members, responsible for regional strategy and planning.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	A strategy under the new resource management legislation which sets out the long-term issues, opportunities, and challenges for the region.
Te Mana o te Wai	Recognition of the fundamental importance of water under the Essential Freshwater Reforms and that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and well-being of the wider environment.



## 3 Project Scope

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### 3.1 Scope and Methodology

Whakatāne District Council (WDC) and Northland Regional Council (NRC) in partnership with Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) commissioned Beca Limited (Beca) to help develop a clear view of emerging responsibilities related to climate change to inform 2024-34 LTPs.

The methodology for this report included:

1. **Background research** related to the various policy and legislative changes, drawing on Beca's knowledge of central government reforms and reviewing recent policy changes applying a climate change lens.
2. **Targeted workshops with Beca specialists, council and LGNZ staff** to draw on knowledge from technical specialists across Beca. These workshops also drew on sector knowledge from WDC, NRC and LGNZ staff to help clarify the anticipated impacts of these changes on local government.
3. **Finalise report** including a summary of workshop findings (provided in Appendix A), and provide key considerations for local government, including for council climate strategies and LTPs.

### 3.2 Parameters and Exclusions

The timing of this report was intended to support councils in developing their 2024-34 LTPs. The information outlined in this report is valid as of **1 October 2023** (i.e., before New Zealand's General Election on 14 October 2023).

With an incoming National-led government it is acknowledged that there will be further significant policy changes ahead. We have not included commentary predicting what further potential changes might look like, except to acknowledge there is a high degree of uncertainty, and to highlight the areas where there is likely to be swift and significant change as outlined in the National Party's 100 Day Action Plan.

Due to the dynamic nature of policy and legislative changes related to climate change, it is intended that this report will be a 'living document'. As such we will seek to update this report following the first 100 days of the new government.

This is an assessment of the various reforms and their impact on local government from Beca's perspective. While local government representatives have been involved in the report, this has not been shared widely with the local government sector at this stage. This information has been prepared from a planning and policy perspective, not a legal one.

## 4 Climate Change Policy Landscape

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### 4.1 Urgency of Climate Action

New Zealand's climate has undergone significant climatic changes in the last 50 years and the impacts of climate change are already being seen and felt by communities. According to NIWA (the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research), New Zealand's average temperature has increased by approximately 1.0°C since 1909 with roughly two-thirds of this increase happening since 1950<sup>2</sup>.

We are already seeing the changes as sea levels have risen at the coast, leading to coastal erosion, coastal flooding, and infrastructure damage. The warming trend has led to more extreme weather events, including heavier rainfall, flooding, and droughts. For example, it is estimated that climate change was likely responsible for 10-20% of the rain that flooded Auckland and Northland in January 2023<sup>3</sup>, and contributed to Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023<sup>4</sup>, both of which caused widespread landslides, flooding, and loss of life with major damage to built infrastructure.

According to climate projections released by Ministry for the Environment (MfE) in 2018, New Zealand is set to undergo further significant changes by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is the case under all projected emission scenarios of climate change based on present models. This has important implications for infrastructure and environmental systems, social structures, and economies in affected regions.

Local government has at times led the way when it comes to voluntary climate action, from mitigation measures such as adopting carbon neutral targets, to adaptation measures such as working with local communities on future options for areas at high risk of natural hazards. Many councils declared a climate emergency in 2019 and 2020, which in turn led to New Zealand's declaration of a climate emergency on 2 December 2020. Councils may wish to use these policy and legislative changes as a tool to support conversations and actions with local communities.

### 4.2 The Pace and Breadth of Government Reform

In the last term of government leading up to October 2023 there was a suite of inter-connected statutory reforms, response programmes and system reviews being progressed simultaneously. We saw a major shift towards incorporating climate change into legislation, policy, reviews and think pieces. All of this has come at a time when funding for local government is limited, there is a national infrastructure deficit<sup>5</sup>, and communities are struggling financially with a cost-of-living crisis driven by high inflation and interest rates.

Influencing factors for the suite of legislative reforms included climate change and de-carbonising the New Zealand economy, severe housing unaffordability, delivering on the Crown's commitments inherent in Te Tiriti o te Waitangi, and ensuring that our towns and cities and the infrastructure serving them are in suitable locations (both in terms of natural hazards but also outside of primary food growing locations and our significant ecosystems). Broader factors included things like the digital transformation, changing demographics and environmental management. The previous government considered that many existing systems were no longer fit for purpose or effective in achieving outcomes.

The Future for Local Government Panel's final report '*He piki tūranga, he piki kōtuku*' was released in June 2023. This report sets out 17 recommendations under five themes involving fundamental and system wide change. These themes relate to the challenges facing local government and the funding,

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<sup>2</sup> MfE 2018. Climate Change Projections for New Zealand, p19.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/131161918>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/climate-news/131488716>.

<sup>5</sup> Rautaki Hanganga o Aotearoa, New Zealand Infrastructure Strategy 2022 – 2052, p31.



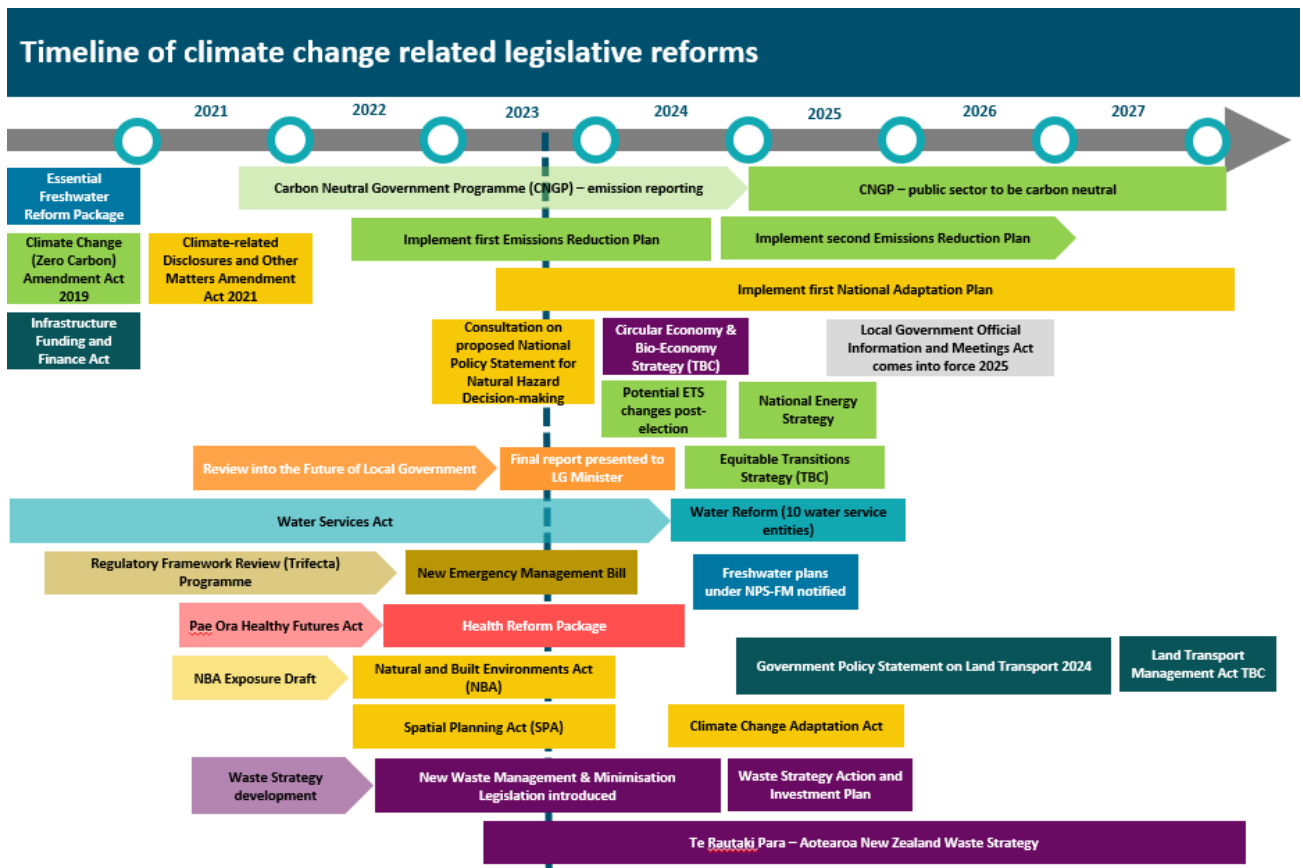
structural and partnership changes that are required to meet these challenges. Under the theme of ‘increasing funding’, the report made a recommendation with a specific focus on climate change: that “central government develops an intergenerational fund for climate change, with the application of the fund requiring appropriate regional and local decision-making”<sup>6</sup>.

The Panel’s report has not been examined in detail here as climate change is not otherwise a major focus of the report. It is relevant however as part of the background context related to the breadth of reform impacting local government.

### Timeline of Climate Change Related Legislative Reforms

The overarching programme of legislative reform extends out over the next five years and beyond. As the high-level diagram below demonstrates there has been a cluster of reform over the past few years, and more reform is likely following the General Election this year. Figure 1 demonstrates the speed and breadth of the government reforms. This timeline was accurate on 1 October 2023, but will likely change with the incoming National-led government.

Figure 1: Timeline of climate change related legislative reforms.



<sup>6</sup> Future for Local Government Panel Report, p24.

### 4.3 Incorporating Mātauranga Māori into Decision Making

Mātauranga Māori literally translated means 'Māori knowledge'. It's a modern term that broadly includes traditions, values, concepts, philosophies, world views and understandings derived from uniquely Māori cultural points of view<sup>7</sup>.

There is increasing recognition that local government should recognise and reflect mātauranga Māori when giving effect to central government policy and legislation. The importance of mātauranga Māori has been highlighted through recent policy and legislative changes. Doing so recognises the unique views and philosophies of Māori that have developed over centuries. Elevating Māori knowledge to be valued equally and alongside Western knowledge respects the notion of equity.

Councils will need to consider how to incorporate mātauranga Māori, alongside Western science, and ensure there is capacity and capability within the organisation to achieve this. This may involve for example, appointing specialist staff and/or allocating funding for local iwi, hapū and Māori to ensure mātauranga Māori is incorporated.

### 4.4 Cross-cutting Themes to Respond to Climate Reform

With the breadth of reform and the urgency with which we need to act in relation to climate change, it can be difficult to know where to focus efforts. Outlined below are **six key themes** that run across the reforms. These are actions councils can and should undertake now.

Table 3: Key cross-cutting themes related to climate change reform.

Theme	Description
1. Better understand and communicate climate information and climate risk.	<p>Improve information related to climate change risk assessments and future climate scenarios and communicate that information to communities.</p> <p>Monitor requirements for adaptive planning including Dynamic Adaptive Pathways Planning (DAPP) approaches – improve information systems for monitoring long term trends.</p> <p>Communicate information related to natural hazards on LIMs.</p>
2. Give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and embed te ao Māori, including mātauranga Māori.	<p>Work with iwi/hapu/Māori to incorporate a te ao Māori lens on long term, spatial, land use and adaptation planning.</p> <p>Protect significant cultural sites.</p>
3. Consider role of land use and spatial planning as tools to tackle climate change adaptation and mitigation.	<p>Connect spatial planning with long term adaptation strategies, understand trade-offs between intensification and adaptation.</p> <p>Use adaptive planning tools to support flexibility in investment to avoid 'locking' in a pathway.</p> <p>Consider council's role in enabling emission reductions through urban and spatial planning, infrastructure investment, incentives.</p>
4. Incorporating climate change into policy decisions and infrastructure design.	<p>Take a long-term lens on infrastructure investment decisions.</p> <p>Managed retreat may mean flexibility in design or a shorter design life, relocatable infrastructure, increased water storage. Plan for infrastructure provision now for areas that communities may retreat to.</p> <p>Consider establishing a more responsive regulatory framework for setting infrastructure or design standards.</p>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.takai.nz/find-resources/articles/matauranga-maori/>.

Theme	Description
5. Working with partners and the community to embed climate change adaptation and mitigation decisions.	Working with other councils, iwi/hapu/Māori, and central government agencies through Regional Spatial Strategies or other forums to share information and develop joint strategies. Boost capability, effort, and funding to undertake community engagement, particularly with communities at risk.
6. Improve capacity and capability across the sector to proactively manage climate risk and deliver on the various changes.	Local government is going to need to significantly increase capacity and capability to deliver on these changes. Particularly in taking a more proactive approach and mitigating climate risk. In many cases enhancing capacity may involve working with other councils, iwi/hapu/Māori, and central government agencies, as outlined in theme 5.

Figure 2: Cross-cutting themes to respond to climate reform.



## 5 Climate Mitigation & Climate Related Disclosures

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### 5.1 Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019

The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 ('Zero Carbon Act') is the foundation for New Zealand's climate change response towards a net-zero carbon economy by 2050, requiring government to implement policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

It sets out domestic greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for New Zealand. These are to reduce net emissions of all greenhouse gases (except biogenic methane) to zero by 2050 and reduce biogenic methane emissions to 24-47% below 2017 levels by 2050.

The Zero Carbon Act:

- Established the Climate Change Commission to provide independent advice to government and monitor and review progress on emission reduction targets and adaptation goals.
- Requires government to set five-year interim emissions budgets that provide a pathway to 2050.
- Requires the government to develop and implement policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation (including national emissions reduction and adaptation plans).

#### Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Many councils have adopted carbon reduction targets which align with or are more ambitious than the targets outlined in the Act. The first step in reducing carbon emissions is to understand the carbon footprint of an organisation, city, district, or region, to inform where to target carbon emission reductions.

#### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Funding may be required for staff or specialist skills to develop carbon footprint data, for both council operations and for the areas they serve.

Councils will need to prioritise initiatives that support carbon reduction over the period of the LTP, and ideally develop a roadmap to achieve carbon reduction targets. This includes having a clear understanding of the 'embodied carbon' (the carbon emitted during construction) that will result from implementing an LTP.

An additional important step is understanding how climate is considered through the decision-making process; whether that's through the LTP, business cases or governance processes. Council decision-making should provide a climate (adaptation and mitigation) lens.

### 5.2 National Emissions Reduction Plan

The first Emissions Reduction Plan, or ERP, was published in 2022, including measures out to 2035. This covers the first three emissions budgets. The ERP highlights the themes of an equitable transition, empowering Māori, working with nature, and a productive, sustainable, inclusive economy. It provides guidance for the following sectors on how to reduce their emissions: transport, energy and industry, building and infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, and waste, circular economy, and fluorinated gases. New Zealand's second ERP is due to be published at the end of 2024.

#### Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Local government must 'have regard to' the Emissions Reduction Plan when making or changing regional policy statements, regional plans, or district plans. This means giving the matter genuine attention and

thought before deciding whether, or how, to reflect that matter in planning decisions. The decision maker should give reasons for how they considered the matter.

### ➤ **Actions for 2024-34 LTPs**

Local government will help deliver or are a key partner in many actions within the ERP in areas including public transport, land use and waste management. For example, section 8.4 (National ERP – Transport) of this report describes how local government will be involved in vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) reduction programmes. Section 9.4 (National ERP – Waste) describes how the ERP’s Waste chapter may impact upon councils. These obligations will have budget and capacity impacts.

## **5.3 Climate-related Disclosures**

New Zealand was the first country in the world to pass climate reporting legislation, the Financial Sector (Climate-related Disclosures and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021, which amended several other Acts including the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013, the Financial Reporting Act 2013, and the Public Audit Act 2001. It is now mandatory for large financial market participants (e.g. large publicly listed companies, insurers, banks) to disclose the expected impact of climate change on their business. This includes how an organisation is preparing for the transition to a net zero economy, preparing for the physical impacts of climate change, and how they will manage climate-related risks and opportunities. In New Zealand climate-related disclosures must be produced in line with XRB (External Reporting Board) standards, which draws on guidance from the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

### **Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans**

Auckland Council and Christchurch City Holdings Limited are currently the only two local government entities that are required to report under New Zealand’s mandatory climate-related disclosures regime. The regime may expand in the future to include more public entities (including local government), but this has not been confirmed.

Councils can prepare for potential future mandatory disclosures by producing voluntary reports. This will allow councils to better understand climate risk and assess how responsive the organisation’s operating model and strategy are, through a consistent disclosure structure. Climate-related disclosures provide transparency and encourage organisations to look critically at climate change impacts.

### ➤ **Actions for 2024-34 LTPs**

Councils preparing climate-related disclosures will need to set aside resource and time to do so. This may include bringing in specialist external support, or up-skilling existing staff.

## **5.4 National Energy Strategy**

The National Energy Strategy is a key output from the ERP. Renewable energy is key to reduce emissions across transport, industrial and building sectors. The ERP sets out targets of:

- 50% of total final energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2035, and
- reaching net zero for long-lived gases by 2050.

This builds off the ERP’s aspirational target of 100% renewable electricity by 2030. The government’s 2050 vision for energy and industry for New Zealand is a highly renewable, sustainable, and efficient energy system that is accessible and affordable, secure, and reliable, and supports New Zealanders’ wellbeing. The full strategy is due at the end of 2024 with some aspects (including a Gas Transition Plan) due earlier.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

The National Energy Strategy is not expected to have direct impacts on local government. However, local government has a role in managing where and how development of renewable energy supply and distribution occurs, through spatial planning (e.g. deciding where to situate renewable energy infrastructure within a district) and subsequently via approving or declining resource consent applications for renewable infrastructure.

In addition to the National Energy Strategy, and related to New Zealand's energy use, are the National Environmental Standards for Greenhouse Gases from Industrial Process Heat (which took effect in July 2023).<sup>8</sup> These Standards will support councils in decision-making on greenhouse gas discharges from industrial sectors using process heat (process heat makes up 33 per cent of our overall energy use and contributes approximately eight per cent of gross emissions). Overall, the Standards will support councils to reduce emissions from industries using process heat, via the resource consenting process.

### 5.5 Emissions Trading Scheme

The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a key tool for meeting New Zealand's domestic and international climate change targets. It puts a price on emissions, by charging certain sectors of the economy for the greenhouse gases they emit.

The ETS is currently in a period of change with the Climate Change Commission suggesting changes in their latest draft advice, and the High Court in July 2023 ruling that government must reconsider ETS settings.

Many councils are likely to be ETS participants, either through assets that are associated with a surrender obligation, such as landfills; or assets registered in the ETS which earn New Zealand Units (for example forestry assets).

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Councils that are ETS participants should stay abreast of upcoming ETS changes, with the latest public consultation period closing in August 2023.

The recent consultation focused on how the ETS might be changed to provide more robust support for emissions reductions, alongside enduring support for emissions removals through forestry. The review also includes considering changes to:

- improve incentives for native forests, and
- examine additional types of carbon removals such as from wetlands or direct air carbon capture.

Councils in areas with both exotic and/or native forests, or wetlands (and those managing or owning landfills) should keep informed of the possible ETS changes, as eventual changes could have an impact on councils' obligations under the ETS. Decisions stemming from this consultation will be a matter for the next government following the October 2023 election.

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<sup>8</sup> Official title: Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat) Regulations 2023.



## 6 Resource Management Reform

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In February 2021, the government announced it would repeal the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and enact new legislation based on the recommendations of the Resource Management Review Panel<sup>9</sup>. This reform, led by the previous government, consists of new Spatial Planning, Natural and Built Environment and Climate Change Adaptation Acts.

The reform aims to:

- protect and restore the environment and its capacity to provide for the wellbeing of present and future generations,
- better enable development within natural environmental limits,
- give proper recognition to the principles of Te Tiriti of Waitangi and provide greater recognition of te ao Māori including mātauranga Māori,
- prepare to adapt to climate change and risks from natural hazards, and better mitigate emissions contributing to climate change,
- and improve system efficiency and effectiveness and reduce complexity while retaining appropriate local democratic input.

With New Zealand's incoming National-led government, it is almost certain there will be further changes. The National Party has promised to repeal the previous government's "2.0 RMA legislation" as part of their 100-day action plan<sup>10</sup>. This may include reverting back to the RMA until the new government has developed, consulted on, and passed alternative legislation<sup>11</sup>. These Acts are included in this report for completeness, as this was a major reform leading up to October 2023. Even if these Acts are repealed, some key actions may still be relevant.

### 6.1 Spatial Planning Act

The Spatial Planning Act (SPA) was given Royal Assent on 23 August 2023. This Act will enable more effective planning for future prosperity through long term objective setting for urban growth and land use change, while responding to climate change and respecting the environment and values of Te Ao Māori.

The SPA will make Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) mandatory in all regions. The RSS will set spatial outcomes for how a particular geographic area will grow, adapt, and change over time, and how land, infrastructure and other resources will be used and integrated to promote wellbeing<sup>12</sup>. It will help coordinate and integrate decision-making, replacing ad hoc regional planning. The SPA will also reset the role of mana whenua in regional spatial planning exercises. Regional Spatial Strategies will plan for a minimum of 30 years into the future but will need to draw on data over at least the next 100 years to inform climate change outcomes.

There are no appeals process for RSSs, which means Regional Planning Committees will have the power to identify and demarcate areas unsuitable for future development due to risks from climate change<sup>13</sup>. As such, RSS will serve as a key mechanism for regions in setting long term climate adaptation direction (for

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<sup>9</sup> The Review Panel was chaired by retired Court of Appeal Judge, Hon Tony Randerson, QC – and undertook a comprehensive review of New Zealand's resource management system. The Panel's findings were released in June 2020, in a report often referred to as the 'Randerson Report'.

<sup>10</sup> [www.national.org.nz/100dayplan](http://www.national.org.nz/100dayplan).

<sup>11</sup> <https://chapmantripp.com/trends-insights/election-insights-2023/election-insights-2023-resource-management-uncertainty-to-be-prolonged/>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/rm-reform-spatial-planning-act.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> However, any person or entity can apply for judicial review if they believe what's in the RSS or the way it was developed didn't comply with the SPA.

example, via avoiding future areas of risk and retreating existing homes and assets from current at-risk areas).

RSSs will be expected to provide for climate change mitigation, as well as identifying and managing risks from natural hazards. Key climate change matters that need to be considered in RSS development under the SPA are outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Key mitigation and adaptation considerations in RSS development under the SPA

Mitigation	Adaptation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate locations for renewable energy production infrastructure (or for other measures to reduce emissions), and</li> <li>• Indicate areas suitable for land use change that would support emission reductions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas vulnerable to natural hazard and/or climate change risks,</li> <li>• Identify where risk-reducing (or resilience-supporting) infrastructure could be located,</li> <li>• Identify where land use change could reduce risks or increase resilience, and</li> <li>• Describe any other measures that could support adaptation to natural hazards and climate change.</li> </ul>

### Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Council climate change strategies, policies and plans will need to inform, and be informed by, the RSS. Any relevant evidence base related to natural hazards and climate risk, or regional, city or district carbon emissions will form a valuable input into future RSS development.

#### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

The RSS will need to consider any potential managed relocation of high-risk areas. This will involve collaboration across various stakeholders (e.g., Waka Kotahi, Ministry of Education, Te Whatu Ora), significant community engagement processes, and developing an evidence base (such as around the transport connectivity and infrastructure needs of future development areas). Councils may also need to engage with MfE to understand transition and implementation requirements. All of which would likely require additional staff, and/or re-allocating existing staff from other projects.

Current spatial strategies mostly address future population growth and housing demands but do not factor in the additional demand created through potential managed relocation of communities out of high-risk areas. The RSS will need to acknowledge and plan for this demand created by potential future relocation.

The first step for preparing for the RSS is to work with iwi and neighbouring Councils to set up Regional Planning Committees. Councils should work out what their region's timing is and align LTP investment with that process, which includes thinking about what level of investment will be required.

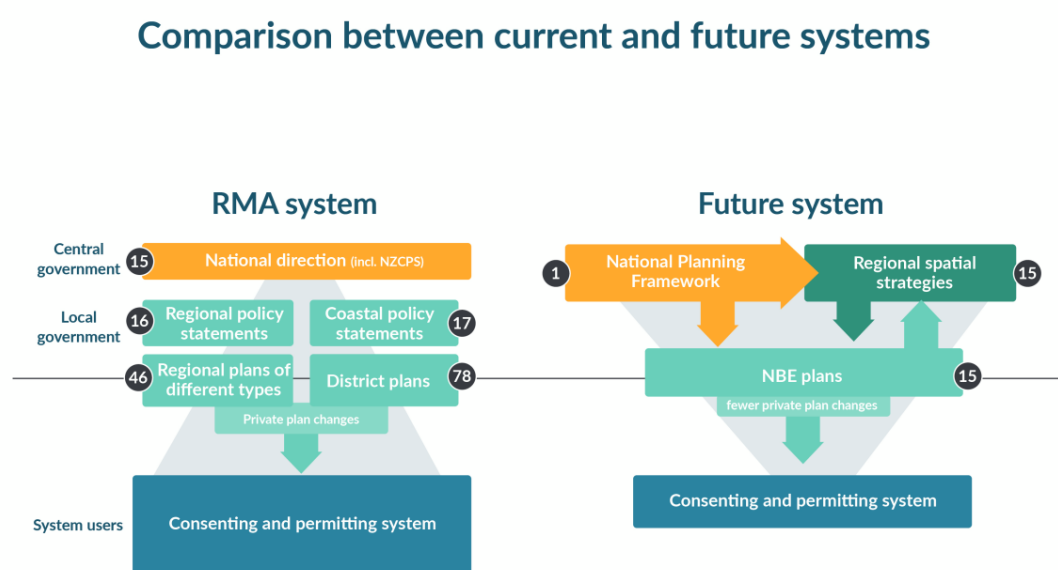
When developing the 2024-34 LTP, it is too early for councils to predict what an RSS might outline in terms of investment priorities – if indeed these continue to be part of a new resource management system. However, many councils already have sub-regional or district-wide spatial strategies, or Future Development Strategies under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD). These strategies should guide infrastructure investment decisions for 2024 – 34 LTPs. Careful consideration should be given to align these decisions with current or planned local adaptation processes.

## 6.2 Natural and Built Environment Act

The Natural and Built Environment Act (NBA) is the main piece of legislation that replaces the RMA. The NBA was also given Royal Assent on 23 August 2023. It seeks to provide a new framework for regulating both environmental planning and land-use planning<sup>14</sup>. Under this Act, Natural and Built Environment plans (NBE plans) will replace the regional and district plans, and policy statements developed under the RMA. They'll set out the rules for land and resource use and the rules and methods for consenting<sup>15</sup>.

The SPA and NBA are expected to work together as a single system, replacing the former system, as outlined in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Comparisons between current and future resource management systems.



The NBA includes climate change mitigation and adaptation as key system outcomes which needs to be achieved to achieve the Act's purpose. This includes:

- GHG emissions reductions to assist NZ to meet its targets,
- Reducing risks from natural hazards and climate change, and
- An environment that is more resilient to climate change risks.

Under the NBA, s107(2)(c), a Regional Planning Committee must 'have regard to' the national adaptation and emissions reduction plans made under the Climate Change Response Act 2002 when preparing or changing a plan.

In addition, the National Planning Framework (NPF) must support and align with these two plans. Under the Act, central government's proposed new NPF will provide a set of mandatory national policies and standards on specified aspects of the new system. These will include natural environmental limits, outcomes, and targets. The NPF includes a chapter on climate change and natural hazards, which will likely encompass:

- Elements of other national direction (e.g., various National Policy Statements),

<sup>14</sup> As outlined in the final report of the Environment Select Committee, 27 June 2023.

<sup>15</sup> <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/rma/resource-management-system-reform/planning-and-consenting-in-the-new-system/#natural-and-built-environment-plans>.

- National Policy Statement/National Environmental Standards on industrial-process heat (greenhouse gas emissions), and
- Other new climate mitigation and natural hazard direction.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

The NBA's approach to natural hazards is long-term future focused and risk averse. Where development is proposed in areas with natural hazard risks, the NBA will impose requirements and conditions on such development to reduce risks. As such, it's expected that it may be more difficult for residential, commercial, or other development to occur in hazard-prone areas without appropriate adaptation measures once the NBA and SPA take effect.

Local and regional climate change strategies should inform local NBE Plans developed under this Act, to support desired development outcomes.

In September 2023, MfE opened consultation on a proposed *National Policy Statement for Natural Hazard Decision-making* (NPS-NHD)<sup>16</sup>. This proposed NPS aims to direct how decision-makers consider natural hazard risk in planning decisions relating to new development under the RMA. As soon as is reasonably practicable after the NPS-NHD takes effect, every local authority must give effect to it by updating their policy statements and plans.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

For existing developments in high-risk areas, there is likely to be an increase in the operational costs to maintain and repair infrastructure due to increasing climate hazards (flooding, erosion, etc). If the NBE Plan indicates that development is subject to long term local adaptation planning, all decisions on how to repair or replace infrastructure will need to be done with a careful consideration of the desired outcomes sought and what the net return on investment is likely to be.

Councils should therefore develop and implement infrastructure investment decision making frameworks that adopt a long-term view and incorporate the consideration of increasing climate hazards to guide investment decisions. For example, it may make more sense to design with shorter design life for certain infrastructure or select infrastructure that can be retrofitted to increase resilience in response to more frequent or intense climate hazards.

To prepare future NBE Plans, councils will need to understand the areas of natural hazard and climate risk in their jurisdiction and have undertaken adaptation planning to identify the long-term strategy for those areas. Many councils have old (pre-2010) hazard assessments that do not adequately consider extreme events (e.g., 1% annual exceedance probability) and/or climate change effects on hazards. A stocktake or gap analysis of hazard information is recommended to fill gaps or update out of date information so that decisions can be made with a sound evidence base. This is necessary to have an appropriate evidence-based rule framework that supports the outcomes sought for high risk areas. In the absence of this planning, councils will only have high level guidance from the National Planning Framework – which is not likely to be sufficient to support public scrutiny through the NBE Plan.

A key component of Dynamic Adaptive Pathways Planning, or DAPP, is the ongoing monitoring of signals and triggers to identify when a change in adaptation pathway is needed. If a DAPP framework has been used to inform the NBE Plan (and resulting rules), then additional resource will be required, and possibly technology updates to capture information and make it transparent to the community. For example, a trigger to implement a new adaptation pathway may be a certain level of sea-level rise. There needs to be

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<sup>16</sup> Consultation closes 13 November 2023.

a consistent way of measuring sea-level rise in the area and this information should be made publicly available if it impacts on which rule may be applicable in a given area.

Councils will need to assess and consider whether they have the resourcing and capability to undertake the actions described above. Many councils will likely outsource the climate risk and adaptation assessment and undertake ongoing monitoring in-house (or in association with the regional council or Crown Research Institute, etc). It will be important to have sound storage of data collected in a publicly available location, which may require immediate investment.

If central government specifies levels of service for local infrastructure (which may emerge from the new infrastructure standard outlined in the National Adaptation Plan) this may require significant infrastructure investment through future LTPs, as it is likely that the introduction of any new code will have a grace period for implementation.

If the reforms proceed as enacted by the previous government, a Regional Planning Committee (RPC) will develop the RSS and NBE plan in each region. Local councils will be closely involved in the establishment and operation of RPCs. LTPs should make provision for the resources and costs expected to be devoted to RPC processes. This guidance will be updated once there is clarity regarding further resource management reforms.

## 7 Adaptation, Natural Hazards & Emergency Management

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### 7.1 Climate Change Adaptation Bill

The Climate Change Adaptation Bill is due to be released in 2024. This will eventually become the Climate Adaptation Act (CAA). This is the third Act related to resource management reform and is expected to address the complex issues associated with adaptation to climate change and the funding of adaptation responses, including for managed retreat. The CAA is expected to work alongside and in conjunction with the NBA and SPA to be effective.

In August 2023, the Minister for Climate Change asked Parliament's Environment Select Committee to commence an inquiry into community-led retreat and adaptation funding. This inquiry will inform the CAA. There is also work underway by Environmental Defence Society preparing three working papers (two of which have been released) that assess the various considerations for the new legislation.

In anticipation of the inquiry,

- MfE has prepared an Issues and Options paper<sup>17</sup> to assist the proposed inquiry into community-led retreat and adaptation funding, and
- An Expert Working Group has also prepared a report about the practical, legal and financial aspects of enabling managing retreat<sup>18</sup>.

The Issues and Options paper lays out the challenges in the current system and presents options for the future, exploring who could make adaptation decisions, how they could be decided, how the community could be involved, and how the costs could be shared. Importantly, it also includes a consideration for Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the role of Māori in managed retreat.

If an inquiry goes ahead, it is likely to incorporate lessons from 2023 cyclone and flooding events, and the need for retreat and adaptation planning and funding approaches to achieve cross-community support,

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<sup>17</sup> Community-led retreat and adaptation funding: Issues and options: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/community-led-retreat-and-adaptation-funding-issues-and-options/>

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Expert Working Group on Managed Retreat: A Proposed System for Te Hekenga Rauora / Planned Relocation: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/report-of-the-expert-working-group-on-managed-retreat-a-proposed-system-for-te-hekenga-rauora/>.

and to reflect iwi/Māori views and aspirations. It is also possible that local adaptation planning will be a requirement under the Act.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Councils will need to keep abreast of the outcomes of the Parliamentary inquiry, which is expected to conclude in 2024. These findings should be incorporated into community-led adaptation plans.

In lieu of this legislation being in place, collaboration with other councils, mana whenua and central government agencies will need to continue, to share climate-related information and approaches.

Local climate change strategies should take direction from MfE's guidance Coastal Hazards & Climate Change – Guidance for Local Government, where a council's jurisdiction includes coastal areas. MfE is currently working with an expert panel to write Climate Change Adaptation – Guidance for Local Government (due to be published late 2023 / early 2024) which will provide DAPP guidance beyond the coastal areas for all climate hazards as well as guidance around broader adaptation decision making.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Councils should be considering climate change adaptation and resilience to severe weather events in their 2024-34 LTPs. This includes:

- Understanding existing levels of service relating to natural hazard protection for communities,
- Outlining clear assumptions around the impacts of climate change and mitigation actions in the LTP, best informed by a comprehensive climate risk assessment,
- Infrastructure resilience planning in 30-year infrastructure strategies, and
- Consideration and explanation of how to fund response and recovery if a severe weather event occurs (e.g., 'buy-out' of properties in high-risk locations), as only a certain proportion of a severe weather event would be funded by insurance or central government sources, the balance would likely be council-funded.

## 7.2 National Adaptation Plan

New Zealand's first National Adaptation Plan, or NAP, was published in August 2022, and lays out an approach and series of actions for how communities can prepare for the inevitable impacts of a changing climate for the 2023-2028 period.

The NAP is structured around actions that relate either to system-wide issues or five 'outcome areas', which broadly align with the domains identified in the National Climate Change Risk Assessment. These are the natural environment; homes, buildings and places; infrastructure; communities; and the economy and financial system.

The NAP outlines a programme of work - mainly the responsibility of central government - to act and adapt to climate change. It brings together existing and proposed actions to:

- enable better risk-informed decisions,
- drive climate-resilient development in the right places,
- lay the foundations for a range of adaptation options including managed retreat, and
- embed climate resilience across government policy.

The NAP provides some clarity for local government, for example by specifying which climate change scenario they should use when assessing risks to coastal areas from sea-level rise. It also sets out actions to review the sharing of adaptation costs between local and national government – however this lacks the detail to enable councils to begin making realistic plans for their own local adaptation.



Councils must 'have regard to' the NAP when preparing or changing regional policy statements, regional plans, and district plans. This is to support resource management planning nationwide to be in line with New Zealand's long-term climate strategies and goals.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Local and regional climate change strategies should align with the priorities laid out in the NAP, much of which will be addressing similar risks experienced at the local government level.

The updated MfE guidance referenced earlier is likely to cover scoping of adaptation plans, looking at scenarios (e.g., when a DAPP approach is preferred or a traditional adaptive management plan suffices), step by step guidance on things to consider when planning adaptation actions, and guidance on rapid adaptation decision-making in a crisis scenario. This document will be an important guide for local adaptation strategy and action for 2024 onwards.

Shared socioeconomic pathways projections are also due to be released in January 2024. These comprise different socio-economic assumptions that drive future greenhouse gas emissions and replace the representative concentration pathways (RCP) climate scenarios previously used. This information will be useful for councils when making long-term decisions.

Another adaptation consideration stems from the Zero Carbon Act. Section 5ZW of the Act enables the Minister for Climate Change or the Climate Change Commission to request that a reporting organisation (which includes councils and council-controlled organisations) provide information about its governance, risks and opportunities faced, and management of risks as it relates to climate change adaptation. Councils should consider and prepare for responding to this in case they receive a request to do so.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Several actions in the NAP will have resourcing implications for local councils. The adaptation guidance for local government will be regularly updated, meaning local government will need to understand and implement that guidance material which will require resourcing and funding.

## 7.3 Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 2023

This Bill passed its third reading and received royal assent in July 2023. Part 1 of the Act (focused on LIMs) will come into force on 1 July 2025 (unless brought in earlier by an Order in Council). The Bill's main objective is to improve the natural hazard information provided in land information memoranda, known as LIMs.

The Bill covers:

- Specific obligations for councils to provide natural hazard information in LIMs,
- Requiring regional councils to share natural hazard and climate change information with territorial authorities, and
- Liability of local authorities in respect of natural hazard on LIMs.

In making natural hazard information more accessible, property buyers will be more informed about issues that could arise with property in the future. This will in turn affect decision making around purchase, and insurability.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Natural hazards information on LIMs may see some areas becoming more (or less) desirable to live in. These changes should aid councils in their planning of where future development be located (e.g. it won't make sense for a council to invest in infrastructure or services in areas with low demand).

## ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Information to be provided via LIMs will be more extensive, adding to the workloads of council staff. Councils may also receive more enquiries from LIM applicants about the information provided. Councils may wish to increase the price they charge for LIMs as a result. With the new obligations to share information, regional councils will need to allocate resources to meet this requirement.

## 7.4 Emergency Management Bill

The Emergency Management (EM) Bill will create the new legal framework to prepare for, deal with, and recover from local, regional, and national emergencies. The Bill seeks to replace the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. It is not a fundamental transformation of the emergency management system, but instead makes some practical improvements to ensure the system can meet current and future needs<sup>19</sup>. The Bill considers many lessons identified from emergencies and reviews over the years.

Key objectives of the Bill:

- clarifying roles and responsibilities across the sector,
- recognising and enhancing the role of Māori in emergency management,
- enabling equitable outcomes for communities disproportionately impacted by emergencies,
- enhancing the resilience and accountability of critical infrastructure, and
- modernising the legislative design, including establishing a more responsive regulatory framework for setting standards.

A key point for councils is that they have an important role during and after an emergency and are expected by government to be effective in this role. As weather-related events become more common, councils will need to have the ability and capacity to respond and continue to function. The Bill clarifies it is the duty of the local authority to continue to function during and after an emergency, albeit this may be at a reduced level.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Climate strategies should recognise that severe weather events are increasingly likely in the years ahead and some will be severe enough to require an emergency response. It may be appropriate for climate strategies to directly include emergency management information or targets or reference their existence elsewhere. Local adaptation planning will need to provide for plans in the event of a disaster. Disaster response plans should be aligned with adaptation plans for this reason.

## ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Councils may need to allocate more resources towards emergency management in 2024 – 2034 LTPs, to fulfil their roles and responsibilities under this Bill. This will depend on the level of resources already devoted to emergency management planning. The Bill focuses on proactive planning and risk reduction, so that responding to events requires less investment and resources.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-legislation-modernise-emergency-management-system>.

## 8 Water & Transport

### 8.1 Affordable Waters / Three Waters Reform

To improve the safety, reliability, and affordability of water infrastructure in New Zealand, ten new publicly owned Water Services Entities are being established. These entities will run drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services that are currently operated by councils on behalf of communities.

The entities will be owned by councils in the region on behalf of their local communities but will be operationally and financially independent from the councils. The intention is that this will enable the entity to borrow more money, over a longer timeframe, to fund the significant long-term investment required in water services infrastructure.

There is a staggered timeframe for establishing the Water Services Entities (WSEs) between 1 July 2024 and 1 October 2025. In the meantime, councils will continue to maintain and operate water services infrastructure and plan for upgrades and new water infrastructure that is needed to protect public health and the environment. Once the transition takes place, it will be a significant change to local government's infrastructure and asset management responsibilities.

Key pillars of this reform:

1. Establishment of a dedicated water service regulator – Taumata Arowai,
2. Regulatory reform through new legislation (as outlined in Table 5), and
3. Reforms to water delivery services via new Water Service Entities (WSEs).

Table 5: Key legislation related to three waters reforms.

Legislation	Status	Rationale for changes
Water Services Entities Amendment Act 2023	Royal assent 22 August 2023.	It changes the Water Services Entities Act 2022 to replace 4 WSEs with 10, allowing for greater community involvement in setting the direction of water entities while ensuring affordability of services for households.
Water Services Legislation Act 2023	Royal assent 30 August 2023.	Sets out the functions and powers for the new WSEs, along with what they are required to do, the tools they need for their work, and arrangements for the changing to the new system.
Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Act 2023	Royal assent 30 August 2023.	Requires water suppliers to provide water at a cost and level of service consumers expect. It appoints the Commerce Commission to be the new economic and performance regulator for Water Services.

However, this is another area of reform with **high uncertainty**, as the National Party has said it will repeal the Water Service Reform legislation within its first 100 days in office<sup>20</sup>. The remainder of this section describes the main changes expected via the reform package, as at 1 October 2023. This report will be updated as information about the new government's changes to water reform become clearer.

<sup>20</sup> [www.national.org.nz/100dayplan](http://www.national.org.nz/100dayplan).

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Should the reform go ahead, councils will need to consider how they share responsibility and planning for climate change impacts upon water services, with the to-be-established WSEs. Under the Water Services Legislation Bill 2023, the WSEs have specific **climate change adaptation and mitigation** functions, and more extensive risk assessment and management functions as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Climate change adaptation and mitigation functions of WSEs.

Mitigation	Adaptation	Hazards and risks
Mitigate the effects of climate change and natural hazards.	Support and enable climate change adaptation.	Identify hazards relating to water services, assess risks relating to those hazards, and manage, control, monitor, or eliminate those risks.

At this stage climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation are not rated as highly within the Affordable Waters 'Prioritisation Framework' as other outcomes. This could be a challenge for councils when working with the WSEs to seek investment for climate-related initiatives. This could also pose a risk to resilience of infrastructure to severe weather events.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

The financial investment required to upgrade and/or improve local water infrastructure is significant in many areas of New Zealand. Due to severe weather events in 2023 (e.g. Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabrielle), many councils are facing even higher cost pressures than in normal times. There is much uncertainty regarding where and how to invest in water-related services and infrastructure. While councils should be able to make budget allocations for the first year or two of the 2024-34 LTP, investment beyond this could be difficult to plan for, given that it will come under the remit of the new WSEs (or there may be further changes led by the new government).

In addition, whole-of-life carbon assessment is becoming an integral part of water infrastructure planning. Since November 2022, consent authorities are now able to consider the effects of discharges on climate change, in applications for discharge or coastal permits<sup>21</sup>. Assessments of effects should now also consider the effects of greenhouse gas discharges. Overall, this trend towards recognising and assessing the emissions created by infrastructure may require councils to hire specialist staff or seek external specialists to undertake these assessments – which should be planned for in LTP and resourcing processes.

## 8.2 Essential Freshwater Reforms

'Essential Freshwater' is a package of national direction designed to improve the health and water quality of NZ's rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands. These changes came into effect in 2020, meaning it's a not-so-recent change, however it is included here as it has major implications for climate change and local government resourcing.

The package, which took effect in September 2020, includes<sup>22</sup>:

- new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES)
- new stock exclusion regulations

<sup>21</sup> In November 2022, section 104E ('Applications relating to discharge of greenhouse gases) of the RMA was repealed.

<sup>22</sup> Package components taken from: <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/essential-freshwater-overview-factsheet.pdf>.

- amendments to the Resource Management (Measurement and Reporting of Water Takes) Regulations 2010
- the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM 2020), which replaces the NPS-FM 2017
- amendments to the RMA to provide for a faster freshwater planning process
- amendments to the RMA to enable mandatory and enforceable freshwater farm plans, and the creation of regulations for reporting nitrogen fertiliser sales.

### **National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)**

The NPS-FM strengthened requirements for local government to partner and engage with tangata whenua when making resource management decisions. It recognises Te Mana o te Wai as a fundamental principle underpinning environmental decision making; recognises the importance of protecting te mauri o te wai; and provides recognition of tangata whenua rights related to freshwater. However, it will take time to build the capacity within local government and local iwi to implement this.

The freshwater planning process is a new plan-making process that regional councils and unitary authorities ('regional councils') must use for proposed freshwater provisions in regional policy statements and regional plans (excluding regional coastal plans). This process must be used for proposed regional policy statements or regional plans (or changes) that give effect to the NPS-FM or otherwise relate to freshwater ('freshwater plans'). Regional councils are required to notify freshwater plans that give effect to the NPS-FM by **31 December 2024** and make final decisions within two years of notification.

### **Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans**

Te Mana o te Wai is an important concept for councils to respect and recognise when giving effect to the Essential Freshwater regulations and national direction. As such, Te Mana o te Wai should be firmly embedded within the water sections of council climate plans and strategies.

#### **➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs**

Councils around New Zealand have a key role in implementing the Essential Freshwater package, via their plan-making, monitoring and enforcement of the package's rules and regulations. In their LTPs, councils should allocate sufficient staff resource such that these regulations are adequately implemented down at the local level.

Councils may also need to increase their staff capacity to understand and give effect to Te Mana o te Wai and to submit on plan changes on behalf of their communities. Councils will need to consider funding tangata whenua to build capacity to work within this policy. Other options could include secondments, funding scholarships, or policy training for iwi/hapū/Māori.

## **8.3 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024**

The Government Policy Statement (GPS) is reviewed every three years and **guides investment in transport** by providing a 10-year outlook of how spending is prioritised for the transport network. The GPS informs Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs) and the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). When Waka Kotahi and local government make decisions on transport investments, they give effect to the strategic priorities set out in the GPS.

As the largest co-funder of NLTP projects, local government has an essential role in building strong, evidence-based projects and programmes for investment.

The results the government wishes to achieve from National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) investment are expressed via strategic priorities. The draft GPS 2024 includes the following as strategic priorities:

- **Increasing resilience:** the transport system is better able to cope with natural and anthropogenic hazards.
- **Reducing emissions:** transitioning to a lower carbon transport system.

The draft GPS also proposes a strengthened focus on maintaining assets and services and enhancing resilience, recognising recent flood and weather-related recovery efforts (such as the 2023 Auckland flooding and Cyclone Gabrielle). These priorities bring climate change to the fore in the draft GPS 2024. The Ministry of Transport is due to finalise the GPS in June 2024, so it can take effect on 1 July 2024.

The incoming government will want to review the GPS, meaning there will likely be further changes in 2024. The National Party has promised that in its first 100 days, it will issue a draft new GPS on Transport reflecting National's new Roads of National Significance and public transport projects<sup>23</sup>. However, the National Party has also indicated that emissions reduction in the transport sector and improved resilience will continue to be key focus areas.

Given the GPS is still in draft form, councils need to prepare their RLTPs without the certainty that a final GPS brings. This means making some assumptions around what the final GPS will contain.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Council climate change strategies, policies and plans will need to be cognisant of the strategic priorities contained within the GPS. Councils should pay particular attention to the climate-focused priorities.

Councils should also make themselves aware of broader funding sources available to support responding to climate change and building climate resilience. The Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is one example which may be able to support regional transport investments. Being aware of non-rates funding sources is likely to be of increasing importance as the transport system faces increasing maintenance and renewals costs.

Transport investment and planning is also an area where they may benefit in several councils working together, with many transport projects crossing territorial authority boundaries. In this respect, council climate strategies and plans should 'speak to each other' and look for opportunities to deliver transport programmes and actions jointly.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

The GPS includes key projects (or 'strategic investments') to guide NLTP development. The draft GPS 2024 includes, for example, the following two projects among many others:

- Warkworth to Whangārei – SH 1, and
- Wellington CBD to Island Bay – Mass Rapid Transit.

As part of their co-funding role alongside central government for significant transport projects, councils with 'strategic investment' projects planned in their regions will need to set aside significant portions of funding in their LTPs, to support these projects.

At the same time, the amount of funding councils will receive from the NLTF is still pending the finalisation of the GPS 2024. As a result, councils may not be able to make definitive budget allocations for transport investments that rely on NLTF funding, at least in the first year or two of their 2024-34 LTPs.

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<sup>23</sup> [www.national.org.nz/100dayplan](http://www.national.org.nz/100dayplan).



## 8.4 National ERP Transport

The ERP, outlined earlier in this report, has a Transport chapter, focused on reducing New Zealand's transport emissions. Transport is one of NZ's largest sources of GHG emissions, responsible for 17% of NZ's gross emissions.

This chapter contains three focus areas that guide the government's approach to reducing transport emissions:

- Reduce reliance on cars and support people to walk, cycle and use public transport,
- Rapidly adopt low-emissions vehicles, and
- Begin work now to decarbonise heavy transport and freight.

Four transport targets support the above focus areas:

- Reducing total kilometres travelled by the light vehicle fleet by 20% by 2035,
- Increase zero-emissions vehicles to 30% of the light fleet by 2035,
- Reduce emissions from freight transport by 35% by 2035, and
- Reduce the emissions intensity of transport fuel by 10% by 2035.

### Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Council climate change strategies, policies and plans will need to be cognisant of, and ideally align with, the focus areas and transport targets described in the Transport chapter of the ERP.

#### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

The final GPS is likely to clarify the expectation that all investment decisions be consistent with the ERP. If this holds true, councils will need to pay close attention to the focus areas and targets in the ERP when planning their investment in transport-related infrastructure and services in their LTPs.

Councils should be aware of the key ERP Transport actions set to occur in 2024 and 2025. Those actions include (as a selection):

- 2024: Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) reduction programmes for larger urban areas, and
- 2025: Zero-emissions public transport bus mandate established.

Further to the second action above, urban VKT reduction programmes are to be developed by the **end of 2023** for Tier 1 councils and the **end of 2024** for Tier 2 councils. Waka Kotahi's VKT reduction team will work with councils, communities, and Māori to develop these urban programmes. Councils in the Tier 1 category (Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Tauranga, and Hamilton) will therefore need to devote ample resource to support the development of these programmes.

## 9 Waste & Circular Economy

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### 9.1 Te Rautaki Para | Aotearoa New Zealand Waste Strategy

Published in March 2023, this Strategy is New Zealand's roadmap for the period to 2050 for a low-emissions, low-waste society built upon a circular economy. It provides a long-term vision and underlying principles for reducing waste (and associated emissions) by moving New Zealand towards a circular economy, which is "an alternative to the traditional linear economy in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate

products and materials at the end of each service life”<sup>24</sup>. The Strategy includes targets to reduce waste generation, waste sent to landfill and waste-related emissions.

With the Strategy now published, government is now planning to work with local authorities and others to develop New Zealand’s first Action & Investment Plan (AIP), which will help deliver on the goals of the Strategy. The first AIP is expected in 2024.

Territorial Authorities are responsible for producing Waste Management & Minimisation Plans (WMMPs), which is the key local waste planning mechanism. In accordance with the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, WMMPs must ‘have regard to’ the NZ Waste Strategy (section 44). The government may also direct a territorial authority to change its waste management and minimisation plan if that will help achieve the waste strategy (section 48).

The new Waste Strategy also indicates that:

- local government will have a large role to play in design of waste data and information systems (improving waste data is a key goal in NZ)
- Regional approaches to waste infrastructure and service delivery will be important.
- Responsibilities for provision of waste and recycling collections will remain with councils.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

The government’s aspiration for a circular economy is not just related to waste; rather it’s a system change that will mean changes across various council operations and across wider society. Shifting to a circular economy will support climate change aspirations. For example, keeping resources in use for longer reduces the need for purchasing new materials or resources, in turn saving the emissions released through the manufacturing processes of such goods. As such, council climate strategies should be aligned with a council’s waste work programme (e.g. as described in its WMMP), and more broadly with New Zealand’s over-arching Waste Strategy.

WMMPs (under the existing Waste Minimisation Act and in future expected to be a requirement under new waste legislation) – should be aligned with climate strategies and regional spatial strategies. For example, spatial strategies should be cognisant of whereabouts in a district or region key waste infrastructure (such as resource recovery parks) are planned to be located.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Councils will need to consider whether it has the resources to support the implementation of the Waste Strategy through the next LTP period. This includes supporting national behaviour change programmes, and collaboration with local community groups and non-government organisations on initiatives to reduce waste. Councils will be expected to be working towards a national network for circular management of resources.

Resourcing will also be required to support long-term risk management for vulnerable landfills and other contaminated sites; and for improving waste data and information – for example by investing in IT systems for collecting and managing waste data.

## 9.2 Waste Legislation Reform

The government is developing comprehensive new legislation to replace the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (WMA) and the Litter Act 1979. This new law is expected to provide the legislative framework to support planned actions under the Waste Strategy and AIP.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/ohanga-amiomio-circular-economy/>.

In addition to giving effect to the Waste Strategy, improvements will be made to existing legislation. At this stage a draft Bill is expected to be introduced into the house by early 2024, with the government aiming to have the legislation enacted in 2025.

While the exact content of new legislation is not known, Cabinet has made many decisions through policy advice including Cabinet papers, which are available on MfE's website. New legislation is expected to:

- Improve compliance, monitoring and enforcement,
- Improve powers to control products and materials (e.g. product bans, environmental performance standards),
- Provide clear responsibilities for central and local government, and
- Improve how the waste industry operates.

A Cabinet paper<sup>25</sup> released under the Official Information Act 1982 states that “the new legislation will not make significant changes to existing local government roles and responsibilities”. However, the same paper acknowledges that territorial authorities are “of course able to do much more [than their minimum obligations] if they have capacity” and notes that “the wider waste work programme ... will require territorial authorities to expand their current role and service provisions”.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Under the existing legislation, WMMPs are required to ‘have regard to’ the Waste Strategy. The Minister for the Environment has recommended that the new legislation strengthens the role of the Waste Strategy by stating that WMMPs ‘**must align**’ with the Waste Strategy. As local councils come to refresh their WMMPs, these will need close alignment to the Waste Strategy.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

The legislative reform will require councils to undertake more waste-related monitoring and compliance activity, including in relation to the waste disposal levy. Councils may not be able to accurately allocate resource for this in their 2024-34 LTPs (as the new legislation is not expected to be passed until 2025), however councils need to be aware of the possible need to do so in future LTPs and Annual Plans.

## 9.3 Waste Disposal Levy

The waste disposal levy (the ‘levy’) is collected by MfE on waste disposed of at landfills, and then re-distributed to councils, as well as to the contestable MfE-administered Waste Minimisation Fund. Councils are expected to use the levy funding they receive, for local spending on waste minimisation activity. In 2019, the government decided to increase the price of the levy and apply it to a broader range of landfills over the period 2021–2024.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Councils’ LTP allocations for waste services and infrastructure will be able to rely on an increased level of funding in the coming few years due to the levy going up. Councils should recognise however, that they will still need to draw from other funding sources (notably rates revenue) to carry out their waste-related functions.

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<sup>25</sup> See page 13 of paper here: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/cabinet-papers-seeking-policy-decisions-on-the-content-of-new-waste-legislation/>.

## 9.4 National ERP Waste

In 2019, 94 per cent of waste emissions were biogenic methane – largely generated by the decomposition of organic waste (such as, food, garden, wood, and paper waste)<sup>26</sup>.

The Emissions Reduction Plan's waste chapter sets the goal of a 40 per cent reduction in methane by 2035 relative to 2017 levels. Actions in the chapter include:

- Exploring bans or limits to divert more organic waste from landfill; and
- Increasing the capture of gas from (organic material decomposing at) landfills.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Several councils around New Zealand have initiated kerbside collection of organics (green and food waste) in recent years. As this is one of the primary mechanisms for diverting such waste from landfill and reducing emissions, there is likely to be a higher impetus on other councils to adopt these collections. Councils should be prepared to investigate and resource this. For example, they may wish to set aside some funding for trials or pilot studies of organics collections.

## 9.5 Circular Economy and Bio-economy Strategy

Chapter 9 of New Zealand's ERP is on Circular Economy & Bioeconomy. A key action within that chapter is to 'commence a circular economy and bioeconomy strategy'. Within the first emissions budget period, government will start the work needed to deliver this strategy. This will align with the Waste Strategy's vision and principles and will include:

- Consideration of the skills, investment and innovation need to achieve a circular and bioeconomy, and
- Consideration of how Māori could shape and benefit from this transition.

### Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Climate strategies and plans should recognise that local government will have a leadership role in connecting the different stakeholders (e.g. iwi, industry, small business) with an interest in a future circular economy system. Local government is well-placed to be 'connecting agency' because of the work it already carries out with these various stakeholders.

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Councils should carefully consider investments they may be making now in waste infrastructure and systems. Investments not compatible with circular economy (and future bioeconomy) principles might no longer be suitable. The government's waste and circular economy work programme will encourage collaboration between councils to explore and implement regional services and infrastructure. LTPs should consider how councils might partner on this issue.

## 10 Social Wellbeing Reforms

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### 10.1 Equitable Transitions Strategy

The Equitable Transitions Strategy, still in development, is designed to ensure that New Zealand's transition to a low-emission future (the 'transition') is fair and inclusive. This is being co-led by MBIE (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment) and MSD (Ministry of Social Development).

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<sup>26</sup> Emissions Reduction Plan, p295.

The strategy aspires toward a transition that supports those in need and minimises disruption and social inequities. It seeks to address challenges and opportunities including:

- How the transition will impact jobs,
- Impacts on household costs,
- Changes for rural communities,
- Creation of new industries, and
- Fairness and accessibility (e.g. making public more accessible).

The draft strategy was due to be published in June 2023. However, MBIE has delayed the work and is now reconsidering the scope and timeline of the draft Strategy.

Local councils are uniquely placed that have a good understanding of the groups in their jurisdictions that may face challenges and/or opportunities from the transition to a low-emission future. As such, local government will be an integral stakeholder in the development of the Strategy.

Current and future council planning should recognise and provide for fair and equitable change. For example, spatial or economic development strategies that identify areas for housing or business development, should also consider how marginalised or vulnerable groups could partake in or benefit from such development.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Climate strategies should include a 'fair and equitable transition' as a key underpinning principle. Climate strategies and plans should also be accessible to all members of a community (for example, braille or large print/easy read).

### ➤ Actions for 2024-34 LTPs

Councils should allocate resources to engaging with the full spectrum of interest groups in their regions, including those groups who may not always be reached by traditional channels such as formal public consultation. An example might be sending a council engagement team to meet face-to-face with those living in remote parts of a district, who may lack access to the internet or find it difficult to travel to public meetings in urban areas.

## 10.2 Health and Disability Reform

Aotearoa's health and disability system has transformed to support all New Zealanders to live longer and have the best possible quality of life. The government announced a major transformation of New Zealand's health and disability system in April 2021. Driving this change were inequitable outcomes, limited national planning and insufficient focus on primary/community care.

The **Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act** subsequently took effect on 1 July 2022, establishing four new entities. These are the public health agency; Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand; Te Aka Whai Ora – Māori Health Authority; and Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.

The 'locality approach' is a cornerstone of the new system. This approach involves reorganising primary and community care to serve communities based on local priorities and needs.

## Considerations for climate change strategies, policies, and plans

Climate change will have effects on New Zealanders' health – for example<sup>27</sup>:

- Extreme heat is linked to heart-related illness and death, cardiovascular failure,

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/default.htm>.

- Storms and flooding are expected to displace people and damage property, leading to impacts upon mental health and wider community cohesion,
- Air pollution can result in asthma and cardiovascular disease, and
- Increasing allergies can result in respiratory allergies and asthma.

These health-related effects can also impact New Zealanders' ability to be fully productive in their employment, representing a potentially detrimental flow-on impact to the economy.

Climate strategies and plans should recognise these impacts and put in place measures to mitigate adverse impacts, while recognising the potential positive impacts of climate change (such as the ability to grow a wider variety of crops in certain areas).

## 11 Conclusion

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This report has assessed key central government policy and legislative changes that impact upon local government, from a climate change perspective. It has highlighted key policy areas for local government to take note of, and commented on how local climate strategies and LTPs can recognise and respond to the changes.

For several reform areas, there are mandatory steps that councils must take to comply with the relevant policy or legislation. In addition, there are actions that councils should undertake to respond to climate change responsibly and proactively (Many councils have stand-alone climate change strategies for their organisations, districts, cities, or regions. A key takeaway from this work is that responding to climate change requires a holistic and integrated approach. This means climate change cannot be considered in isolation and needs to be a key consideration which influences **all** strategic, operational and project decisions and cuts across all aspects of a council's business.

Table 1 of this report summarises 'must do' and 'should do' actions).

Across the various policy reform areas, we have also identified six cross-cutting themes for councils to consider and progress:

1. Give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and embed te ao Māori, including mātauranga Māori.
2. Consider role of land use and spatial planning as tools to tackle climate change adaptation and mitigation.
3. Integrate climate change into policy decisions and infrastructure design.
4. Better understand and communicate climate information and climate risk.
5. Work with partners and the community to embed climate change adaptation and mitigation decisions.
6. Improve capacity and capability across the sector to proactively manage climate risk and deliver on the various changes.

This report demonstrates that responding to climate change needs to be integrated throughout all areas of a council's strategy and operations. It hopes to provide information that councils can usefully draw from as they make changes to better prepare their communities for a changing climate.

Further climate change policy reform is likely due to an incoming National-led Government following the General Election in October 2013. It is intended that this report will be reviewed in 2024.



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These are in addition to the legislation discussed in this report.

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# A

## Appendix A – Climate Policy Mapping Workshop Summaries

## Appendix A: Climate Legislative & Policy Changes Workshop Data

This is a collation of feedback from a series of workshops related to the various topic areas. Attendees were staff from Beca Ltd, Local Government New Zealand, Whakatāne District Council and Northland Regional Council. The purpose of these sessions was to consider the impact the reforms would have on local government generally, considerations for a council's climate change strategy (if they have one), and considerations for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. The tables below reflect a summarised and prioritised list of comments as well as the main themes discussed in each session.

### Workshop #1: LGOIMA, Emergency Management Bill, Severe Weather Legislation

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to improve understanding of natural hazards and climate risks at a spatial / property level.</li> <li>• There is a risk with increased weather events more people will be pulled out of BAU to work in recovery.</li> <li>• Need for improved data and portals/platforms for sharing data, GIS / digital tools.</li> <li>• Role of prevention in planning decisions - how do we ensure emergency management considerations form part of planning decision?</li> <li>• Greater demand on resourcing during events and following recovery - potential to combine resources across TAs/regions?</li> <li>• Greater focus on pre-event recovery plans.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed climate resilience in council strategies.</li> <li>• Collaboration with critical infrastructure providers (e.g. ports/airports, telecoms etc).</li> <li>• Work with LIM function to ensure common communication terminology/ plain English descriptions of risk.</li> <li>• Draw explicit links to CDEM/emergency management.</li> <li>• Apply learnings from past emergency events in producing LoS maintenance of council functions in future events.</li> <li>• Proactive planning for recovery and relocation.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to resource and fund parcel level risk assessments/data collection.</li> <li>• Consider the need for additional emergency management capacity, sharing services across local government .</li> <li>• Embed climate resilience in LTP planning, particularly through infrastructure and asset planning.</li> <li>• Contingency funding for unknown events - balanced with affordability.</li> <li>• TA's need a joined-up approach with regional councils over provision of natural hazard information for LIMs.</li> <li>• Funding to supporting marae preparedness plans.</li> <li>• Increased number of dedicated recovery roles.</li> <li>• Consider capacity and resourcing to include plain English information around natural hazards on LIMs.</li> <li>• Staff training required to summarise climate impacts on LIMs.</li> </ul>

## Workshop #1 (continued): RM Reforms

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerations in the Acts are mandated, but how to apply these is not, communities will need to develop their own plans.</li> <li>• Councils will need to apply DAPP (guidance is currently being developed).</li> <li>• The CAA will give us tools to remove communities from vulnerable areas. Will need to identify areas that need more detailed adaptation planning.</li> <li>• Changes through SPA will take a while to flow through to a District level.</li> <li>• Need to better understand financing of adaptation, some costs will fall on ratepayers, how do we plan for it.</li> <li>• Need to give effect to the principles of te Tiriti, incorporate te ao Māori, Mātauranga Māori. How to better understand iwi / hapu long-term plans.</li> <li>• Will need to understand the link between existing LGA mechanisms and new Acts e.g. infrastructure planning.</li> <li>• Risk based approaches need to be reflected spatially. Currently we only map hazards.</li> <li>• Consistency between districts/cities will be needed. May need to explore shared services to make small budgets go further.</li> <li>• Need clear decision-making frameworks (avoid 'locking in' investment decisions which have a negative impact).</li> <li>• Seems unclear at this stage where responsibilities will lie regional councils vs TA's.</li> <li>• Councils will need to balance competing demands (e.g. housing affordability/climate risk).</li> <li>• There is a clear mandate for emission reductions. How do we bring Emissions reduction actions into both NBA plan and spatial plan.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal staff awareness may be a priority focus. Governance and leadership understanding, awareness and buy in is critical.</li> <li>• Climate strategies need to influence regional spatial strategies.</li> <li>• Greater engagement with different groups within Te Ao Māori. Need to incorporate a Te Ao Māori worldview.</li> <li>• Need to empower communities especially in adaptation planning and implementation. Make sure they are well-informed.</li> <li>• KPIs and performance measures to enable adaptive approaches.</li> <li>• Strategy needs to be flexible to provide for changing priorities of changing governments.</li> <li>• Climate strategies need to filter through all decisions throughout the organisation, particularly infrastructure decisions.</li> <li>• Embed climate projections into work e.g. all asset management plans aligning with sea level rise projections.</li> <li>• Understand how a changing climate will affect our economic development strategies. Are there any new land uses to plan for.</li> <li>• Need to factor these reforms into local adaptation strategies/community adaptation plans over the next 3 years.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to better understand financing of adaptation, some costs will fall on ratepayers, what does this look like, and how do we plan for it (acknowledging it's difficult to accurately budget in the climate adaptation space, as so much is still unknown).</li> <li>• Incorporating climate change projections, resilience and mitigation into asset management plans and infrastructure strategies.</li> <li>• Invest in local government capacity to respond to these changes. Increased investment to understand climate change risks.</li> <li>• Consider how to share resources across councils / other agencies. Particularly accessible climate information.</li> <li>• Consider a targeted rate for climate action (like Auckland Council).</li> <li>• Consider funding for iwi / hapu to contribute to processes.</li> <li>• Challenge to balance cost implications of climate action compared to other priorities, in a time of economic hardship.</li> <li>• Central government funding likely influenced by reforms (e.g. Waka Kotahi), so councils will need to consider how they comply.</li> <li>• Infrastructure provision for communities identified as 'at risk' and where longer-term discussions around managed relocation occurring means that design of infrastructure may be different (shorter design life, for example).</li> <li>• Whole of life cost is important for decisions - need to think about costs of climate change on maintenance activities and levels of service.</li> </ul>

## Workshop #1 (continued): National Adaptation Plan (NAP)

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The actions in NAP will impact on pretty much all council functions in some form e.g., food resilience strategy will impact on economic development strategy, Waka Kotahi resilience strategy will have impact on transport/procurement.</li> <li>• Hopefully clearer accountability around statutory roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• A culture change required. Will need political buy-in to any decisions.</li> <li>• The next version of the NAP likely to be more specific to local government, businesses, industry, etc.</li> <li>• Consider how you might apply the NAP to a regional / local level. Goals set out on p23 of the NAP (reduce vulnerability to impacts of CC, enhance adaptive capacity and consider CC in decisions at all levels, strengthen resilience).</li> <li>• Need for improved data and portals/platforms for sharing data, GIS / digital tools.</li> <li>• Role of prevention in planning decisions - how do we ensure emergency management considerations form part of planning decision?</li> <li>• Consider more temporary or moveable infrastructure in higher risk areas, we need more innovative infrastructure design.</li> <li>• Need to start identifying potential places for communities/infrastructure to retreat to in spatial strategies.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to draw alignment to National Adaptation Plan and National Emissions Reduction Plan.</li> <li>• Need strategic alignment between LTP, CCA and spatial plan.</li> <li>• Maladaptation, need to avoid perverse outcomes.</li> <li>• Use various guidance provided, such as socio-economic pathway projections, MfE coastal guidance, DAPP guidance.</li> <li>• Embed climate resilience in council strategies.</li> <li>• Upskilling of staff to better understand climate change.</li> <li>• Improved understanding, monitoring, and reporting climate risks.</li> <li>• Leverage existing reporting mechanisms e.g. performance measures.</li> <li>• Need consistent decision making, clear and measurable objectives, metrics, indicators relating to climate resilience.</li> <li>• Build in a review process to evolve with changes.</li> <li>• Being aware of pending changes and new case law to inform policy thinking and process mapping.</li> <li>• Communicating urgency without scaring people. Needs to be a collaborative process - taking community on the journey.</li> <li>• Embedding across the whole organisation (internally) and getting the buy-in externally.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant investment in council capacity and capability is needed in this space.</li> <li>• Embed climate resilience in LTP planning, particularly through infrastructure and asset planning.</li> <li>• Combined risk assessment with key agencies such as WK, Kainga Ora, Ministry of Education (schools) etc.</li> <li>• Consider all LTP projects against climate objectives (put through a decision-making framework).</li> <li>• DAPP resourcing - needs a comms/engagement and DAPP specialist – comms/engagement often available in-house, DAPP usually needs outsourcing at least first time around.</li> </ul>

## Workshop #2: Transport

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant change to smaller centres as a result of VKT.</li> <li>• Investment in EV charging stations required.</li> <li>• Regional Spatial Strategies need to align with GPS.</li> <li>• Increased parking fines and congestion charging have diminishing returns, so will need long term stable funding options.</li> <li>• Funding of climate resilience will require new funding sources.</li> <li>• Will place pressure on new housing developments to be close to main centres.</li> <li>• Impact on spatial planning and placemaking -- will need to ensure that land use and transport are integrated in RSSs.</li> <li>• Investment in community engagement will be required.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will transport changes affect overall emissions - e.g. VKT and carbon reduction inter-play.</li> <li>• Council climate strategies may be very similar between districts/city, look for opportunities to deliver actions jointly.</li> <li>• Embed the Emissions Reduction Plan targets with Action Plans.</li> <li>• Ensure a VKT focus within actions - set targets.</li> <li>• Align to funding opportunities to help pay for actions.</li> <li>• Strategies will need to identify resources needed to meet legislative targets and reporting requirements.</li> <li>• How to support council decision making where there are conflicts (e.g. housing supply vs reducing emissions) – need a clear decision-making framework with priorities.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited understanding of climate resilience issues means this is unlikely to have major impacts within the next LTP cycle.</li> <li>• Increased political awareness of the scale and scope of transport climate change challenges.</li> <li>• How much funding will come from the different sources and how to plan for this in LTPs?</li> <li>• Need increased capacity and capability. Especially training for climate decision making and resilience.</li> <li>• How to balance need/desire to achieve targets with affordability given social demographic challenges</li> <li>• There can be conflicts prioritising funding of mitigation vs adaptation. Invest in win-win projects.</li> </ul>



### Workshop #3: Water Reform

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Waters reform requires regional engagement on water services.</li> <li>• Need to integrate the new water entities with TA spatial planning.</li> <li>• Need to work with new entities on climate goals - may be a challenge if sustainability / climate is priority 4 of 5.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to use highly treated wastewater rather than just discharge it.</li> <li>• Where does stormwater planning, and decision-making sit after reform, particularly as a tool for resilience?</li> <li>• Cost of projected upgrades combined with disaster recovery and CC adaptation is worrying.</li> <li>• Local Govt need to be influencers in this space - new skills and approaches required.</li> <li>• Communication and coordination with WSEs and RPCs will be critical -- time and resource will be needed to maintain these relationships.</li> <li>• Need to prioritise investment - risk of delays due to vast amount of investment needed and knowing where to start.</li> <li>• Need to research and understand assimilative capacity of receiving waters to stormwater and wastewater with climate change in mind.</li> <li>• Need to understand the requirements under NES and adjust levels of service related to this.</li> <li>• Need to understand what Te Mana o Te Wai means at the local level. This will not just be for the Water Entity to give effect to.</li> <li>• Understand interdependencies with other critical infrastructure -- need to look at whole system e.g. where power plants are consented, who much capacity they have.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC Strategy needs to recognise water reforms. Need to better understand the link between three waters and climate change.</li> <li>• Look closely at all 3 Waters consents (takes/discharges) and see how they could be better joined up to reduce their impacts.</li> <li>• For climate strategies make sure you take a system-wide view e.g. the whole water + wastewater network not just individual assets.</li> <li>• Wastewater is a major source of emissions, need to consider targets related to this.</li> <li>• Work alongside the new Water Service Entities to plan for climate change impacts.</li> <li>• There is a lack of focus in Water Services Act to drive climate reduction initiatives. This may require advocacy and direction from councils.</li> <li>• With asset renewals look to improve the assets with climate change challenges not just replace.</li> <li>• Te Mana o Te Wai is important here. Council should work purposefully with iwi and others.</li> <li>• Ensure priority areas identified by WSE's are also reflected in climate change strategies.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2026 the Water Entities will have taken effect. Differing political agendas shouldn't constrain 3 waters planning or asset renewals.</li> <li>• Further delays to implementation will have debt servicing impacts and delivering service.</li> <li>• It's hard to prioritise and plan for a long-term infrastructure activity with reform looming.</li> <li>• Difficulty separating/untangling with other council infrastructure projects especially where there are interdependencies.</li> <li>• Staffing levels and funding in first two years not compatible with WSE structures.</li> <li>• Need to plan for new requirements and alignment with WSEs.</li> <li>• Need to have a clear plan for the first two years and then also what happens once the transition occurs.</li> <li>• Uncertainty and nature of changes will influence assumptions for LTPs.</li> <li>• Need to consider whether the NPS/NES changes in expectations and regulations are appropriately resourced.</li> <li>• Stay agile - 3 waters reform may stall under a new Govt.</li> </ul>

## Workshop #4: Carbon Reduction and Sustainability

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) will affect services and operations, e.g., in waste emphasis on organics and construction wastes landfill bans.</li> <li>• Climate related financial disclosures may become compulsory for Local Government, makes sense to prepare for this.</li> <li>• Local Govt are / could be strong influencers to reduce carbon footprints across the various sectors within our communities.</li> <li>• Need more information on emissions – e.g. regional/city emissions and inclusive of all infrastructure spending.</li> <li>• Councils have been given actions in ERP to support, but limited resources. There doesn't seem to be much collaboration in this space.</li> <li>• Even if external funding is available, resource is needed to complete the funding application process.</li> <li>• The national Energy Strategy will hopefully help enable councils achieve objectives around carbon reduction.</li> <li>• We will likely start to see some testing of the 'have regard to' clauses through judicial reviews etc. This will impact council decision-making.</li> <li>• We don't have many levers to directly reduce emissions reduction in our communities.</li> <li>• There isn't much funding available to implement some of the big changes required. For example, replacing gas boilers.</li> <li>• Greater requirements for transparently showing the carbon impacts of council decisions and investments.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support is needed with measuring and reporting. If we include carbon emissions as part of metric to choose projects, we need to be able to measure life cycle emissions.</li> <li>• Need to develop capacity and capability strategy for climate/carbon reduction. Both to upskill current staff and increase the number of dedicated climate reduction/adaptation staff.</li> <li>• Would be great to have a structure that provides for greater collaboration across District/City/Regional Councils.</li> <li>• Climate strategies need to be more externally focused. Align to Climate Related Disclosures.</li> <li>• Strategies should have clear guidance for staff.</li> <li>• A mātauranga Māori holistic approach will offer opportunities.</li> <li>• Is there an opportunity to align carbon reporting across Local Govt, e.g. Toitū.</li> <li>• Procurement strategy needs to align. This involves working with suppliers to provide us with the information we need. We use local (and therefore smaller) companies, but they may not have resource to keep up with changes. Could be a conflict with social procurement practices.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of the actions in ERP1 require delivery by local government -- e.g. public transport, land use, consenting, waste. This will have budget and capacity impacts that are exacerbated by other budgetary pressures.</li> <li>• LTPs need to include sufficient funding /resourcing – some of this is still unknown.</li> <li>• Challenge of taking a meaningful 'whole of life' carbon cost for projects in LTP.</li> <li>• Carbon emissions of potential of projects needs to be prioritised. How do we make emissions reduction matter as much as cost?</li> <li>• Getting community on board with investing in low carbon options. Also, council should not be responsible for everything.</li> <li>• Need to provide for emissions reduction considerations in our asset programmes.</li> <li>• Hopefully 'having regard to' is strong enough to ensure adequate weighting applied by councils in decision-making process for LTPs.</li> <li>• Need for transparency to rate payers is the investment going to reduce emissions (embodied and operational).</li> </ul>

## Workshop #5: Waste

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid waste is no longer just dealing with waste now also circular thinking.</li> <li>• Changes in overall aims, operations, and services.</li> <li>• Significant changes to waste management practices offer opportunities - have we got a good understanding of what the opportunities are?</li> <li>• Need clear definition of roles and responsibilities between Local Govt, Central Govt, Industry, Community, and Iwi.</li> <li>• Shift to collaborative service delivery models - other councils, community orgs.</li> <li>• Need to consider long term strategy even in short term infrastructure spend.</li> <li>• Uncertainty in waste policy development makes it hard to make decisions.</li> <li>• Need to manage new, current and old assets in a way that makes them resilient to climate impacts.</li> <li>• Increased responsibilities in compliance/enforcement.</li> <li>• Data, data, data - how will councils collect, share and use data, as well as protect data sovereignty.</li> <li>• More equitable funding is required.</li> <li>• What services are not currently being provided that will need to be provided (organic kerbside for example).</li> <li>• Leadership role with our own contractors/providers - encouraging/demanding waste reduction and circular economy.</li> <li>• Regional spatial strategies could present good opportunity to think about waste infrastructure from a regional perspective.</li> <li>• Council needs to consider its role in education on the impacts of consumer behaviour.</li> <li>• Thinking internally about what we buy, how we use it and then how we dispose of it or otherwise.</li> <li>• What waste infrastructure (namely historical contaminated sites) might be impacted in the future and how do we protect and clean these up.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WWMPs MUST align with the national Waste Strategy. May require strong leadership from staff to elected members to get necessary traction.</li> <li>• Can we design with flexibility?</li> <li>• Need to look at disestablished landfills/contaminated sites in adaptation.</li> <li>• Align WMMPs with climate strategies and regional spatial strategies. Inform Waste Action plan to align with national direction (and mandates).</li> <li>• Thinking about whole of life/cradle to grave with all of our actions.</li> <li>• Building Act Waste plans need resourcing.</li> <li>• Circular economy is not just waste related, it's a system change that is needed across council and wider.</li> <li>• Need to consider role of mana whenua / iwi.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to determine who will fund regional infrastructure in the future (i.e. a new materials recovery facility or organic processing plant (if needed)).</li> <li>• We need to work collaboratively with other councils, particularly the regional council.</li> <li>• Service delivery and asset management planning. Including thinking about adaptation and things like vulnerability of closed landfills, etc.</li> <li>• Additional funding will be required. The LTP should flag key milestones and respective timing. LTP comes before AIP which we need to action.</li> <li>• What roles does community play, particularly in repair, reuse, etc facilities.</li> <li>• Consider where new infrastructure should be located to minimise risks / improve resilience to climate change.</li> <li>• Kerbside standardisation, container return scheme, etc, will require resourcing and effect services operations.</li> <li>• Increase in data/reporting and compliance/enforcement which will need resourcing.</li> <li>• Engagement of wider stakeholders (industry, businesses, communities, mana whenua).</li> <li>• Circular economy is across all of council, not just waste, so don't put CE budget all under the waste team.</li> </ul>

## Workshop #6: Social Impacts and Mātauranga Māori

Topic	Feedback
How will these changes impact local government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable transition, opportunity for people to retrain in new, low emissions industries, including roles within Local Govt.</li> <li>• Regional and district spatial planning needs to include an equity lens.</li> <li>• Councils need to find ways to interact with vulnerable communities more effectively.</li> <li>• Efforts for inclusiveness in comms and engagement plans.</li> <li>• Align with local Future Development Strategies and with local economic development plans.</li> <li>• Relationship building is key, and then, how can local government help support (where appropriate) others particularly iwi partners.</li> <li>• To ensure equitable transition, need to ensure education so everyone knows how. This could be a role for councils.</li> <li>• Equitable transition strategy will likely impact other Local Govt strategies, e.g. economic development strategies.</li> <li>• Allocate resources to engagement and consultation in this space. Also build a partnership with Ministry of Social Development.</li> <li>• Councils play a role in facilitating collaboration.</li> </ul>
How do climate change strategies and plans need to evolve to cater for this changing policy landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils could seek to join up with the new Pae Ora agencies.</li> <li>• Supporting community to access funding to initiatives through information. For example, energy transition (gas to electric). Especially when we have to compete with other regions for one pot of money.</li> <li>• Plans need to be adaptable to changing circumstances.</li> <li>• Ensure accessibility of all material to ensure all can access/learn etc.</li> <li>• Just transition should be a key principle of a climate strategy.</li> <li>• Actions for collaboration with iwi partners (as appropriate).</li> <li>• Ensure actions support those most effective and most vulnerable. Try to be as inclusive as possible.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities to include a mātauranga Māori framework or measures in the climate strategy. Involve mana whenua in this.</li> </ul>
How might these changes impact your 2024-34 Long Term Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTP needs to recognise levels of uncertainty exist around new legislation and Govt's expectations of LG's roles in relation to the pending changes.</li> <li>• Positive geared opportunities to concentrate and focus on Iwi Partnership as an outcome. Do it together, define it together.</li> <li>• Need funding for hapu partnerships both to internally upskill but also to support the mahi, given this is often done on a voluntary basis.</li> <li>• Manaakitanga is many things to Māori that go beyond just care and is geared from a "You before me" ethos. Therefore, a paradigm shift away from what's in it for me to what's in it for you.</li> <li>• Consider rerouting council effort in dollar terms to shifting these dollars to Māori communities.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate resourcing for collaboration and relationship building.</li> <li>• Exploring treaty house model for engagement, i.e. defining separately the outcomes then coming together to find the middle ground.</li> <li>• Link to infrastructure strategy - making sure infrastructure is built to withstand natural hazards but also accessible to all.</li> <li>• Council playing a leadership role to enable just transition, through programmes, infrastructure, collaboration etc.</li> <li>• Central and Local Government responses need to be complementary.</li> </ul>