



**I give notice that
an Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on:**

Date:	Tuesday, 24 June 2025
Time:	10.30am
Location:	Council Chamber Level 1, 67 Horomātangi Street Taupō

AGENDA

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson Mayor David Trewavas
Deputy Chairperson Cr Kevin Taylor

Members

- Cr Duncan Campbell
- Cr Karam Fletcher
- Cr Sandra Greenslade
- Cr Kylie Leonard
- Cr Danny Loughlin
- Cr Christine Rankin
- Cr Rachel Shepherd
- Cr Kirsty Trueman
- Cr Yvonne Westerman
- Cr John Williamson

Quorum 7

**Julie Gardyne
Chief Executive**

Order Of Business

- 1 **Karakia**
- 2 **Whakapāha | Apologies**
- 3 **Ngā Whakapānga Tukituki | Conflicts of Interest**
- 4 **Whakamanatanga O Ngā Meneti | Confirmation of Minutes**
 Nil
- 5 **Ngā Kaupapa Here Me Ngā Whakataunga | Policy and Decision Making**
 - 5.1 Local Water Done Well - Hearings and Deliberations on Future Water Services
 Delivery Model3
- 6 **Ngā Kōrero Tūmataiti | Confidential Business**
 Nil

5.1 LOCAL WATER DONE WELL - HEARINGS AND DELIBERATIONS ON FUTURE WATER SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

Author: Joanne Walton, Programme Manager

Authorised by: Tony Hale, General Manager Community Infrastructure and Services

TE PŪTAKE | PURPOSE

The purpose is for Council to:

- Receive submissions from the public consultation on Council's Local Water Done Well proposal for the future delivery of water services
- Hear from those who wish to present their submission to Council
- Deliberate on feedback from public consultation
- Decide on a delivery model for future water service delivery in Taupō District, as a key component of our Water Services Delivery Plan, which is legislated under the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act.
- Give direction to the Chief Executive on whether to sign the Waikato Waters¹ Shareholders' Agreement

Officer advice and recommendations in this report have been provided in advance of the hearings process. There is the potential that any new information received during the hearings process may cause officers to review this advice.

WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA MATUA | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 requires councils to deliver a Water Services Delivery Plan to the Minister for Local Government by 3 September 2025. A key part of this Plan is selection of a future water services delivery model that is financially sustainable and will deliver good quality outcomes for the community.

Council officers have undertaken significant analysis to compare our current state and the available options, and based on this information and direction from Council, have recommended that the preferred option is to keep water services inhouse for now, with a review in 2027. An inhouse business unit meets the financial, investment and revenue sufficiency tests laid out in the legislation. This option is the lowest risk currently and allows for future flexibility. It retains the benefits of local priorities, elected member accountability and minimised financial risk.

Consultation shows the public is generally supportive of this pragmatic approach, with 74% supporting our preferred option. It is recommended that Council adopts the preferred option to keep water services inhouse for our Water Services Delivery Plan.

It is important to note that the inhouse business unit model will require changes from the status quo to ensure we meet the legislative requirements. These include ensuring the financial systems between water and rest of Council are fully separated; separation of planning activities from Council; reviewing the governance model for water services; and preparing for the scrutiny of economic regulation which will take effect in 2026.

To maintain flexibility in our future available options, Council has remained party to the modelling and planning of a Waikato Waters entity. Negotiations have culminated in special terms for Taupō incorporated into the Shareholders' Agreement. The terms laid out are favourable for Taupō District, with no financial cost or guarantees while a Stage 1 shareholder, a shared service agreement to be negotiated by July 2026, and maintaining a future path to joining with a final decision not required until 2030. Existing termination clauses are maintained. It is recommended that Council directs the Chief Executive to sign this Shareholders Agreement on these terms.

¹ Waikato Waters Limited is the Name of Company as agreed in the final Shareholders' Agreement. Throughout the evolution of the workstream, this group has been referred to variously as Waikato Water, Waikato Waters, Waikato Water Done Well and WWDW. For clarity in this report the term Waikato Waters has been used throughout, even when quoting historical references that used other names.

NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA | RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:

1. Receives the submissions from public consultation on Council's Local Water Done Well proposal for the future delivery of water services.
2. Accepts late submissions numbers 214 – 215.
3. Hears from submitters 7, 8, 30, 57, 81, 103, 135, 151 who wish to present their submission to Council.
4. Adopts for its Water Services Delivery Plan the future delivery model of keeping water services inhouse for now.
5. Directs the Chief Executive to sign the Waikato Waters Shareholders' Agreement, including the special terms relating to the Taupō District as a Stage 1 shareholder without an agreed transfer date.
6. Approves:
 - i. the incorporation of Waikato Waters Limited with Taupō District Council being a shareholder of that company; and
 - ii. the Shareholders' Agreement and Constitution for Waikato Waters Limited, as attached as appendices ("Incorporation Documents")
7. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive on behalf of Council to approve non-material amendments to the Incorporation Documents prior to Waikato Waters Limited being incorporated.

TE WHAKAMAHUKI | BACKGROUND

The Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 requires councils to review their current delivery model for water services, and compare against at least one alternative option, such as a single or multi-council controlled organisation. A decision on delivery model, and subsequent submission of a completed Water Services Delivery Plan, is due to the Minister for Local Government by 3 September 2025.

The requirements and options have been presented to Council at the following workshops and Council meetings:

- 14 Mar 2024 and 20 June 2024 – Workshops – Local Water Done Well Briefings
- 27 Aug 2024 – Council resolution directing the Chief Executive to negotiate a Heads of Agreement with other participating Councils
- 26 Nov 2024 – Workshop – Local Water Done Well Options and Waikato Waters Heads of Agreement proposal
- 10 Dec 2024 – Council resolution to sign a Heads of Agreement with six other Waikato Councils (Resolution TDC202412/07)
- 18 Feb 2025 - Workshop - Analysis of options to date
- 18 Mar 2025 – Workshop - Waikato Waters presentation
- 3 April 2025 – Workshops – Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) presentation and inhouse business model option
- 29 April 2025 – Council meeting to decide preferred option for public consultation

In December 2024 Council directed the Chief Executive to sign the Heads of Agreement with Waikato Water Done Well. This gave chief executives the mandate to co-design the Waikato Water model. Taupō District has participated throughout this process over the last six months which has culminated in the attached final Shareholders' Agreement.

At the 29 April 2025 Council meeting the following resolutions were made (resolution TDC202504/03):

That Council

1. Approves for public consultation under the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act the following options for water services delivery in Taupō District into the future
 - a. Option 1 – Enhanced Inhouse Business Unit . Under this option
 - Council continues to deliver water services, own all assets, and make all decisions.
 - Position is reviewed in two years.
 - Council joins Waikato Water as a limited shareholder to procure shared services, and only if the benefits of this shareholding outweigh any costs

AND

- b. Option 2 –Multi Council Controlled Water Organisation – Waikato Waters. Under this option
 - Taupō partners with other Waikato councils to form a multi-council controlled water organisation
 - New entity would deliver all water and wastewater services
 - Taupō District Council is a shareholder
 - An independent, professional board governs the CCO
 - Assets and debt would be transferred to the new entity
 - Stormwater assets remain with Taupō District Council, with Waikato Waters contracted to deliver stormwater services

AND

- c. Option 3 – Single Council Controlled Water Organisation – Taupō Water. Under this option
 - A sole Taupō District Council Controlled organisation would be established to deliver water services
 - Taupō District Council would be the sole shareholder and appoint an independent, professional board to govern the CCO
2. Approves for consultation the preferred option as Option 1 – Enhanced Inhouse Business Unit.
3. Approves for consultation a specific question around joining Waikato Waters as a limited shareholder only, for the purposes of procuring shared services, and only if the benefits of this shareholding outweigh any costs.
4. Approves the consultation documentation to be included as supporting information for the public consultation (attached).

Following the resolutions, public consultation has occurred from 30 April to 29 May.

NGĀ KŌRERORERO | DISCUSSION

Submissions

As required by the Government's Local Water Done Well Reform [[Local Government \(Water Services Preliminary Arrangements\) Act 2024](#) refers], Council publicly consulted on a proposal to retain water services within Taupō District Council, with two alternative options proposed: joining a new regional water joint council-controlled organisation (Waikato Waters), or setting up a district council-controlled water organisation.

Consultation ran over the period 30 April – 29 May 2025. The summary of submissions is:

- 220 submissions received
- 74% in favour of the preferred option (keep water services inhouse for now)
- Submitters were asked to choose which statements they most agreed with or considered most important. The top statements were: That we have invested in our assets and should keep control of them (64%); Accountability (56%); and Performance (that Council has done a good job – 50%).

- The top concerns were increasing costs (60%) and local voice (44%).
- For the second decision, do you support joining Waikato Water as a limited shareholder only, for the purposes of procuring shared services, and only if the benefits of this shareholding outweigh any costs, the responses were 43% support, 24% against, 28% unsure, 5% did not answer.

A detailed submission report, including the submissions in full, is attached.

Waikato Waters Negotiations

Between the signing of the Heads of Agreement by seven councils in December 2024, and public consultation in recent months, all six other Waikato councils² have made decisions to consult on Waikato Waters as their preferred option. They also indicated they would go straight to Stage 2 – full transfer of water services delivery and assets to the entity, over a time period from 1 July 2026 to 1 July 2027.

In recognition of the role of Taupō District Council as a founding council in Waikato Waters, negotiations have laid out specific terms for Taupō District as a Stage 1 Shareholder. These terms largely align with the Heads of Agreement that was entered into by the participating councils in December 2024.

The conditions, agreed in principle between chief executives and negotiated in good faith, are generally considered to be favourable to all parties. The broad agreement is that Taupō District:

- Joins as Stage 1 shareholder with no agreed transfer date or commitment to transition to Stage 2 (asset transfer)
- Retains ability to influence as a shareholding council of Waikato Waters during establishment phase (noting that Stage 1 shares will be non-voting)
- Negotiates the details of a shared services agreement by 1 July 2026, with an agreement to be in place by 1 July 2027
- Retains the right to become a Stage 2 Shareholder without incurring any entry contributions. Completes a review of the decision in 2027, with a final decision on a transfer agreement by 2030
- Makes no further financial contribution to establishment costs
- Makes no debt guarantees for the Waikato Waters CCO
- Can access existing exit clauses as negotiated in the Heads of Agreement

Based on this outcome, it is determined that the benefits of joining on these terms outweigh any costs (no financial impact). We maintain the ability to exit in future, if we cannot agree terms of shared services arrangement.

Waikato Waters team are seeking to have all seven councils party to the Heads of Agreement make their final decision on signing the Shareholders Agreement by 30 June 2025. This is to allow time to incorporate and begin transition planning to be operational for the first Stage 2 shareholders onboarding by 1 July 2026.

The Shareholders' Agreement, with specific terms incorporated for Taupō District Council, is attached.

Delivery Model

The preferred future delivery model is one important aspect of our Water Services Delivery Plan, which must be certified by the Chief Executive, adopted by Council, and submitted to the Minister for Local Government by 3 September 2025. The finalised Water Services Delivery Plan is expected to be brought to Council for adoption on 10 July 2025, pending any significant changes in direction.

The timeline is

24 June	Council hears submissions, adopts preferred delivery model and decides on Waikato Waters shareholders agreement
30 June	If directed, Chief Executive signs the Waikato Waters Shareholders Agreement, noting special terms for Taupō District
10 July	Council adopts Water Services Delivery Plan
3 Sept	Water Services Delivery Plan is due to Minister for Local Government
Dec 2025	Expected decision from Minister as to the acceptance of our Plan

² Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Ōtorohanga, South Waikato, Waipa, Waitomo

1 July 2026	Waikato Waters is operational and providing services for first Stage 2 joining councils.
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NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA | OPTIONS

There are two separate decisions to be made, and the options and advantages and disadvantages of each are laid out separately for clarity, as the decisions and reasons are mostly independent of each other (noting that no decision is required for the second decision, if Option 1b is chosen in the first decision).

1. Decision One: Future Service Delivery Model for Water Services
2. Decision Two: Decision on joining Waikato Waters – Shareholders' Agreement

Decision One: Future Service Delivery Model for Water Services

Analysis of Options

Based on the information, there are considered to be two options available. Do nothing is not an option.

Option 1a.

Adopt the option of keeping water services inhouse for now, as our future water services delivery model for our Water Services Delivery Plan.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision is consistent with previous Council workshops and decisions • The preferred option for consultation was agreed by Council (Council meeting 29 Apr Agenda item 5.1) after weighing up the advantages and disadvantages • Public support prefers this option (74%) • We have negotiated favourable terms to remain in Waikato Waters as a Stage 1 shareholder, which allows us to influence the establishment of the entity, plus retaining an entry path for us if this option becomes more favourable over time. This reduces the risk that our future options are limited by this decision. • An agreed review in two years gives us further time to review our position • The advantages of going with the inhouse delivery model have been previously listed, and are summarised as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, financially sustainable plan • Local focus, knowledge and priorities • Flexibility to adapt to future changes • Reduced financial risk • Retain local accountability • Lower cost implementation • Balanced infrastructure investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disadvantages that have previously been listed for this option i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited economies of scale • Ongoing supplier and workforce risks • Risk of under-investment due to ratepayer pressure • Possible compromised outcomes with Council resources spread across many services • Central government have strongly indicated they expect councils to work together, and they will apply increased scrutiny to those councils that have chosen to remain inhouse

Option 1b.

Choose one of the alternative options as the future water services delivery model (either joining Waikato Waters with an asset transfer agreement, or establishing a single Taupō CCO for water services).

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantages of each option as previously identified i.e. Waikato Waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economies of scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disadvantages of each option as previously identified i.e. Waikato Waters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial guarantee risks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risks over time • Independent governance • Council focus frees up for other priorities without water services • Workforce attraction <p>Single CCO Independent governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear financial separation • Enhanced influence (as sole shareholder) • Other similar advantages inhouse model – local focus and knowledge, flexibility to adapt to future changes, reduced financial risk, lower cost implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater alignment with government direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminished local voice • Uncertainty and risks • Reduced council viability • Establishment costs • Limited future options <p>Single CCO Additional costs and complexity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other similar disadvantages to inhouse model – limited economies of scale, ongoing supplier and workforce risks, risk of under-investment
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Decision Two: Decision on joining Waikato Waters – Shareholder’s Agreement

Analysis of Options

Based on the information, there are considered to be two options available.

Option 2a.

Agree to sign the Waikato Waters Shareholders’ Agreement as a Stage 1 shareholder, with no agreed transfer date.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables Taupō to continue to influence the establishment of Waikato Waters to our potential future benefit • Retains our ability to join Waikato Waters as a full shareholder at a future point in time, safeguarding our options • Demonstrates to central government our openness to collaboration with other councils where there are clear benefits • If terms cannot be agreed existing exit clauses will apply • No financial cost • One year to negotiate shared service agreement. • Potential collective benefits from shared services arrangement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict with existing service contracts for shared services, although these risks will be managed as part of the shared services negotiation. • Significant organisational resource remains pulled to Waikato Waters activities • Ongoing uncertainty for staff • Public opinion may conclude this means we intend to join Waikato Water as full shareholder eventually, despite consultation

Option 2b.

Do not sign the Waikato Waters shareholders agreement, and exit the Waikato councils collective workstream.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides clarity of our position as fully independent • Public opinion opposing joining Waikato Waters will be accepting of this option • Removes uncertainty of what the shared services will include 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our future options are reduced for little benefit • Loss of opportunity to work collaboratively with neighbouring councils • Central government is likely to look unfavourably on this decision

Analysis Conclusion:

Based on this information, the preferred options are

Option 1a: Adopt the option of keeping water services inhouse for now, as our future water services delivery model for our Water Services Delivery Plan.

and

Option 2a: Agree to sign the Waikato Waters shareholder's agreement as a Stage 1 shareholder, with no agreed transfer date.

NGĀ HĪRAUNGA | CONSIDERATIONS

Ngā Aronga Pūtea | Financial Considerations

The financial impact of the proposal is estimated to be \$150,000 in coming year 2025-2026. This amount has been budgeted for in the Long-term Plan and will be used for additional consultant resources to support financial separation and prepare for the information disclosure requirements of economic regulation. One additional finance role has been budgeted for to support the financial separation.

Long-term Plan/Annual Plan

The expenditure outlined is currently budgeted for under the Long-term Plan 2024-34.

Ngā Aronga Ture | Legal Considerations

Local Government Act 2002

The matter comes within scope of the Council's lawful powers, including satisfying the purpose statement of [Section 10](#) of the Local Government Act 2002. That section of the Act states that the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. It is considered that social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects are all of relevance to this particular matter.

The proposal has been evaluated with regards to a range of legislation. The key legislation applicable to the proposal has been reviewed and the relevant matters for consideration are as follows:

- ✓ Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 – the preferred and alternative options have been assessed against the requirements of this Act and meets all relevant criteria.
- ✓ Local Government (Water Services) Bill – the plan has been assessed by officers against the future requirements for water services providers as laid out in the bill. Under all options, Council will be able to meet the future obligations.
- ✓ Local Government Act 2002 – consultation was undertaken in line with this Act.

Taupō District Council has specific obligations to iwi and hapū under the following Te Tiriti o Waitangi Treaty Settlement legislation. Any change to our service delivery model needs to uphold these settlements and protect these relationships.

- ☐ Ngāti Tūrangitukua Claims Settlement Act 1999
- ☐ Ngāti Tūrangitukua Ancillary Claims Deed 1998
- ☐ Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Raukawa and Te Arawa River Iwi Waikato River Act 2010
- ☐ Ngāti Manawa Claims Settlement Act 2012
- ☐ Ngāti Whare Claims Settlement Act 2012
- ☐ Ngāti Raukawa Claims Settlement Act 2014
- ☐ Ngāti Tūwharetoa Claims Settlement Act 2018
- ☐ Ngāti Rangī Claims Settlement Act 2019

The Shareholder's Agreement has been drafted by Russell McVeagh and reviewed by Simpson Grierson on behalf of all Waikato councils. The agreement has been internally reviewed by our legal team.

Authorisations as follows are required for the proposal:

None

- ☐ Resource Consent ☐ Building Consent ☐ Environmental Health
☐ Alcohol Licencing ☐ Licence to occupy

Authorisations are not required from external parties.

Ngā Hīraunga Kaupapa Here | Policy Implications

The proposal has been evaluated against the following plans:

- ✓ Long-term Plan 2024-2034 ✓ Annual Plan ☐ Waikato Regional Plan
☐ Taupō District Plan ☐ Bylaws ☐ Relevant Management Plan(s)

The key aspects for consideration with regards to this proposal are as follows:

Financial modelling for consultation was based on the Long-term Plan figures with some adjustments. The final Water Services Delivery Plan that will be submitted will use the Annual Plan 2025-26 figures. There are some financial policies that will need to be reviewed and/or created to achieve the full financial separation required under the Act, but these changes will be made as part of the next Long-term Plan 2027. Additional funding and roles were budgeted for as part of the Long-term Plan and Annual Plan processes (as above in financial implications).

The new requirements of the legislation mean that from 2027, water services planning will be separated from Council's existing Long-term and Annual planning processes. Our Water Services Delivery Plan will lay out our implementation plan for achieving this requirement.

Te Kōrero tahi ki te Māori | Māori Engagement

Taupō District Council is committed to meeting its statutory Tiriti O Waitangi obligations and acknowledges partnership as the basis of Te Tiriti. Council has a responsibility to act reasonably and in good faith to reflect the partnership relationship, and to give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti. These principles include, but are not limited to the protection of Māori rights, enabling Māori participation in Council processes and having rangatiratanga over tāonga.

Our statutory obligations outline our duties to engage with Māori and enable participation in Council processes. Alongside this, we recognise the need to work side by side with iwi, and hapū of our district.

In line with these obligations and commitments we've made:

Early engagement was undertaken with iwi groups across the rohe with two hui in October and December 2024. The purpose of these hui was to keep partners informed of the legislative requirements and the options being considered. Prior to and during the consultation period, Council officers and elected members on the steering group have continued to engage with iwi and hapū groups on the options and process, using existing forums including the Tūrangi Co-Governance Committee, Te Arawa River Iwi Trust Co-Governance Committee, and Mana Whakahono Joint Working Group, and direct discussions with Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa Trust, and Raukawa Charitable Trust. Our partners were strongly encouraged to make a submission.

Submissions were received from

- #7 Waipahihi Marae Trust
- #201 Ngā Taikura Taiao o Tūwharetoa
- #205 Ngati Tahu-Ngati Whaoa Runanga Trust
- #214 Te Hikuwai o Tūwharetoa
- #215 Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board

Key factors of importance to iwi and hapū are representation and meaningful engagement, upholding Te Mana o Te Wai and Treaty settlements, respecting kaitiaki obligations and cultural impact assessments, and building on existing partnerships and agreements. Continuing to work together with iwi as we navigate the next stages of implementing and reviewing our Water Services Delivery Plan will be critical to success.

Ngā Tūraru | Risks

There is a risk that if no decision is reached at this meeting, we will not meet the deadline for submission of our Water Services Delivery Plan.

There is a risk that the Secretary for Local Government will not accept our plan. If the plan is not accepted, either we will be required to amend our plan and resubmit it, or the Minister may appoint a Crown facilitator or Crown water services specialist to oversee resubmission of our plan. This risk is being managed by working closely with DIA, with whom we have already shared a draft version of this plan and incorporated their feedback. We have also obtained external advice and reviews of the information within our plan.

There is a risk of reputational and relationship damage as there are many dependencies implicit within the choice of a future water services delivery model, and the timeline has made it challenging to engage with stakeholders. There are multiple stakeholders who will be affected by the decision we make as a Council, including our communities, other councils, iwi partners, staff, contractors and central government (DIA). We are reducing this risk by keeping communications as open and transparent as possible as we work through the process.

There is a risk that this plan is based only on best information currently available to us and new information may impact our future options.

There is contractual risk in signing the Shareholder's Agreement, however the document has been reviewed by internal and external legal teams and deemed to be low risk. Prior to any decision to transfer there is no financial risk and Taupō District Council's obligations within the contract are limited.

TE HIRANGA O TE WHAKATAU, TE TONO RĀNEI | SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECISION OR PROPOSAL

Council's Significance and Engagement Policy identifies matters to be taken into account when assessing the degree of significance of proposals and decisions.

Officers have undertaken an assessment of the matters in the [Significance and Engagement Policy \(2022\)](#), and are of the opinion that the proposal under consideration is significant.

TE KŌRERO TAHI | ENGAGEMENT

Consultation on options for future water services delivery was required under the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024. Under the Act, Council could follow the alternative consultation requirements, however Council chose to take a broader approach and follow the guidance for consultation under the Local Government Act 2002.

Consultation was open for one month from 30 April to 29 May 2025.

- 6 community events were held, with approximately 100 people attending
 - Taupō Market x 2
 - Tūrangi Market
 - Mangakino Library
 - Kinloch Store x 2
- Each of our representative groups have been kept updated throughout the process
- 220 submissions were received
- 8 submitters chose to be heard at hearings

The submission summary and copy of all submissions in full is attached to this report.

The Local Government Act requires consultation if considering joining a Council Controlled Organisation. We asked the community if they supported us joining Waikato Waters for the purposes of procuring shared

services. Officers consider that the terms that have been negotiated are of benefit to Taupō District and the costs and risks of joining are minimal. Many of the community consultation responses were supportive of this pragmatic approach.

TE WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO PĀPAHO | COMMUNICATION/MEDIA

Communication has been carried out as part of wider consultation with the community on this issue.

Throughout the consultation period our website home page displayed Local Water Done Well information prominently. Detailed information was included on the background of Local Water Done Well, our options, financial information and how to have your say.

Radio ads, newspaper ads, articles, billboards and social media posts were all used to share information about Local Water Done Well and encourage the community to have their say.

- 6 social media posts with good reach (3 posts with a reach over 4,500) but relatively little engagement
- 3,344 page views of Local Water Done Well content, with 989 active users

The decision will be communicated to the community following Council resolution. This will include a high-level summary of public submissions.

WHAKAKAPINGA | CONCLUSION

Through this hearing process, and the written submissions attached, Council has had an opportunity to understand from the public their priorities and concerns for water services delivery.

The proposal to retain water service delivery inhouse for now is a pragmatic and financially sustainable choice that aligns with the community's preferences and legislative requirements. The extensive analysis and public consultation have demonstrated strong support for this approach, with 74% of submissions favouring the inhouse model. This model ensures local accountability, flexibility, and reduced financial risk, while meeting the financial, investment, and revenue sufficiency tests laid out in the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024.

Remaining a part of the Waikato Waters collective as a Stage 1 shareholder further safeguards Taupō District's future options. The negotiated terms are favourable, allowing Taupō District to influence the establishment of the entity and retain the right to join later without incurring additional costs or financial guarantees. This approach demonstrates openness to collaboration with neighbouring councils, while maintaining the ability to exit if terms cannot be agreed upon.

While Council prepares to adopt its Water Services Delivery Plan and prepare for its implementation, it will be critical to continue monitoring the evolving, regulated, water services environment. A review of our position in two years will ensure that Taupō District remains adaptable to future changes and continues to seek the best outcomes for its ratepayers.

NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Water- submission summary
2. Water- full list of submissions
3. Waikato Waters Shareholders' Agreement 12-06-2025
4. Waikato Waters Constitution 12-06-2025