

Kaunihera | Council

Kaupapataka Wātea | Open Agenda



Notice is hereby given that an extraordinary meeting of Matamata-Piako District Council will be held on:

Ko te rā | Date: Tuesday 4 August 2026
Wā | Time: 8.30am
Wāhi | Venue: Council Chambers
35 Kenrick Street
TE AROHA

NGĀ MEMA | MEMBERSHIP

Tiamana | Chairperson: Koromatua | Mayor
Ash Tanner

Mema | Members: Koromatua Tautoko | Deputy Mayor
James Sainsbury
Kaunihera ā-Rohe | District Councillors
Vincent Andersen
Grace Bonnar
Bruce Dewhurst
Tyrel Glass
Dayne Horne
Greg Marshall
Andrew McGiven
James Thomas
Gary Thompson
Rewiti Vaimoso
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1 Whakatūwheratanga o te hui | Meeting Opening

2 Ngā whakapāha/Tono whakawātea | Apologies/Leave of Absence

At the close of the agenda no apologies had been received.

3 Whākī pānga | Declaration of Interest

Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any conflicts of interest they might have in respect of the items on this Agenda

4 Whakaaetanga mēneti | Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes, as circulated, of the ordinary meeting of Matamata-Piako District Council, held on 29 July 2026

5 Pūrongo me whakatau | Decision Reports

5.1 Simplifying Local Government – preferred amalgamation model

CM No.: 3200133

Te Kaupapa | Purpose

The purpose of this report is to enable Council to decide whether to participate in the Government's Simplifying Local Government Head Start pathway and, if so, to approve a Waihou–Piako–Coromandel Unitary Authority (previously referred to as East Waikato) as the proposal. The reasonably practicable options are:

- Option 1: do not submit or support a Head Start proposal and proceed into the Government's backstop process;
- Option 2: approve a Waihou–Piako–Coromandel Unitary Authority (previously referred to as East Waikato).

Rāpopotonga Matua | Executive Summary

The Government has indicated that local government reorganisation will proceed either through the voluntary Head Start pathway or through a later compulsory backstop process. Outline Head Start proposals are due by 9 August 2026.

Council is therefore not deciding whether reform will occur. It is deciding whether to seek greater influence over reform through a Head Start proposal for a Unitary Authority for the East Waikato (note for the purposes of community feedback and this report we refer to the East Waikato, this will not be the official name, that is to be determined during detailed design phase but in the proposal itself it will be referred to as a Unitary Authority for the Waihou-Piako-Coromandel to be more reflective of the participating Councils).

Since seeking community feedback from the Matamata-Piako community - South Waikato District Council have confirmed they will not be joining East Waikato so the option in this report refers to Matamata-Piako, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel.

At its workshop on 8 July 2026, Council indicated a preference for East Waikato based on strong community feedback favouring an East Waikato model. Both Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel District Council's community feedback also favoured an East Waikato model. Respondents placed greatest weight on keeping decisions close to home, affordability and fair representation for town and rural communities.

At the time of the public consultation a Waikato-wide option was considered potentially viable. However, at this stage it appears no Council is currently pursuing it. The Waikato-wide proposal has not been finalised and as such has not been included in this report for consideration. The concepts explored in the draft Waikato-wide proposal have subsequently informed the development of the current Western Waikato (Waikato–Waipā Catchment) Unitary Authority proposal being progressed by some councils.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared by Thames-Coromandel District Council. Council is asked to consider and adopt the Memorandum of Understanding.

It is intended the Mayors of Matamata-Piako, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel (individually or collectively) send a letter to Central Government to express a view on the reform process. Council is asked to consider the key messages of the letter so it can be prepared.

This is a preferred-model decision only. Governance, representation, rating, debt and asset arrangements, service levels, organisational design, transition costs and cross-boundary regional functions would be addressed through detailed design if the proposal is accepted by the Government.

Tūtohunga | Recommendation

That Council:

OPTION 1: Do not submit a head start proposal

- 1. A) Receives the information.**
- B) Considers the community feedback, feedback received at public information sessions and Iwi feedback.**
- C) Approves Option 1: Do not submit or support a Head Start proposal and proceed into the Government's backstop process.**
- D) Approves a letter being prepared from the Mayors of Matamata-Piako, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel (individually or collectively) to Central government regarding the reform process, with the following key messages:**
 - Expressing concern about the limited time available for councils and communities to fully consider the proposals, and the need for greater detail to clearly demonstrate the case for reform, particularly alongside other significant legislative changes occurring. Also note existing commitment to collaboration and shared services.**
 - A preference to continue operating under the current arrangements, enabling Council to build on its track record of delivering high-quality services, responding to local priorities, and maintaining effective local representation.**

OR

OPTION 2: Approve the Waihou-Piako-Coromandel Unitary Authority Proposal, previously referred to as East Waikato

- 2. A) Receives the information.**
- B) Considers the community feedback, feedback received at public information sessions and Iwi feedback.**
- C) Approves Option 2: the Waihou-Piako-Coromandel Unitary Authority Proposal, noting this has been previously referred to as East Waikato both throughout this report and in community consultation.**

D) Authorises the Mayor / Chief Executive to:

- Amend the proposal to reflect decisions made by the other Councils and any administrative and non-material amendments to the relevant proposal, consistent with Council's resolution.
- Sign off the proposal on behalf of Council
- Submit the proposal by 9 August 2026

E) Approves a letter being prepared from the Mayors of Matamata-Piako, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel (individually or collectively) to Central government regarding the reform process, with the following key messages:

- Expressing concern about the limited time available for councils and communities to fully consider the proposals, and the need for greater detail to clearly demonstrate the case for reform, particularly alongside other significant legislative changes occurring. Also note existing commitment to collaboration and shared services.
- A preference to continue operating under the current arrangements, enabling Council to build on its track record of delivering high-quality services, responding to local priorities, and maintaining effective local representation.
- A Head Start proposal has been agreed to retain as much local influence as possible over any future arrangements, provide greater certainty for our community and to enable Council to proactively shape its future, rather than relying on a default backstop process with outcomes that are not yet clearly defined.

F) Memorandum of Understanding

- Adopts the attached Memorandum of Understanding between Matamata-Piako, Thames-Coromandel District and Hauraki District Councils, and approves the Mayor to make administrative and non-material amendments and sign it on behalf of Council.

Horopaki | Background

Government reform and the Head Start pathway

The Government announced the Head Start pathway on 5 May 2026. Two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities may submit an outline proposal to establish a new unitary authority covering part or all of a region. Regional councils cannot submit a proposal but may contribute to its development.

Outline proposals are due on 9 August 2026. Officials will assess the proposals and Cabinet is expected to decide in September 2026 which proposals proceed to detailed design. Detailed

proposals are due in March 2027, with final Cabinet decisions expected in May 2027 and enabling legislation intended before the 2028 local elections.

Councils that do not submit a head start proposal, or whose proposal does not proceed, will enter a compulsory backstop process after the 2028 local elections. The final form of that process is not yet known.

The Head Start pathway: Policy document – Simplifying Local Government is attached to this report. Further detail including the Guidance for Head Start outline proposals is available here: <https://www.mcert.govt.nz/our-work/local-government/local-government-policy/simplifying-local-government/>

Government assessment criteria

Head Start proposals will be assessed as a whole against five criteria:

- **Deliverability:** Proposals are realistic and demonstrate how new arrangements can be implemented in a timely manner.
- **Supports the new planning system:** Shows clear support for implementing the new planning system – including progress on spatial and natural environment plan development – and avoids or minimises disruption to that work.
- **Simplifies local governance:** Proposes more efficient regional governance arrangements, consolidating decision-making and improving alignment between a region's councils.
- **Economies of scale:** Supports regional strategic planning and effective delivery of key regional functions (such as transport and catchment management), and demonstrates responsible and affordable asset management, infrastructure investment, and service delivery.
- **Maintains local voice:** Demonstrates fair and effective representation for communities of interest and how decisions will be made at the local level, balancing urban and rural interests.

In relation to working with iwi/Māori the Head Start pathway provides that existing Treaty settlement arrangements will continue to be provided for. Councils will be expected to engage with relevant post-settlement governance entities (PSGEs) to demonstrate how existing Treaty settlement arrangements could be transferred to new unitary authorities with equivalent effect.

The Government has indicated that subregional proposals will need to demonstrate geographic scale and complexity, strong performance against the criteria and effective arrangements for regional functions that extend beyond the proposed boundary.

Process

Staff and Council representatives have been involved in a number of meetings since the reform announcement in May 2026, with neighbouring Councils. This has included supporting the development of the East Waikato proposal.

Council staff were involved as an observer in the All of Waikato Working Group (refer to section below on regional engagement for further details).

On 1st July 2026, representatives from Waikato Regional Council: Keith Holmes (Waihou General Constituency Councillor), Robert Cookson (Waihou General Constituency Councillor) Warren Mayer (Chair), and Chris McLay (Chief Executive Officer) presented to Council, about the functions and roles of the Regional Council and issues that should be considered as part of the reform process.

On 8 July 2026 Council discussed the Head Start pathway, the reform process and expected timeframes with Vanessa Blackstock, a representative of the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT).

In workshops held on 15 July, 22 July and 29 July 2026 staff provided further updates on the Head Start proposals, public engagement and submissions. Council also considered its available options, the positions of other Councils and discussed its key principles. These are discussed further in this report.

Proposals before Council

Two options are available.

Option 1 is not to progress through Head Start and to enter the later Government-led backstop process.

Option 2 is a sub-regional Waihou-Piako-Coromandel (previously known as East Waikato) Unitary Authority. Since seeking community feedback from the Matamata-Piako community - South Waikato District Council have confirmed they will not be joining East Waikato so the option in this report refers to Matamata-Piako, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel.

An option for a Waikato-wide Unitary Authority appears to be no longer viable based on the indicative Council positions at the time of writing this report.

Option 1 is not to submit a Head Start proposal. Staff understand this to be the position of some Council's around the country. The Government has said that the backstop option:

- will be compulsory, rather than voluntary;
- It will begin after the 2028 local elections;
- Regional councillors will not be elected in 2028. Instead, an interim governing body (such as a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a hybrid model) will oversee regional functions during the transition.
- Legislation for the backstop will be enacted before nominations open for the 2028 local elections.

The final design has not yet been decided. Cabinet has said it will confirm the precise model in 2027, after considering lessons from the Head Start proposals and further policy advice. The term "backstop" indicates there is a guaranteed mechanism to ensure local government reform occurs, even if councils cannot agree on a locally led proposal.

The intent of the Government's policy is that Head Start gives councils the opportunity to shape their own future. The backstop option ensures that simplification of local government still happens if they do not.

Staff understand that if a Head Start proposal is submitted that does not comply with the criteria, the participating council(s) will likely be subject to the backstop option.

Option 2 is a sub-regional Waihou-Piako-Coromandel (previously known as East Waikato) Unitary Authority. The proposal has been developed collaboratively by Hauraki, Thames-Coromandel and Matamata-Piako District Councils. It would replace the participating territorial authorities with one unitary authority and transfer the relevant Waikato Regional Council functions for the new authority's area. The final composition will reflect the participating councils' resolutions.

The term 'East Waikato' is used in this report to reflect the community consultation and discussions held to date, this will not be the official name, that is to be determined during detailed design phase but in the proposal itself it will be referred to as the Waihou-Piako- Coromandel Unitary Authority to be more reflective of the participating Councils.

Waikato-wide option: At the time of the public consultation, a Waikato-wide option (combining 10 territorial authorities within the Waikato Region and the Waikato Regional Council) was considered a viable option and as such was one of the options provided for community feedback. However, since that time, it appears no Council is pursuing it. The Waikato-wide proposal has not been finalised and as such has not been included in this report for consideration.

The draft Waikato-wide proposal was commissioned by the Waikato Mayoral Forum and prepared by a cross-council collaborative working group established for that purpose. Council staff were 'observers' on the working group.

The concepts explored in the draft Waikato-wide proposal have subsequently informed the development of the current Western Waikato (Waikato–Waipā Catchment) Unitary Authority proposal being progressed by some councils.

One of the criteria for Head Start is that it must be submitted by two or more territorial authorities (district or city councils). A single council cannot submit a proposal on its own. Regional councils cannot submit proposals, although they can support or participate in developing them. The proposing councils must represent either a majority of the directly affected territorial authorities, or a majority of the population across the directly affected districts.

As it appears the Waikato-wide proposal is no longer an actively supported option Council is unable to submit this as a complying proposal without support by other Councils.

Community engagement

Matamata-Piako district-wide engagement received 832 responses. Of the two structural scenarios presented, 89% per cent preferred East Waikato, 7% per cent preferred a Waikato-wide authority and 4% selected other/no selection. The survey was self-selecting and was an engagement exercise rather than formal statutory consultation, but it provides a clear indication of the views of participants. The East Waikato option that was consulted on included Thames Coromandel, Hauraki, South Waikato and Matamata-Piako District Council's.

- A one-page summary of the consultation is [here](#).
- A summary of the feedback is [here](#).
- A list of the full submissions is [here](#).

A copy of the above documents are also attached to this report.

Four late submissions were also received which are below, please note these are not included in the overall numbers.

#	Name	Ward	Submitter comments
Late 1	Mr Gordon and Mrs Margaret Eddy	Te Aroha	Option 1 – Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback Personally we could lose our identity if option 2 instigated. Our local council performs extremely well at present, would ratepayers receive the same service under option 2? When contacted on any matters MPDC acts in a responsible manner; to

#	Name	Ward	Submitter comments
			ensure safety and requests from any ratepayers are followed thru. It will be interesting to see the poll result.
Late 2	Ron Wright and Ursula Pinder	Te Aroha	Option 1 – Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback *Excluding South Waikato
Late 3	Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust Submission	Morrinsville (office location)	Option 2 – Waikato Wide model preferred-Feedback (refer submission attached) Summary of key submission points: • Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust, the post-settlement governance entity for Ngāti Hauā, supports Option 2, the Waikato-wide local government model, as it considers this option best placed to deliver coordinated regional planning, stronger environmental stewardship, improved infrastructure outcomes, and long-term community wellbeing. • While expressing concern about the limited consultation timeframe for proposals of this significance, the Trust emphasises that any future governance arrangements must be developed in genuine partnership with iwi and give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ngāti Hauā considers a Waikato-wide model would reduce duplication, provide more consistent recognition of mana whenua across council boundaries, and support integrated approaches to growth, housing, environmental management, climate resilience, and economic development. • The Trust stresses the importance of protecting rangatiratanga, kaitiakitanga, local community and marae voices, and existing statutory arrangements, including Joint Management Agreements and Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato. • Key recommendations include adopting Option 2 for further development, co-designing future governance arrangements with iwi, embedding Tiriti-based partnership and mana whenua participation at all levels of

#	Name	Ward	Submitter comments
			decision-making, and ensuring local voices remain central within any new regional structure.
Late 4	Hilda Burdie	Morrinsville	Option 1 – Eastern Waikato Selected

Engagement undertaken by other proposed partner councils also indicated substantial support for East Waikato. Hauraki's district-wide engagement received 656 responses. Of the three structural scenarios presented, 86.9 per cent preferred East Waikato, 8.5 per cent preferred a Waikato-wide authority and 4.6 per cent preferred a provincial model (Under this scenario Hauraki District would merge with all the other Councils in the Waikato region except Hamilton City or Waikato District). Thames-Coromandel results indicated support of 46 per cent and was the most preferred option, with North Bay of Plenty at 34 per cent and Greater Waikato at 12 per cent.

The engagement processes and questions were not identical, and the results should not be aggregated as a single statistically representative poll. Taken together, however, they show a strong East Waikato preference in Matamata-Piako and Hauraki, and the most preferred option in Thames-Coromandel.

Public information sessions

Three information sessions were held in June 2026 with a total of 106 people attending, and 162 people viewed the recording. Details of the sessions, attendance and a summary of the questions raised by those who attended is set out below:

Morrinsville – 22 June, Morrinsville Event Centre

Meeting attendee number: 26 (excluding staff and elected members)

Te Aroha – 24 June, Silver Fern Farms Event Centre

Attendance number: 40 (excluding staff and elected members)

Matamata – 25 June, Matamata Memorial Event Centre

Attendance number: 40 (excluding staff and elected members)

Common questions/comments from all sessions:

Local voice and community identity

The strongest and most consistent theme was concern about protecting local representation, local decision-making and community identity. Many attendees expressed concern that smaller communities could lose influence within a larger council structure and referenced experiences from previous amalgamations where local communities felt disconnected from decision-makers.

Financial impacts, debt and rates

Many questions focused on who would pay for existing debt and whether communities could end up subsidising other districts. There was considerable interest in the possibility of ring-fencing debt and assets, as well as concerns about taking on liabilities from larger councils.

Scepticism about amalgamation benefits

A common sentiment was that there is little evidence amalgamation leads to lower costs, lower rates or better outcomes. Several attendees referenced Auckland's experience and questioned whether larger organisations ultimately become more bureaucratic and expensive.

Questions about the Government's intentions

Many attendees questioned what problem the reforms were intended to solve and why the changes were being progressed so quickly. There was a recurring desire for greater clarity around the Government's objectives and the evidence supporting reform.

Concern about uncertainty and lack of guarantees

People frequently asked what would happen if councils submitted a proposal that was not accepted and whether communities could ultimately be required to join a different structure than the one they preferred. Several comments reflected uncertainty about what the final outcome might be.

Governance and representation

Community members wanted more information about how a future governance structure would work, who would sit on any overarching body, and how local communities would continue to influence decisions. Questions about representation, voting power and governance arrangements were raised at all meetings.

Preference for local or regional solutions over a Waikato-wide model

Many comments indicated concern that a Waikato-wide authority could result in larger urban centres dominating decision-making. There was a commonly expressed preference for solutions that maintain stronger local connections and reflect existing communities of interest.

Costs and disruption of transition

Attendees questioned the cost of developing and implementing any future structure and expressed concern about the scale of organisational change required. Some highlighted previous examples of major transition costs associated with amalgamation.

Overall Community Sentiment

Across all three sessions, community feedback was characterised by a strong desire to retain local voice and identity, concern about financial impacts and debt sharing, scepticism about the benefits of large-scale amalgamation, and uncertainty about the Government's intentions and the eventual outcome of the process. There was also significant interest in understanding how governance and representation would work under any future model.

Mana whenua conversations/engagement

MPDC has had conversations with mana whenua and Iwi on the Head Start proposal – including through two hui with Te Manawhenua Forum, regional discussions with Waikato Iwi Chairs, and direct outreach from the Mayor to Iwi Chairs and Iwi Chief Executives and followed up inviting further discussion.

The Mayors and Chief Executives from Matamata-Piako, Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki also met with chairs of the Pare Hauraki and the Hauraki Māori Trust Board.

Treaty settlement information prepared to inform the Head Start proposal was provided to Te Manawhenua Forum and Te Toa Horopū ā Matamata-Piako, Council's Māori Ward Councillor for comment.

A submission was prepared on behalf of Te Manawhenua Forum Mo Matamata-Piako and is attached to this report (also included as submission #831 in the full list of submissions).

Both Te Manawhenua Forum and Te Toa Horopū ā Matamata-Piako, Council's Māori Ward Councillor have requested that any potential amalgamation ensure that any proposal explicitly identifies and provides for Treaty settlement obligations, statutory acknowledgements, iwi management plans, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements, co-governance or co-management

arrangements, existing partnership commitments and any other obligations affecting the rohe. These obligations must be enduring and must transfer, continue or be strengthened under any new structure.

Any change to local government boundaries, functions or governance arrangements must protect and strengthen the Crown's and council's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and all relevant Treaty settlements. There is concern that structural reform could unintentionally weaken existing obligations, relationships and mechanisms if those matters are not built into the proposal from the outset.

Regional engagement

The Waikato Mayoral Forum and Chief Executives' Forum have considered the available models on several occasions. Waikato Regional Council attended a Council workshop and presented on regional functions. The East Waikato working group has also sought Waikato Regional Council input on regional functions. Regional discussions have recognised that community-led subregional proposals can coexist with formal Waikato-wide collaboration where functions genuinely require a larger regional scale.

The Group Manager Corporate, People and Relationships, Kelly Reith, is the Council representative on the All of Waikato Working Group. Council staff were 'observers' on the working group.

As discussed above, at the time of writing, the Waikato-wide proposal has not been finalised. It appears the Waikato-wide proposal is no longer an actively supported option by other Councils in the Waikato.

Based on indicative positions expressed publicly and by council leadership, the most likely outcome is the development of two unitary authority proposals covering most of the Waikato region: a Western Waikato grouping and an Eastern Waikato grouping.

Over the coming days, the position across the region is expected to become clearer, with several councils, including the Eastern Waikato councils, scheduled to consider their preferred approach at meetings in early August.

The Western Waikato proposal is centred on the Waikato and Waipā River catchments, while the Eastern Waikato proposal is focused on the Waihou, Piako and Coromandel catchments.

Although the proposals reflect different catchment-based priorities, the wider Waikato region remains interconnected through its environment, economy, infrastructure networks and communities of interest.

If established, the success of the two unitary authorities will depend not only on their individual performance, but also on strong and enduring partnerships with neighbouring authorities, iwi and central government across the wider Waikato region.

Achieving the objectives of local government reform, including implementation of the future resource management system, will require ongoing collaboration across regional boundaries. Strong partnerships and coordinated transition arrangements will be essential to ensure the region continues to function effectively before, during and after the implementation of any new governance arrangements.

There appears to be broad alignment that some functions need to be considered at a regional or catchment scale, particularly spatial planning, catchment management, regional infrastructure and some specialist regional council functions.

Local voice is a critical design issue. Any larger unitary or regional model would need clear mechanisms for local representation, delegations and budgets.

Ngā Take/Kōrerorero | Issues/Discussion

The Government has indicated that local government reorganisation will proceed either through Head Start or through a later Government-led backstop process. Continuing the existing structure indefinitely is therefore not one of the reasonably practicable outcomes available to Council.

Council must decide whether to seek greater influence over reform through a Head Start proposal for a Unitary Authority for the East Waikato. There appears to be no other viable option to consider at this stage, such as a Waikato Wide model.

This is a decision on Council's preferred strategic direction. It is not a final decision on governance arrangements, rating systems, debt and asset allocation, organisational structure, service levels or implementation. Those matters would be addressed through detailed design if a proposal is accepted by the Government.

The options are assessed against the Government's five criteria, together with community views, Treaty settlement alignment, transition complexity, regional collaboration requirements and the principal financial and organisational uncertainties.

Guiding Principles

Council has been asked by the East Waikato and Waikato groups to provide "principles" that informs decision making and the proposal itself. Council sought community feedback on two options (East Waikato and one single unitary) plus any other feedback rather than asking about guiding principles or priorities.

The consultation document set out some principles/reasons why the East Waikato proposal was preferred at that stage:

- keeping decisions closer to home
- protecting local voice and representation
- avoiding large urban centres outweighing the needs of smaller rural districts like ours
- avoiding our ratepayers carrying costs that do not reflect our district
- keep working with councils that are similar to ours and we already work well

Council considered its key principles at a workshop on 15 July 2026 and formulated the following principles:

- Local voice, representation and decision-making remains as close to communities as possible.
- A simple governance structure that achieves the right balance between scale and localism.
- Amalgamation occurs with those that share similar rural characteristics and interests.
- Rating fairness, equitable cost distribution, and responsible stewardship of community assets are maintained.
- Affordability, efficiency, and long-term financial sustainability can be clearly demonstrated.

Mana Whenua/Māori

Proposals are required to identify all relevant Treaty settlement arrangements that may be affected (such as statutory acknowledgements, co-governance frameworks, and relationship agreements) and explain either how these will transfer to new unitary authorities or how an approach will be developed to give them equivalent effect. This includes recognising that the Crown retains responsibility for maintaining settlement commitments, while councils must show how their proposal supports this outcome.

A new unitary authority would assume territorial and regional functions affecting ancestral land, waterways, coastal environments, wāhi tapu and other taonga. Existing Treaty settlement obligations, statutory acknowledgements, relationship agreements and co-governance arrangements would need to transfer with equivalent effect.

The Pare Hauraki Collective Redress Deed provides for a Waihou, Piako and Coromandel Catchment Authority and expressly anticipates possible local government reorganisation. The catchment geography generally aligns with East Waikato and could simplify the local government side of the arrangement by replacing several council participants with one authority responsible for both territorial and regional functions.

Detailed design would require direct engagement with Pare Hauraki, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Hinerangi, Raukawa, and other affected iwi and post-settlement governance entities, the proposed Catchment Authority and the Crown. This includes the governance model and any proposed boundary adjustment.

Governance structure

Mayors, and several elected members from each Council met to discuss potential governance structures.

For the East Waikato governance structure it is proposed as:

- A two-tier unitary authority, with both tiers elected by the people: one council covering the East Waikato area and four to six local boards.
- A council of 12 to 15 elected members, plus one mayor elected at large.
- The council would provide governance and oversight at the unitary authority and Waikato regional level for matters such as spatial planning, land transport, land drainage and flood protection, catchment management, biosecurity and pest control, civil defence, and maritime matters.
- Local boards would be based on communities of interest and have meaningful decision-making powers set by legislation. They would manage local community facilities and places, govern local grants, develop bylaws, set local rates, and adopt local board plans that reflect local priorities and preferences.

Matters to be confirmed in stage two of the Head Start process:

- The name of the Council.
- Local board boundaries and names.
- Iwi and Māori representation.
- Governance arrangements for Waikato-wide functions.
- Whether the northern part of the South Waikato District becomes part of this Council to align with the Waihou-Piako catchment boundary.

How this high-level governance model simplifies local government while maintaining local voice:

- A single Council would represent the East Waikato area, replacing the current Regional Council and three territorial authorities.
- Local boards provide locally elected representatives who are accessible to residents and accountable to their communities.

- Decision-making remains close to communities, helping local needs and priorities shape service delivery and investment decisions.
- More granular representation has a better chance of reflecting diverse communities of interest

There has been a direction not to have local boards without any powers i.e. they need to be more than advocacy and community engagement bodies. Feedback on the Auckland model suggests the devolution of power to local boards has not worked as intended, with local boards having limited authority and struggling to genuinely represent community voice within a centralised structure. This risk would need to be carefully managed.

There is a desire for clear powers outlined in legislation so the power of local boards is not dependent on the good-will of the Mayor and Council of the day.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Council has been asked to enter into a MOU with Thames-Coromandel District and Hauraki District Councils committing to high level principles that support ongoing collaboration and partnership for local government reform in the Waihou, Piako, Coromandel area.

Mōrearea | Risk

Principal risks and mitigations:

Risk	Potential effect	Mitigation
Financial and transition	Costs, savings, rating effects, debt and asset allocation are not yet known.	Do not assume savings. Require independent financial, asset, debt, rates and transition due diligence during detailed design. Seek a contribution to transition costs from central government as part of the headstart proposal
Legal and Treaty compliance	The proposal may not satisfy Head Start, decision-making or Treaty settlement requirements.	Apply Ministry of Cities, Regions and Transport (MCERT) guidance, obtain legal review, map all settlement obligations and maintain direct engagement with affected entities and the Crown.
Proposal scope and participation	A participating council may select another alignment, requiring changes to boundaries, scale and evidence.	Confirm council resolutions before submission and update the proposal, statistics and boundary narrative accordingly.
Regional functions	Subregional boundaries could fragment planning, transport, biosecurity, emergency management or catchment functions.	Define binding collaboration, joint-governance or shared-service arrangements for functions that operate beyond the boundary.
Workforce and service continuity	Uncertainty and transition may affect retention, recruitment and business-as-usual delivery.	Use a staged transition, clear accountabilities, dedicated programme capacity, workforce planning and regular staff communication.

Risk	Potential effect	Mitigation
Community confidence	Council may be perceived as predetermining outcomes or overstating financial benefits. The consultation document said that an East Waikato unitary authority was Councils preferred option at that stage. Council now needs to give consideration to the community feedback received which strongly indicated that an East Waikato unitary authority was the community's preferred and consider all the information available to make a decision. This report does not provide a recommended option.	Clearly distinguish this preference decision from final implementation, publish the evidence and uncertainties, and continue targeted engagement.

Ngā Whiringa | Options

The following reasonably practicable options have been identified for Council's consideration:

- Option 1: do not submit or support a Head Start proposal and proceed into the Government's backstop process;
- Option 2: approve a Waihou–Piako–Coromandel Unitary Authority (previously referred to as East Waikato).

The following comparison brings the principal considerations together. The individual option tables that follow provide the supporting advantages, disadvantages and conditions.

Consideration	Option 1 Backstop	Option 2 Waihou Piako Coromandel (previously referred to as East Waikato)	Option 3 Waikato-wide (no longer an option being pursued by other councils – comparative information only)
Influence over reform	Lowest; Government-led process	Highest; locally led proposal	Moderate; locally led regional proposal
Scale and capability	Unknown until backstop design	Sufficient subregional scale and specialist pool	Greatest scale and specialist pool

Consideration	Option 1 Backstop	Option 2 Waihou Piako Coromandel (previously referred to as East Waikato)	Option 3 Waikato-wide (no longer an option being pursued by other councils – comparative information only)
Planning and functional integration	Unknown	Strong for East Waikato territorial and regional functions	Strong whole-of-region integration
Local voice	Unknown	Closest fit with Matamata- Piako priorities and provincial communities	Depends on statutory local governance and delegations
Regional coordination	Government determined	Formal arrangements still required	Most coordination internalised
Deliverability and transition	Deferred, not avoided	Substantial but more contained	Largest and most complex transition
Community feedback	Not directly tested	Strongly preferred in Hauraki and Matamata- Piako; most preferred in Thames-Coromandel	7% support in Matamata- Piako survey
Financial certainty	Unknown	Unknown; benefits and costs require due diligence	Unknown; greatest integration potential and transition exposure
Overall	Defers influence and uncertainty	Best overall balance	Strong regional integration but higher local-voice and transition risks

Option 1 – Government backstop

Option 1: Do not progress through Head Start – Government backstop	
Summary	Council would not progress a locally led Head Start proposal. Existing arrangements would continue in the short term, but Matamata-Piako would enter the compulsory Government-led process after the 2028 local elections.
Advantages	• Avoids the immediate workload and direct cost of developing a detailed Head Start proposal. • Provides more time before structural change is implemented, • Allows Council to focus in the short term on core services and the new planning system. • Potentially places the costs of design and transition on central government
Disadvantages	• Does not avoid reform; it defers reform to a process whose final design is unknown. • Reduces Council, community and Mana Whenua influence over boundaries, governance and operating arrangements. • Extends uncertainty for elected members, staff, communities and

	partner organisations. - Does not reflect the workshop direction or the strong East Waikato preference among Matamata-Piako survey respondents. - If Matamata-Piako is included in another proposal developed by two or more other councils in the Waikato, the Government could include Matamata-Piako in that grouping.
Conditions / risk controls	- Remain engaged in Waikato forums and with Mana Whenua. - Maintain organisational data and capability so Council can respond to the backstop process. - Continue public and staff communication as Government policy develops.
Financial, rates and debt	No immediate rates or debt effect. Eventual transition, rating, debt and asset effects are unknown; deferring reform does not remove those costs.
Overall assessment	Viable, but provides the least local influence and prolongs uncertainty.

Option 2 – Waihou-Piako-Coromandel (previously referred to as East Waikato)

Option 2: Waihou-Piako-Coromandel Unitary Authority – recommended option	
Summary	Matamata-Piako, Hauraki, and Thames Coromandel District Councils would be replaced by one subregional unitary authority, with relevant Waikato Regional Council functions transferred for its area. The final scope will reflect council resolutions and confirmed boundaries.
Advantages	- Provides a locally led pathway and a direct opportunity to shape boundaries, governance and transition. - Demonstrates sufficient current scale: approximately 93,500 people, 57,280 rating units, \$320.7 million revenue and \$3.703 billion net assets excluding water services. - Integrates territorial planning and services with catchment, flood protection, land drainage and environmental functions that already operate as connected systems. - Aligns closely with the Waihou, Piako and Coromandel catchments and the Pare Hauraki settlement geography. - Enables functional consolidation without geographic centralisation, retaining service presence and professional employment across provincial centres. - Most closely reflects Matamata-Piako's community priorities and workshop direction. - Is likely to be more deliverable within the Head Start timeframe than a whole-region amalgamation.
Disadvantages	- Requires formal arrangements with other Waikato and neighbouring authorities for functions operating beyond the boundary. - Final participation, governance, representation and boundary details are not yet settled. - Financial savings and rates outcomes have not been quantified. - The Government may consider the proposal insufficiently regional or may require changes during detailed design.

Conditions / risk controls	• Confirm the participating councils and final proposal scope before submission. • Complete a credible governance and local decision-making model. • Protect Treaty settlement arrangements and continue direct Iwi and Crown engagement. • Undertake independent financial, legal, workforce and service-delivery due diligence. • Establish binding regional collaboration and shared-service arrangements where required. • Use a staged transition that protects service continuity and staff capability.
Financial, rates and debt	No immediate rates or debt effect. Detailed design must quantify establishment and transition costs, debt and asset allocation, rating harmonisation, service levels and potential efficiencies.
Overall assessment	Provides the strongest overall balance of scale, integration, deliverability and local voice.

Recommended option

This report does not offer a recommended option.

Council has indicated a preferred option in the community engagement for an East Waikato option.

Council now needs to give due consideration to the community and iwi feedback, the issues and options, and the Waihou-Piako-Coromandel Head Start proposal to confirm the option to proceed with.

At this time there is no clarity on what option 1 (backstop) would look like so that option cannot be easily evaluated. On that basis Option 2 could be said to provide the strongest overall balance between sufficient organisational scale, integration of connected territorial and regional functions, deliverability and the maintenance of local voice. It is also most closely aligned with community feedback, and feedback from public information sessions.

The options in this report provide a preferred strategic direction, not an unconditional endorsement of every aspect of future amalgamation. It remains subject to confirmation of the participating councils, Government acceptance, an acceptable governance model, protection of Treaty settlement arrangements, independent financial and organisational due diligence and satisfactory arrangements for functions requiring wider regional coordination.

Independent legal, financial, technical and transition assurance would be required if the proposal proceeds to detailed design.

Ngā take ā-ture, ā-Kaupapahere hoki | Legal and policy considerations

Strategic alignment

The 2024-2034 Long Term Plan did not anticipate the Government's 2026 reform pathway. Selecting a preferred model does not amend current budgets, levels of service or work programmes. Any later change would require separate statutory, financial and implementation decisions.

Policy and bylaw consistency

This decision is not inconsistent with any Council policies or bylaws. Existing policies and bylaws would continue until changed or transferred through future legislation and implementation arrangements.

Climate resilience implications

No material climate impact arises from identifying a preferred model. Detailed design would need to assess organisational travel, accommodation, fleet, information technology and procurement impacts. An East Waikato Unitary also creates an opportunity to integrate flood protection, land drainage, catchment, coastal and climate-adaptation functions, provided wider regional coordination and specialist capability are maintained.

Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002) Decision-making requirements

Significance criterion Assessment

An assessment has been completed against the [Significance and Engagement Policy 2023.pdf](#)

	Significance criterion	Assessment
1	Degree of change from LTP	High for East Waikato; the compulsory backstop was not directly tested.
2	Proportion of community affected	High. Future governance and delivery of all council functions may change.
3	Public interest	High. High response rate to public consultation/engagement.
4	Consequences for present and future community	High. Regional environmental, catchment, coastal and drainage functions are affected. No immediate rates or debt decision.
5	Flow on effect for future plans or budgets	Low immediately; potentially high during detailed design and implementation.
6	Cultural significance to Māori	Moderate. Iwi engagement has been undertaken.
7	Alignment with iwi aspirations	Moderate. Hauraki Iwi have indicated some support for the East Waikato proposal. Ngāti Hauā have expressed preference for a Waikato-wide Unitary proposal (refer attached submission)
8	Financial impact	High. The whole district and wider region are affected.
9	Reversibility	High. A decision to submit a Head Start proposal may not be legally irreversible at the point of submission, but in practical and political terms it may become difficult to unwind. Once a proposal is submitted, it is likely to shape the expectations of partner councils, central government, staff, and the community, and in principle decisions by Ministers/central government.
10	Effect on level of service of significant activity	Low. The outline proposal does not in itself set new levels of service for significant activities, and there is not yet enough detail to identify specific increases, reductions, or redistributions in service levels.
11	Supports climate change adaptation and environmental wellbeing	Low. At present, the proposal does not appear to have a direct or immediate effect on climate change adaptation outcomes or environmental wellbeing.

	Significance criterion	Assessment
		The Head Start outline stage is primarily about future governance and institutional arrangements rather than specific environmental policy changes, investment decisions, or adaptation measures.
12	Community views already known	Moderate – consultation has been undertaken with a relatively high response rate compared to other Council consultations in recent years. No specific formal consultation requirement, but Local Government Act decision-making duties apply.

Having regard to the decision-making provisions in the LGA 2002 and Councils Significance Policy, a decision in accordance with the recommendations is assessed as having a **high level of significance** for all options.

There is no general statutory requirement to undertake full consultation before deciding whether to continue investigating Head Start or whether to submit an outline proposal. However, for decisions of higher significance, Council must still comply with the decision-making obligations in sections 77 and 78 of the Local Government Act 2002 in a manner proportionate to the significance of the matter and the practical constraints that apply, including time pressure (with the 9 August 2026 deadline for a head start proposal).

Consistent with Simpson Grierson legal advice, the engagement has been targeted and time-limited to mitigate legal risk.

The Significance and Engagement Policy says

If a matter is of high significance, Council must engage with the community under this Policy. Depending on the degree of significance, Council would work together with the community to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions. This would likely involve large scale publicity and may include both informal engagement/discussions with the community followed by formal consultation in accordance with the LGA.

This may involve the use of the below tools as well as those listed in the 'low' and 'medium' columns:

- *Partnering with the community, e.g. co-drafting, codesigning*
- *Citizens Assemblies*

Although overall is rated as high significance there is a limit to what could be practically achieved in the current phase of the process. Nonetheless, a comparatively large number of submissions have been received with three public information sessions held in Te Aroha, Morrinsville and Matamata.

All Council decisions, whether made by the Council itself or under delegated authority, are subject to the decision-making requirements in sections 76 to 82 of the LGA 2002. This includes any decision not to take any action.

Local Government Act 2002 decision	Staff/officer comment
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making requirements	
Section 77 – Council needs to give consideration to the reasonable practicable options available.	Options are addressed above in this report.
Section 78 – requires consideration of the views of Interested/affected people	Community views have been sought through the online survey and community sessions
Section 79 – how to achieve compliance with sections 77 and 78 is in proportion to the significance of the issue	The Significance and Engagement Policy is considered above. This issue is assessed as having a high level of significance.
Section 82 – this sets out principles of consultation.	Community consultation took place from 15 June to 30 June 2026.

Staff also assessed whether section 97 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) applies. That section covers decisions that may be made only through a Long Term Plan or an amendment to it. Staff concluded that the Head Start proposal does not contain any such decisions, so a Long Term Plan amendment is not required.

Policy Considerations

The Head Start process is ‘significantly inconsistent’ with adopted policies and plans. This means Council needs to clearly identify:

- a. the inconsistency; and
- b. the reasons for the inconsistency; and
- c. any intention of Council to amend the policy or plan to accommodate the decision.

As discussed above the 2024–2034 Long Term Plan did not anticipate reform of this nature.

Ngā Pāpāhonga me ngā Whakawhitiwhitinga | Communications and engagement

Council has undertaken community engagement via a community survey and community sessions in each town. The results are summarised above and have been considered in the options assessment. The East Waikato and Waikato-wide scenarios were directly tested; the compulsory backstop was not. Engagement with Iwi has also been detailed elsewhere in this report.

The East Waikato working group has also engaged through the Waikato Mayoral and Chief Executives’ forums and sought Waikato Regional Council input.

Following Council’s decision, the outcome and reasons should be published through Council’s usual channels. If a proposal proceeds, further engagement will be required on governance and representation, local delegations, rates and debt, assets and reserves, service levels, workforce implications, Treaty Settlement arrangements and any potential boundary changes.

Each participating council will make its own decision. The final outline proposal should accurately record both the common position and any material differences between councils.

The Memorandum of Understanding states that the Parties agree not to actively undertake any media communications about the Memorandum of Understanding until such time as the Mayors have signed it.

Timeframes

The table below sets out the next key steps:

Key Task	Responsibility	By when
Council considers and resolves its preferred option.	Mayor and Councillors.	4 August 2026
If Council approves the Waihou–Piako–Coromandel Unitary Authority (previously referred to as East Waikato) the following time frames would apply:		
Finalise the Waihou–Piako–Coromandel outline proposal, supporting evidence and letters of support.	East Waikato area working group.	Before 9 August 2026
Each participating council confirms its position and any authority required for submission.	Participating councils.	Before 9 August 2026
Submit the outline proposal to MCERT, subject to the councils' resolutions.	Mayors	By 9 August 2026
Cabinet assesses outline proposals and decides which proceed in principle.	MCERT and Cabinet.	September 2026
If accepted, undertake detailed design, due diligence, assurance and further engagement; submit detailed proposal.	Joint East Waikato area programme and participating councils.	October 2026 to March 2027
Local government elections held (for new entity)	Participating councils.	October 2028
Transition to new entity (staffing etc)	Participating councils.	October 2028 and beyond

Te Tākoha ki ngā Hua mō te Hapori me te here ki te whakakitenga o te Kaunihera | Contribution to Community Outcomes

Matamata-Piako District Council's Community Outcomes are set out below:

MATAMATA-PIAKO TŌ MĀTOU WĀHI NOHO OUR PLACE	MATAMATA-PIAKO DISTRICT COUNCIL TE ARA RAUTAKI STRATEGIC DIRECTION
TŌ MĀTOU WHAKAKITENGA OUR VISION Matamata-Piako District is vibrant, passionate, progressive, where opportunity abounds. 'The heart of our community is our people, and the people are the heart of our community.'	
TŌ MĀTOU WHĀINGA MATUA OUR PRIORITIES (COMMUNITY OUTCOMES)	

			
He wāhi kaingākau ki te manawa A place with people at its heart	He wāhi puawaitanga A place to thrive	He wāhi e poipoi ai tō tātou taiao A place that embraces our environment	He wāhi whakapapa, he wāhi hangahanga A place to belong and create

The community outcomes relevant to this report are as follows:

- All the outcomes.

Pānga ki te pūtea, me te puna pūtea | Financial Cost and Funding Source

There is no immediate impact on rates, debt, capital expenditure, strategic assets or levels of service. Work to date has primarily used existing staff resources.

If a proposal proceeds to detailed design, further work will be required on programme costs, assets and liabilities, debt, rates, reserves, contracts, council-controlled organisations, systems, workforce, property and service levels. Any unbudgeted expenditure or additional staffing requirement will be reported separately for approval. No claim of net savings or rates reduction should be made until that work is complete.

Ngā Tāpiritanga | Attachments

- A.  Head Start pathway: Policy document – Simplifying Local Government

- B.  One-page summary of the consultation

- C.  Summary of the community feedback

- D.  List of submissions received

- E.  Te-Manawhenua-Forum-submission-on-Headstart-Proposal-29.6.26

- F.  He tāpaetanga nā Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust on local Government Reorganisation Proposals_20 July 2026 MPDC

- G.  Memorandum of Understanding

- H.  Draft Head Start Proposal

- I.  Draft Head Start Proposal Appendices


Ngā waitohu | Signatories

Author(s)	Niall Baker	
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	Kaiārahi Tima Kaupapahere Policy Team Leader	
Approved by	Sandra Harris Pou Kaupapahere, Rāngai Mahitahi me te Kāwana Policy, Partnerships and Governance Manager	
	Kelly Reith Hautū Rangatōpū, Tāngata me ngā Hononga Group Manager Corporate, People & Relationships	



Head Start pathway

Simplifying Local Government

Item 5.1

Attachment A



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Ministerial foreword

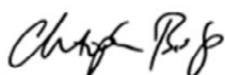
Local government plays a central role in shaping how New Zealand grows and develops. Councils understand their communities and regions, and they are key partners with central government in delivering housing, infrastructure, and environmental management.

The Government knows councils are managing significant change, with multiple reforms happening at once. Alongside implementing a new planning system, councils told us through submissions on the [Simplifying Local Government proposal](#) that they wanted greater flexibility, including the ability to shape future governance arrangements themselves and, where they are ready, to move more quickly.

The Head Start pathway is a direct response to that feedback. It provides a voluntary, streamlined option for councils that want to lead the transition early, while continuing to deliver the new planning system. Head Start enables locally led solutions, so councils can set their own direction and pace rather than waiting for wider reform settings to apply.

The Government has been clear that regional governance needs to be simpler and more effective over time. Head Start is voluntary. Councils that do not opt in will not face mandatory change until after the 2028 local elections, giving them space to focus on delivering the first generation of plans under the new planning system.

Together, the Head Start pathway and the backstop approach provide certainty and confidence, supporting councils to lead where they are ready, while setting the system up to work better for the long term and delivering the new planning system.



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform



Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Local Government

The Simplifying Local Government proposal

In November we consulted on a draft proposal to establish regional boards of mayors, replacing regional councillors, to lead the development of reorganisation plans for a region. The proposal can be found at dia.govt.nz/Simplifying-Local-Government#Proposal.

What we heard

Consultation on this proposal resulted in more than 1,150 submissions, including around 70 from councils and local government sector bodies, and around 60 from iwi/Māori organisations. Submitters generally agreed with the need for reform but raised issues with the specific proposal.

There was more support for regional reorganisation plans than combined territories boards (CTBs). Many submitters had concerns about council capacity to progress these reforms at the same time as other government initiatives. Some suggested changes to the timing, membership, or remit of CTBs.

Many submitters supported keeping regional councillors in place until the 2028 local elections – as a practical measure to support mayors and maintain democratic legitimacy.

Submissions highlighted the important relationships regional councils have with iwi Māori, and the Treaty settlement redress arrangements that relate to regional council functions.

Other issues raised in submissions included:

- preserving and supporting local democracy, including balancing urban and rural interests, with some support for Crown observers
- retention of regional service delivery, particularly environmental management and river catchment management
- mayoral workloads and adopting a regional perspective; and
- funding and process concerns.

Councils told us they wanted greater flexibility to take locally led approaches to reform. Some councils and mayors have been clear that they are ready to move faster, building on existing regional arrangements such as mayoral forums rather than establishing a board of the region's mayors.

The Head Start pathway responds directly to that feedback, giving councils that are ready the opportunity to take the lead, shape their own regional solutions, and progress at pace.

What we are doing

We have listened to feedback and refined our approach.

We will introduce a streamlined Head Start pathway for councils that are ready to develop and progress reorganisation proposals, with the aim of creating unitary authorities within a region through bespoke legislation.

We will legislate for councils not progressing through Head Start to enter a compulsory backstop process after the 2028 local elections.

We will replace regional councillors at the 2028 local elections with an interim body (for example, a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a combination of both). The precise model will be confirmed later. Retaining regional councillors until the 2028 local elections will provide capacity during a period of substantial change.

How this fits with the new planning system

We know councils are navigating significant change, with multiple reforms happening at once.

The Head Start pathway gives councils that are ready to move early the confidence to get on with delivering the new planning system now, while they shape the governance arrangements ahead of the 2028 local elections.

By progressively aligning governance with how the new planning system is designed to work, Head Start enables councils to lead the transition on their own terms, rather than waiting for wider reform to commence.

Delivering the new planning system remains core business for all councils and continues in parallel, whichever pathway councils choose.

Head Start pathway

From 5 May 2026, two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities can submit an outline proposal to establish a new unitary authority covering part or all of a region. Proposals will need to be submitted by 9 August 2026.

A unitary authority combines the functions of a regional council and a city or district council into a single organisation. This can simplify governance, reduce duplication, and improve regional coordination.

Councils participating in the Head Start pathway will continue implementing the new planning system alongside any reorganisation activity.

Who can submit an outline proposal?

Any two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities (except for Auckland) including cross-boundary groupings, may submit if they represent a majority of either the:

- directly affected territorial authorities, or
- population across directly affected areas.

Proposals cannot be submitted by minority groupings, individual territorial authorities or unitary authorities, regional councils, individuals or other organisations.

Eligibility criteria

Proposals must be submitted by two or more territorial authorities that together represent a majority of either directly affected territorial authorities or a majority of the population across directly affected districts. The following examples illustrate how this may work.

What types of reorganisation can be proposed?

Outline proposals must provide for the establishment of new unitary authorities. The most straightforward approach is for all councils in a region to combine to form a single unitary authority.

We will also consider outline proposals for subregional unitary authorities and potential cross-boundary proposals, where:

- existing territorial authorities are combined and regional council functions are transferred
- the proposed arrangements would result in fewer local authorities overall
- the proposed arrangements would deliver clearer accountability and effective delivery of key functions, including regional planning, transport, and catchment management.

More than one unitary authority in a region is only likely to be approved if:

- the region is large and has more complex issues
- the proposal clearly meets the criteria and doesn't lead to the fragmentation of key regional functions where collaboration is required, such as catchment management.

Working with iwi/Māori

Treaty settlement arrangements will continue to be provided for. We will work with applicants and iwi/Māori affected by the Head Start pathway to support the continuation of effective relationships and uphold settlement redress.

Councils will be expected to engage with relevant post-settlement governance entities (PSGEs) to demonstrate how existing Treaty settlement arrangements could be transferred to new unitary authorities with equivalent effect. The Government will also work with PSGEs directly on proposed arrangements. Councils will have an opportunity to further engage with Māori as they continue to develop outline proposals ahead of final decisions in 2027.

Example 1: Majority of directly affected councils

A region contains three territorial authorities: Council A, Council B and Council C. Council A and Council B jointly submit a proposal that affects Council C.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because Councils A and B form a majority of the directly affected territorial authorities, regardless of population size.

Example 2: Majority of population

A region contains four territorial authorities: Councils A to D. Councils A and B jointly submit a proposal that also impacts Councils C and D. Councils A and B together represent more than 50% of the population of the directly affected area, even though Council C and Council D are larger in land area.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because the proposing councils represent a majority of the population, even if they do not represent all councils.

Example 3: Minority of directly affected councils

A region contains five territorial authorities: Councils A to E. Council A and Council B jointly submit a proposal that also affects Councils C, D and E. Councils A and B together do not represent more than 50% of the population or the majority of affected councils of the directly affected area.

- ✗ This proposal would not be eligible for consideration because, while it involves two councils, it does not represent a majority of councils or population.

Example 4: Subregional unitary authorities

A region contains five territorial authorities: Councils A to E. Council A, Council B, Council C and Council D jointly submit a proposal for two unitaries for the region affecting Council E.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because the proposing councils are a majority of the directly affected territorial authorities, regardless of population of the directly affected areas.

Example 5: Subregional proposal - part of region

A region contains seven territorial authorities: Councils A to F. Council A, Council B and Council C jointly submit a proposal for a unitary for the three councils within their part of the region. The other four councils are unaffected.

- ✓ This proposal would be eligible for consideration because there are more than two territorial authorities proposing amalgamation and the majority of territorial authorities and population affected by the proposal are in favour of the proposal. Reorganisation plans for the remainder of the region (Councils D to F) will be required after the 2028 local body elections.

Note: eligibility is not acceptance, and eligible proposals will still need to pass the assessment.

How will outline proposals be assessed?

Five criteria will be used to assess the proposals:



Deliverability: Proposals are realistic and demonstrate how new arrangements can be implemented in a timely manner.



Supports the new planning system: Shows clear support for implementing the new planning system – including progress on spatial and natural environment plan development – and avoids or minimises disruption to that work.



Simplifies local governance: Proposes more efficient regional governance arrangements, consolidating decision-making and improving alignment between a region's councils.



Economies of scale: Supports regional strategic planning and effective delivery of key regional functions (such as transport and catchment management), and demonstrates responsible and affordable asset management, infrastructure investment, and service delivery.



Maintains local voice: Demonstrates fair and effective representation for communities of interest and how decisions will be made at the local level, balancing urban and rural interests.

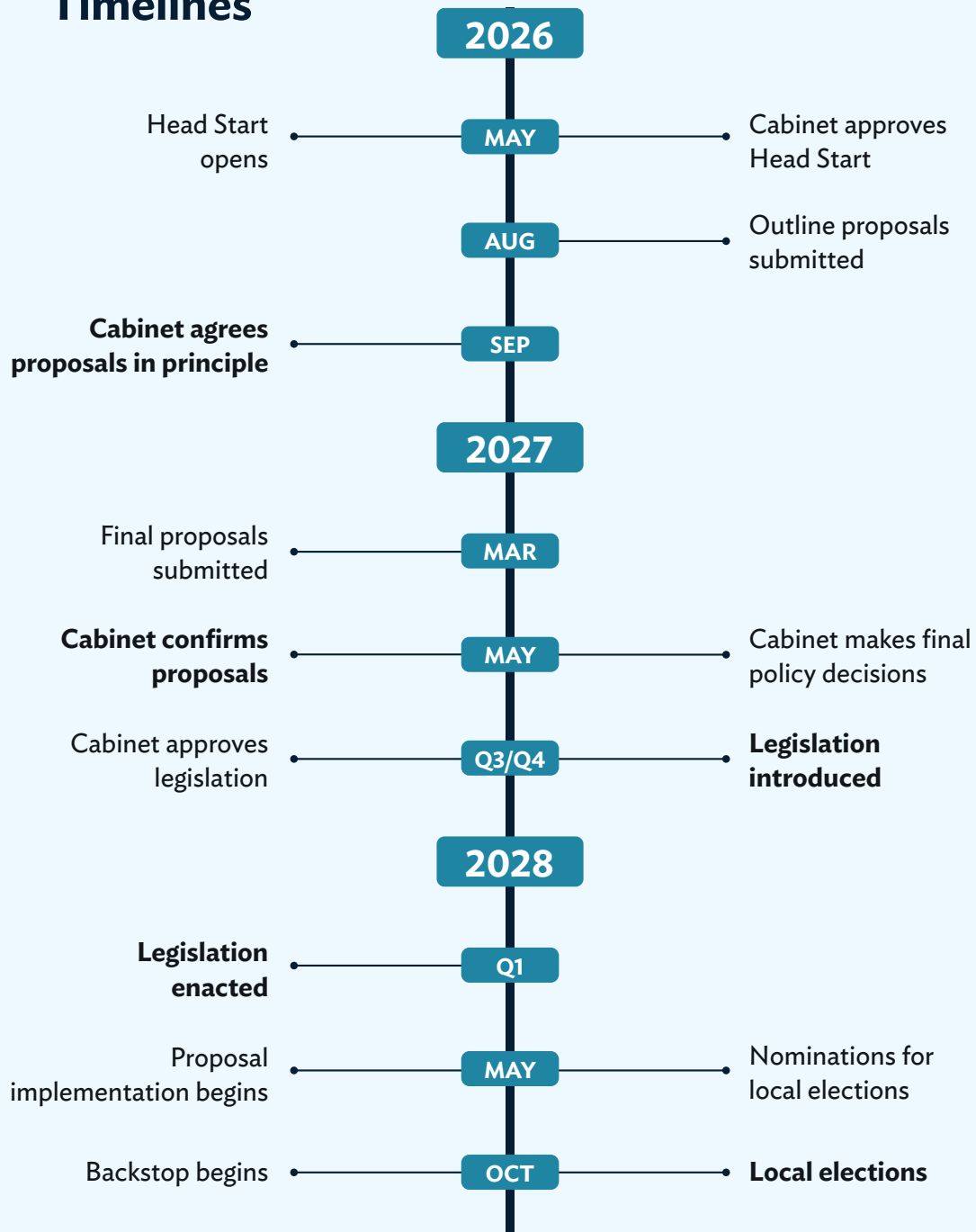
Next steps for Head Start

Once outline proposals have been assessed, Cabinet will decide which proposals are accepted into the detailed design phase of the Head Start pathway.

Once agreed in principle, any support required to develop detailed reorganisation proposals will be determined with submitters and agreed by Cabinet.



Timelines



Status of regional councillors

We previously proposed replacing regional councillors with boards of mayors.

Submitters suggested that retaining regional councillors until the end of their current elected periods would:

- support the transition to the new planning regime, including the first generation of spatial and natural environment plans
- retain institutional knowledge needed to make the transition
- provide additional governance capacity and capability during a period of substantial change.

It is our intention that regional councillors will not be elected at the 2028 local elections. They will be replaced by an interim body, for example a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a hybrid model. We will confirm the exact model in 2027, when successful Head Start proposals are approved.

Current regional councillors will stay on through to the end of the 2028 term to lead regional councils in their roles in the new planning system, particularly regional spatial plans.

Backstop legislation

Progress through the Head Start pathway will help inform the design of backstop arrangements for other regions.

Councils that do not progress through Head Start will continue to focus on delivering the new planning system, including development of the first generation of plans. Reform for those councils will not occur until after the 2028 local elections, through the compulsory backstop process.

This approach gives councils more time to concentrate on planning system implementation before any mandatory governance changes take effect, while still providing a strong indication of when and where future reform will occur.

Regions and councils not progressing through the Head Start pathway will be subject to a backstop process. During the transition, regional council governance would be exercised by an interim body, with the precise model to be confirmed in 2027. Legislation for the backstop will be enacted before nominations open for the 2028 local elections. This will ensure candidates understand any new roles and responsibilities, and electors can vote with clarity.

The final models of governance will be informed by lessons from the Head Start, feedback from consultation on the Simplifying Local Government proposal, and further advice from officials.

Rapid review update

A rapid review of regional council functions was completed to help guide councils during reorganisation planning. It was intended to identify functions that could potentially be centralised or ceased.

The review found that the key opportunities for centralisation are already being considered through existing government work programmes. For example, a national regulator for compliance and enforcement is being considered as part of the new planning system.

The RMA Expert Advisory Group recommended that, in the new planning system, compliance and enforcement functions should be transferred to a national regulator with regional compliance hubs. Policy work on this proposal is expected to be progressed after the Planning and Natural Environment Bills pass. The Government then expects to engage with local authorities and others to discuss the merits of different approaches.

The review concluded that other functions are still best delivered at a regional or local scale. In general, centralisation would involve high transition costs, be disproportionate to the problem identified, and is unlikely to materially improve regional or system outcomes. In some cases, the status quo is functioning effectively or could benefit from targeted modification rather than substantial change.

Transport is one key regional function that requires further consideration as a part of Head Start proposals. Transport responsibilities are currently split across central (NZ Transport Agency) and local government, with territorial authorities responsible for local roading while regional councils are responsible for network planning and public transport.

Outline proposals do not need to resolve all issues relating to any transfer of regional functions. However, proposals should:

- address the need to consolidate regional transport functions (such as in a regional unitary authority, regional joint committee or regional council controlled organisation)
- propose interim arrangements with respect to the new planning system compliance and enforcement functions, until Government decisions have been made
- explain how effective river catchment management can be maintained.



Resources

For further information, including guidance and how to engage with officials and access support, see dia.govt.nz/Simplifying-Local-Government

Published by the New Zealand Government
in May 2026



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government



Let's Talk Matamata-Piako

Local Government Change Community Feedback

Central government wants fewer councils and has indicated that regional councils, such as Waikato Regional Council, will not continue in their current form after 2028. Councils have been invited to put forward proposals for how local government could be reorganised. If councils choose not to do so, central government will determine future arrangements through a separate process. Before deciding what proposal to submit, we sought community feedback from **15 to 30 June 2026**.

How we promoted the consultation



Three public information sessions: Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha.



Three articles on the MPDC website were opened by **1473** people.



Four posts on Council's Facebook page were viewed by **40127** people.



Two e-newsletters included information.



Advertising in three local newspapers.



Four notifications reached around 4868 mobile phones. 744 people clicked through for more information.

Who we heard from

4097

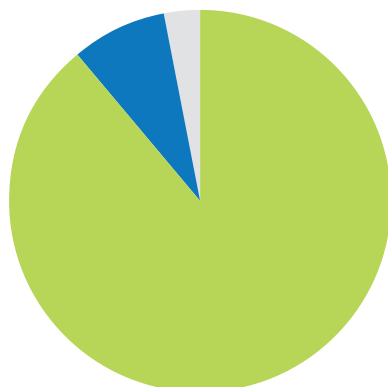
Visits to the Let's Talk consultation page.

832

Submissions were received. Completed online or in hard copy.

106

People attended the public information sessions. 162 people viewed the recording.



Level of support for the proposed options

- Eastern Waikato unitary authority **89%**
- Waikato-wide unitary authority **7%**
- Other/no selection **4%**

Where respondents live

- Te Aroha **28%**
- Matamata **33%**
- Morrinsville **36%**
- Outside the district **3%**

Further information and next steps

Following this consultation, Council will review the feedback received and decide how to respond to central government. This will include discussions with neighbouring councils and regional council. There is a deadline of **9 August** to submit a proposal to central government. Some respondents questioned why retaining the current structure was not an option. Under the Government's reform criteria, councils were asked to consider larger combined structures rather than the status quo. We will continue to update the community as this progresses.

Top six feedback themes



Keep local decision-making, representation and community identity strong.



Shared rural values, industries and environmental challenges.



Concern about rural voices being outweighed by larger centres.



Protect local assets, debt positions and ratepayer interests.



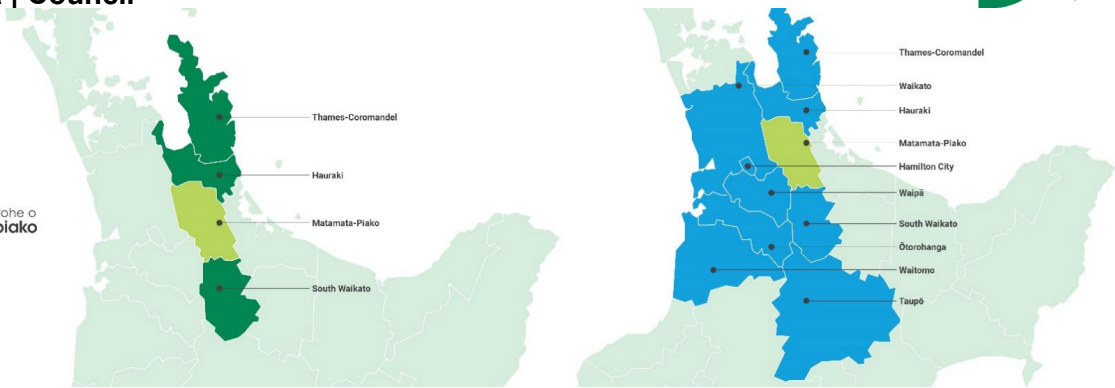
Build on existing council partnerships and shared services.



More time needed to understand and influence proposed changes.



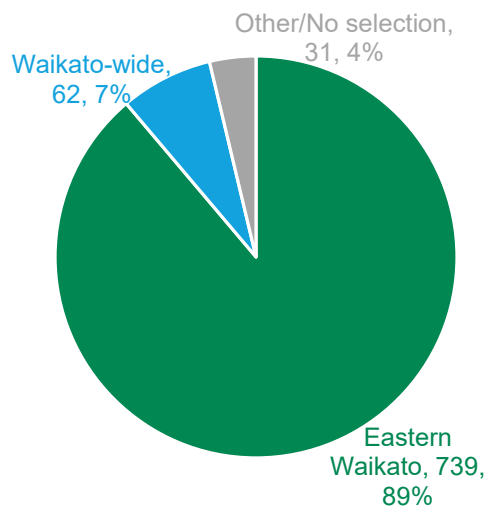
te kaunihera ā-rohe o
matamata-piako
district council



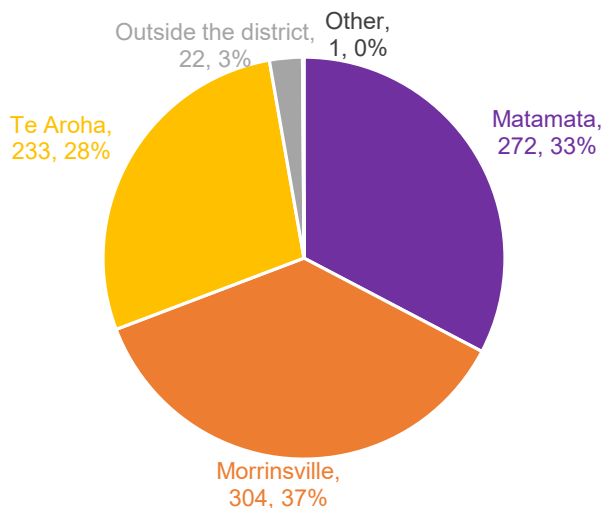
Local Government Change is Coming – Consultation summary

Community consultation was open from 15 to 30 June. 832 submissions were received. These have been summarised below. Full submissions are available [here](#).

Do you have a preferred option?



Where do you live?



Those that selected **Eastern Waikato** - Summary of comments (739 comments, 89%)

Overview

Feedback received from those that selected Eastern Waikato was overwhelmingly supportive of a smaller, rural-focused unitary authority comprising Matamata-Piako and neighbouring eastern districts. The dominant view was that this option provides the best opportunity to meet the Government's reform objectives while preserving strong local representation, local decision-making, community identity and avoiding domination by larger urban centres.

Protecting Local Voice and Representation

The most frequently raised theme was the importance of retaining a strong local voice. Respondents expressed concern that a larger Waikato-wide authority would dilute representation for rural communities and result in smaller towns being overshadowed by larger urban centres. Many considered the Eastern Waikato option more likely to maintain local accountability and decision-making closer to the communities affected.

Rural and Provincial Communities of Interest

Many submitters considered Matamata-Piako, Hauraki, South Waikato and, to a lesser extent, Thames-Coromandel, to share common characteristics and challenges. Respondents referred to shared rural economies, similar demographics, primary industry interests, community values, and common environmental and catchment issues as reasons for supporting an Eastern Waikato grouping.

Concerns About a Waikato-Wide Authority

A significant proportion of respondents opposed a Waikato-wide model, particularly one including Hamilton City. Common concerns included:

- Rural communities being outvoted by urban populations.
- Funding and resources being directed towards city priorities.
- Increased bureaucracy and reduced responsiveness.
- Potential loss of local identity and community focus.

Financial Prudence and Debt Concerns

Many submitters expressed concern about potentially inheriting debt or financial liabilities from larger councils. There was strong support for protecting locally funded assets and ensuring ratepayer funds continue to benefit local communities. Respondents frequently questioned whether a larger authority would deliver genuine savings or improved outcomes for rural ratepayers.

Building on Existing Partnerships

Submitters commonly noted that councils within the proposed Eastern Waikato area already collaborate successfully in areas such as emergency management, waste services, environmental management, and catchment-related activities. Many viewed the proposal as a natural extension of these existing relationships.

Process and Governance Expectations

While supporting Option 1, many respondents sought assurances around future governance arrangements, including maintaining strong local representation, protecting local assets, ensuring transparent financial arrangements, and providing ongoing opportunities for community input. There was also criticism of the perceived pace of the reform process and calls for continued community engagement.

Those that selected **Waikato-wide** - Summary of comments (62 comments, 7%)

Overview

Those who favoured a Waikato-wide model generally did so because they believed a larger authority would be better positioned to deliver long-term efficiencies, stronger strategic planning, improved coordination of regional infrastructure, transport, environmental management, and economic development across the wider Waikato region. However, even among supporters there was recognition that safeguards would be required to ensure local communities continue to have an effective voice and that rural interests are not diminished within a larger governance structure.

Key Themes

Supporters considered a larger authority could provide greater organisational capability, economies of scale, and a stronger collective voice when engaging with central government. Several respondents noted that growth, transport, housing, infrastructure and environmental issues increasingly cross current council boundaries and may be more effectively managed at a regional level.

Some submitters questioned whether a smaller Eastern Waikato authority would have sufficient scale to meet the Government's long-term reform objectives and suggested that a larger model may ultimately be more sustainable. Others believed potential concerns around rural representation could be addressed through well-designed governance arrangements, local boards, and ward-based representation.

While supportive of a larger authority, respondents generally emphasised the importance of retaining meaningful local representation, transparent governance structures, protection of local interests, and strong community input into decision-making.

Those that selected **Other/No selection** - Summary of comments (31 comments, 4%)

Overview

A smaller group of respondents either selected "Other" or did not clearly express support for either proposed option. Feedback from this group was generally characterised by concerns about the reform process itself, requests for additional information, stronger community engagement, greater transparency around costs and benefits, and careful consideration of alternative structures that would preserve local representation and community identity.

Key Themes

Many respondents expressed a preference for retaining the current local government structure and questioned the need for reform. Common concerns included the perceived lack of public consultation, the short timeframe for decision-making, and uncertainty around the costs, benefits, and long-term implications of amalgamation. Several submitters described the process as rushed and sought more detailed analysis before any decisions were made.

A number of respondents proposed modifications to the options presented, including alternative council groupings, excluding Thames-Coromandel from an Eastern Waikato arrangement, or adopting boundaries based on shared river catchments, communities of interest, or existing service arrangements.

Governance and representation remained important considerations. Respondents sought clarity on future governance structures, the role of mayors and elected members, protection of local assets, treatment of debt, and mechanisms to ensure local communities continue to have meaningful influence over decision-making.

Submissions

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
1	- TeAhirau John Anthony Matchitt	Matamata	
2	- Jodi	Matamata	
3	- Constanza Baigent	Matamata	Avoids the issue of Hamilton Centric decisions. Better representation of our demographics and local issues and matters
4	- Denise Williams	Matamata	Definitely do not want to be part of Waikato wide, anything we have been involved in within that area we have been a lost voice/poor relation. We wish to be part of a district with a small rural town basis, understanding of our needs.
5	- Wanda Whitton-Esteve	Matamata	Option 1 makes sense as we are already working closely with these councils, share similar environments and the scale is manageable.
6	- Wayne and Chris Liddicoat	Matamata	We want to keep our council local and option one is the only option that will be similar to what we have now, and definitely keep our own separate Mayors and councilors
7	- Glenda Corkill	Matamata	I can't see that the bigger population choice would consider rural based area needs in an equitable way.
8	- MR S T SIMON	Matamata	
9	- Helen Samuel	Matamata	Small, rural towns have separate needs to larger cities. We need a council that recognises and has a voice of what is important to our region. We also should not have to carry the cost as ratepayers for Hamilton, Taupo etc
10	- Ruth Oldershaw	Matamata	Option 1 appears to be as local as we can hope for with not too many outside voices which could be irrelevant to the needs of our area.
11	- Anne Taylor	Matamata	I like thought of rural and lining our civil defense with smaller close areas.
12	- Richard Davis	Matamata	Rural Matamata is very different to Hamilton City. The demographic is very different and therefore we need to keep local protection around local voice. MPDC already works well with similar councils that surround the area that are also Rural based community. There is a common type of thought process. Super City has not worked well in Auckland with many decisions being based on the inner areas of that city without any thought as to the diverse nature of those in real area. If Hamilton were to become the main position for a Super City, then the local work will be undone.
13	- Lynette Stanley	Matamata	Option 2 - we would just be swallowed up by Hamilton (and their debt). At least with Option 1 it is a smaller catchment of likeminded regions.
14	- Sandra Cummings	Matamata	
15	- Dale Pollock	Matamata	
16	- Sharon Edge	Matamata	The most sensible and practical option. The others are a no brainer.
17	- Wendy	Matamata	Waikato unitary authority preferred.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
18	- TOLLEY	Matamata	
19	- Declan Smith	Matamata	
20	- Jennifer King	Matamata	We prefer that decision making I. Our region is localized. We do not want to be lumped in with others who have different agendas to the people that live here.
21	- Lisa Leech	Matamata	
22	- Jacqueline Allen	Matamata	
23	- Wendy Fenn	Matamata	I support option one as it is clearly the on option to keep our voice from being heard.As you have covered we already work closely with nearby councils with shared recycling collection and civil defense and it only makes sense to continue in this way. Please please ensure that you as a council can still represent members of your community to ensure the we all continue to enjoy our life here in beautiful Matamata.
24	- James Cover	Matamata	I would prefer Matamata-Piako Council to stay as it is. I am against further amalgamation, preferring local decision-making, local control & local voice.
25	- eric hill	Matamata	Better to work with the communities that we work with the day to day business
26	- Sue Rockliffe	Matamata	I think option 1 works better for our district. Similar area and smaller towns.
27	- Helen Sparks	Matamata	
28	- Roy Brimblecomb e	Matamata	Opting for option one, I feel there will be the ability for more local input and control. Option two will see our voices watered down and have less impact and recognition at the table.
29	- Penny Vuglar	Matamata	I would like to keep our council area as small as possible. I think it also makes sense to keep our region with a greater rural support outlook.
30	- Lesley-Ann Boshoff	Matamata	
31	- WARREN EDWARD GREEN	Matamata	To: Matamata-Piako District Council Feedback on Local Government Reorganisation (Head Start Pathway) My position is that I Strongly Support Option One: Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority While I share the Council's view that the current local government system is not broken, I recognize that central government's mandated reform means status quo is not a viable option. If our community does not actively drive its own destiny through the Head Start pathway, we risk having a rigid structure imposed upon us via the government's Backstop process. Among the models available, Option One (the Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority) is unequivocally the best pathway forward for us. It strikes the balance mandated by the reform criteria: it achieves the central government's goal of structural simplification and regional scale, while safeguarding the localized voice, provincial identity, and specific needs of Matamata-Piako residents. My reasons for supporting Option One (Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority) 1. Shared Community Interests and Aligned Provincial Identity The four proposed partner districts—Matamata-Piako, Hauraki, South Waikato, and Thames-Coromandel—share a deeply interconnected rural, agricultural, and provincial makeup. Unlike a massive region-wide entity, this smaller cluster ensures that any newly formed authority's strategic focus remains firmly fixed on the issues that matter to provincial communities: primary industries, rural roading infrastructure, and small-town economic development. 2. Proven Track Record of Existing Collaboration An Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority would be a logical evolution built on organic,

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			pre-existing partnerships. Our four councils already successfully collaborate across several operational fronts, meaning a transition would be smoother, less disruptive, and highly cost-effective. Key areas of existing alignment include: Protection of Local Voice vs. The Risk of Urban Dominance The flaw of Option Two (a Waikato-wide authority) is the sheer dilution of provincial representation. In a single, region-wide council, the massive population density of Hamilton City and its surrounding metropolitan high-growth areas would inevitably command the lion's share of political attention and financial resource allocation. My Key Concern, under a region-wide model, is that the needs of rural communities like Matamata, Morrinsville, and Te Aroha risk being completely outweighed or overlooked by urban-centric priorities. Option One ensures that decisions regarding local assets, planning, and community funding are kept closer to home, decided by representatives who understand the distinct challenges of our specific sub-region. In conclusion Option One looks to fulfil the government's structural reform criteria without sacrificing the local soul of our communities. It offers a unified, simplified "one-stop-shop" governance model that removes duplicated bureaucratic layers, yet remains small enough to remain directly accountable to its people. I urge the Council to firmly advance Option One: Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority as its preferred outline proposal to Cabinet to ensure our community retains its strong local voice.
32	- Rexine Hawes	Matamata	I don't agree Thames-Coromandel should be part of this unitary. Their district needs (high tourism), complex hazards, shorelines, catchments and roading makes them far more unique to a coastal unitary (such as BoP). I'd prefer to see A South Waikato, Matamata-Piako, Hauraki unitary, which already has multiple shared services.
33	- Paul Cameron	Matamata	I believe that decision making should be kept local. A big concern is that moving to option 2 would see MPDC ad rate payers, paying for infrastructure which are no benefit to us locally, and that my financial reserves would. be taken to prop up poor and indebted areas, e.g. Hamilton (which is known for poor management). Even though there is still plenty of work and renewals to be done in our district. There is also the consideration of having a voice in decision-making. Therefore, I strongly recommend Option 1 as outlined in this communication.
34	- Gail Oliver	Matamata	
35	- Lara Simmons	Matamata	
36	- Milly Keys	Matamata	While the status quo is no longer an option for us due to the forced decision by central government, I support the Eastern Waikato unitary authority as the proposed neighbouring districts are similar to Matamata- Piako with rural and provincial communities with shared interests. I also support this option as it will retain our local voice of elected representation.
37	- Anna Roughton	Matamata	It is upsetting to hear of the amalgamation of councils as it means a distancing from what is happening on the ground for local people. I feel it will mean people will lose their voice and will impact on the wellbeing of local community. It is important that we maintain oversight of community decisions and these are not passed out to wider bodies who do not see or understand the need of the local community. I am disappointed that government have not chosen to include people in this decision making process as it is these people who will be impacted.
38	- Dennis and Iori Ogle	Matamata	
39	- Gemma Sowry	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
40	- Shane Baker	Matamata	
41	- Trevor Green	Matamata	The end solution must not end up with community boards and councilors. We must retain local control.
42	- Sandra Harper-Clark	Matamata	
43	- Helen Mead	Matamata	
44	- AJ Jackson	Matamata	Definitely option 1. Option 2 is too big to cover everything
45	- Ian Howarth	Matamata	
46	- Steph Baker	Matamata	
47	- Jaime Pugh	Matamata	I prefer option one eastern waikato unitary authority however don't think TCDC should be included.
48	- Rosemary Thorne-George	Matamata	Think it's better to combine with smaller Councils rather than be the small player if combined with Hamilton
49	- Erin Fowler	Matamata	
50	- Gemma Scott	Matamata	
51	- Karen	Matamata	Ideally not join up with others as we have seen what happens eg Matamata Playcentre Amalgamation. However, since we have no choice but to go with one or the other, i Agree with the Eastern and the below: keep decisions closer to home protect local voice and representation keep working with councils that are similar to ours and we already work well with reflect shared catchments, communities of interest, and common goals
52	- Cliff and Maureen Mason	Matamata	Keep decisions close to home and similar rural areas
53	- Jessica Lowe	Matamata	
54	- Linda Hodge	Matamata	I support the belief as stated in Scene 16 June, 2026, that the Eastern Waikato option offers the best chance to keep decisions closer to home, protect local voice and representation and allow MPDC to continue working with councils that are similar and already connected.
55	- Sandra Young	Matamata	Would prefer to stay away from Hamilton
56	- Ian McLeary	Matamata	Please do not go elect a Waikato-wide unitary authority as 'Bid is not good. we lived in the Franklin District when Pukekohe was forced into the Auckland Super city amalgamation. It was a total loss of an excellent, prosperous District Council that had everything that was both of high standard and modern to the greater Auckland City where all our rate payments went to pay for Queen Street upgrades and other projects in the CBD. We lost the good upkeep of the parks and reserves so well maintained under the Franklin District Council, too berms not mowen and

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			continuing loss of FDC local governance and high standards. Bid is not beautiful or cost effective governance
57	- Graeme Villers	Matamata	Keep away from Hamilton, we would be dictated to by them, stay in smaller districts to unite and keep rates down.
58	- Chantelle Windlebourne	Matamata	Is there possibility to remove TCDC from the consideration. That district unfortunately has significant issues with infrastructure, environmental challenges, and roading, resulting in exorbitant rates. I am hoping this option does not create a significant rates increase for households in Matamata.
59	- John McClintock	Matamata	
60	- Chris Earl	Matamata	Very much against option two, as I feel we would be taking on Hamilton city council huge debt and out of control bureaucracy, resulting in Matamata Piako having little or no say at the council table and costing us ratepayers much more.
61	- Patricia Hague	Matamata	Seems the best option for those that live in Matamata
62	- Kay Tappin	Matamata	This option is the most "like" what we currently have. It makes sense to keep the country model as opposed meeting dragged into city like .
63	- Jill	Matamata	
64	- Adrienne Wilcock	Matamata	I acknowledge the time frame is tight and not a lot of resource has been put into this piece for good reason. There are way more questions than answers at this stage. However, I was particularly disappointed with the press release as it was very skewed towards the option you seem to prefer. There are advantages and disadvantages for both options. This survey should have provided more balance so that people responding can make a more informed response and not be influenced by the one eyed view provided. That's not being transparent if you are wanting a genuine opinion from the community. I am not of the opinion that an East Waikato council will achieve the best outcome for the MPDC residents. Morrinsville is extremely close to Hamilton and the district's relationship both from a people and economic perspective is generally closer with Hamilton, Waipa and Waikato District than the TCDC, HDC and SWDC. Mayoralities are a victorian archaic form of democracy and leadership. They are male-centric, with the mayoress being for a woman, the mayor's partner. It's time to take a more modern approach. To elect a mayor for an East Waikato area is not the best outcome for four districts. Potentially a lot of candidates with the winner only securing a small percentage of votes if same voting system were used. I acknowledge people's fear of Hamilton city with its debt and that the city would dominate the rural districts. To say loss of the rural voice is subjective. An innovative governance and representation structure will address this and you have the opportunity to shape this. If Hamilton, Waipa and Waikato amalgamate, where does that leave Otorohanga and MPDC with the airport shares? Public transport is a regional service. Another good reason to all come together as one. MPDC is an economic powerhouse, is well positioned between Hamilton and Tauranga so the council needs to go in the best strategic direction for our district. I am not convinced the East Waikato option achieves that. All roads lead to Hamilton, not Paeroa or Putaruru. I don't see the Otorohanga Waitomo amalgamation getting the tick as not enough scale, so they will be faced with joining the big three. There is a risk that the East Waikato option will be a lemon next to the larger amalgamation. I encourage you to take a broader longer term view and think more deeply about where the greatest opportunity sits. There can still be a sub-regional operations within a larger entity. There seems to be an opinion that the Auckland Unitary authority is a massive failure. I would suggest that had it not happened to consider what mess they would be in now- silos, parochialism and poor outcomes due to

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			disjointed planning. It's like the waters decision. As much as a minority of current elected members don't agree with the decision made about the waters, the decision was made by taking the long term view. The benefits of scale will be achieved in the long term, not the short term. This amalgamation needs to also take that view.
65	- Catherine Robson	Matamata	
66	- Graeme Guilford	Matamata	
67	- Jenny Mayo	Matamata	
68	- Ana Rogers	Matamata	I wish it could stay as is. I resent (N)ational government forcing/imposing this change on local government. We hope to build on our section soon, but our interactions with Matamata-Piako Council have overall been positive and helpful; we've mostly been impressed by Council's responsiveness. I hope amalgamation won't change the Council for the worse.
69	- Mary Porter	Matamata	I agree in the area where this already works with the other councils close to Matamata-piako and stand by my feedback and my option.
70	- Brenda dunn	Matamata	
71	- Judith Howard	Matamata	
72	- Karen Ohanlon	Matamata	I have ticked option 1 but was tempted to tick option 2 , maybe a change would be good, all I hear from people when we talk about Matamata council is , they are well known to be the worse council to deal with as far as building permits etc go, so maybe a change in council might fix this ???
73	- Val Lundon	Matamata	
74	- Jenni Laing	Matamata	I'd like to keep decision making close to our home
75	- Morrie Laing	Matamata	
76	- Lisa Dellow	Matamata	
77	- Ted Usmar	Matamata	
78	- Peter Williams	Matamata	We need to keep some local control, Larger Waikato would not do that. We came to Matamata 12 years ago to be in a smaller community, away from large controlling councils. We want the local council to be the ones to speak for us not someone in a high tower.
79	- Jono Arthur	Matamata	Smaller representative government is always better government.
80	- Misty Smith	Matamata	I agree with the option 1, The Eastern Waikato, as it focuses on our region and rural areas, especially with regards to the management of Te Awa o Waihou and as per your info does not effect the current standing of the local governance and who we have elected to represent us. Option 2 is far too big a region and resources will be allocated to the loudest voice.
81	- Allan Price	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
82	- Spencer Fallon	Matamata	Why is Central Government doing this? There has to be a reason behind it all. From experience i know When Heirachy make changes its not for the Good of the People!
83	- Dot Veal	Matamata	We cannot allow the government to dictate what we have to do. We do not have a voice in a larger unitary authority. Our local council know the needs/wishes of the local people and if they are already working together with other councils then decisions remain closer to home. Thank you Ash for asking for community feedback. Hopefully we all support our council and vote for option 1.
84	- Chris Bedggood	Matamata	Option 2 would be ok if it didn't include the city. Such a huge geographic area with lots of wards needed and the remote places might get left behind. In comparison the Auckland council has a smaller rural zone.
85	- Paul Dudley	Matamata	
86	- Donelle Conning	Matamata	
87	- Gail and Tony Bailey	Matamata	
88	- Valmae Spence	Matamata	Concern is we will be overtaken with larger towns/cities and the progress and financial status our Council have achieved will be eaten up
89	- Walter Spence	Matamata	
90	- Vilingi Young	Matamata	I'm not in favour of this at all or how government has gone about this. There has been no analysis done to provide the public the pros and cons. it's not at all fair for our local government or our communities.
91	- Shirley macleod	Matamata	
92	- Denis Mason	Matamata	I saw what happened when Rodney Council District was taken over by Auckland Council. A lot more costs with less services.
93	- Kevin Turney	Matamata	I would prefer the status quo to remain, but as this doesn't seem to be an option, then I think the smaller Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority would be more suitable, as the other parties, except for Thames Coromandel, are very similar in geography and would have very similar needs and requirements as Matamata Piako District Council. Thames/Coromandel unfortunately are quite different, having totally varied terrain and a mainly coastal boundary. Giving them different problems. Having lived in Whitianga I can vouch that areas outside of the more central Thames can at times be forgotten. So my conclusion would be to opt for the Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority, and I agree that there should be a Mayor in each area to ensure nobody gets "forgotten"
94	- Robert Allanson Stuart	Matamata	A Waikato-wide unitary authority would lead to us not having a voice, and being ruled by areas not being so prudent as here in MPDC. I still don't see why the government is pushing this on to us.
95	- Pauline Mary Stuart	Matamata	
96	- Janine Kane	Matamata	
97	- Terry O'Brien	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
98	- Christine O'Brien	Matamata	
99	- Judith Munn	Matamata	I don't totally understand the ins and outs of all this, but I read Ash Tanner's Scene article, which made a lot of good and common sense to me, and wish to support his stance.
100	- Daniel Wilson	Matamata	Would prefer if this didn't happen so hopefully options will be able to change after elections.
101	- PATRICIA MCCARVILL	Matamata	OPTION 1 will at least afford some compatibility with rural communities and relatively less dense urban areas 'and similar environmental concerns
102	- Barbara Keys	Matamata	If we go with Option 2 we will be lost amongst the larger ones. I can remember when the current amalgamation was suggested and many Matamata people felt we were the stronger one and didn't like the suggestion. Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha have been working well together and all towns are thriving. The bigger cities will just swallow us up. Please vote for Option 1.
103	- Diane	Matamata	Number 1 is best
104	- Alex Naea	Matamata	
105	- Mike Boreham	Matamata	I support the Status Quo and Option 1 is closest to that
106	- Shanan Mowatt	Matamata	
107	- Irena & Jim Leadbeater	Matamata	Dear Ash Tanner, regarding government intentions to change council into large impersonal conglomerates, we do not need or want anything to change. We agree with you that it would be more costly and we would have no say in anything that happens in our community. The lesser of the two evils, would be Option 1, the only option that we would agree to. We have lived in our community our whole lives and don't need to be told how to run it by Option 2, which takes in Hamilton city. Anything that needs doing in our community would take months to be sorted and prioritised, when our councillors already know our community and what needs doing. We all pay Waikato Regional Council rates already, and don't get any benefit from that. Someone has looked at all this and decided that we need to be the same, as our community is one of the more affluent, our monies would be diverted to less affluent towns and communities
108	- Helen Slattery	Matamata	From the information supplied at the public meeting in Matamata I think the Eastern Waikato option is my preferred option. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my feedback
109	- Roger Slattery	Matamata	I don't want to take on the debt of Hamilton City. MPDC residents won't have the same say if it was Waikato wide - I prefer the Eastern Waikato option
110	- Stuart Montgomerie	Matamata	
111	- Pamela Howe	Matamata	
112	- Pauline Raphael	Matamata	I am concerned that if Hamilton is in the area chosen, smaller towns such as Matamata will get no say about what happens in our town. I can't see any viable reason why these changes need to take place.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
113	- Clarice Joan Hall	Matamata	Dont want to be in larger area that includes Hamilton
114	- Lorna M Reynolds	Matamata	
115	- Sonja Hoogenboom	Matamata	Prefer no change but if change is to happen then option 1 is the way to go. This would allow smaller communities to work together with a shared understanding of what the needs look like in our part of provincial NZ. Merger which the greater Waikato is likely to leave us with less voice and less choices at a greater cost.
116	- Christine and Matthew Warden	Matamata	
117	- Jo Prevett	Matamata	
118	- Lianne Edwards-Maas	Matamata	
119	- Glenn Rowsell	Matamata	
120	- Phil Simpson	Matamata	
121	- Leonie Tisch	Matamata	
122	- Annemarie Lucie-Smith	Matamata	
123	- Janine	Matamata	
124	- Dave Moore	Matamata	
125	- Raewyn Clark	Matamata	If we have option 2 I don't think we'll get as good amount of council support and focus. Funds/ Rates will be directed supporting areas that aren't as relevant to us our current neighbouring wards. The inclusion of only a few more will hopefully satisfy Central Government.
126	- Dianne Minto	Matamata	
127	- Graham McGurk	Matamata	Best of options. Hamilton would try and dominate if part of authority. Strongly believe the rural/city divide should remain and each has very different aspirations. Prefer to say as is, but appears this is not an option
128	- Graeme Burrage	Matamata	
129	- Daniel Anglesey	Matamata	We need to retain local representation. In a whole Waikato option we will loose local representation. That is not the New Zealand way.
130	- Leslie Cordes	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
13 1	- Bridie workman	Matamata	
13 2	- pania Anderson	Matamata	I prefer the eastern waikato. Keeping our council smaller. With people in touch with what our towns are about rather than only worry about Hamilton City an the bigger towns
13 3	- Raewyn Bradshaw	Matamata	
13 4	- Sharon Neal	Matamata	
13 5	- Kathy Thomas	Matamata	The smaller the better. I lived in Auckland under the super city regime and it was extremely impersonal and smaller districts were lost behind the bigger central areas. Would rather leave things the way they are. Why does the Gvt have to interfere?
13 6	- Frances Germann	Matamata	No
13 7	- Paul Cameron	Matamata	I can see option 2 heading towards a situation where MPDC will be over ruled by larger councils looking at their own interests. Some councils have massive debt and Matamata area does not again, need to support or pay for these indebted councils. I believe the service in our area will decline further. Go for option EASTERN Option 1.
13 8	- Raelene Mikkelsen	Matamata	I prefer decisions made about close to where I live.
13 9	- Kevin Kerewaro	Matamata	
14 0	- Carey Fletcher	Matamata	
14 1	- Cynthia Piper	Matamata	
14 2	- Dianne	Matamata	
14 3	- Catherine Russell	Matamata	
14 4	- John and Sue Cottle	Matamata	We prefer option 1 as lived in West Auckland when it was included in the Supercity and experienced increased rates, our area ignored, infrastructure and traffic problems. Would hate that to happen here in Matamata. Bigger is not necessarily better.
14 5	- Gary Paterson	Matamata	
14 6	- Christopher Bozzo	Matamata	Yes option one would be the best. Option 2 is concerning and I have seen problems in Australia where a city gets all the attention and outer regions don't. Option 1 keeps things as close to how they are at the moment.
14 7	- Suzanne Crawford	Matamata	
14 8	- Bruce Maxwell	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
149	- Michelle	Matamata	
150	- Deon	Matamata	
151	- Beryl	Matamata	
152	- Jenny Peachey	Matamata	
153	- Murray Peachey	Matamata	This whole process is undemocratic and is very destabilising to our communities. The government is forcing this through, as is obvious by the very short time frame - why the great rush? What is the government up to? - What is their real agenda?
154	- Maria van Heuven	Matamata	
155	- Sarah	Matamata	
156	- Charlotte Cotter	Matamata	
157	- Aileen Crayford	Matamata	
158	- Anne Judge	Matamata	This is the plan that makes the most sense to me
159	- Steven Hughes	Matamata	All though larger than present, it represents the rural area. We will not become a little fish in a big pond.
160	- Marilyn Runciman	Matamata	
161	- Lance Cameron	Matamata	I concur with the Mayor on every aspect of this ill-conceived bureaucratic nonsense.
162	- David Carter	Matamata	
163	- Rae Brus	Matamata	No
164	- Victor	Matamata	
165	- Tania Trower	Matamata	Do not want to be part of Hamilton, their spending is out of control, they have large debt, and they don't listen to there constituents. We are a rural community, which I feel needs to stay a rural community. If we went with Hamilton, the city,(urban) would dominate everyone else, just due to their population, which is not fair.
166	- Jewel Trower	Matamata	I do not want us to be included with Hamilton. We need to stay a rural community, and not be out voiced by a large city who waste money and do not listen to the people it is meant to be working for.
167	- Susan Walter	Matamata	Do not want to be like the Auckland City Council be came . Far too widespread. Keep us local.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
168	- Terry Walter	Matamata	stay local
169	- Matthew Slattery	Matamata	Would much rather keep the council as it is as the matamata Piako council does a fantastic job. We don't need any change central government are being undemocratic and are wanting to force us to lose our local voice.
170	- Shannon Cody	Matamata	
171	- Kris Fourneau & Gerald Paquier	Matamata	We've looked at the options' pros and cons and think it's a no-brainer: Option 1 is the best choice for us. Governments are very good at spending our money. We think it's inexcusable to pass on more cost to we citizens in the name of "efficiency" and "progress" by enforcing this big change. It it's not broken, why "fix it?". Good luck MPDC.
172	- Josh Adamson	Matamata	
173	- Megan Adamson	Matamata	
174	- Robb Adamson	Matamata	
175	- Tinka Adamson	Matamata	We already have 3 areas under our council and struggle to get funding and stuff done. Ie. Creative community grant has to be split between 3 towns, this means putting on large events in you town is hard to fund. Bigger is not always better. The Waikato wide option is a very large area with lots of smaller towns,, how will funding and services be provided fairly. Also the level of debt that some of the bigger areas carry is not something I think we should have to take on as we do not get the same level of services etc.
176	- Judith Andrews	Matamata	The Waikato wide option would be detrimental to the rural interests
177	- Malcolm & Lynette Fairhall	Matamata	We do not want to lose our voice on local issues and be squeezed out of representation on a very large governing body. The smaller body with current connections is the only option that makes sense at this stage if any, apart from the status quo. The latter being the best really, and this is not acceptable according to Central Government.
178	- Mark Tapper	Matamata	Due to the short time frame for feedback, this is the best option.
179	- Pamela Foster	Matamata	The status quo is my preferred option, but as the Mayor has commented, this is not an option. So much for democracy. Government stupidity is what this is.
180	- Lyn Lock	Matamata	No
181	- Brian Hunter	Matamata	
182	- Albert CLARE	Matamata	
183	- Joan & Peter Donnison	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
18 4	- Alan Godsalve	Matamata	Nil
18 5	- Linda Kidner	Matamata	
18 6	- Cyril Southan	Matamata	
18 7	- Tania Scott	Matamata	
18 8	- Stace Edwards	Matamata	
18 9	- Justin Scelly	Matamata	
19 0	- Larissa Goodwin Wylie	Matamata	Submission on Local Government Reform – Preference for an Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority To whom it may concern, Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the future structure of local government in our region. I am writing to formally express our strong support for the establishment of an **Eastern Waikato unitary authority** as our preferred option moving forward. Our vision for this smaller, focused unitary authority is one that brings together the Matamata-Piako District with any or all of our neighboring districts: Hauraki, South Waikato, and Thames-Coromandel. These neighboring areas are a natural fit for us. We share identical DNA as rural and provincial communities, navigating the same unique challenges and economic landscapes, and holding deeply aligned shared interests. Choosing this path builds on the highly successful ways we already work together. Our councils have a proven track record of cross-boundary collaboration that delivers tangible results: Emergency Management: We currently share robust civil defence partnerships with both Hauraki and South Waikato. Shared Services: We have actively partnered with Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel to secure better, more cost-effective outcomes for essential services like kerbside waste collection. Environmental Stewardship: We naturally co-manage vital shared environments, working closely across the Waihou and Piako river catchments and extending our care into the Hauraki Gulf. The greatest strength of an Eastern Waikato unitary authority is that it captures the operational benefits of a larger organization without sacrificing our identity. It allows us to scale up shared services and streamline efficiencies without forcing our communities to give up their local voice or elected representation. This model successfully keeps critical decision-making closer to the communities it impacts, while still delivering the operational advantages and resilience of working as a collective region. At this stage of the process, this is unequivocally our preferred option. Our core priority is to keep decision-making close to our communities, retained through our own Mayor and elected members. Maintaining a distinct, strong local voice and robust local representation is non-negotiable for ensuring our provincial towns and rural sectors are not swallowed up by a larger, detached bureaucracy. We believe an Eastern Waikato unitary authority strikes the perfect balance between regional strength and local heart, and we urge the Commission to progress this option. Thank you for your consideration
19 1	- Cathy O'Callaghan	Matamata	I agree with the preferred option of Eastern Waikato. This option gives us some retention of local voice. We have shared characteristics with the other three councils - rural, primary industries and largely the same river catchment. The whole of Waikato option will give us a better rating base but reduced voice and autonomy. Thank you for the presentation it was helpful.
19 2	- Chris Bennett	Matamata	Same values.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
19 3	- James Wylie	Matamata	To whom it may concern, I am writing to express my support for the establishment of an Eastern Waikato unitary authority as our preferred option. This smaller, focused unitary authority is one that brings together the Matamata-Piako District with: Hauraki, South Waikato, and Thames-Coromandel. These neighboring areas are a natural fit for us. Choosing this path builds on the highly successful ways we already work together. The greatest strength of an Eastern Waikato unitary authority is that it captures the operational benefits of a larger organization without sacrificing our identity. It allows us to scale up shared services and streamline efficiencies without forcing our communities to give up their local voice or elected representation. Thank you for your consideration
19 4	- Simon Bourke	Matamata	As per ash tanner thoughts a better known system that. Already works.
19 5	- Raeburn Donald Kerr	Matamata	
19 6	- Tim Seuchter	Matamata	
19 7	- Lesley McVeigh	Matamata	I think we need to keep local input with other areas which are similar. I like our local people making the descisions for us
19 8	- Matthew Zonderop	Matamata	Hamilton debt needs to be ring fenced until it has paid its debt off. flood and water protection schemes must not enter the Hamilton City 'books' and a seperate body is to control the flood and water protection schemes. we need to have our own Civil Defense management.
19 9	- Emma Campbell	Matamata	
20 0	- Theo Brus	Matamata	N0
20 1	- Dana Pou	Matamata	
20 2	- Veruschka Herrick	Matamata	
20 3	- Douglas Fagan	Matamata	No.
20 4	- Rodd Orr	Matamata	
20 5	- Bryan Dove	Matamata	I do not want to be gobbled up by larger councils and lose our local voice or have our well-run council lost and taken over by poorly run and indebted cities.
20 6	- David Webb	Matamata	Option 1 geographically is the perfect choice. Obviously!!
20 7	- Ross Miles	Matamata	
20 8	- Bruce Morgan	Matamata	We are all rural and don't need any input from city (Hamilton).
20 9	- Jenny Morgan	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
21 0	- Wayne Liddicoat	Matamata	If it must be done this is the only option.
21 1	- Paul Thomasen	Matamata	
21 2	- Colin Kemplen	Matamata	
21 3	- Margaret Gibbons	Matamata	
21 4	- Elizabeth Harkness	Matamata	
21 5	- Andrew Dryload	Matamata	
21 6	- Te Rauna Cawker	Matamata	Keep decision making close to our community and maintain a strong local voice, with our own Mayor and elected members.
21 7	- Angela Thomasen	Matamata	
21 8	- Graham J. Harkness	Matamata	No, ifs, buts. Eastern Waikato as outlined.
21 9	- Christine Miles	Matamata	Need to keep our local representation if we can.
22 0	- Heather Symons	Matamata	
22 1	- David Irwin	Matamata	
22 2	- Robyn DeMasi	Matamata	
22 3	- Kelly Balsom	Matamata	
22 4	- Angela	Matamata	Smaller option, perhaps more manageable, similar land and area with farming and waihou area/flood zones and civil defense areas more relevant to each other. Might not matter, new way of managing council may increase efficiency, new approaches. Or it might be like auckland and even less accountability like poor town planning, allowing building in flood prone areas, not attending to upgrading stormwater drains etc may continue while increasing salaries for size of council areas being responsible for yet not actually being accountable for lack of forward planning for climate change/increased rain due to sub tropical weather patterns etc.
22 5	- Helen Saunders	Matamata	
22 6	- john phillips	Matamata	
22 7	- Bev Lightfoot	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
228	- Phil Smith	Matamata	
229	- Joanne Aoake	Matamata	Staying local is essential, the more local the better
230	- Joanne Morgan	Matamata	My clear preference is option 1. This option best reflects the characteristics of our district which is predominantly rural and aligned with councils of a similar size without the complexity of large urban centres. Incorporating high growth urban areas such as Hamilton or Taupo would present significant challenges where higher debt levels would certainly affect the total ratepayers. It is critical our community retains a meaningful voice in determining its future. Governance arrangements should reflect the unique needs, identity and long term sustainability of rural areas.
231	- Ian Morgan	Matamata	My preference is option 1 as it reflects who we are as a rural community. We are far better off with councils of a similar scale, without the added complexity of large urban centres e.g. Hamilton or Taupo. We would risk being drawn into decisions driven by bigger populations, higher debt and very different priorities. That is not what our community needs as it could put pressure on our local resources and rates. What matters most is our voice is heard.
232	- Terri-Ann Judge	Matamata	Option 1 is strongly preferred. This option aligns more closely with our existing Council structures. Expanding into high population areas such as Hamilton/Taupo would introduce significant challenges. These urban centres carry higher debt and very different priorities which may not align with the needs and values of our rural community. Local decision making should remain grounded in the interests of the communities it serves.
233	- Stuart Brizzle	Matamata	I feel it's in the interests of our community and its ratepayers to stay as local as we can and work with other districts that we already have an affiliation with and are of similar population sizes and demographic. Local decision makers doing their best for their local electorates is always a preferred option. As a rural community our priorities reflect our electorate and that is an important differential between ourselves and larger urban areas.
234	- Pamela Webber	Matamata	Happy that option 1 Eastern Waikato unitary authority is my choice. Unfortunately no.
235	- Joanna Grant	Matamata	We need to be in control of our own area, not dictated to by central government or areas further afield.
236	- Linda Marshall	Matamata	Like to keep it as things are as more people are moving to Matamata.
237	- Mikayla Grant	Morrinsville	
238	- Sheree O'Brien	Morrinsville	
239	- Graham Hare	Morrinsville	If this means nothing and it's going to happen anyway why do you want feedback?
240	- Matthew Judge	Morrinsville	
241	- Angela Kearvell	Morrinsville	I think option 1 is the best way to go.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
24 2	- Dawn Adams	Morrinsville	It makes sense to keep a smaller regional group of councils together. I lived in Franklin when it became part of Auckland and it wasn't a positive move. Hamilton is a huge city with very little in common with smaller Waikato towns other than location. An amalgamation leading to regions inheriting its debt and the potential for increasing rates would feel unfair.
24 3	- Alice Norton	Morrinsville	
24 4	- Annette Locke	Morrinsville	
24 5	- Angela Young	Morrinsville	Just feel if we move in with a bigger city the matamata paiko area will have no voice
24 6	- Kerry Tait	Morrinsville	
24 7	- Kiri Higgs	Morrinsville	
24 8	- Nick Kearvell	Morrinsville	
24 9	- Paul Wood-Stotesbury	Morrinsville	I'd rather it kept the status quo. The current council feels accountable to the local people. The big faceless council monster is unaccountable.
25 0	- Keith Ferguson	Morrinsville	Agree - we will have more control over costs that reflect our type of community. I do NOT support Waikato-wide option
25 1	- Julia Fausett	Morrinsville	
25 2	- Brian Torrey	Morrinsville	
25 3	- Diane Carter	Morrinsville	
25 4	- Shua Dayap	Morrinsville	
25 5	- Michael Hagarty	Morrinsville	this seems to be the option most likely in tune with the area covered. Option 2 has too much potential for smaller rural communities to get lost in the mist
25 6	- Ariel McCracken	Morrinsville	Makes sense to go with neighboring small towns with similar needs, problems etc rather than be swallowed up by being included with a large developing city with differing priorities.
25 7	- Marcus Ngatai	Morrinsville	Preference is not to include Thames Coromandel. Join only with Hauraki and South Waikato. Least expensive option. Also stay right away from Hamilton and Waipa. They are debt ridden!!!!!!
25 8	- Diane Hugo	Morrinsville	
25 9	- Nicholas Robinson	Morrinsville	The Waikato District Plan is very different to that of MPDC or Hauraki.
26 0	- Kevin Zuppich	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
26 1	- Marie	Morrinsville	Like you I prefer as is, but as that's not as option then it has to ve Option one
26 2	- Paulette M Esau	Morrinsville	
26 3	- Kaitlyn Waugh	Morrinsville	
26 4	- Vicki Maddever	Morrinsville	Under no circumstances do we want to be lumped in with Hamilton! They spend far too much on silly vanity projects we'd never see benefits from
26 5	- Kevin Carney	Morrinsville	Don't want to be put in with Hamilton
26 6	- Rosemary Williams	Morrinsville	
26 7	- Alison Holloway	Morrinsville	
26 8	- Lynette Ralph	Morrinsville	Besides the fact that its completely stupid and it shouldnt be done. Id prefer to keep with a smaller region. Not one massive region. We dont want cities making our decisions
26 9	- Freya Turner-Wright	Morrinsville	I do not want my district amalgamated with a large urban city, we would get overlooked and forgotten.
27 0	- Helen Taylder	Morrinsville	I agree whole heartedly with the present Council view that it keeps decision making local, keeping focus on our long term plan, not getting swallowed up in a mega city situation. So it makes sense to keep working with what is already working for us.
27 1	- Sam Niven	Morrinsville	
27 2	- Louise Edward	Morrinsville	Needs to be a council that deals with our areas requirements.
27 3	- V F HENTON-HILL	Morrinsville	As we already work alongside the councils within this area it makes a lot of sense to maintain that relationship especially as we all have common needs and service similar communities. Better to have our voice then get lost in a much bigger area as a small fish..
27 4	- Stephen Sing	Morrinsville	
27 5	- Jessica Smart	Morrinsville	
27 6	- Judy Salter	Morrinsville	Much prefer OPTION 1 - because this option allows linking with similar Councils. It should also preserve local decision making and representation much more than Option 2 - Waikato-wide unitary authority . Option 2 could allow larger Councils to dominate and overshadow smaller Councils and our local voice could be diluted and possibly lost. This would not be in the best interests of Matamata-Piako District residents and ratepayers.
27 7	- Linda Collins	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
27 8	- Lee-Anne Griffiths	Morrinsville	
27 9	- Barbara Dalziel	Morrinsville	
28 0	- Ani Hauraki	Morrinsville	
28 1	- Jason Cook	Morrinsville	Keep it small and rural.
28 2	- Neil McComb	Morrinsville	Similar councils that would understand each others options
28 3	- Christine Applebee	Morrinsville	A Waikato wide council (option 2) will not be able address the localised issues that arise for smaller areas. These smaller areas tend to get overlooked in favour, of larger projects in the bigger urban areas. Costs rise with very little benefit to the regional small towns and rural areas. I have seen this occur in Auckland when the then stand alone council of Papatoetoe was absorbed into the Manakau City Council. Costs rose and services deteriorated as Papatoetoe's needs had to compete with other areas within the larger council one. I would not like to see Morrinsville go down this track with deteriorating services due to a lack of focus on the area. Therefore if we are unable to remain as we are currently (which would be the best option) I would vote for option one as it would give us more autonomy over our district and we already share services or cooperate with the councils in that option. it would not be as disruptive or negative for our area
28 4	- Cathie Peddie	Morrinsville	Having our own voice as an area is important. It's extremely unfortunate that things can't stay as they are.
28 5	- Delwyn Martin	Morrinsville	I don't believe option 2 is a option at all for us, as I can see in the future Hamilton would probably benefit more than the rural communities would. For me option 1
28 6	- Phillip Ecclestone	Morrinsville	In 1989 at the last reorganisation of local gov about 90 staff were transferred to form Wrc Now there is close to 600 staff. So option 1 is a no brainer
28 7	- Brooke Bonnar	Morrinsville	
28 8	- Campbell Lee	Morrinsville	
28 9	- Sophie Richards	Morrinsville	
29 0	- Fern Bennett	Morrinsville	
29 1	- Les Bennett	Morrinsville	
29 2	- christopher Derewlany	Morrinsville	This restructuring is another excuse for our central government to stop providing to the taxpayers who fund it, another in a long list of cuts. Here we are forced to choose the better of two bad options, in this case, the smaller council.
29 3	- Angela Eason	Morrinsville	The eastern waikato unitary is better as the location and climate of the areas. If it was with the western side of the country. It wouldn't work as so far away from each other and different land areas with different needs to the east.
29 4	- Chris Spies	Morrinsville	Keeping it local will keep the true and unique community culture positive and effective.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
29 5	- Rosie Hartwell	Morrinsville	
29 6	- Kirsty Sing	Morrinsville	Do whatever you can to stay how we are as it works and you guys are financially prudent!
29 7	- Karen Muir	Morrinsville	We need to remain with like minded neighboring Council's to maintain representation for our rural communities. However I would prefer 1 Mayor, 1 Council's representation for the new entity.
29 8	- Grant Chaytor	Morrinsville	Keep it local as possible, looking after the people within the area is so important- the larger the area the harder that becomes
29 9	- Joanna Johnson	Morrinsville	
30 0	- Natarsha Love	Morrinsville	
30 1	- Paul Brunton	Morrinsville	
30 2	- Mikaela	Morrinsville	
30 3	- Travis Marshall	Morrinsville	
30 4	- Rachel Mayall	Morrinsville	Folding growing regional towns into a large metropolitan "city" model risks diluting our perspective, prioritising urban issues over rural and provincial needs, and slowing regionally appropriate economic progress. One-size-fits-all settings rarely fit well here. What I'd like to see: • Decisions made as close as possible to communities, with clear, local accountability. • Shared services where they add value, under transparent standards and with local input. • A governance model that reflects our existing partnerships and geographies, not just administrative convenience. In short, please choose a model that builds on proven collaboration across our neighbouring districts and keeps decision-making local. That's how we'll get better services, protect our local voice, and support the steady growth of our towns.
30 5	- Fiona Dowling	Morrinsville	
30 6	- Sandra	Morrinsville	
30 7	- Nikki Chong	Morrinsville	Keep it small. Keep it local. I'm with council on this.
30 8	- Jo Keogh	Morrinsville	
30 9	- Adam ward	Morrinsville	
31 0	- Tarryn Brunton	Morrinsville	
31 1	- Neil brunton	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
31 2	- Samantha Glossop	Morrinsville	
31 3	- Kylie Jennings	Morrinsville	We don't want to take on the debt of Hamilton & these other options are more apples with apples.
31 4	- Hemiona Green	Morrinsville	
31 5	- Andrew Stevenson	Morrinsville	Option 1 seems to be a manageable size with efficiencies but not too big that we get lost.
31 6	- Katrina Brown	Morrinsville	
31 7	- Howard Tiddy	Morrinsville	Keep decisions close to home Smaller the better I want to know my building inspector I don't want my council to be faceless to me
31 8	- Jess Parker	Morrinsville	We live rural and to be honest 1 council will not work. Rural & City people have different requirements and having a council that understands that is a high priority, I feel we have that now, under 1 council we are not going to have that.
31 9	- Dylan Culhane	Morrinsville	I agree with your preference, & have worked with TCDC / Hauraki DC - they are more like us -
32 0	- Josh Watson	Morrinsville	
32 1	- Michael	Morrinsville	What I think is most likely: If the reform proceeds after the 2026 election, I think there are three broad probabilities: Waikato-wide authority — 40% Several larger unitary authorities (including an expanded Eastern Waikato) — 45% MPDC's preferred Eastern Waikato model largely unchanged — 15% The reason I assign a lower probability to the pure Eastern Waikato model is that it looks somewhat like a defensive merger among smaller rural councils. Central government may ask why it should stop there if the objective is simplification across the whole Waikato. The critical factor will be what proposals come from Waikato District, Waipā District, and Hamilton. Those three councils collectively hold much of the region's population, economic activity, and political influence. Their positions will likely carry significant weight with central government.
32 2	- Annmarie Barnhill	Morrinsville	I don't feel This will serve the community for the better
32 3	- Hannah Burndred	Morrinsville	
32 4	- Don Clark	Morrinsville	As a tenant resident of Matamata-Piako district, I agree with mpdc's preference for Eastern Waikato unitary authority, it makes sense, to have an area that is similar in make up, ie rural and small towns, so the needs of all the residents would be better taken care of rather than being in an authority that has one very large city in it, as that one city would always get preference owing just to its population size and voice. Small towns and rural residents would, I feel, get lost in the fog of bureaucracy and not be heard because of the loudest city voices.
32 5	- Kelly Young	Morrinsville	
32 6	- Tracy Anderson	Morrinsville	
32 7	- Jeanette Cameron	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
328	- Ron Shirtcliffe	Morrinsville	
329	- Suzanne Hindman	Morrinsville	
330	- Neil Hindman	Morrinsville	
331	- Louise Gibson	Morrinsville	
332	- Maurice Arnold	Morrinsville	
333	- Wendy Hansen	Morrinsville	I think option 1 would be better suited to our smaller rural communities. I feel we would be swallowed up under option 2, just like a lot of the smaller communities feel with the larger Auckland council.
334	- Neil Hansen	Morrinsville	
335	- Shelten Kitney	Morrinsville	Less likely for us to get lost
336	- Mike Hayes	Morrinsville	
337	- Joe Jessup	Morrinsville	Long overdue! Modern communication and transport allow for ease of coordination, resource sharing and economies of scale. Needs and challenges across councils are not that different. However, it is prudent to amalgamate/consolidate the smaller (more rural) councils rather than incorporating the larger city which has significantly different issues, and scales. Just a shame they did not start with halving the number of electorates and MP's!
338	- Wayne Aberhart	Morrinsville	Most definitely do not want to join with Hamilyin in any way shape or form
339	- Monika Rose	Morrinsville	
340	- Kylie Haurea	Morrinsville	
341	- Stu Clarke	Morrinsville	Option 1 is the most logical option for our district. It has very similar communities being Rural and provincial urban. Also it would cover the catchments of all the major Awa that feed into the Hauraki Gulf. Giving more local control as to water quality leaving the land to the sea. The best people to care for these water ways are those who live and work within these catchments. Option 2 is far too big and cumbersome meaning rural/ provincial communities will not be heard.
342	- Lycinda Lett	Morrinsville	
343	- Coral Ansley	Morrinsville	Keep up the awesome work Ash Tanner.
344	- Jean Hitchcock	Morrinsville	
345	- meryl marks	Morrinsville	TCDC has its issues - especially coastal areas. The new council would have these problems to solve/budget for. I was reading a discussion from Thames Coromandel District Council and they had been to a meeting which included the

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			East coast settlements - Waihi, Tauranga, Ohope, Opoitiki etc- because they all had coastal borders and similar issues and infrastructure to deal with.
34 6	- Kaye Ferguson	Morrinsville	I like the smaller area of equal communities not one where the city needs will dominate over the smaller communities.
34 7	- Peter Lee	Morrinsville	I fear that a waikato wide authority would end up with Hamilton and Taupo getting favourable funding and the outlying and rural areas missing out
34 8	- Murray Foley	Morrinsville	It is theOnly Option that allows any form of Local control. In my opinion. Bigger is not Better.
34 9	- Jim Milich	Morrinsville	
35 0	- Eleanor Ellis	Morrinsville	
35 1	- Brian and Sheryll Gordon	Morrinsville	We agree, joining similar smaller councils we will be able to maintain local identify and spend rates collected locally.
35 2	- Fee Sullivan	Morrinsville	Hamilton council are undemocratic and are sneaking in co governance. Democracy must remain.
35 3	- Ruth Moerenhout Moerenhout	Morrinsville	Option 1 would be best as we already have working relations with them and have similar interests.
35 4	- Rowena Peard	Morrinsville	Eastern Waikato makes more sense.
35 5	- Melanie Zwart	Morrinsville	I prefer an authority that will cover the needs of our rural communities. A greater Waikato wide authority would include Hamilton city and Taupo, each having different needs to smaller rural towns. A smaller authority would ensure a suitable voice from members that actually live in our community and understands the needs of those in the community. I would assume that representation would weigh more heavily towards a large city due to population size and therefore the decisions would meet the needs for the large city and not necessarily for the smaller rural towns.
35 6	- Craig Harriman	Morrinsville	
35 7	- Owen Brown	Morrinsville	I believe a local Mayor and local council would beter understand and act for our local predominant farming community.
35 8	- Anne Matherson	Morrinsville	
35 9	- Tom Bougher.	Morrinsville	1: I do not like or agree with the bullying tactics that central government is using to bring about change. Neither have I seen any valid justification for forcing it through. Bigger is not necessarily better and is is definitely not more efficient. It inevitably increases the size of the controlling bureaucracy thus incurring more expense and slows down the processes of getting anything done. 2: It is still the rate payers who will finish up footing the increased bill. And they will probably lose convenient access to those who are making the decisions . 3: The fly in the ointment in the proposal from my point of view is Thames-Coromandel. It has it's own unique problems and very expensive infrastructure costs due to its topography . 4. Being part of any grouping that includes Hamilton City is definite NO. The debt burden they have accumulated is horrendous. How many rate payers rates are being swallowed up paying Interest? 5. My next communication

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			is going to be to Tim van de Molen. Unless ordinary people speak up and let their concerns be known , especially since this is an election year, the government will continue to push.
360	- Reno Paki	Morrinsville	
361	- Gudrun Hoffmann-Vocke	Morrinsville	Centralisation in the age of climate change is problematic. Decentralisation is usually better, more effective and more democratic as decisions are made locally by locals for local problems.
362	- Dieter	Morrinsville	Decisions by locals for local problems has better outcomes. Centralisation is bad for democracy and for solving local problems.
363	- Michael Gaiger	Morrinsville	As long as costs are kept under control and rates rises don't keep ballooning like they have been. Rate rises last few years aren't sustainable and cuts need to be made. That includes looking at staff levels etc cause a lot of councils are over staffed and I doubt this one is different. Also when contracting jobs like roading etc out there needs to be more checks taken and not just accept the price on paper.
364	- Llewellyn Els	Morrinsville	
365	- Ian mckeen	Morrinsville	We live in a rural area where decisions are and should be made by people that understand what it is to live in a rural district. It would be totally wrong to give decision making for our farming based area to people more concerned about city living.
366	- Rosalyn Kempthorne	Morrinsville	My preference is to have a council/authority that most closely resembles the area in which we live - small, rural that has industries and demographics unlike those of cities. I do not want to see an authority where decisions are made by people with little to no understanding of our environment and reduce our ability to influence decisions that directly impact on our community. Most importantly to me is that we do not ending up bearing the costs of other areas with no benefit to our district. It's disappointing that central government does not seem to understand that small local authorities are best placed to serve their communities, especially in rural areas.
367	- Margaret Clark	Morrinsville	
368	- John Redshaw	Morrinsville	
369	- Tracey Larsen	Morrinsville	
370	- Tracey Stevenson	Morrinsville	Option b would be too big. Option 1 is what I've been saying needs to happen for financial benefits 15 yrs ago
371	- Andrew Stevenson	Morrinsville	
372	- Heather Thomas	Morrinsville	
373	- Kevin Westbury	Morrinsville	A eastern waikato focused council will ensure the rural regions and towns get better servicing and proportioned spending based on regional spread rather than a population based per area sized spend that a waikato focused council would feel obligated allocate spending.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
37 4	- Cassandra Mankelow-Hancock	Morrinsville	I prefer this option as I suspect the Waikato wide one will see Hamilton benefit more.
37 5	- Adelle Mace	Morrinsville	
37 6	- Brenda Wilson	Morrinsville	
37 7	- Liam Aberhart	Morrinsville	I would prefer to work with the same people I have gotten to know through my business. If we get a wider Waikato council we will lose the connection to local projects.
37 8	- Helen Sutherland	Morrinsville	
37 9	- Muray Cadman	Morrinsville	
38 0	- Raewyn Bonnar	Morrinsville	The Eastern Waikato unitary authority, would bring together rural communities that potentially understand the dynamics of those they represent. This option potentially gives our communities a communication avenue that makes our voices heard, instead of being part of a bigger unitary authority where small communities are often overlooked. Taking on Option 2 potentially increases the smaller councils fiscal burden. Ring fencing a councils assets so they cannot be swallowed up in the future. Retaining the mayors and (some) councillors so the community has a local body to consult and represent their local community.
38 1	- WE & GJ BONNAR LTD	Morrinsville	Retaining the mayors and (some) councillors so the community has a local body to consult and represent their local community. Option 2 has the potential to overlook smaller councils voices and burden them with a debt from other councils that increases their rates unfairly. In all the options we need to retain our assets and the work that has been done in the past.
38 2	- Adrienne west	Morrinsville	The Eastern Waikato unitary authority seems to offer the best opportunity for our local voices to be heard We all have more similarities than differences Not too sure that the central government will allow each area within it to have it's own mayor etc though The idea seems to be that only one governance system will cover each unitary authority with regional councils devolved into the new authority
38 3	- Debra Hobbs	Morrinsville	I would of rather just to have stayed the same Matamata Piako, but option one is better than option 2
38 4	- MAUREEN HORAN	Morrinsville	
38 5	- Russell Galloway	Morrinsville	I understand these reforms are being forced upon our Councils. I strongly urge all Councils effected, to submit strong disapproval to Central government on the un-democratic approach and time frame to these changes, however necessary OR NOT they may be.
38 6	- John Sharland	Morrinsville	What legislation, laws, bylaws, central or local government will need to be revoked, amended or introduced for an amalgamation to proceed?
38 7	- Trevor Horan	Morrinsville	
38 8	- Bronwyn Cadman	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
389	- Paul Huntles	Morrinsville	
390	- Marilyn Smith	Morrinsville	
391	- Winnie Singleton	Morrinsville	The question re biosecurity is extremely relevant after the behaviours and disgrace of Covid years.
392	- Graeme Baker	Morrinsville	3 Mayor's option. (No). Save ratepayers money. 1 Mayor. 1 Council. Please keep the public informed and given the chance to vote.
393	- Emah Lane	Morrinsville	Prefer status quo
394	- Dariah Ruiz-Wharekawa	Morrinsville	
395	- Maree Dobson	Morrinsville	
396	- Neko Paki	Morrinsville	
397	- Don McLeod	Morrinsville	
398	- Margaret mcleod	Morrinsville	
399	- Kevin Murray	Morrinsville	Option 2 would create a complex and expensive entity.
400	- Tania Parton	Morrinsville	I support the eastern Waikato UA option, however i wouldn't go so far as to include SWDC. Even though we may have some shared services with South Waikato we are very different communities with very different issues. It would be inefficient to be a long, narrows UA. SWDC fits more naturally with Rotorua Lakes, Taupo, Waitomo and Otorohanga District Councils.
401	- David Lawson	Morrinsville	Smaller area you can be more focussed
402	- Melissa	Morrinsville	
403	- Chris West	Morrinsville	It is hardly democratic; it shouldn't be driven by central government without people being able to have a say on it.
404	- Rochelle Edgar	Morrinsville	
405	- Stephen Silcock	Morrinsville	Synergies in catchment & tourism opportunities
406	- Nathan	Morrinsville	
407	- Derek Dixon	Morrinsville	
408	- Gaye Dixon	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
409	- Donna Arnold	Morrinsville	I do support the Eastern Waikato unitary authority however should the Waikato Wide Unitary Authority be approved - Hamilton City's debt must be "ringfenced" to those city ratepayers and we must have representation at the board table.
410	- Matt Welsh	Morrinsville	To make it more in line with Government intentions does a union with only 3 other existing areas fit with the new concept. Should we look further than our borders to include other similar councils e.g. King Country, North and South Waikato. Your preferred option may be too small. I like the idea of keeping the regional mayors and not just one for all.
411	- Rosslyn Welsh	Morrinsville	
412	- Justine Phillips	Morrinsville	
413	- Melissa Athy	Morrinsville	Waikato wide would be far too big and difficult to manage (I work in local government myself in a different district)
414	- Bex Toone	Morrinsville	
415	- Paul marriner	Morrinsville	
416	- Heather marriner	Morrinsville	We
417	- Kiri Allan	Morrinsville	
418	- Em	Morrinsville	
419	- Nicole Fisher	Morrinsville	
420	- Allan Carter	Morrinsville	N/A
421	- Paula Thomson	Morrinsville	I dont want to be joined with big city councils. I feel the smaller towns would soon be overlooked and money and works would focus on the city.
422	- Nannette Bolstad	Morrinsville	Most definitely prefer the smaller rural based option
423	- Linda mills	Morrinsville	
424	- Gregory Whyte	Morrinsville	
425	- Jason Mills	Morrinsville	Would prefer for things to stay as they are and work on more shared services amongst councils, as opposed to an all in approach which dilutes representation.
426	- Gaylene Bogle	Morrinsville	I believe the option for the Eastern Unitary Council makes the most sense. We have common interests and concerns with these areas and I would be worried that our small rural voices would be lost in the roar from big urban areas if we are not very careful how we proceed.
427	- Gavin Peebles	Morrinsville	Option 1 is far better for Morrinsville. No way should we be stuck with Hamilton City. They would send our area broke like they have with Hamilton.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
428	- Sharron Berry	Morrinsville	I would rather we did not combine with Thames coromandel
429	- Pauline Wilson	Morrinsville	
430	- David Wilson	Morrinsville	
431	- James Wix	Morrinsville	
432	- Michelle Lemay	Morrinsville	Eastern Waikato satisfies the requirement to combine councils & gives us more control over our own communities.
433	- Esther Neill	Morrinsville	
434	- Lynette Moore	Morrinsville	
435	- Sue Lawton	Morrinsville	
436	- Jan Hare	Morrinsville	
437	- Ann Armstrong	Morrinsville	Eastern Waikato is where we work well now and a smaller entity. Why change what's working best for locals in Eastern Waikato. No way do I want to be lost in a Super City or big entity that centralizes on Hamilton and it's interests.
438	- Shelly Good	Morrinsville	
439	- Mikala Ebbett	Morrinsville	Would rather stay the same.
440	- Janet Winchester	Morrinsville	
441	- Marcus Ngatai	Morrinsville	
442	- Brendon John Fiebig	Morrinsville	
443	- Rick Johnson	Morrinsville	It makes sense to have a regional authority of a decent scale that can still represent the local area without being swamped with the debt burden of Hamilton and no chance of smaller regions getting stuff done when all the focus will be on the larger city.
444	- Andrea	Morrinsville	Concerned with the larger towns/cities taking a priority and small towns like Morrinsville getting a smaller slice of the pie then we currently do.
445	- Lisa Dunbar	Morrinsville	
446	- Bev Barbarich	Morrinsville	Eastern Waikato and Matamata-Piako are both small, close knit areas, we think and act in a similar way, and understand the issues we all face, therefore I think we could support, progress and continue to develop our communities in a much smoother, more positive way in the future.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
447	- Brett Johnstone	Morrinsville	
448	- Diana Jenkins	Morrinsville	
449	- Carol Oldham	Morrinsville	
450	- Rosemaree Redshaw	Morrinsville	
451	- Garry Rayner	Morrinsville	
452	- Tosch Henrikson	Morrinsville	The smaller the council the better for the community
453	- Bruce Webb	Morrinsville	
454	- Barbara Jenkins	Morrinsville	
455	- Daniel Ward	Morrinsville	
456	- Jessie	Morrinsville	I prefer option one as Morrinsville rated dont even go towards Morrinsville they go towards matamata and tell aroha. The council are so busy as it is and it will be ridiculous to go woth option 2 as that even more area to cover and less resources for Morrinsville.
457	- Adrienne Pescini	Morrinsville	
458	- Deena hobbs	Morrinsville	I think both options are terrible. However option 1 being the smaller option is the better option even though we have no correlation housing and weather wise to the coromandel. Combining piako and South Waikato is understandable.
459	- S Cunningham	Morrinsville	
460	- Jeanette Crook	Morrinsville	
461	- James George Burton	Morrinsville	I feel that Option 1 is best for future of our district as all the outhter three districts have more in common as we work together on outhter pr0jects ie retail ,industrial, rural.
462	- Rex Fleming	Morrinsville	If we get involved with either Hamilton ot Tauranga in a unitary area our voice is going to be somewhat muted. Not keen on MPDC getting involved with the politics of both cities which don't have a good track record, not to mention carrying their debt. Looking forward we must also consider whether the combined assets of the unitary body be sufficient to support funding in the MPDC area with future capital investment.
463	- Duncan Peddie	Morrinsville	
464	- Theresa Schicker	Morrinsville	I now have to reconsider my support, due to the undemocratic way in which the plan to streamline local bodies and hence privatise water through CCOs (Council Controlled Organisation) is being rushed through government. In general, I

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			understand the need for local body reform, but the unseemly haste and lack of public consultation seems to be very undemocratic. That is not what I voted for."
46 5	- Sheryl Hubbard	Morrinsville	
46 6	- Craig	Morrinsville	
46 7	- Dianne Hickford	Morrinsville	
46 8	- Linda Newton	Morrinsville	Option 2 is too large an area. We should definitely not have both the Waitomo and the Taupo region as part of our Council. I am very opposed to the health risks eg bone disease and fractures caused by adding toxic flouride into our water system as evidenced by the successful Court case in the USA. and don't want to amalgamate with a Council which does that with no scientific evidence of any safe amount if any!
46 9	- Alan Sutton	Morrinsville	Having worked in local government for 40 years in this region I believe that option 1 is best as it represents an area of local interests and is an area that has proven it can work together for the common good, and its required to manage the local river catchments for the common good without losing funding to the current regional council for bureaucratic mismanagement outside our area.
47 0	- Holly Hubbard	Morrinsville	
47 1	- Deborah Newton	Morrinsville	
47 2	- Colin Bennett	Morrinsville	
47 3	- Alison Hayden	Morrinsville	Like minded councils working together for the community works better for the locals than having a unified council that includes a city. The decisions made local are for local, money is kept for local initiatives, rather than being focused on the city. Look at the Taupo District Council, Turangi and other outlying areas miss out on financial decisions because they only serve a small area of the community.
47 4	- EDNA CRANFIELD	Morrinsville	Prefer to keep as is bit next best option. Well done Ash for taking the lead and fighting for our community
47 5	- Peter Sommerhalder	Morrinsville	Keep control and make decisions within our close area.
47 6	- Kirsty Hannah	Morrinsville	
47 7	- Dianne and Peter Mckinnon	Morrinsville	Had the country delved more into the benefits of the previous basically logical "Three Waters" proposal and made the necessary improvements, there would have been no need for this radical upheaval. Remaining as individual councils. If the amalgamation as in Option 1 brings benefits to our basic infrastructure, and prepares the area for the previously denied climate changes still to come it will be worthwhile. If it finally brings the cleaning of our rivers and streams within the whole area, this is way beyond time. We have lobbied the Waikato Regional council to clear up the Piako river, by initially removing the fallen trees and debris blocking the flow of this water ..especially near Holmwood park. It is interesting to note that Mayoy Tanner, at the time 3 Waters was thrown out, without due consideration, had remarked that there was nothing wrong with the quality of our local rivers, and that He would swim in them!! Let us hope this forced government

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			change will bring wider thinking and thus assistance to the Piako Area. Working With Coromandel and Hauraki , who have a better idea of clean water, may be able to influence our local area on the importance of working together, as rivers often flow through many council areas .More Native -tree planting after clearing the shockingly muddy river beds will help to alleviate silt etc from those farms they flow through, who have not yet bothered to realise their negative impact downstream. Yes, it is their problem, and it is our problem. The quality of our own Morrinsville Water may even become drinkable with positive input from the Eastern seaboard. Retaining our individuality within the basic areas will also be important. as will consideration within our area of the actual benefits to everyone of further population of previously small towns, enjoyed for their individuality. Maybe the shake up is required to allow us to appreciate the small businesses within our smaller towns, without the total lack of respect for these small businesses who have supported their customers for many years without BIG CHAIN overseas Fast Food outlets. Yes, Morrinsville, why have you kicked our hard working small businesses by allowing Mac Donads and their ilk, into our town??. Who also is going to clean up the litter, many of their customers traditionally dispose of at random. Will these fast food chains make an attempt to change these bad habits? A Digression, perhaps but still part of the bigger picture of that MORE / Big, does not necessarily mean better. IT IS Time to Put the ENVIRONMENT FIRST! Now is an opportunity.
47 8	- Margaret	Morrinsville	Option 2 would mean that we would be 'lost'. Main central cities do not have any understanding of smaller, rural areas - how they function, what the community needs, their issues. Plus, how has Hamilton for example managed their rates and finances over the years? Would we end up propping them up.
47 9	- Amanda Neeld	Morrinsville	
48 0	- Laura Daniels	Morrinsville	
48 1	- Renee Cooper	Morrinsville	
48 2	- H. M. Seales	Morrinsville	Thames/Coromandel not a good fit with the contour of this area. Roading problems could overpower the rest of the area.
48 3	- Bev Seales	Morrinsville	Not comfortable with Thames Coromandel as it has different (coastal) problems. While we have very much in common with Hauraki & South Waikato, I do not believe we are as similar with Thames Coromandel.
48 4	- Joan Williamson	Morrinsville	To keep a strong local voice.
48 5	- Lynette Stuart	Morrinsville	More local with option 1.
48 6	- Annette Wilson	Morrinsville	Do not want to be under a big city like Hamilton
48 7	- Alan Wilson	Morrinsville	We want to keep to the country towns so that we have a say in what matters for smaller towns.
48 8	- Estelle Vyle	Morrinsville	
48 9	- Martin Richardson	Morrinsville	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
490	- Melissa laing	Morrinsville	It would be better to be in a smaller authority with similar ideas to ensure people are getting looked after. Small rural towns have very different needs to be city's
491	- John Needham	Morrinsville	I do believe this option 1 will be an easier option to implement and manage. I believe this option was envisioned in 1987 with the amalgamation of the County Councils in our area but was stymied by Matamata preferring to be called Matamata - Piako District Council. So yes, smaller and more easily to manage, smaller and stronger. I believe Hamilton City Council has a very large financial dept to its rate payers so option 2 is not feasible to my way of thinking.
492	- Peter Bonenkamp	Morrinsville	
493	- Anton Landman	Morrinsville	Keep it to local districts and not get swallowed up by the larger Hamilton area. Reform is pointless really if it doesn't equate to lower rates or more efficiency at least. Generally reform costs money and will probably lead to job cuts and is that really a good thing?
494	- Kathryn Duncan	Morrinsville	
495	- Jayne Westbury	Morrinsville	
496	- Robert Edgar	Morrinsville	
497	- Carolyn Wallace	Morrinsville	
498	- Kathleen Granich	Morrinsville	I agree with Council's reasons for option 1. I urge Council to press for full disclosure and extended timeframes for due public consultation from central government. This is an issue of great national significance and informed, rational and evidence-based decision-making should occur.
499	- Mike Gribble	Morrinsville	I strongly object to who can submit an outline proposal.
500	- Bette Blance	Morrinsville	I would rather have a smaller group of councils rather than a big one. These are mostly farming councils rather than city.
501	- Ron Tuck	Morrinsville	Will option 1 give a cheaper rate for householders? The way this change has been presented, has not given much time to think about a better solution.
502	- V. Laurie	Morrinsville	My preference is the "lesser of two evils" for me. Why fix something that is not broken?
503	- Max Campbell	Morrinsville	By option 1: THIS ONE ONLY. By other option: LEAVE AS IS. Auckland took over Rodney. With the result, funds go into Auckland without lying areas being deprived of services firsthand experiences.
504	- Patricia Shannon	Morrinsville	Obviously, I would prefer NO change, however, time moves on and changes are inevitable, I guess.
505	- Margaret Stockley	Morrinsville	As a smaller ward, I feel we will have more control over OUR area rather than dissolved into bigger authorities - the easter region has far different requirements for such different communities.
506	- Lenore Kolli	Morrinsville	Don't agree with this change.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
507	- Othniel Kolli	Morrinsville	Don't agree at all with this change.
508	- Katrina Brown	Morrinsville	It just works better and has a better financial standing.
509	- Jean Burmester	Morrinsville	I prefer the Eastern Waikato unitary authority. I do not want us to be aligned to Hamilton City, they have enough problems now. We need to keep it local and work with councils we already know and deal with.
510	- Alison Jackson	Outside the district	
511	- Carole Cowie	Outside the district	Eastern Waikato should include everything east of Highway 1. We live 10 minutes out of Morrinsville but are in the Waikato council region, so my "local" library is in Ngaruawahia. It would make much more sense for us to be included with Morrinsville, rather than Ngaruawahia or Hamilton City.
512	- Jasmine	Outside the district	
513	- Scott Tynan	Outside the district	I support Option 1: Eastern Waikato unitary authority. It appears to offer the best balance between gaining scale and capability while keeping decision-making close enough to the communities affected. The grouping makes sense because Matamata-Piako, South Waikato, Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel share rural/provincial communities, existing working relationships, catchment interests, infrastructure pressure, affordability challenges and a need to protect local identity. I do not support a Waikato-wide model as the preferred direction at this stage. It may offer more scale, but that scale comes with a real risk that smaller towns and rural communities are outweighed by Hamilton and other larger growth centres. Bigger does not automatically mean better, cheaper or more accountable. However, I would not want Option 1 to rely only on broad assurances about local voice. It should include a clearly designed governance model with strong local boards or equivalent local decision-making structures, delegated local budgets, local-area financial and service reporting, protection for water sources and catchments, transparent treatment of debt, assets, reserves and infrastructure backlogs, and clear safeguards for local suppliers, service centres and staff impacts. I also think the proposal should be supported by a materiality assessment so the issues that matter most to residents, iwi, businesses, staff, community groups, local suppliers and vulnerable communities are identified before the model is finalised. Any preferred option should be tested in plain English against costs, savings, transition risks, representation, service access, infrastructure priorities and long-term accountability. I support reform if it creates a better council, not just a bigger one.
514	- Karlana Whitehead	Outside the district	I am in the South Waikato area (Tokoroa) and would support an amalgamation similar to pre-1989 boundaries. I feel we have a lot in common and believe there will not be a major reduction in services to our ratepayers. I also believe that ratepayers will not be impacted negatively by impact to service ie travel times to satellite office, access to services, less lost voice. My Dad used to work for the Thames Valley Electric Power Board and I remember the territory was similar to this proposal. We could be Thames Valley Council! (or whatever the Maori translation would be) or something to do with the Waihou river which binds us all.
515	- Mike Binns	Outside the district	
516	- rebecca stott	Outside the district	I live outside the district but work for local council within this area. Having gotten to know the area and the challenges rural towns face, I consider the best option is to

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			align with other local councils along the kaimais. this would also reflect the alignment with the new Local waters done well
51 7	- callum Patton	Outside the district	Ratepayers of MPDC shouldnt have too pay for the debts of waipa and Hamilton city council mismanagement
51 8	- Katherine Luketina	Outside the district	With Option 1, region-wide oversight of functions such as CDEM, regional transport such as the Matamata-Hamilton and other Connector bus routes and Te Huia will be lost. Powerful liaison with NZTA regarding transport corridors will be difficult and a small Unitary Authority may end up competing with nearby UAs for optimum transport planning. There will be fragmentation of many regional services such as monitoring of water quality and other environmental services, which can become patchwork and of poor quality. You will need to stand up an entire section of scientists and field technicians. Navigation safety can no longer be done on a region-wide scale, and each council will have to bear the cost of maintaining its own boat fleet and qualified operators. Drainage infrastructure is expensive to maintain, and requires a dedicated team of engineers and field workers. You will need them as well. As well as district planners you will need regional planners and policy makers. Your regulatory team will have to burgeon because of all the environmental consent monitoring you will need to do. This level of expertise is best maintained at a central level.
51 9	- Walter Ngamane	Outside the district	Seeing as central govt as so bent, publicly at least, on upholding our democracy, Put it to a referendum as they did the Māori wards!
52 0	- Lynette Revell	Te Aroha	
52 1	- Andrew Ellis	Te Aroha	
52 2	- Russell Smith	Te Aroha	
52 3	- Gerard O'Sullivan	Te Aroha	Keep it local.
52 4	- Elizabeth Coppell	Te Aroha	If we have to change, then option 1 is the only one that makes sense to me, as it means small rural communities working together with similar aims, rather than one big urban area (option 2) dictating to small rural areas, irrespective of their aims.
52 5	- Judith Chaffe	Te Aroha	This Eastern Waikato ward seems the only option which gives the benefits of a larger area without being smothered by the demands and culture of a large cities infrastructure. It also would give the opportunity for some consistency in approach to climate change particularly with emphasis on intelligent developments which will be critical very soon, particularly with regard to identified areas of potential flood/slip risk. Such areas should be totally removed from zoning requirements for intensive development and in high risk areas completely integrated into sacrificial flood management zones.
52 6	- Susie Sherley	Te Aroha	I prefer Option 1 as we are a small rural district and do not want to loose our identity with a big city in the mix. We have worked with Hauraki and the other districts in the past.
52 7	- Campbell Moore	Te Aroha	The east Waikato option is likely to retain better local representation compared the one Waikato unitary option. The greater population bases in Hamilton and surrounding areas may skew representation away from the smaller rural communities.
52 8	- Barry Avery	Te Aroha	Seems the better option to keep the rural connection rather than add a big city. Down side is that is it still too small?

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
529	- Ron Galloway	Te Aroha	Considering that we historically are part of Hauraki this is a logical choice, also our focus is often north for holidays, beaches, fishing etc. Hauraki all the way. A larger Council region will not give us better services.
530	- Sue Dyer	Te Aroha	We need to strongly maintain our already working collaborations, for the benefit of our area.
531	- Ruairi Kelly	Te Aroha	Dubious about including Thames Coromandel as they will have massive financial issues with climate change induced localized weather events. We have already seen these massive costs and they don't apply in the same way as the other more inland areas. Better they joined with Bay of Plenty who have similar issues and a larger rate payer base in Tauranga. Plus alot of the residences there are owned by Aucklanders anyway!
532	- Maria	Te Aroha	Less chance of our 'voice' being diluted
533	- Christine Coley	Te Aroha	
534	- Chris Clothier	Te Aroha	All areas have alot in common and have already worked together thus maybe make it easier to adjust to the change. We will be lost in the other option.
535	- Del Pouwels	Te Aroha	Option 1 keeps us more localised and more in control Option 2 is basically giving our control/voices to a huge governing bkdy where the smaller towns/councils wont get their views herd, as the main big city operators will do their own thing without consideration. So option 1 for me.
536	- Carol Dutton	Te Aroha	
537	- Jen Hirawani	Te Aroha	
538	- Robert Utting	Te Aroha	Hamilton city debt will be a millstone on any rate payers connected to them. Please avoid going anywhere near them.
539	- Deanna Robertson	Te Aroha	
540	- Meg Appleby	Te Aroha	
541	- Eve Kinane	Te Aroha	
542	- Suzy Monds	Te Aroha	
543	- Lyn	Te Aroha	
544	- Julia Miles	Te Aroha	
545	- Michael Parkes	Te Aroha	
546	- Courtney Llewellyn	Te Aroha	This is logical and most applicable to our community directly.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
547	- Shannon	Te Aroha	
548	- Anjelica Beaman	Te Aroha	
549	- Lisa Oliver	Te Aroha	
550	- Erin	Te Aroha	
551	- Josy Jansonius	Te Aroha	
552	- Ben Norman	Te Aroha	While it's important to pool resources and efficiency it is also important to retain local voice and a balanced regional focus. The Eastern ward makes sense in areas of similar focus and support areas currently operating. This would not be effective in a Waikato wide approach, trying to take a City and rural focus. The intended efficiency improvements will no doubt be lost when the focus area is too large.
553	- O'Connors	Te Aroha	Absolutely agree with the position to remain local however we can. We want to continue to have a local voice, local decision making to minimise the risk of our rates reflecting our district.
554	- Aimee Davies	Te Aroha	
555	- Dorothy Elgar	Te Aroha	I am happy to support the Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority option that our Mayor and Council prefers.
556	- Paul Ashman	Te Aroha	
557	- Julie Sweeney	Te Aroha	
558	- Stacey Aldridge	Te Aroha	
559	- Michelle Thackwell	Te Aroha	
560	- Donald & Yvonne Giddy	Te Aroha	Prefer the smaller area as will benefit our area town (Te Aroha) better
561	- Brendan Smith	Te Aroha	If we have to merge it would be better to merge with similar areas. Rural areas were swamped when the Auckland super city was created. Let's ignore the fact that the "supercity" council is so large that it is unusable from a citizen viewpoint - and I speak from experience.
562	- Janette Dalley	Te Aroha	
563	- Blaze Tanner	Te Aroha	Disagree with the incentive in general. Central government could be focusing on the economy.
564	- Debbie McNeil-Vincent	Te Aroha	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
565	- Stuart Vincent	Te Aroha	
566	- Lynette Beer	Te Aroha	
567	- Robert Beer	Te Aroha	It's the most sensible
568	- Tamara Kingi	Te Aroha	
569	- Marilyn Cooper	Te Aroha	This seems to me to be the most sensible option. We already work together with the other councils and all 4 districts have similar rural and urban areas.
570	- Geoff Dodd	Te Aroha	Thanks. Keep it local. Grass roots. Decisions made by residents of the smallest permissible area. Is crucial for proper self management. Geoff D.
571	- Frances Bailey	Te Aroha	I agree that keeping decision-making as local as possible is important. I also think it's important from an employment perspective. It makes sense that we have shared catchments in the proposed eastern Waikato unitary authority. best of luck - most of all I hope that there won't be too many job losses in this process.
572	- Stuart barclay	Te Aroha	Waikato wide is top heavy and works against smaller communities. There can be no doubt the rates revenue from the overall district will be siphoned off to feed large areas such as Hamilton at our expense. Takapuna did just that 50 years ago and nothing in this unnecessary bullying gives any guarantee it won't happen again, here.
573	- Duarne Kingi	Te Aroha	
574	- Stephanie Reed	Te Aroha	
575	- Neville Galvin	Te Aroha	
576	- Daniela Gray	Te Aroha	We need local councils, supporting local.
577	- Doug GriffinTe Aroha	Te Aroha	Te Aroha is already the Cinderella of the Matamata Piako area. Joining in with a Waikato wide unitary authority will only make things worse.
578	- Annabel Lee	Te Aroha	
579	- Jill Gibbs	Te Aroha	Keep it small and simple. We need our own mayor. We don't want to be part of a huge city like Hamilton. They have a different life, requirements and culture than our smaller towns.
580	- Lisa Moore	Te Aroha	
581	- Shane Hutchins	Te Aroha	
582	- Stephanie O'Hara	Te Aroha	I think if we can keep away from Hamilton it will better for us. We would be swallowed up and our voice too small to be heard. I think we need our own representation. Perhaps all the Mayors at least need to join as the Eastern

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			Waikato authority to make decisions. Depending on how many people are needed to run "the monster" but only elected people should be on that board.
583	- Suzanne Spooner	Te Aroha	
584	- Hannah Shands	Te Aroha	
585	- Thalia	Te Aroha	Central government are lunatics for thinking that less individualised and community focused representation will be a positive thing. I'm reluctantly choosing option 1, but i would actually rather choose neither. Keep local government as is would work better for me.
586	- ALBERT WAYNE & LYNDALL EDNA HANSON	Te Aroha	Smaller area is better for us. Hamilton has no idea what really happens in our area.
587	- Gayleen Miller	Te Aroha	Option one seems to include those areas that we already work alongside. Similar demographics across these regions.
588	- Vicky Kelly	Te Aroha	If we can't stay what with what we have already I prefer Option 1. A large Waikato council would mean our individual localness would be lost and sucked up into Hamilton. I feel we could work well with Hauraki and South Waikato - Coromandel might be better with Western bay of plenty. I am worried about staff jobs however and keeping jobs in our district.
589	- Kim Coughy	Te Aroha	Keep it local. Whatever the outcome rural towns in the district will suffer especially the one with council offices think carefully about the process we don't want it to be like waikato water done well were people are now having the drive to Hamilton to do a job that was done in Te Aroha.(So much for saving our planet!)
590	- Zara Coughy	Te Aroha	
591	- Kerrie opie	Te Aroha	
592	- Barry Monds	Te Aroha	
593	- Michelle Edge	Te Aroha	Id really prefer to stay as we are as any large debts on other councils now become ours. We manage our infrastructure well- but it seems we don't have a choice.
594	- Simon McNeil-Vincent	Te Aroha	Good luck
595	- Heather Wavish	Te Aroha	Absolutely need the Eastern Authority to look after the stated areas. Combining urban development with farming communities and rural dwellers, will be detrimental to our small towns. Our rates need to be spent looking after our own tiwns not city infrastructure that has been left for years and bad decisions made by previous city councils that have contributed to a huge debt.
596	- sue fitzpatrick	Te Aroha	
597	- Edith Doran	Te Aroha	I prefer to be connected with other communities like ours. We have similar concerns.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
59 8	- Catherine Tyson	Te Aroha	
59 9	- Sarah Fowlie	Te Aroha	I prefer Option 1. The district populations are of a similar size, and we face many of the same challenges in servicing our communities, particularly around three waters, roading, and development. I believe the similarities in population size and the issues we face make it a good fit. By partnering with councils of a similar size, we are less likely to become a minor party or have our interests overshadowed, which could happen in a larger city council arrangement. I would also expect that rate increases would be more manageable than if we were to join with a larger city council.
60 0	- Peter Volker	Te Aroha	I warmly support the comments made by MPDC on the website under 'Local Government Change is coming', expressing disappointment about the introduction by force of this reorganisation by Central Government.
60 1	- Richard Worley	Te Aroha	Fairly convinced by the mpdc arguments.
60 2	- Allan Van Tiel	Te Aroha	Ideally I do not want amalgamation to happen. I don't believe that we need to downsize. If we do, you should also in parliament downsize.
60 3	- Colleen Marshall	Te Aroha	
60 4	- Ruth Waugh	Te Aroha	
60 5	- Gillian M Thomas	Te Aroha	
60 6	- Denise DeDera	Te Aroha	
60 7	- Robert Cookson	Te Aroha	
60 8	- Tina Brown	Te Aroha	I'd prefer local people run an area they are familiar with and can make decisions with their local knowledge/
60 9	- Trish Churchill	Te Aroha	
61 0	- Jonathan Campbell	Te Aroha	I would NOT want to be part of a Waikato wide unitary authority. My biggest (!!)
61 1	- Ross Miller	Te Aroha	
61 2	- Jeremy Gamble	Te Aroha	Option 1 and Other option - regionally to discuss grouping in pairs to achieve 50% reduction with the least complication. Well presented thank you.
61 3	- Desmond Austin	Te Aroha	I believe that we should have as many opportunities as possible to have local input on the wide range of work, services, environment, and community issues.
61 4	- Margaret Layton	Te Aroha	
61 5	- Jill Taylor	Te Aroha	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
61 6	- Glynn Bailey	Te Aroha	Option one appears the most sensible, sustainable and obvious. Rather not have to do this at all, however, when the arm is forced this would be my pick, only because we have to.
61 7	- Harry Bowers	Te Aroha	
61 8	- Olwyn Gillespie	Te Aroha	
61 9	- Nichole Suarez	Te Aroha	I think the Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority option better reflects the shared river systems (Waihou and Piako/Waitoa) and associated drainage catchments that flow into the Hauraki Gulf. Aligning these natural systems within one authority would improve the efficiency and coordination of operational functions, particularly in flood protection, land drainage etc. Additionally, a smaller unitary authority would help ensure that rural districts retain a strong and meaningful voice in decision-making.
62 0	- Tanya Austin	Te Aroha	I would rather keep Thames separate as I think they are unique to themselves with the type of things they care about and how weather will be affecting their land in the future. Every weather event will result in road slips and issues. If we could follow the waihou from its spring until its end, plus the kaimais extend the same way. We will be similar in how we are affected. I'm pretty annoyed at the government for putting you in this position and feel that an amalgamation would be great if it was done well. Rushing it prior to an election is not the way to go. This is going to cost ratepayers not save money
62 1	- Andrea Best	Te Aroha	The smaller the better unitary authority. Allow a more personalised approach.
62 2	- Lindsay Best	Te Aroha	Neighbouring councils; can share resources, help each other in times of disaster, work together to reduce costs (i.e. contractors). Not keen on a large Waikato unitary body - too big and too far away. DO NOT AGREE TO ABOLISH REGIONAL COUNCIL.
62 3	- Jan McNeil	Te Aroha	
62 4	- Ian McLeod	Te Aroha	Option one is a logical combination of similar mainly rural councils. It is reasonably compact, catchment based (important for consistent management of river schemes) and will not be dominated by the population of Hamilton city. There may be some difficulty with TCDC on the basis that it has considerable coastal areas with a large number of absentee ratepayers. Also, part of South Waikato is in the Waikato River catchment. Please do not include "Waikato" in any new Authority name. How about 'Thames Valley' or 'Kaimai-Coromandel'. How about the old TVEPB building (currently for sale at a bargain price) for the headquarters office.
62 5	- Tu Clarke	Te Aroha	This is a rush job from this Govt. Like many of their other failed jobs. Canceling Ferry Contracts and not fixing the Ferry problems. Removal of Te Tiriti responsibilities in Govt Depts. Trying to remove Te Tiriti from the school boards, who refused the changes. Promising to lower unemployment then wiping tens of thousands of jobs in the guise of cost saving. Promising to reduce the cost of living and instead seeing it rise. Denying the rise in homelessness, spending more on defence toys than cost of living crisis. Giving tax breaks to landlords and taking \$1000 per week housing allowances while making criteria for social housing more difficult for people. Stopping the ability of people to take large corporations to court over environmental failures and damage. Cutting equity claims from ever being heard, basically discriminating against some of our most important front line people. And now, forcing amalgamation unitary compliance with little to no consultation with the NZ public. An Eastern Waikato unitary authority means the

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			people of the Waihou and community may continue to have our voices heard for our region.
626	- P Lehrle	Te Aroha	
627	- Marion Koppenol	Te Aroha	My choice of option 1 is only valid on the condition that option 1 does not involve 1) more highly paid salaries or consultants ,highly paid central government overseers or inspectors, 2)new offices, 3) transfer of personal information of people living in the region and or 4)burdened communication complications due to oversized organisation forms and infrastructure, 5) higher rates for people owning land and houses, businesses in the Matamata Piako District, 6) debts other district councils or debts of central government are not loaded on the Matamata Piako District. 7) local control and input from local councillors voted in by the residents is made impossible or made invalid.
628	- Harold McGall	Te Aroha	
629	- Andrew Honeyfield	Te Aroha	Option 1 is the only one that will work for us.
630	- Andrew Leech	Te Aroha	We lived on the North Shore when the Auckland "super city" was created. Everything went down hill as money that was supposed to benefit our area was diverted to other parts of Auckland over the bridge that had no bearing on our area. We should keep our council area as localized as possible for all the reasons you have mentioned - I agree with you 100%!
631	- Lorraine Prout	Te Aroha	I opt for the Eastern Waikato because I feel our little community will get 'lost in the bigger picture' of decisions resource and supply.
632	- Ruth Shaw	Te Aroha	
633	- Bronwynne Leech	Te Aroha	
634	- Evelyn Munro	Te Aroha	Big is NOT necessarily better!
635	- Sandra Joyce	Te Aroha	To me it makes the best sense for what is in our area, farming, smaller towns, seaside places...
636	- Robyn Greer	Te Aroha	I think the smaller area is more easy for people to keep in touch with what is happening in their area.
637	- Jo Kelly	Te Aroha	
638	- Katja Wotherspoon	Te Aroha	Keep local governance more local !
639	- roslyn hirawani	Te Aroha	I choose this because I always believe we shud unite with Hauraki being my whakapapa and I choose the Eastern for that reason
640	- Bridget Mulligan	Te Aroha	
641	- Deborah Watson	Te Aroha	Keep us small please. Once we have dumped this goverment, maybe things can get back to normal.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
64 2	- Bruce Greer	Te Aroha	
64 3	- Katherine Smith	Te Aroha	
64 4	- Hamish Mohring	Te Aroha	
64 5	- Victor	Te Aroha	
64 6	- Megan Paul	Te Aroha	
64 7	- Stacey Blake	Te Aroha	
64 8	- Ashley	Te Aroha	Yes agreed we are a small community the work structure eg. Kerbside rubbish different days for different towns works well. Infrastructure alot of work has gone into our public roads to make it wider and more safer to drive on.. This town needs its own council our town is running well and the government needs to be here to see the work time effort that's gone into projects and see the finished outcome. SO LEAVE OUR COUNCIL ALONE WE DONT NEED TO AMALGAMATE OR JOIN BIGGER COUNCILS
64 9	- Angela Vaughan	Te Aroha	
65 0	- Paul Jamieson	Te Aroha	
65 1	- Tremayne Jones	Te Aroha	I'd prefer to stay as we are and the eastern Waikato unitary authority is the closest thing to it. We need decisions and planning to stay relevant to our small community. A larger area under one council will lead to greater detachment and, I feel would leave our small towns out in the cold.
65 2	- Mike Voykovich	Te Aroha	Concerns many of the tcdc issues are substantial different because of geography, holiday populations compared to the others which are predominantly rural communities. Perhaps the eastern side could go with Tauranga
65 3	- Rob den Boer	Te Aroha	
65 4	- Suzanne Norris	Te Aroha	
65 5	- Benson	Te Aroha	
65 6	- Evelyn Rowley	Te Aroha	I think that Eastern Waikato is where Te Aroha is located.
65 7	- Joan Jennings	Te Aroha	
65 8	- Braiden Gray	Te Aroha	I work for WRC, doing land drainage and river scheme work, biggest thing I want to make sure that rate payers are still getting the level of service as before, pump stations, river work, erosion control and a multitude of other things that the public doesn't see on the day to day.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
659	- Maureen Coleman	Te Aroha	I do NOT want to see the Waikato Wide option as this will be an absolute disaster for the rural and smaller communities. I dont need to say any more - this has been so clear to see on other occasions - let us learn from this please
660	- Catharina Bruygoms	Te Aroha	
661	- Isobel Worley	Te Aroha	
662	- Arnya	Te Aroha	All my points of concern appear to be addressed in the council survey info on the MPDC website
663	- Ethan Tapper	Te Aroha	
664	- Ira Merrifield	Te Aroha	Would like to have Te Aroha keep as much as her own voice as much as is possible. Own Mayor definately etc as a voted in voice for us. I am Maori and I identify and whakapapa to the whole of this area and there is history of our independence that I feel supports the Eastern option more. Thankyou so much for the opportunity to put my option and view forward. Good luck I love my home town Te Aroha and very much like your leadership Ash Tanner.
665	- Debra Byford	Te Aroha	
666	- Sandy Gwynne	Te Aroha	
667	- Andrew Riley	Te Aroha	
668	- Vanessa Kowalski	Te Aroha	
669	- Janet Tee	Te Aroha	
670	- H G. DAVEY	Te Aroha	If it must be, at least give us a name we can pronounce, has history and connection, while there may not be a name covering all the area proposed, the heart of the proposed district is THAMES VALLEY, this name was and has been connected with many local body and community groups historically and for a few still is. Bring back the the Thames Valley. Let's get something positive out of this Central Government uninvited tinkering.
671	- Nicola Turnbull	Te Aroha	Wish to keep the region smaller so that we don't get overlooked in decision making.
672	- Debra Burns	Te Aroha	Option 1 will allow our small areas continue to be heard and not lost amongst the larger areas who will always be more important than us
673	- Carolyn Cranna	Te Aroha	I read Ash's article. I totally agree with Option 1. The wider the Unitary Authority, the more likely Matamata-Piako especially Te Aroha will seem less important and control and decisions will be lost that is most important to this area. Once again as we don't seem to have a choice with this change, common sense falls into play. Amalgamate the areas that are already working together closely.
674	- Mary Davey	Te Aroha	Sad that government is forcing this issue in the first place but that is making it be sorted in such a quick time frame. Why call us eastern waikato. Let's stand alone as Thames Valley.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
67 5	- Tim Cranna	Te Aroha	Central govt are just uninformed bullies tell them to mind their own business.
67 6	- Marilyn Lovegrove	Te Aroha	Option 1 seems to be the best for us as it aligns us with like thinking councils. And as stated we already work together in some areas.
67 7	- Neil Shaw	Te Aroha	
67 8	- Maree Capper	Te Aroha	To have a voice with local council is important
67 9	- Trevor Capper	Te Aroha	This is the best option I feel looking forward
68 0	- Mary Hansen	Te Aroha	I believe the current system is working well so there is no need to change it, change always brings costs and we need to be run by those who understand our unique district. Option 1 is more preferential than the other which because of the large scale is not going to serve us well.
68 1	- Gail Brown	Te Aroha	We will get lost with the Waikato-wide option and as we work with the other three councils it makes sense to go with option 1.
68 2	- Mary Haines	Te Aroha	
68 3	- Kay Hansen	Te Aroha	
68 4	- Margaret Teague	Te Aroha	Keep the local office for employment in town.
68 5	- Mike Teague	Te Aroha	
68 6	- Olivia Toms	Te Aroha	
68 7	- Vivienne Batchelor	Te Aroha	Its easy to get lost in a big conglomerate where the smaller areas get pushed into the background and eventually forgotten. My preference is definitely for the option where the smaller Eastern Waikato areas come together and support each other.
68 8	- S Gilchrist	Te Aroha	Option 1 may identify additional opportunities for sharing and working together with areas that are similar in make up to the Matamata Piako district which result in cost savings, without us losing our voice. Percentage wise the people of Te Aroha and the Matamata Piako district would have a bigger share of the say in an Eastern Waikato authority than in a Waikato-wide authority. My concern with option 2 is that the needs and voices of the Matamata Piako communities will be lost due to the size of the catchment area covered by a Waikato-wide authority. Rural communities are quite different from urban ones and have different needs and priorities. It would be highly likely that rural communities would lose out to the priorities of cities like Hamilton. I am not overly familiar with the reasons behind Central Government forcing a change on councils. If it is to reduce the number of entities they have to deal with they should prefer a single Waikato-wide authority so the case for an Eastern Waikato authority needs to be strongly made. I also think there should be consideration given with Option 1 to opportunities to slim down the council and save costs. Does it make sense to keep councils as they are in terms of the number of Mayors and Councillors if we are not operating as 4 or 5 separate districts? A potential cost saving for ratepayers emanating from this would you think be palatable not only to ratepayers but to Central Government as well.

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
689	- Jennie Hema	Te Aroha	Don't like the idea of only having a small voice in a waikato wide authority
690	- Alayna Mita	Te Aroha	Option 1 looks to be the best in terms of size and alignment with a positive outlook and hopefully cheaper rates would there be opportunities to rotate or assist in similar work roles when the 3 regions become one unitary authority?
691	- Raewyn Ellison	Te Aroha	I prefer option 1 as being in a smaller unitary we will still have a local voice, representation and decision making. It will also mean that we are not paying for items that are not in our district.
692	- Darryl Sullivan	Te Aroha	
693	- Lewis marshall	Te Aroha	We will get nothing if we join Hamilton and am not keen on giving any resources to them
694	- Tegan Clark	Te Aroha	Eastern Waikato. We need to have control over what happens in our community and not be left behind. Ngā mihi.
695	- Sarah	Te Aroha	Keep it small and easy the way it is.
696	- Sheryl Dodge	Te Aroha	
697	- Patricia McKenzie	Te Aroha	
698	- Marjolein Volker	Te Aroha	Being grouped in with Hamilton City council will be unsuitable and expensive to Te Aroha in the long run. This region would benefit from a more tailored approach, rather than being lumped in with a major city.
699	- Kane Albrecht	Te Aroha	Being grouped with Waikato-wide will mean that we lose any voice that we have, as we will be grouped into such a great and non specific area. Ideally councils would be left as they are, as this results in a great connection to specific management within the area.
700	- Richard Connett	Te Aroha	If this is a merger to form one entity, we do not need four Mayors, that is an unnecessary extravagance, just like if four companies merge they don't keep four CEO's. Same for the Executive teams for the four councils they should be merged into one. Assets that belong to the ratepayers should remain in the region, such as the Power New Zealand Share Distribution which was gifted to the councils for the purpose of benefiting all ratepayers.
701	- John Mullon	Te Aroha	
702	- Allison Ward	Te Aroha	Definitely the most sensible option!
703	- MAREE ANNETTE YOUNG	Te Aroha	Option 2 would be disastrous to our community. Our voice would be lost amongst the masses, who have very different focuses from us, I believe. Services would be slow and not based on local needs. I agree that in a perfect world we would stay as we are.
704	- Alison Cradock	Te Aroha	Combining into a larger council structure will mean that small communities lose their "voice" and thus lose control in decision making and asset control. Thus the amalgamation needs to encompass as few existing entities as possible.
705	- Lynn Murphy	Te Aroha	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
70 6	- Gregg McKenzie	Te Aroha	
70 7	- Ryan Jackson	Te Aroha	I don't want to inherit Hamilton City's debt and have my rates increased to cover it
70 8	- Diane Robinson	Te Aroha	Believe whole heartedly in keeping organisation as local as possible. We in the Thames Valley do not want to be enveloped by the whole Waikato whom we have no kinsship with in relation to community involvement.
70 9	- June Mccaskill	Te Aroha	
71 0	- Keith Harris	Te Aroha	
71 1	- Nakita McNab	Te Aroha	
71 2	- Tayla Skipper	Te Aroha	
71 3	- Angela Millward	Te Aroha	Stay with more like minded councils. Would get lost in the larger authority
71 4	- Denice Taukiri	Te Aroha	Te Aroha doesnt need to be part of the wider waikato. We are a small rural community and will be disadvantaged if lumped together with a big city
71 5	- Megan Farac	Te Aroha	
71 6	- Sharon Coombe	Te Aroha	
71 7	- Darren Diprose	Te Aroha	We dont want to lose our identity and we certainly dont want to be involved with the Hamilton council as there are to far in debt due to historical bad planning.
71 8	- Maddi Simpson	Te Aroha	Working with like minded community sounds like the way to go. I think the Hamilton city lot would have very different wants and needs to us rural guys. So the eastern sounds like a great idea
71 9	- Shirley Ellison	Te Aroha	
72 0	- Rion Ellison	Te Aroha	
72 1	- Donna Maria Jones	Te Aroha	
72 2	- Sandra Hansen	Te Aroha	
72 3	- Dale McEntee	Te Aroha	
72 4	- Anna Croft	Te Aroha	
72 5	- Heather Burns	Te Aroha	

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
726	- WM and AM Timmo	Te Aroha	More say in the things that matter for our immediate district. . We will be better heard.
727	- Hermina van Orsouw	Te Aroha	
728	- Gillian Walker	Te Aroha	Option 2 is too big and everything would go to Hamilton
729	- Hamish Millward	Te Aroha	
730	- Geraldine swann	Te Aroha	This is important & I nearly missed it, due to being presented among so much else ,eg dog info I don't have a dog. Perhaps such important issues could be stand alone issues & treated as such.
731	- Helen Wood	Te Aroha	
732	- M Naudé	Te Aroha	Option 1 makes more sense in terms of roles currently undertaken by regional council as it aligns better with the Piako and Waihou water catchments. The districts are similar in character and land use so potentially have more in common than a Waikato-wide council might have. It also reduces the risk of Hamilton dominating decision-making in a Waikato council in the same way that Auckland City appeared to dominate over the former rural districts of Rodney and Franklin when the 'super city' was created. The downside is that the boundary would be misaligned with the new water entity. It will also be a very large area and if Thames-Coromandel is included there is a lot of infrastructure to maintain for a low resident population. There is also a risk that larger towns like Thames or Whitianga will dominate over smaller centres in terms of representation and spending.
733	- Ngahina McLaren	Te Aroha	
734	- Fiona Ryan	Te Aroha	I do not support a Waikato-wide unitary authority because of the following issues I believe would likely have a negative impact on our district: - Decisions and operational actions are likely to be less responsive to the specific needs of our district when spread across such a large geographical area as that of the Waikato, which contains a large population and significantly diverse range of assets, interests and needs. I believe dedicated in-district governance, oversight, and service delivery (where reasonably possible) in manageable proportion to our various demographics, is in our district's best interest. Governance and management by our people, for our people. - With the large scale and size of a Waikato-wide unitary authority, I expect the location, structure and broad-brush operations of such authority would result in significant loss of local knowledge, understanding, personal investment, and accountability of our governance and management decision makers. This extends beyond strict loss of prudent management of our district's physical assets and infrastructure, eroding our distinct character and sense of local ownership, which are the building blocks of our district's identity, strength and resilience. The importance of decision-makers having a genuine and proportionate understanding of, and commitment to, the communities they serve cannot be overstated. - Assimilation of our uniquely featured, predominantly rural, district into a large region of melting pot urban sprawl has the very serious risk of turning our district's pursuit of progressively harnessing and leveraging against our special features, into a direction of dumbed-down and ignored non-city/poor-cousin district regression. Under a Waikato-wide unitary authority, I would expect our urban leaders to naturally allocate resources and priority of importance to those city centres in which larger populations reside, likely resulting in inequitable allocation of resources and

#	Name	Ward	Option 1 - Eastern Waikato Selected - Feedback
			potentially reducing the level of services and infrastructure investment available to our smaller fringe districts. - Reduced representation by like-minded local elected members. Our district would have less opportunity and less likelihood of success in electing representatives who understand and prioritise the issues unique to our district, resulting in weaker advocacy and support for our local interests. - Reduced community engagement. Under the large Waikato-wide scale of unitary authority, our residents are likely to find it more difficult to successfully achieve contact with elected members and decision-makers, resulting in a greater disconnect between our community and local government. - I think central government needs to be careful about making any assumptions that predominantly rural districts will happily have their existing local government autonomy removed in favour of being directed by an urban idealist authority. As more rural based issues arise, the disparity in relevant knowledge, experience and understanding of an urban focused authority is likely to become more obvious over time, and significantly divisive between those communities central government was hoping to unify.
73 5	- Jason Carey	Te Aroha	
73 6	- Vickie Lanceman	Te Aroha	Continuity with other rural districts. Not to join Waikato.
73 7	- R. Marks	Te Aroha	
73 8	- G. L. Galloway	Te Aroha	
73 9	- Sharon Marks	Te Aroha	Central government i.e. this coalition has become a dictatorship and should have no say in how Councils run their Districts.

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
740	- Holly Cushion	Matamata	
741	- Brad Hutton	Matamata	
742	- Sharron Wooler	Matamata	Experience in regional environmental matters including planning and regulation is the primary requirement for a strong unitary authority. There is a shift towards more urban form than previously and experience in urban management is also important going forward.
743	- Michelle	Matamata	We have to many council members. We can save with lease people.one council should be able to look after every one if run right.
744	- Simone Hillis	Matamata	As someone who has been involved in community initiatives, I have seen firsthand how much our communities have had to lead, advocate and fundraise to achieve improvements that, in my view, should have been proactively planned by council. While I value local representation and community involvement, I believe a well-run council should have robust long-term asset management and strategic planning processes that identify and deliver community infrastructure before residents have to campaign for it. For this reason, I see greater merit in a Waikato-wide council than an Eastern Waikato merger. My concern with the Eastern Waikato option is that Matamata-Piako could become one of the stronger financial contributors while taking on the infrastructure challenges of neighbouring districts, without necessarily achieving a significant improvement in planning or governance. I often compare Matamata with Cambridge. Both have similar rural roots and strong agricultural and equine identities, yet Cambridge has embraced growth through thoughtful planning, balancing housing with parks, playgrounds, commercial and industrial development, and supporting infrastructure while retaining its character. I would like to see Matamata benefit from that same proactive approach. However, if part of a larger council it would be great retain meaningful local representation and decision-making, with strong local boards and a commitment to investing in local communities. The success of any governance model will depend not just on its size, but on its willingness to plan ahead, invest strategically and work with communities rather than relying on them to fill gaps in council planning.
745	- Muna Wharawhara	Matamata	I think a Waikato wide approach will have wider benefits for Matamata Piako with a broader regional strategy that will lift economic benefits and performance for our smaller communities through recognition and participation i.e. the Golden Triangle. Early lwi engagement is going to be critical to standing up the chosen unitary authority quickly. So would like to see this happen early and the lwi relationship framework designed earlier in the phased development
746	- Jeff Johnson	Matamata	The bigger picture is almost inevitable at some stage; so better to do it now.
747	- Brendon Finlay	Matamata	Thames/Coromandel area continue to be hit by weather disasters and huge bills every year. I fear keeping a few small rural holdings such as option one suggests will leave us more inland stable climate ratepayers propping up their exposed infrastructure as the climate gets worse every year. Better to spread this burden over the whole region and larger rate payer bases of Hamilton city and the other larger towns.
748	- Karl Gordon Boobyer	Matamata	

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
749	- Cathrine Henderson	Matamata	
750	- Martin Parkes	Matamata	
751	- Neil Robert Thompson	Matamata	
752	- Geer korstanje	Matamata	
753	- Walt Cavendish	Matamata	
754	- Kevin Curtis	Matamata	Eventually Eastern Waikato will be forced in to a single Waikato Council at some point in the future. Amalgamation to Waikato now will mean local rate payers will avoid the cost and burden of doing it again in the future. There seems to be no tangible benefits offered from the mayor or council advocating for the status quo. The only reasons offered against amalgamation are that: it will cost money, Matamata Piako will "Lose a local voice" and Matamata Piako will subsidise other councils. If the Mayor and council believe the status quo should remain then they need to do a better job at demonstrating this to central government and the opposition. Having a "Voice" is not the same as having something worthwhile to say. If MPDC really want to fight against this please tell rate payers and central government what it is MPDC does that cannot be done by another authority rather than emotive talking points.
755	- Jason Daniel	Matamata	
756	- Deslee Howell	Matamata	
757	- Helen Phare	Matamata	
758	- Tina Somerville	Matamata	
759	- Stephen Somerville	Matamata	
760	- Rachael Curtis	Matamata	Best to go with the larger authority now as it will happen eventually. Save money in the long term.
761	- Virginia McMillan	Matamata	A collection of small, largely low-income eastern Waikato councils would, as one council, find its workload even more expensive and burdensome. Small districts would fight each other to retain bureaucracies. Matamata, Hauraki and Thames have totally different landscapes and demographics. A council of such entities would not be noticed by central government. If we must make this choice, forced hurriedly upon us by a reckless Coalition Government, I urge that we choose the Waikato region, which has strength in diversity of people and assets, a single overarching river catchment, a history of regional relationships and a range of skills and competencies. I urge MPDC also to seriously engage with local iwi on this matter.
762	- John Gillespie	Matamata	I do not consider there is any viable alternative to the Waikato Wide Option because Hamilton is the only city in the region. In any organisation, people are the key, our new authority needs to attract professional people of the highest quality, That means being in the vicinity of good education for their children, tertiary education for development, highest level health care, easy travel options to work

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
			including public transport and high class sports, arts and cultural amenities. Hamilton has all those and Thames, Matamata, Tokoroa and the other towns definitely do not. We should quickly accept the Waikato wide option but then work hard to ensure the towns of the MPDC are catered for in terms of elected representation and regional hubs that provide the services we need on a regular basis Let's look forward and not back, we all thought the world would end when Matamata borough became part of MPDC but strangely enough it didn't even remotely. Cheers
763	- Terry Borchers	Matamata	The risk of a Waikato-wide authority is of course the disproportionate weight the city of Hamilton will have in decisions and funding allotments. It's a real risk. But the fact is, our small country has way too many levels of government and way too much overlap of taxing and services across the board. It's time to change that. The Eastern Waikato authority is just a slightly different assembly of a slightly large set of puzzle pieces. It doesn't address the fundamental issue of substantially too much government overlap.
764	- Gord Stewart	Matamata	An Eastern Waikato unitary authority would offer little or no economies of scale. It would keep decision-making closer to home, but what is the quality of that decision-making? MPDC's climate resilience strategy, made with incomplete information (confirmed by staff) and at odds with the desires of the community is an example of a poor outcome. As you note, a Waikato-wide unitary authority would benefit from scale - supporting region-wide planning, shared services, and stronger organisational capability. It will be crucial that all the responsibilities and activities of the current Waikato Regional Council are folded into the new authority (not 'deep sixed' as the fast-track, pave-over-the-place Coalition Government prefers). I don't agree that the trade-offs are significant. Local voice need not be at risk. Using the citizens' assembly format for decision-making can avoid the failure evident, for example, in MPDC's climate strategy as noted above. It would ensure communities are fairly represented and participants in the process are properly informed. Furthermore, the use of local boards (that accurately represent each community throughout the region) could feed into effective decision-making. Wouldn't this be preferred to relying on the opinions of a few councillors, many elected (in low voter turnout) simply because they are well known in the community? Organising the country in jurisdictions set by the current regions make so much sense - rather than a couple of councils here, a few councils there, a full region down there. The Eastern unitary authority would have four councils, but Wakato Waters Ltd has additional entities involved. The proposed format would be a shambles, but no surprises given the workings of the current Government. They're afraid to organise from the top down, given the Three Waters Experience. They are giving the appearance of councils having some choices, but isn't it all really subtle bullying? Not to mention all done in a rush. You should ask the Government to park it and revisit if they are re-elected in October.
765	- Brooke Roebeck	Matamata	
766	- Julian Snowball	Morrinsville	I like the idea of an Eastern Waikato; a unitary that reflects rural NZ: however, my head tells me that the Waikato wide unitary will be more affordable for rate payers: For example, current regional level services are funded across the whole region: Those same costs will need to be absorbed by a new smaller unitary with less households to spread the burden: hence creating the potential for bigger financial implications to rate payers.
767	- Paul Hurrell	Morrinsville	The Waikato-wide model is the best model to support the future growth of the Waikato region. Hamilton City is bursting at the seams and Waipa/MPDC and Waikato Districts provide satellite towns for the region. It makes perfect sense to integrate and reduce management-level positions in backroom functions. You are still going to need the soldiers on the ground—animal management/building consents/etc.—but by providing a flatter reporting structure, you can help to reduce

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
			costs/create greater clarity with by laws. Functions such as HR/accounting/marketing/communications are best run as one unit with locations of those units spread across the larger region to utilise the current offices rather than centralised in say Hamilton, thereby reducing the cost footprint of a large building in the most expensive real estate. The larger Waikato-wide authority also provides a far strong voice to central government and would be a larger land area that neighbouring Auckland, and also incorporating the largest part of the "Golden Triangle" and also some of the key tourist destinations for this area. Smaller councils need to stop being protectionist around their roles and look to the far larger picture that benefits firstly the region but also the whole country moving forward.
768	- Kendal Anstiss	Morrinsville	
769	- Shaun Leslie	Morrinsville	
770	- Rebecca Oliver	Morrinsville	
771	- Tim Carmichael	Morrinsville	I think option 2, may as well bite the bullet now. It'll make Local councillors be more accountable for their local area
772	- michael carey	Morrinsville	I feel that option 2 would be best as it would provide sufficient scale to carry out all required activities. In theory, it could support region-wide planning, shared services, and stronger organisational capability. There should also be savings to be made across the whole region, as well as co-ordinated restructuring savings.
773	- Caitriona Gyde	Morrinsville	
774	- Rod Young	Morrinsville	I think Option 1 is the better option for MPDC going forward. It is obvious from the decisions by Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council have made regarding their future provision of water services that they see themselves apart for the surrounding smaller Councils. The Councils who might participate in Option 1 are of a similar scale as MPDC and seem to have considerations. I see from the Piako Post of 25/6/26 that MPDC does not transition to the new water body until 1 October 2026. We have yet to see what effect this will have on MPDC rates? I do not see the value in this action either. Unfortunately, I don't have much faith in the existing NZ (and I have similar feelings for a Labour led govt too should they win the upcoming election) government given their decision to require all local governments to make this local government amalgamation decision themselves now after having distracted the population and existing local government by the water amalgamation issue. I think they are continuing this type of action. I am actually surprised that local government didn't see this coming! I did. Both political parties have pushed for the water management amalgamations and divestment to unelected autonomous governing bodies. I suspect the present government may not accept Option 1 and require the creation of fewer local government areas. If that occurs I do not think the people of MPDC will be well served by a less representative larger local government body. I would like to see WRC disappear into the new local government authorities as I think they are an unnecessary duplication of local government. I do not hold out much hope for either option regarding providing local government for local people. There has not been long enough time given for consideration or consultation on this amalgamation matter. The advertisements in the local paper did not provide a timeline for responses? Good luck with your endeavours.
775	- Ajay Kumar	Morrinsville	This is the best opportunity to look at the bigger picture and form a Waikato wide mega city option, which will not only eliminate any future reforms but also bring in

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
			economic growth for the MPDC and other smaller Councils. The best city in NZ to expand has to be Hamilton and my gut feeling is the Government will support this growth as an opportunity to boost the region and bring the best out of Waikato. On the other hand, I understand the fear of losing community voice and jobs, but they are a by-product of any reform, even in Option 1, so instead of letting someone else (the Government) to decide the outcome, perhaps we can explore the bigger option ourselves instead.
776	- Ashleigh Sattler	Morrinsville	Option 1 feels like too much of the same. We would be overshadowed by what would effectively be a Hamilton super city / greater waikato council body so I think it might be better to join that bigger group. Matamata-Piako is already a cluster of three different town/areas with different challenges. I think a greater waikato oversight body would be more powerful and lead to more efficient use of resources.
777	- Maria Clark	Morrinsville	We run a farm building company. If this means that all councils will run under the same building requirements this would make our job a lot easier.
778	- Hugh Makgill	Morrinsville	You are planning an almost Waikato wide Water Authority. It seems to make sense to follow with the Unity authority.
779	- Michele Bennett	Morrinsville	
780	- Brent Vyle	Morrinsville	Population base of the Eastern Waikato option is too small to create the efficiencies that Central Government is seeking. Highly likely that the Eastern Waikato option will result in significant rate rises to deliver regional functions i.e. flood control works, state of environment reporting, env compliance etc. These functions are currently subsidised by a rating base of approximately 500,000 people. Eastern option will likely result in decreased levels of service. Local boards can address concerns re loss of local voice in a single unitary authority.
781	- Marcia Velloen	Morrinsville	Unrealistic view to keep Mayors, the idea from Central Government is to cut cost by having only one Mayor and being able to use that savings towards what matters to ratepayers. It is also extremely disappointing that MPDC is forcing one option and not really giving more info on the 2nd option (or others).
782	- JP Velloen	Morrinsville	Waikato wide will have a greater cost benefit. Auckland models has shown that over recent years. Yes not initially, just like a start up of any business, but benefits will come. Just on councilors and CEO's and ELT across the organisations, you can have upwards of \$10mil in savings. Currently our representation within Morrinsville is poor, thought our elected members would be more active and engaged with the community. I dont even know if they are still around.... One proposal being pushed is poor and prosing to keep the same governance structure is unrealistic, which leaves me with no confidence on the current leadership representation.
783	- Gina Barreto	Morrinsville	
784	- Warrick Herd	Morrinsville	
785	- Simeona Herd	Morrinsville	
786	- Nick Povey	Morrinsville	
787	- Georgina Pearce	Morrinsville	Option 2 would give us access to the Hamilton Library (improved library services), Hamilton Gardens free entry. Our local swimming pool may be eligible to be covered and therefore used all year! Maybe it would allow secondary students

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
			access to all schools in the area, i.e. Hamilton Girls and Boys High etc. and other schools in towns closer by. It would share all resources equally (this could be both good and bad). Financial analysis would show if big ticket items, such as water, a shared cost would be cheaper due to scale. ALL DEPENDS ON THE FINANCIALS.
788	- Kimberley Porteous	Outside the district	
789	- Jo Hall	Outside the district	
790	- Jonathan Caldwell	Outside the district	While I understand the concerns and challenges around the scale of Option 2 and the potential for weakening of local voice, I think that there would be greater potential for efficiency gain from maintaining the region as it currently is rather than splitting it in to an east and west catchment. Also potential for more equitable service provision to ratepayers across all districts within the current regional boundary.
791	- Anita Lewis	Outside the district	I support a Waikato-wide unitary authority as it would provide a more coordinated, consistent, and efficient approach to managing key issues across the region. Many challenges, including land use, infrastructure planning, water management, and contaminated land, cross district boundaries and benefit from being managed at a regional scale rather than in a fragmented way. A single authority would improve alignment between planning and consenting, reduce duplication, and create more consistent standards and processes. This is particularly important for complex technical areas such as contaminated land, where strong in-house expertise and continuity are critical to managing risks effectively and ensuring compliance with national regulations. It is important that any new structure retains sufficient technical capability within the organisation, rather than relying heavily on external consultants. Maintaining experienced staff will support better decision-making, institutional knowledge, and more efficient outcomes over time. At the same time, local representation should remain a priority to ensure communities continue to have a meaningful voice in decision-making. Overall, I consider Option 2 provides the best opportunity for long-term consistency, capability, and effective management of the region's environmental and infrastructure challenges.
792	- Anita Lewis	Outside the district	I support a Waikato-wide unitary authority as it provides the best opportunity for consistent and coordinated planning across the region. Many key issues such as land use, infrastructure, water management, and environmental risks do not align with district boundaries and benefit from a more integrated regional approach. A larger structure is more likely to support strong in-house technical capability and consistent decision-making. This is particularly important for complex areas such as environmental management, where retaining experienced staff and institutional knowledge is critical to achieving good long-term outcomes. I recognise the concerns about local voice and representation, and it will be important that any larger structure maintains meaningful local input and decision-making at a community level. Overall, I consider a Waikato-wide approach offers better long-term coordination, capability, and resilience.
793	- Geeta Sharma	Outside the district	Bigger the better, less money spent on useless councillors
794	- Michelle Begbie	Outside the district	I favour proposed boundaries that maintains river catchment boundaries and doesn't leave smaller councils with a lower rate-base stranded with no means to fund their own infrastructure. However, I'm concerned that a unitary format will result in reduced environmental accountability. Unless an organisation is held to account by another, it is easy for environmental results to be deprioritised for financial reasons if there is no external agency enforcing compliance. I'm also

#	Name	Ward	Option 2 – Waikato Wide Option Selected - Feedback
			concerned that state of the environment monitoring undertaken as a regional function will be deprioritised in a unitary model.
795	- dave erceg	Outside the district	
796	- Jessica Norman	Te Aroha	
797	- Nerida Turner	Te Aroha	
798	- ken mahon	Te Aroha	
799	- Paul Dutton	Te Aroha	How will an eastern Waikato unitary authority provide biodiversity/biosecurity services with such a low rate payer base? Dare I say 'transport', it is already poor with regional council input, is it going to become worse with a lower rate payer base.
800	- byron price	Te Aroha	Option 2 is theoretically the best for scale of efficiency but (small word big meaning) it's just a crap shoot as usual with most government schemes mainly because it's other people's money, good luck to all we'll need it
801	- Denver Robinson	Te Aroha	Proven time and time again that when Small Organisations amalgamate to form large Conglomerates that efficiencies don't improve. Sure some cost savings can be made in certain areas but overall a large organisation becomes bogged down with bureaucracy and loses touch with the Little People who are funding the whole thing. Vermently opposed to Waikato Wide and even Eastern Waikato is really "Hobson's Choice". The only really good thing about Eastern Waikato is that it does incorporate the entire Waihou River and Piako River catchments which means a coordinated approach can be made in this region in this regard to flood control, replanting of wetlands, erosion control of 'soil creep' from farmlands into Firth of Thames. There was a time when the Firth of Thames was clear, clean water and not the muddy, murky body of water it has become. To conclude, Eastern Waikato holds the most promise in a tricky situation.

#	Name	Ward	Other - Feedback	Feedback
802	- Daniel Scelly	Matamata	Keep as Matamata Piako only	
803	- Trevor William Green	Matamata	May I suggest a third option: we amalgamate with Hauraki , but only the part on the western side of the Coromandel ranges and only go south into South Waikato to just south of Tirau	Option 2 I'm totally opposed to.
804	- Stewart George Wadey	Matamata	What is going to be achieved, by a quick fix restructure of tier 3 (District Governance) and tier 2 (Regional Governance). Without thought to achieving wealth for New Zealand Incorporated. and the provision of good common sense governance of Air, Water , Land and the basic coalface service and amenities for ensuring a vibrant community to be part of.	The history of New Zealand, has always demonstrated to be a country that its peoples cannot Save themselves to Wealth. Important good governance , is to support the creation of wealth. The Waikato contribution to New Zealand's export income, is land based produced. With significant employment opportunities. I am disappointed with the limited public consultation, only to be identified 'As ask questions of Ash Tanner. So , if home work has been done. it should be a consensus point of view, that prior to 1989 ; councillors had a 'hands on' oversight of its responsibilities, that many councillors of that time, contributed acknowledged business acumen. We must view the determination by the present Government to restructure Tier 2 and Tier 3 into one. As a 'YES Minister" moment. As I contributed in 2010 to Waikato University proposal of amalgamations and the academia opinion identified for such knowledge . Therefore, it is sensible thought to void all positions of Council management staff of both Regional and District, and seek applications for the new positions that has that will 67% of the current situation. That councillors elected to oversee the new business structure, have tangible involvement in remuneration and employment contracts content of public servants. A media item by Mayor Ash Tanner, quite correctly noted the beureacrat cost to Matamata Piako District ratepayers, since 1989. For the good of our Country, and constituents of what ever is formed, be catchment based and has relevance for the future.
805	- Tim Barrable	Matamata	Waikato wide minus Taupo district is my preferred option. I believe that the population does not warrant a smaller division of councils, as long as there are robust measures in	

#	Name	Ward	Other - Feedback	Feedback
			place to ensure local voices are heard.	
806	- Benjamin Ross	Matamata	I prefer to keep the Matamata-Piako District functioning as is. I am satisfied with the way things are currently run. I do not have big concerns about amalgamating with South Waikato but do have some concerns about the other options.	I have concerns about the Eastern Waikato unitary authority. I have lived in Thames-Coromandel District and their concerns seemed significantly different to here. They have a huge amount of coastline and bush. Some very isolated communities and many communities built around holiday homes and tourism. The western half of the Hauraki District has a huge network of canals, pumps, and levees while the eastern half is a continuation of the Thames-Coromandel District. Both of these regions will have upcoming challenges as land is reclaimed by rising sea levels. I think TCDC and the eastern half of Hauraki would fit better with BOP districts that will be grappling with the same issues. I can see the potential for economies of scale with a Waikato-wide unitary authority but I also suspect Matamata would not have a loud voice at that table and thus I do not particularly like that option.
807	- Neil Denby	Matamata	Having read Mayor Ash's piece in the scene, I whole heartedly agree with his analysis of the directive from the government. Essentially, none of the reasons put forward for amalgamation are credible, however you spin them. I am not going to address the issues, but I will say that we were in Auckland when the amalgamation was put in place, and I would call it a monumental cock up that is costing the ratepayers dearly. Let's be clear here, I DO NOT TRUST THE GOVERNMENT. I see this as a personal issue, as the effects directly impact my family and I. We have a Government, and I make no party distinction here, who are hell bent on exercising totalitarian control and ignoring or even considering, the WILL of the people. I ask why they are acting against the people and would conclude that the "directives" are coming from outside the Government as we understand it. I also believe that this type of move by a Government is designed to destabilize and reassert authority, when that authority is perceived to be in the process of being challenged. Then using the unelected "whipping boys" LGNZ to push their left wing	Centralisation, Further Loss of Identity.

#	Name	Ward	Other - Feedback	Feedback
			communist agendas. Just adding here, and thinking about the new “scheme” the Government is proposing to “help” ratepayers to cope with the ever increasing rate demands and manage “other things” that may be needed on their properties. What a cool scheme, NOT! Get into debt to the Council/Government, further impoverish your situation and leave yourself vulnerable to a “hostile takeover”. I want to know where this directive from the Government originates? Who or what has thought this scheme up? Does it originate from UN Agenda 2030/2050 directives, from that un-elected criminal organisation. This smacks of centralization, little by little. My thoughts on how and where local Government must move to be more successful and serving. After all, is that what we elected our local Government to do, to serve those who elected them to the positions, right? 1. De-centralize: Split the present large councils down to smaller entities relating to the different Boroughs. Elect local Borough Councils with Mayors and Council. Reinststate community and local control. Not withstanding shared services as appropriate. 2. Close down LGNZ: An unelected body and does not represent the “owners” of the properties and lands within councils. Remember, we are the stewards and owners of Council Properties through the Council. Am I right, or am I right? 3. Government as servants: Some believe that “The Government” owns lands, but the Government owns nothing. They are “servants” just like councils. My local MP regularly makes the point that he “serves” the electorate. I regularly remind him of his obligations. Only allow Central Government, which could now be much smaller, to advise. 4. Will. The “Will of the People” is paramount, is God given and exceeds all other authorities.	
808	- Carmen Warwood	Matamata	neither of the above, being a central waikato and joining with Waipa would be better aligned with MPDC. Many young families and forward thinkers	Hauraki is a vastly different district, in the 6 years ive lived in Matamata as a young family, we have never attended any events in Hauraki. no sports teams

#	Name	Ward	Other - Feedback	Feedback
			are moving to MPDC, Waipa aligns with what we are wanting out of a district. its closer in location and similar industries such as farming in Waipa as MPDC.	combine with Matamata, but Waipa does. Hauraki is a district without much growth in being more aligned with young families. also we have a very different geographic make up, our roads dont flood.
809	- Kevin Stanley	Matamata	I support the concept of local government reform and am open to both an Eastern Waikato Unitary Authority or a Waikato-wide Unitary Authority, provided the process learns from past experience and focuses on achieving the best long-term outcome. 1. We must learn from the last amalgamation Previous restructuring clearly showed that: Local representation does not last Community boards and local structures introduced to protect local voice were eventually removed or weakened. "Ring-fencing" of assets does not hold over time Debt and cash were ultimately consolidated across the wider entity despite earlier protections. These are established outcomes, not hypothetical risks. 2. Focus on governance quality, not structure Because local representation structures tend to erode: We should not rely on layered governance models to protect community interests Instead, we must prioritise: Strong, capable elected representatives Communities putting forward high-quality candidates I do not support retaining multiple mayors and councillors within a merged structure, as this creates complexity and weakens accountability. A simpler, unified governance model is preferable. 3. Protect local assets before amalgamation This is the most critical issue. Assets such as community investment funds must be: Retained for the benefit of the MPDC community, and Protected before any amalgamation occurs Relying on future ring-fencing is not sufficient — history shows these arrangements are unlikely to endure. The most effective approach is to secure these assets in independent structures that guarantee long-term local benefit and control. 4. Concern about current approach I am concerned that the current process appears to reflect a degree of protectionism toward the existing structure. This is evident in the generally negative framing of reform options in some presentations. It is important that we: Park local biases and institutional self-interest, and Genuinely assess what structure will deliver the best long-term outcomes for the wider region This is not about preserving the current system — it is about building a better one. 5. Bottom line I support reform in principle I am open to both proposed options But only if key risks are addressed In particular: Do not assume local representation will endure Do not rely on ring-fencing of assets Prioritise strong governance and accountability Protect community wealth before any change Approach reform openly, not defensively Final thought This is a once-in-a-generation decision. If approached realistically and constructively, reform could deliver real benefits. If not, there is a risk of permanently losing both local voice and local economic advantage.	
829	- Ian Grant	Matamata	No change. Our local affairs should be under the control of our local representatives. Look at the mess created by the creation of the Auckland "super city".	This big-tick attitude by the government smacks of trumpism. Is democracy on a slippery slope? Leave well alone!!
810	- G T Sarah	Morrinsville		We need to have an equal say in our future and with a huge area including Hamilton smaller communities like ours run the risk of being overpowered and ignored. Well done and thank you mayor and council for coming up with a very satisfactory solution that let's us keep our identity.
811	- Megan	Morrinsville	It should stay the way it is. Services (such as animal control) struggle to	Keep otvyge same as it is

#	Name	Ward	Other - Feedback	Feedback
			manage the area as it stands, it would be completely impossible to have effective services if they were stretched over such a large area.	
812	- Sally McFarlane	Morrinsville	We have not been given enough details or time to make an informed decision on the best way forward. I want the council to represent the community's voice requiring FULL DISCLOSURE and EXTENDED TIME FRAMES for DUE PUBLIC CONSULTATION from Central Government on this issue of great National significance in order for INFORMED, RATIONAL and EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING PROCESS to occur.	
813	- DENNIS MEARS	Morrinsville	Option : Morrinsville & Te Aroha goes with Hauraki District Council Option : Matamata goes with South Waikato District Council	Yes This is a better choice
814	- Judith Ralph	Morrinsville	I prefer that Morrinsville and Te Aroha go with Hauraki District Council Matamata goes with South Waikato District	This is a better option for us.
815	- Nigel McWilliam	Morrinsville	Line up with the Waikato Waters done well boundaries so there is one authority for consenting purposes to liaise with and for administration costs savings and resource co-ordination when water is the largest requirement of capital.	The Eastern Waikato option is better for local voice but where does it leave the other Councils ? I believe two unitary authorities for Waikato aligned with the the new Water authorities will be the most logical solution. The integration is already done so other services should be rolled into the same boundaries otherwise we have inefficient cross over with councils again.
816	- Colin McFarlane	Morrinsville	We want longer to consider the options. The government has not provided the council with enough information to inform the people of this district & around NZ. I want the council to represent the communities's voice requiring full disclosure and extended timeframes for due public consultation from central government on this issue of great national significance in order for informed, rational and evidence based decision-making process to occur.	
817	- Sreenivasan Ramasamy	Morrinsville	Merge it as same as waikato waters that's is 6councils - mpdc, hauraki, waipa,South waikato, otorohanga, and waitomo	Option 1 most of the cost related natural disaster issues are faced by thames coromandel and it does not help to save cost. We don't have big cities in this option. As cities can help generate and

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				balance cost incurred. .option 2 can become too big to handle now and but few years down the line waikato as council is the option left. Option 3 can be big enough and not too big too. So it can help to manage attract fundings from central government from the size perspective too
818	- MICHELLE B DAVID	Morrinsville	My preference: Retain the current Matamata-Piako District Council structure (status quo) While I understand central government has indicated regional councils will not continue in their current form after 2028, and that districts are being asked to put forward reorganisation proposals, I want to register my preference that Matamata-Piako remain a standalone council wherever possible. My reasons are: Local voice and accountability: Matamata-Piako already has strong local representation, with elected members who understand and are accountable to our specific communities. Any merger — even with similar rural/provincial districts — increases distance between residents and decision-makers. Unproven benefits of amalgamation: Council's own information acknowledges there is no clear evidence that larger-scale councils deliver the efficiencies often promised. Mergers elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas have frequently resulted in higher costs, longer decision-making timeframes, and reduced responsiveness, rather than savings. Existing collaboration already works: Matamata-Piako already partners with neighbouring councils on civil defence, kerbside collection, and shared catchment management. This shows that the benefits of working together can be achieved through targeted partnerships and shared services, without requiring a full structural merger that gives up our own council and Mayor. Risk of cost-shifting: Any amalgamation — particularly a Waikato-wide model — risks our ratepayers subsidising costs, debt, or infrastructure deficits from other districts that do not reflect Matamata-	If a merger proves unavoidable: Should central government require Matamata-Piako to join a larger structure regardless of this feedback, my fallback preference would be Option 1 (Eastern Waikato unitary authority), as it offers the closest alternative to local representation and reflects communities and catchments we already share and work with. I would ask Council to formally convey to central government the depth of community preference for retaining local control, and to push for any future structure to include strong guarantees of local representation, ward-based decision-making, and protection from cost-shifting between districts.

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			Piako's own financial position or needs.	
819	- Dr. Amelia Williams	Outside the district	Administrative elements: the core differences 2 models: 'EWUA'. Proposes a small boutique unitary council for eastern Waikato region (collapsing the current 2 into a one tier single council serving Hauraki, Matamata-Piako Sth Waik TCORO) . 'WWUA' is a single supercity or mega-council for the entire Waikato region based in Hamilton. Both claim the same model as mandated by the government. The departure is in the geographical size of the organisations, not the structure of governance itself. EWAU claims shared rural-coastal interests between Hauraki MP SWaikato TC. Iwi are deeply concerned that our land-whenua-awa-based activities will be isolated under the EWUA model. The Ohinemuri Waikato-Piako*-Waikumete-Waihou Rivers* impact EWUA, yet at their source are controlled by external Councils - Western BOP and Waikato Central. These river-awa systems impact the water assets of every Council, yet downstream communities have no voice in upstream decisions. We need a system that preserves decision-making by people who live with the consequences. Proportional representation would give the vast majority of seats to Hamilton leaving rural districts overshadowed with no guaranteed voice. SOLUTION: Reserved Representation: Why can we not have reserved voting for the existing Councils alongside Waikato representation. Geographic expanse: this would provide an extra vote for each Council based on geographic expanse-rural isolation. Control of Awa sources: Councils whose catchments originate elsewhere need a guaranteed voice in decisions affecting their water assets. Those that are impacted deserve a seat at the table. These factors are not currently factored into the representation model. The "Local" Myth of the EWUA model claims to preserve the local: local decision-making - preserves local jobs, local voice really! This collapses under scrutiny. HDC employs approx 140 staff. Yet employee records show staff are located across the wider Waikato region and beyond, many based in Ham, Ak, and Tauranga some in the HDC like Te Aroha and Thames. 1hour + from Hauraki, do they understand daily life? do their 60k plus salaries go into local shopping? how do they grasp the flooding reality of Farms under constant water? So how can Councils claim to represent local and local interests. EWUA claims local decision-making, Local jobs-local voice. But the reality is Local governance staffed by people who don't live locally. EWUA perpetuates remote control. WWUA, at least, does not pretend otherwise. WWUA may consolidate capacity and capability in Hamilton giving an interconnected resource we need for catchment management, flooding, regional planning. It gives Capacity, the same issues inverted exist for Hamiltonians asking 'why should we pay for Billionaires living on the Coromandel-the upwardly 2nd home Auckland and why should we constantly fix their roads, ever increasing from climate change, somehow the local argument rings false. If the EWUA model is hollow even before it begins, let us choose a model - not built on falseties. But on one where the capacity is real the connections - connected and we stop pretending that remote - controlled governance is local representation. We are one Tainui waka-lets navigate with a shared purpose, not divided by false boundaries. Lets steer towards a future where our rivers, our people, our voices flow as ONE.	
820	- Harvey Brookes	Outside the district	Wellbeing Waikato has drafted a submission for all local government organisations in the Waikato Region. A formatted version can be shared via email. We do not have a model preference because we think the question is not the right one, or is at least incomplete. Our submission is copied below as unformatted text: Submission on Local Government Reform (Head Start Programme) June 2026 1. Introduction Wellbeing Waikato (Wellbeing Waikato) is a Charitable Trust which undertakes research, knowledge and storytelling projects focused on community and social equity in the Waikato. The Trust was incorporated on 19 February 2026 and is the successor to the Waikato Wellbeing Project (WWP). Our Vision: Our mokopuna are thriving. Our Mission: To hear our people and transcend their lives through positive impact. Our work illuminates the deeper	

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			stories of our regional wellbeing challenges, to awhi the real-life initiatives, people and projects imagining, creating and leading positive alternatives to the status quo. Wellbeing Waikato is a suite of integrated focus areas and projects across the region, with the common theme of listening deeply and facilitating impact, through: • Research on the region's pressing social and environmental wellbeing challenges, their upstream causes and innovative ways ahead. • Wellbeing knowledge which brings together existing and new data and information at a range of scales and locations. • Storytelling - shining a light to support the invisible labour which leads to tangible grassroots change in our communities. • Advocacy and communications - sharing the knowledge and insights we have gained and to encourage positive change. The impacts we are aiming to achieve are: • Better informed policy, funding and services in the Waikato. • Whānau voice being heard - communities empowered and supported to make decisions about their future. • More effective support and resources for communities and those working in the social, environmental and community sectors. • Collective wellbeing leadership across all sectors of our communities. Our Core Purpose: Household-Level System Insight Wellbeing Waikato exists to strengthen upstream decision-making by grounding it in independent, household-level system insight. Our primary scale of inquiry is the household and whānau. We focus on what it takes for people and families to live lives they value, beginning with whether essential needs are affordable, accessible, and sustainable over time. Wellbeing Waikato is neither an economic think tank nor an economic development agency. We do not design macroeconomic strategy or promote particular economic, social or cultural models, although we are fully aware of the spectrum of models that are commonly referred to. Our role is practical and grounded. We examine how current system settings affect real households/communities and whether those settings enable material stability, participation, and long-term wellbeing. 2. Our Submission This submission provides commentary on the Government's proposed local government reforms under the "Head Start" programme. The programme is premised on the assertion that New Zealand's local government system is "too complex, too costly, and too hard to navigate," and proposes structural consolidation—fewer and larger councils—as the primary remedy. Councils across the Waikato and New Zealand are currently assessing reorganisation options within a constrained timeframe. While the process is framed as locally led, the alternative of central government intervention creates a strong incentive for compliance. This dynamic risks shaping outcomes around structural acceptability rather than long-term effectiveness or demonstrable improvements in performance. 3. The Limits of Structural Reform A central assumption underpinning the reform programme is that increasing organisational scale will improve efficiency and effectiveness. However, both New Zealand and international evidence suggests that the relationship between size and performance is weak and highly context dependent. Analysis from the New Zealand Initiative indicates that amalgamations do not consistently produce cost savings or improved service delivery. Expected efficiencies are frequently offset by transition costs, organisational complexity, and the harmonisation of wages and service levels. System alignment and amalgamation (especially IT and finance systems) is frequently underestimated and can turn out to be extremely expensive and technically difficult to achieve. International experience reinforces this conclusion. Studies of municipal consolidation in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom consistently find that efficiency gains are modest, slow to emerge, and often outweighed by disruption and implementation costs. 4. Evidence from Organisational and Behavioural Science Insights from organisational research provide a strong parallel to local government restructuring. Evidence published in Harvard Business Review demonstrates that structural change, in isolation, rarely delivers sustained performance improvement. In "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail", John Kotter identifies recurring causes of failure in organisational transformation, including weak leadership alignment, unclear vision, poor communication, failure to remove	

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			barriers, and an inability to embed change within organisational culture. Recent behavioural science research further reinforces this conclusion. A 2026 analysis by Boston Consulting Group, reported in Fortune , finds that approximately 70% of corporate transformations fail to achieve their intended outcomes. These failures are not primarily due to flawed organisational design, but to a lack of attention to how change is experienced and implemented in practice. Common drivers of failure include: • Over-reliance on structural or strategic solutions rather than behavioural and cultural change • Failure to translate high-level reform into day-to-day practice • Insufficient attention to how people experience and respond to change • A disconnect between leadership intent and operational reality These findings are directly applicable to local government reform and reinforce the conclusion that structural change alone is unlikely to deliver meaningful or sustained performance improvements. 5. Lessons from Auckland Council The creation of Auckland Council in 2010 provides a relevant New Zealand case study. The amalgamation was intended to address fragmentation, reduce inefficiency, and enable coherent regional planning. While the new structure achieved some coordination benefits, many of the original criticisms of local government: cost pressures, perceived inefficiencies, and challenges in responsiveness remain evident more than 15 years later. This suggests that structural consolidation alone was insufficient to resolve underlying issues. It is also notable that the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance recommended an alternative structural model, reinforcing that structural design is inherently contestable and does not guarantee improved outcomes. 6. Royal Commission on Auckland Governance: Problem Definition and Proposed Design The Royal Commission on Auckland Governance (2009), chaired by Judge Peter Salmon, provides an important precedent for the current reform process. The Commission identified two primary systemic failures: • Fragmented and ineffective regional governance. The existing structure lacked the ability to act cohesively at a regional scale, resulting in weak strategic alignment, inconsistent planning frameworks, delayed decision-making, and limited coordination of infrastructure investment. • Poor accessibility and democratic engagement. The governance system was difficult for citizens and stakeholders to navigate, with unclear roles, barriers to participation, and weak connection between communities and decision-makers. Importantly, the Commission did not frame the problem simply as one of scale. Rather, it identified a dual failure: insufficient regional coordination alongside inadequate local engagement. To address this, the Commission proposed a two-tier governance model: • A single Auckland-wide unitary authority responsible for regional strategy, infrastructure, and economic leadership • Six substantial local councils with meaningful decision-making powers and responsibility for local outcomes and community representation ...complemented by a raft of special purpose and statutory CCOs. This model was designed to balance the need for regional coordination with the need for local voice and democratic legitimacy. 7. Reframing the Core Question The current reform process risks being driven by the implicit question: "How large should councils be?" A more appropriate framing would be: "What problems are councils trying to solve, and what arrangements best enable those outcomes?" Evidence suggests that a wide range of structural models can function effectively if key conditions are present, including: • Clear identification of root cause issues • Strong political and administrative leadership • Alignment of organisational capability, incentives, and culture • Focus on outcomes that matter to communities • Maintenance of democratic accessibility and local legitimacy 8. Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi Considerations in Governance Design Any consideration of future local government structures in the Waikato must give careful and substantive attention to the role of Māori and to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Local government does not exist in a constitutional or historical vacuum. In the Waikato, iwi and hapū are foundational to the identity, wellbeing, and long-term future of communities, and are already significant partners in environmental management, social investment, infrastructure planning, and regional development. Any reform process that does	

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			not explicitly and meaningfully engage with this reality risks producing governance arrangements that are incomplete and ultimately unsustainable. The experience of Auckland Council reform is instructive. Despite significant political contestation and subsequent modification, the reform process ultimately resulted in the establishment of a statutory Māori governance entity in the form of the Independent Māori Statutory Board. This occurred more than 15 years ago and reflected a growing recognition that effective regional governance requires formal mechanisms for Māori participation, voice, and influence at the strategic level—not merely consultation at the margins. This precedent is important not because Auckland provides a template that can simply be replicated, but because it demonstrates an enduring principle: governance structures that operate at scale must also provide for meaningful Māori representation and influence in decision-making, consistent with Te Tiriti obligations and contemporary expectations of partnership. In the Waikato context, this requires careful consideration of how iwi and hapū relationships are embedded within any future governance model. This includes not only representation arrangements, but also how decision-making authority, resource allocation, and accountability mechanisms are designed to reflect the enduring partnership between Māori and the Crown. At the same time, it is important that the integrity of democratic local governance is maintained. Any future model must therefore balance two essential requirements: • The need to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi through meaningful and durable Māori participation in governance, rather than symbolic inclusion alone • The need to preserve transparent, accountable, and democratically elected decision-making structures that are accessible to all citizens. These are not competing objectives. Rather, they are interdependent foundations of legitimate and effective governance in Aotearoa New Zealand. The challenge for reform is not whether Māori participation should occur, but how it is structurally embedded in a way that is durable, meaningful, and consistent with both Treaty obligations and democratic principles. Accordingly, any evaluation of structural options for Waikato local government should explicitly test how each model gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and how it recognises the central role of iwi and hapū in the wellbeing and future development of the region. 9. Scale and Service Delivery While some functions may benefit from operating at larger scales, many local government functions are not inherently dependent on organisational size or a single geographic construct. Housing affordability provides a clear example. There is no strong evidence that larger councils, in themselves, produce more affordable housing outcomes. The primary determinants lie in land markets, infrastructure funding, planning frameworks, and national policy settings. Some issues, such as catchment management, transport and logistics, economic development and biodiversity operate at completely different scales and timeframes from each other. An overriding principle must be that these issues are managed firstly in an integrated way, but secondly at the spatial and temporal scale at which they exist. For example, any suggestion that the Waikato River could be suitably managed in isolation from Lake Taupō or its headwaters in the Tongariro National Park are senseless. 10. The Role of Central Government Many of the most significant constraints on local government performance are shaped by central government policy and legislation. Structural reform at the local level, without corresponding changes at the national level, is unlikely to address the root causes of current challenges. A key outcome here must be coherent allocation of roles, responsibilities and funding. The current government has consistently championed localism, but its implementation is patchy and inconsistent. While more coherent local government structures may be an important pre-requisite for greater devolution, this needs to be seen as a total package, not isolated interventions. 11. Risks and Opportunity Costs Large-scale restructuring involves substantial financial and organisational cost, including transition expenses, disruption, and reduced focus on service delivery. There is a material risk that resources and leadership attention are diverted toward structural change at the expense of addressing substantive issues affecting communities. Harvard	

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			Business Review research on restructuring and downsizing shows a consistent pattern of selective attrition following organisational change. Rather than losing people evenly across performance levels, restructures tend to trigger a self-selection effect in which more mobile, high-performing employees are often the first to leave, as they have stronger external opportunities and are more sensitive to signals of instability. At the same time, employees who remain are more likely to be those with fewer external options, higher risk tolerance, or greater dependence on organisational security. This can be compounded by “survivor syndrome,” where morale, trust, and engagement decline among remaining staff, further weakening performance. The result is that restructuring can unintentionally erode organisational capability, leaving behind a workforce that is not necessarily lower in intent or effort, but often more constrained in mobility and less confident in the organisation’s direction Councils should undertake at least a shortened version of a proper cost benefit analysis on the options being considered before deciding on a preference. The overriding question to ask from this process should be- what is the financial and organisational capability cost of implementing the reform, and what is the next best thing we could have done with those resources, which would have created real community value? Based on a simple analysis, councils in the Waikato should assure themselves that this is the best use of what could amount to \$100m of cost and is the best way for them to attract, develop and retain the best talent they need to succeed. 12. Conclusion The case for change in local government is beyond question. The current model is indeed “too complex, too costly, and too hard to navigate.” But care is needed at all levels to make sure that, in the rush to fix things, the cure is not worse than the disease. Focusing on structure alone is likely to at best lead to no material improvement in the things that really matter, and at worst be a massive waste of resources and time. The available evidence does not support the view that structural consolidation alone will resolve the challenges facing local government. Performance improvements are driven primarily by leadership, clarity of purpose, organisational capability, and alignment with community outcomes—not by organisational size alone. To put it bluntly- any structure can work if the underlying motivations and conditions for it are right. Similarly, the best restructure on paper will fail if they are not. 13. Recommendations It is therefore recommended that: 1. Even if there is no choice but to commit to the Head Start programme, councils must treat structural reform as a secondary consideration 2. Greater emphasis be placed on addressing root cause issues - the things whanau care and talk about “at the kitchen table” 3. Proposed changes be assessed against their impact on community wellbeing and affordability, including an assessment of the opportunity cost of reform and the risk of losing valuable talent. 4. Central government be engaged as a critical partner, with a view to designing a fully integrated and enduring devolution model which creates lasting value. Without this focus, there is a significant risk that the reform process will result in substantial cost and disruption without delivering meaningful benefits. In that scenario, structural reform risks becoming a costly distraction from the issues that matter most to communities across the Waikato region, and leads to a decade or more of lost opportunity. Harvey Brookes Executive Director Wellbeing Waikato	
821	- Julie Marie MAZUR	Outside the district	Matamata Piako, Waipa and South Waikato - a central trio, with well over the 50,000 population criteria and keeping to the smaller regions, meaning not involving Hamilton as they are in a lot of dept and would end up running the show if the Wider Waikato option was happening. We want the local people in these regions running the show. OR Matamata Piako and Waipa - would	I think the smaller the amalgamation regions the better to keep local voice. I feel like, honestly, all regions in NZ should just push back and say no, because of the nature of the short timeframes and lack of communication on central governments plans. But completely understand their threats to that so understand why there needs to be a response from local regions.

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			be over the 50,000 population criteria, and are not costal so less likelihood of natural disasters. Both effluent areas. And have workings together nicely in the local ground level perspective.	
822	- Kenneth Ranger	Te Aroha	I see no reason to change from how we operate at the moment.	I imagine the Government has already decided on the outcome. Therefore, submissions are really pointless.
823	- Peter Watts	Te Aroha	I'm totally ain't super city's or combined city's, in Auckland it has done nothing to enhance the smaller areas like Rodney	If you asked the residents of Rodney what they think of the Auckland super city, they will be in favour of going back to smaller councils
824	- Keven and Pat Ryan	Te Aroha	Stay same as is.	
825	- Martie Browne	Te Aroha	Thames too much risk coastal and road flooding. Over to me I prefer Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Waipa and South Waikato.	I think Matamata-Piako should throw all the risks into AI model and see what is the best fit for us. Costs overtime, duplications of staff, no back stop if I member as a cash crisis. Who will have the ability to control outcome other than govt.
826	- Sally Barker	Te Aroha	This seems to be a very rushed piece of legalisation from the Government. I would like to see it put on hold until every ratepayer has adequate time to comprehend all facets of why it is necessary and why the rush.	
827	- John Bouttell	Te Aroha	South Waikato DC + MPDC + Hauraki to form the Kaimai Unitary Council (suggested sample name only) TCDC + Western BOP+ Tauranga to form the BOP-Coromandel Unitary Council (suggested sample name only). The first 3 are naturally aligned in the majority by river catchment The second 3 seem more naturally aligned in land use and lifestyle. However in certain aspects, this may require reconfiguring existing Councils' boundaries. This may not be possible under the current Central Government directive. Nevertheless, I want my own First Preference made known.	I would fall back to the Eastern Waikato unitary authority as a 2nd less preferred option. I am NOT in favour of a Waikato wide unitary authority AT ALL. Too much disparity between the various regions and the risk of loss of local voice representation is too great.
828	- Jeremy Gamble	Te Aroha		

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830	- John and Maria van Heuven	Matamata	
831	- Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako	Other	<i>See below</i>

Submission from Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako on Local Government Reform To: Matamata-Piako District Council Subject: Feedback on local government change proposal From: Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako Date: 29 June 2026 1. Introduction Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako thanks Matamata-Piako District Council for the early engagement and the opportunity to provide feedback on the local government change proposal and options for consideration. We acknowledge the efforts of the Mayor, elected members and staff to engage with communities, including mana whenua, despite the very limited timeframe and significant uncertainty surrounding the process. Te Manawhenua Forum is a standing committee of Council established to facilitate tangata whenua contribution to Council decision-making and to consider matters that promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Māori communities now and for future generations. The Forum includes representatives from iwi with interests across the Matamata-Piako district, including Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Rāhiri-Tumutumu, Raukawa, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Whanaunga, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Hinerangi and Ngāti Tamaterā. This submission reflects the kōrero shared by Forum members at the public workshop held on 25 June 2026. It is provided as collective feedback from the Forum, while recognising that individual iwi, hapū, marae and whānau may also choose to make their own submissions. 2. Overall position The Forum supports Council putting forward a proposal rather than remaining silent and risking a default outcome that may not reflect local priorities, local relationships or mana whenua interests. However, the Forum's support is conditional on any proposal giving explicit effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty settlement obligations, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements, and enduring mana whenua participation in governance and decision-making. Forum members expressed a general preference for a model that protects local voice and avoids mana whenua and smaller communities being absorbed into a large Waikato-wide structure where decision-making could be dominated by larger urban centres. Some members indicated support for the proposed Eastern Waikato model involving Matamata-Piako, Hauraki, South Waikato and Thames-Coromandel, provided the model is further tested through a Māori lens and strengthened to ensure mana whenua have equitable seats at the table. 3. Key matters for Council to address 3.1 Timeframes, uncertainty and meaningful engagement The Forum is deeply concerned that the timeframe for developing, consulting on and confirming local government reform proposals is inadequate for a decision of this scale. Forum members described the timeframe as unfair, rushed and lacking the clarity needed for communities, iwi and councils to properly assess the options. The scale of change being contemplated has long-term implications for representation, rating, infrastructure, environmental management, Treaty settlements, iwi relationships and community wellbeing. These matters cannot be responsibly resolved through a compressed process with incomplete information. The Forum asks Council to clearly state in its proposal to central government that further time, information, engagement and resourcing will be required before any final model can be implemented. Engagement with mana whenua must not be limited to a late-stage check or technical review. It must occur at the beginning of design, throughout option development, and at the final decision-making stages. 3.2 Te Tiriti, Treaty settlements and mana whenua rights and interests Any change to local government boundaries, functions or governance arrangements must protect and strengthen the Crown's and councils' obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and all relevant Treaty settlements. The Forum is concerned that structural reform could unintentionally weaken existing obligations, relationships and mechanisms if those matters are not built into the proposal from the outset. The Forum asks Council to ensure that any proposal explicitly identifies and provides for Treaty settlement obligations, statutory acknowledgements, iwi management plans, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements, co-governance or co-management arrangements, existing partnership commitments and any other obligations affecting the rohe. These obligations must be enduring and must transfer, continue or be strengthened under any new structure. 3.3 Mana whenua representation and decision-making The Forum's clear position is that mana whenua must be at the top table for all major decisions about local government reform and moving forward into any new governance structure. Mana whenua involvement must be broader than advice, consultation or technical input. It must include genuine participation in governance, option design, decision-making, implementation and ongoing monitoring. Any future structure must provide for both collective mana whenua mechanisms, such as an enduring Te Manawhenua Forum or equivalent body, and formal Māori representation within elected governance arrangements. The Forum also asks Council to consider how mana whenua from across any proposed grouping would be supported to work collectively while respecting individual iwi rangatiratanga, rohe, settlement obligations and capacity. A future model must not assume that one Māori voice can speak for all iwi or all areas. 3.4 Local voice, geography and communities of interest The Forum supports the principle of retaining strong local voice. Members raised concerns that a single Waikato-wide authority could dilute the voice of Matamata-Piako communities, rural communities, marae and mana whenua, particularly if decision-making is concentrated in larger urban centres. At the same time, the Forum asks Council to undertake further analysis of whether the Eastern Waikato model best reflects communities of interest from a mana whenua perspective. Consideration should include

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			iwi rohe, marae connections, catchments, waterways including the Waihou and Piako Rivers, environmental management responsibilities, the Hauraki Gulf, growth pressures from Auckland, links to Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty, transport and infrastructure corridors, and social, cultural and economic relationships. Structural reform should not be driven solely by administrative convenience, infrastructure scale or perceived cost savings. It must also reflect whakapapa, whenua, wai, cultural landscapes and the lived realities of whānau, marae and communities. 3.5 Rating impacts, resourcing and implementation The Forum asks Council to, when available, provide transparent information about the likely costs, savings, risks and rating impacts of any proposed model. If reform is promoted as a cost-saving measure, then communities should be able to see how those savings will be achieved and who will benefit. Particular attention must be given to the impacts on marae, Māori land, whānau and communities already facing affordability pressures. The Forum also notes that iwi and mana whenua require adequate resourcing to analyse reform proposals, participate in technical work, engage with their own people and provide informed advice. The burden of responding to major structural reform should not fall on iwi without support, especially when the process is being driven at pace and alongside other significant work programmes, including resource management reform, long-term planning, water services and other legislative changes. 4. Requested outcomes The Forum asks Matamata-Piako District Council to incorporate the following outcomes into its local government reform proposal and any subsequent advocacy to central government: 1. Clearly state that the current timeframe is inadequate and that further engagement, analysis and resourcing are required before any final model is implemented. 2. Ensure Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty settlement obligations, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements and existing iwi partnership commitments are explicitly protected and strengthened. 3. Retain and strengthen local voice, including mechanisms that protect the voice of mana whenua, marae, rural communities and smaller settlements. 4. Provide equitable opportunities for mana whenua at the top table in governance, decision-making, implementation and monitoring, not only as advisors or consultees. 5. Protect both collective mana whenua forums and formal Māori representation within future governance structures. 6. Undertake further analysis of the Eastern Waikato model through a mana whenua lens, including rohe, catchments, cultural landscapes, environmental responsibilities, growth pressures and relationships with neighbouring regions. 7. Provide transparent information about costs, savings, liabilities, rating impacts and impacts on marae, Māori land and whānau. 8. Advocate for appropriate resourcing from central government so iwi and mana whenua can participate meaningfully in the next stages of reform. 5. Conclusion Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako supports Council taking an active position in response to local government reform, rather than allowing a default model to be imposed. However, any proposal must be future-focused, principled and grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, mana whenua rangatiratanga, local voice and enduring partnership. The Forum wishes to continue working with Council as the proposal develops. We ask that mana whenua remain directly involved in all future stages, including technical work, governance design, transition planning and engagement with central government. Signed on behalf of Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako Hinerangi Vaimoso Chairperson, Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako

#	Name	Ward	No Option Selected - Feedback
832	- Nicola Greenwell	Outside the district	Submission to Matamata Piako District Council 'Head Start' local government reform Hamilton & Waikato Tourism (HWT) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the amalgamation proposals under the Government's 'Head Start' local government reform. Hamilton & Waikato Tourism is the region's specialist organisation focussed on growing the Waikato visitor economy on behalf of local government and industry. We fulfil this role as the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for Matamata Piako District Council, along with Hamilton City, Waipā District and Waikato districts, delivering services through a collaborative Service Level Agreement signed by each council. This agreement enables councils to access specialist expertise in visitor attraction, business events, industry development, sector and regional advocacy and regional tourism coordination through a collaborative shared-service model. As councils consider future governance arrangements and amalgamation options, we encourage Elected Members to recognise tourism as an important economic enabler. The visitor economy supports businesses, sustains employment, attracts investment, activates infrastructure and contributes to vibrant communities. It is an important contributor to regional prosperity and should remain an important consideration in future governance and service delivery models. Visitors experience places, not political boundaries. They travel between destinations, attractions, events and experiences because together they create the visitor proposition of the mighty Waikato. Their journeys regularly cross multiple districts during a single visit, making regional coordination essential to delivering a seamless visitor experience and maximising economic benefit. HWT's existing shared-service model already reflects many of the collaborative principles being sought through this local government reform. Rather than duplicating specialist capability across individual councils, our model provides coordinated regional delivery through our collaborative Service Level Agreements. This approach delivers efficiency, collaboration and economies of scale while strengthening the region's collective visitor offering. HWT has tourism expertise and the trust of the sector that would be costly and time consuming for councils' to try to replicate. Hamilton & Waikato Tourism does not seek to influence the amalgamation decisions arising from the Head Start process. Rather, we encourage councils to ensure whatever model emerges retains the ability to deliver coordinated tourism services at the quality and scale visitors expect when experiencing our region. Regardless of the outcome and the geographical areas of councils, HWT stands ready to continue supporting councils and the visitor sector through collaborative Service Level Agreements. Our proven collaborative model can readily adapt to future amalgamations, ensuring the mighty Waikato continues to benefit from coordinated visitor economy leadership and regional destination management. Maintaining the ability for councils to work together through the RTO on tourism will help ensure the mighty Waikato remains competitive, connected and well positioned to deliver long-term economic benefit for businesses, communities and residents.

Submission from Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako on Local Government Reform

To: Matamata-Piako District Council

Subject: Feedback on local government change proposal

From: Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako

Date: 29 June 2026

1. Introduction

Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako thanks Matamata-Piako District Council for the early engagement and the opportunity to provide feedback on the local government change proposal and options for consideration. We acknowledge the efforts of the Mayor, elected members and staff to engage with communities, including mana whenua, despite the very limited timeframe and significant uncertainty surrounding the process.

Te Manawhenua Forum is a standing committee of Council established to facilitate tangata whenua contribution to Council decision-making and to consider matters that promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Māori communities now and for future generations. The Forum includes representatives from iwi with interests across the Matamata-Piako district, including Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Rāhiri-Tumutumu, Raukawa, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Whanaunga, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Hinerangi and Ngāti Tamaterā.

This submission reflects the kōrero shared by Forum members at the public workshop held on 25 June 2026. It is provided as collective feedback from the Forum, while recognising that individual iwi, hapū, marae and whānau may also choose to make their own submissions.

2. Overall position

The Forum supports Council putting forward a proposal rather than remaining silent and risking a default outcome that may not reflect local priorities, local relationships or mana whenua interests. However, the Forum's support is conditional on any proposal giving explicit effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty settlement obligations, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements, and enduring mana whenua participation in governance and decision-making.

Forum members expressed a general preference for a model that protects local voice and avoids mana whenua and smaller communities being absorbed into a large Waikato-wide structure where decision-making could be dominated by larger urban centres. Some members indicated support for the proposed Eastern Waikato model involving Matamata-Piako, Hauraki, South Waikato and Thames-Coromandel, provided the model is further tested through a Māori lens and strengthened to ensure mana whenua have equitable seats at the table.

3. Key matters for Council to address

3.1 Timeframes, uncertainty and meaningful engagement

The Forum is deeply concerned that the timeframe for developing, consulting on and confirming local government reform proposals is inadequate for a decision of this scale. Forum members described the timeframe as unfair, rushed and lacking the clarity needed for communities, iwi and councils to properly assess the options. The scale of change being contemplated has long-term implications for representation, rating, infrastructure, environmental management, Treaty settlements, iwi relationships and community wellbeing. These matters cannot be responsibly resolved through a compressed process with incomplete information.

The Forum asks Council to clearly state in its proposal to central government that further time, information, engagement and resourcing will be required before any final model can be implemented. Engagement with mana whenua must not be limited to a late-stage check or technical review. It must occur at the beginning of design, throughout option development, and at the final decision-making stages.

3.2 Te Tiriti, Treaty settlements and mana whenua rights and interests

Any change to local government boundaries, functions or governance arrangements must protect and strengthen the Crown's and councils' obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and all relevant Treaty settlements. The Forum is concerned that structural reform could unintentionally weaken existing obligations, relationships and mechanisms if those matters are not built into the proposal from the outset.

The Forum asks Council to ensure that any proposal explicitly identifies and provides for Treaty settlement obligations, statutory acknowledgements, iwi management plans, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements, co-governance or co-management arrangements, existing partnership commitments and any other obligations affecting the rohe. These obligations must be enduring and must transfer, continue or be strengthened under any new structure.

3.3 Mana whenua representation and decision-making

The Forum's clear position is that mana whenua must be at the top table for all major decisions about local government reform and moving forward into any new governance structure. Mana whenua involvement must be broader than advice, consultation or technical input. It must include genuine participation in governance, option design, decision-making, implementation and ongoing monitoring.

Any future structure must provide for both collective mana whenua mechanisms, such as an enduring Te Manawhenua Forum or equivalent body, and formal Māori representation within elected governance arrangements. The Forum also asks Council to consider how mana whenua from across any proposed grouping would be supported to work collectively while respecting individual iwi rangatiratanga, rohe, settlement obligations and capacity. A future model must not assume that one Māori voice can speak for all iwi or all areas.

3.4 Local voice, geography and communities of interest

The Forum supports the principle of retaining strong local voice. Members raised concerns that a single Waikato-wide authority could dilute the voice of Matamata-Piako communities, rural communities, marae and mana whenua, particularly if decision-making is concentrated in larger urban centres.

At the same time, the Forum asks Council to undertake further analysis of whether the Eastern Waikato model best reflects communities of interest from a mana whenua perspective. Consideration should include iwi rohe, marae connections, catchments, waterways including the Waihou and Piako Rivers, environmental management responsibilities, the Hauraki Gulf, growth pressures from Auckland, links to Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty, transport and infrastructure corridors, and social, cultural and economic relationships.

Structural reform should not be driven solely by administrative convenience, infrastructure scale or perceived cost savings. It must also reflect whakapapa, whenua, wai, cultural landscapes and the lived realities of whānau, marae and communities.

3.5 Rating impacts, resourcing and implementation

The Forum asks Council to, when available, provide transparent information about the likely costs, savings, risks and rating impacts of any proposed model. If reform is promoted as a cost-saving measure, then communities should be able to see how those savings will be achieved and who will benefit. Particular attention must be given to the impacts on marae, Māori land, whānau and communities already facing affordability pressures.

The Forum also notes that iwi and mana whenua require adequate resourcing to analyse reform proposals, participate in technical work, engage with their own people and provide informed advice. The burden of responding to major structural reform should not fall on iwi without support, especially when the process is being driven at pace and alongside other significant work programmes, including resource management reform, long-term planning, water services and other legislative changes.

4. Requested outcomes

The Forum asks Matamata-Piako District Council to incorporate the following outcomes into its local government reform proposal and any subsequent advocacy to central government:

1. Clearly state that the current timeframe is inadequate and that further engagement, analysis and resourcing are required before any final model is implemented.
2. Ensure Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty settlement obligations, Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements and existing iwi partnership commitments are explicitly protected and strengthened.
3. Retain and strengthen local voice, including mechanisms that protect the voice of mana whenua, marae, rural communities and smaller settlements.

4. Provide equitable opportunities for mana whenua at the top table in governance, decision-making, implementation and monitoring, not only as advisors or consultees.
5. Protect both collective mana whenua forums and formal Māori representation within future governance structures.
6. Undertake further analysis of the Eastern Waikato model through a mana whenua lens, including rohe, catchments, cultural landscapes, environmental responsibilities, growth pressures and relationships with neighbouring regions.
7. Provide transparent information about costs, savings, liabilities, rating impacts and impacts on marae, Māori land and whānau.
8. Advocate for appropriate resourcing from central government so iwi and mana whenua can participate meaningfully in the next stages of reform.

5. Conclusion

Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako supports Council taking an active position in response to local government reform, rather than allowing a default model to be imposed. However, any proposal must be future-focused, principled and grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, mana whenua rangatiratanga, local voice and enduring partnership.

The Forum wishes to continue working with Council as the proposal develops. We ask that mana whenua remain directly involved in all future stages, including technical work, governance design, transition planning and engagement with central government.

Signed on behalf of Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako

Hinerangi Vaimoso
Chairperson, Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako

20th July 2026



Mayor Ash Tanner
Matamata Piako District Council
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TE AROHA, 3342

PO BOX 270 Morrinsville 3340

Tel 07 889 5049

admin@ngatihauaiwitrust.co.nz

www.ngatihauaiwitrust.co.nz

Tēnā koe Mayor Ash

Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust Submission on local government reorganisation proposals — Support for Option 2: Waikato wide model

Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Head Start Programme and the proposed options for local government reorganisation. At the outset, we wish to record our concern regarding the extremely limited timeframe provided for iwi to consider and respond to proposals of this significance.

The Head Start Programme has the potential to fundamentally reshape local government arrangements across the Waikato for decades to come. Decisions of this scale will influence governance structures, resource management, infrastructure investment, environmental stewardship, and the manner in which mana whenua participate in decision-making. They warrant thoughtful consideration, meaningful engagement and sufficient time for iwi to analyse the proposals, consult internally, and provide informed feedback.

Unfortunately, the timeframe provided has not reflected the importance or complexity of the issues under consideration. While Ngāti Hauā has made every effort to engage constructively, compressed consultation periods risk reducing engagement to a compliance exercise rather than a genuine partnership. This approach is inconsistent with the collaborative relationships that the Head Start Programme itself seeks to foster.

Notwithstanding these concerns, Ngāti Hauā welcomes the opportunity to contribute and offers the following comments.

1. Ko wai mātou — Submitter details

Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust provides this submission as the Post Settlement Governance Entity established through the Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act 2014. This submission is grounded in the whakapapa, mana whenua, rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga of Ngāti Hauā. Ngāti Hauā descend from the



eponymous ancestor Hauā, a direct descendant of Hoturoa, captain of the Tainui waka. The hapū of Ngāti Hauā are Ngāti Te Oro, Ngāti Werewere, Ngāti Waenganui, Ngāti Te Rangitaupi and Ngāti Rangitawhaki. The Ngāti Hauā rohe spans from Te Aroha, south along the Kaimai Range to Te Weraiti, from Te Weraiti west to Maungatautari, then northwest to Te Rapa, from Te Rapa eastward to Mangateparu and then to Te Aroha. Part of the Ngāti Hauā rohe is located within the Waikato Raupatu Claims Area established in 1995.

The Ngāti Hauā boundary includes five local government bodies: Waipā District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, Waikato District Council, South Waikato District Council and Hamilton City Council. Ngāti Hauā holds mana whenua responsibilities across each of these council catchments, particularly where resource management decisions affect Ngāti Hauā lands, waters, wāhi tapu, marae, taonga and communities. Ngāti Hauā has also lodged Te Rautaki Tāmata Ao Tūroa o Hauā with each council, setting out Ngāti Hauā environmental management standards, aspirations and expectations.

2. Te tū a Ngāti Hauā — Position of Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust

Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust supports Option 2, the Waikato wide model, as the preferred structural option. Our support is based on the need for a regional model that respects mana whenua, gives practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, protects te taiao, strengthens communities, and enables long-term prosperity for present and future generations.

Ngāti Hauā provides this submission on the basis that future engagement with council partners must be early, genuine, well-resourced and grounded in partnership. Future “Head Start” proposals and the detailed design of any new governance, management and implementation arrangements must be shaped with iwi Māori, not simply consulted on after key decisions have already been made.

3. Ngā take tautoko — Reasons for supporting Option 2

3.1 Mana whenua partnership and regional coordination

The Waikato wide model provides an opportunity to reduce duplication in administration, infrastructure planning, consenting, commercial activity and environmental obligations. From a Ngāti Hauā perspective, regional coordination must also reduce the burden on iwi and hapū who are currently required to engage across multiple councils, processes and planning systems. A more coordinated structure should enable clearer partnership pathways, more consistent recognition of mana whenua, and stronger alignment across catchments and rohe.

3.2 Intergenerational outcomes for whānau, hapū, iwi and communities

Ngāti Hauā considers that a central regional model has the potential to improve long-term affordability, deliver better value for money, and support more efficient services. However, value must be understood broadly. It is not only financial value for ratepayers, but also the wellbeing of



whānau, the protection of whenua and wai, the strength of marae and papakāinga, and the ability of future generations to thrive in their own rohe.

3.3 Planning that recognises rohe, marae, papakāinga and rural communities

The new structure should be capable of supporting both urban growth and rural communities. It should enable regional growth strategies, including Future Proof, while recognising that iwi Māori, marae, papakāinga, rural communities and whenua Māori have distinct histories, needs, rights and aspirations. Growth must not occur at the expense of mana whenua relationships with whenua, wai, wāhi tapu or taonga.

3.4 Rangatiratanga, local voice and decision-making close to place

Decision-making powers should be set at the right level, with decisions made as close as practicable to the communities, places and taonga affected by them. For Ngāti Hauā, local voice includes the voices of hapū, marae, whānau and mana whenua. The Waikato wide model should strengthen the region's ability to engage with central government while ensuring that rangatiratanga, local democracy and community ownership are not diminished.

3.5 Kaitiakitanga and a resilient future

Ngāti Hauā supports a model that strengthens te taiao, climate resilience, infrastructure planning and economic performance. The preferred structure must uphold kaitiakitanga and be able to respond to climate-related risks, infrastructure pressures, freshwater challenges and long-term regional change. Short-term thinking must be avoided where it risks costly mistakes in planning, infrastructure and environmental management.

4. Te Tiriti, mana whenua and statutory alignment

Any future model must be designed in a way that gives practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, recognises tino rangatiratanga, honours Māori as tangata whenua, and protects iwi Māori taonga. This requires more than general consultation. It requires shared design, shared decision-making, appropriate resourcing, and enduring Tiriti-based partnership with iwi and hapū.

The model must align with relevant legislative and statutory frameworks, including Joint Management Agreements and Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato — the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River. These frameworks are not optional considerations. They are central to environmental decision-making, iwi partnership and the restoration and protection of the Waikato River and its catchment, and they must not be weakened through structural reform.

5. Ngā tono matua — Key recommendations

- 5.1 Adopt Option 2, the Waikato wide model, as the preferred option for further development.
- 5.2 Co-design the next stage of the model with iwi Māori, including Ngāti Hauā, before key governance and implementation decisions are finalised.

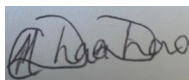
- 5.3 Provide for Tiriti-based partnership with iwi and hapū at governance, management, planning and operational levels.
- 5.4 Recognise and protect mana whenua, rangatiratanga, kaitiakitanga, mātauranga Māori, wāhi tapu, taonga and the relationship of Ngāti Hauā with whenua and wai.
- 5.5 Protect and strengthen existing statutory arrangements, including Joint Management Agreements and Te Ture Whaimana.
- 5.6 Design the model to deliver coordinated regional infrastructure planning, environmental management, housing and papakāinga outcomes, and economic development.
- 5.7 Ensure local voice, marae voice, hapū voice, rural perspectives and community identity are embedded in decision-making.
- 5.8 Use robust evidence, transparent assumptions and clear trade-off analysis, alongside iwi knowledge and mātauranga Māori, to inform final decisions.

6. Whakakapi — Conclusion

Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust supports Option 2 because it provides the strongest opportunity to build a coordinated, resilient and future-ready regional system. That system must be iwi-led in its design, Tiriti-led in its governance, and grounded in the wellbeing of te taiao, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities over the next 20 to 30 years.

Ngāti Hauā seeks ongoing, early and genuine engagement with council partners on the development of the preferred model, including governance arrangements, iwi Māori partnership mechanisms, environmental responsibilities, mātauranga Māori, local decision-making pathways and implementation resourcing. The reform process should uphold the mana of Ngāti Hauā and ensure that decisions affecting our rohe are made with us, not for us.

Naaku noa, naa



Muna Wharawhara
Chairperson

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

PARTIES

The Mayor of Hauraki District Council

AND

The Mayor of Matamata-Piako District Council

AND

The Mayor of Thames-Coromandel District Council

Each referred to as "a Party". Collectively, all three (3) together referred to as "the Parties"

BACKGROUND

- A. The Parties and their respective Councils are working together to develop a qualifying Simplifying Local Government (SLG) proposal (the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal) for submission by 9 August 2026, subject to statutory decision-making obligations and processes.
- B. The Parties and their respective Councils have also been in discussions about other SLG proposals and each Party acknowledges that at the date of signing no decision about what, if any, proposal will be made to Government.
- C. The Parties have, however, recognised that there appears to be some support for the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal and have been discussing that, if the Head Start East Waikato proposal is submitted, how they would like their respective Councils to progress any further development of that proposal.
- D. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) records the Guiding Principles the Parties have developed together and establishes how the Parties envisage these principles will inform the detailed design of the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal.
- E. The MoU will be signed as a non-binding arrangement, with the intention that if the respective Councils support the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal they will each also adopt the MoU by resolution as a binding agreement.

AGREEMENT

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Parties wish to establish principles and commitments that will inform their work together to develop and implement the SLG reform proposal. The Parties will encourage their respective Councils (and Council staff) to give effect to the principles and commitments as recorded in this MoU.

- 1.2 This MoU records the Guiding Principles that the Parties have agreed on and that will serve as the framework and evaluation criteria for the detailed design of the Head Start East Waikato proposal.
- 2 **CONTEXT**
 - 2.1 The Government's SLG reform programme provides the Parties and their Councils with an opportunity to develop locally led proposals for structural reform and improved local government arrangements.
 - 2.2 The Parties recognise that the challenges facing local government require consideration of governance arrangements that are affordable, sustainable, effective and capable of meeting future community needs.
 - 2.3 The Parties are exploring the potential for a jointly developed reform proposal that may include amalgamation and other structural changes designed to simplify local government and improve outcomes for communities across the districts of the three Councils.
 - 2.4 This MoU is entered into in good faith to demonstrate the Parties' commitment to working collaboratively and constructively together to achieve a successful outcome.
 - 2.4.1 The Parties agree that this MoU in no way records that they (or their respective Councils) are in a legal partnership, joint venture or in any other commercial relationship with each other.
 - 2.4.2 This MoU expresses intentions and is not legally binding, until after all three Councils adopt it by resolution in accordance with clause 5.3.
 - 2.4.3 Any future proposal remains subject to statutory decision-making processes and any requirements imposed by the Government.
- 3 **SHARED AND AGREED PRINCIPLES**

The Parties agree that the following principles inform the development and assessment of the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal and development of detailed design:

 - 3.1 **Representation and Local Voice:** Representation must acknowledge both resident populations and non-resident ratepayers, with a clear line of sight between communities and decision-making at both local and higher levels.
 - 3.2 **Affordability, Efficiency and Sustainability:** Any proposed model should be capable of demonstrating improved affordability, efficiency, value for money and long-term financial sustainability.
 - 3.3 **Iwi and Hapū Partnerships:** Existing and future obligations to iwi and hapū will be recognised, valued and honoured, including commitments arising from Treaty of Waitangi Settlements, statutory obligations and established relationships.

- 3.4 **Collaboration:** The proposed arrangements must foster greater collaboration, coordination and consistency across key functions where this improves outcomes for communities.
- 3.5 **Evidence and Community Input:** The proposal development will be based on robust evidence, analysis, community feedback and stakeholder engagement.
- 3.6 **Strong Local Voice:** Local identity, local representation and local influence over local priorities and services must be maintained and/or enhanced.
- 3.7 **No Community is Worse off from Legacy Decisions:** Where reasonable and practicable, communities should not be disadvantaged by historical funding decisions made elsewhere. Legacy assets, reserves, liabilities and rating arrangements must be managed fairly and transparently throughout any transition.

4 SIGNING AND CONFIRMATION

- 4.1 This MoU is signed by the Mayors in their representative capacity and in good faith. They will each use their best endeavours to ensure that their respective Councils comply with this MoU.
- 4.2 Before 5 August 2026, each Party will present this MoU to their Council for consideration as part of the deliberations on whether to adopt the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal.
- 4.3 If that proposal is adopted, each Party will seek by resolution the adoption of this MoU as a binding agreement between the respective Councils. If it is so adopted by resolution, this MoU will be deemed to be a binding Agreement between the three Councils.
- 4.4 Nothing in this MoU fetters or requires any Party or their Council to act inconsistently with their or its statutory obligations or decision-making processes.
- 4.5 Nothing in this MoU predetermines the outcome of any future decision-making process.

5 COOPERATIVE EXCLUSIVITY AND COST SHARING

- 5.1 **Exclusivity:** Post adoption of the Head Start Waihou-Piako-Coromandel proposal, by the Party's respective Councils, no Party or their Council will enter into formal amalgamation negotiations with another council while this MoU has effect.
- 5.2 **Cost Sharing:** The Parties and their Councils will meet their own costs but may agree that costs of external independent consultants, (including legal and financial reviews), and community consultation which is applicable to all of the Councils may be covered equally, one-third each, between the Parties.

6 TERM

- 6.1 This MoU takes effect on the date of signing by all Parties.

- 6.2 The MoU remains in force and valid unless one or more Councils do not adopt the proposal under clause 5.2 or do not confirm the MoU by resolution in accordance with clause 5.3.
- 6.3 Once the MoU is adopted under clause 5.3, it can be replaced or terminated by written agreement by all Parties or their respective Councils.
- 6.4 On termination, the Parties will meet to determine responsibility for any outstanding costs or commitments.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

- 7.1 Although the Parties agree not to actively undertake any media communications about this MoU until such time as the Mayors have signed the MOU, the Parties acknowledge that their respective Councils are subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and their respective Council meeting processes. It is acknowledged that the MoU will become publicly available as part of those processes.

8. ENTIRE UNDERSTANDING

- 8.1 This MoU records the entire understanding between the Parties in relation to its subject matter and supersedes any prior discussions, correspondence or understandings relating to that subject matter.

Signed by the Mayor of Hauraki District Council

Signature: _____

Toby Adams, Mayor

Date:

Signed by the Mayor of Matamata-Piako District Council

Signature: _____

Ash Tanner, Mayor

Date:

Signed by the Mayor of Thames-Coromandel District Council

Signature: _____

Peter Revell, Mayor

Date:

Simplifying Local Government - Starting from strength

Proposal for a unitary authority aligned with the connected communities and catchments of Waihou, Piako and Coromandel

Thames-Coromandel District Council

Matamata-Piako District Council

Hauraki District Council

DRAFT

Mayoral foreword

To come

Executive summary

New Zealand's planning and local government reforms will reshape how places evolve, grow, manage environmental pressures and invest for decades to come.

A Waihou–Piako–Coromandel unitary authority would establish a coherent governing approach for the sub-region. It would enable decisions about community services, growth, infrastructure and the environment to be made together, and have the organisational capability needed to coordinate investment, retain specialist expertise and respond to increasingly complex demands. Statutory local boards would keep defined decisions close to communities and protect the distinct identities and priorities of the places the authority serves.

This proposal is based on finding a scale that best fits the task by improving strategic and efficient sub-regional decision-making while also ensuring local voice is maintained.

The proposal will also strengthen a much-needed focus on the Hauraki Gulf, a national taonga that has been declining in overall health for several decades. The proposed authority will support greater alignment with the Pare Hauraki settlement and Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari, the country's first marine spatial plan

A Waihou–Piako–Coromandel unitary authority offers that combination.

The unitary authority would remain part of an interconnected Waikato, participating in cross regional spatial planning and shared arrangements wherever collective action is required. Its design would be developed with affected iwi, hapū and post-settlement governance entities so that Treaty settlement arrangements and established relationships continue with the same or equivalent effect.

Cabinet agreement would enable councils and affected parties, supported by government, to complete the detailed design and establish the authority at the 2028 local elections, followed by full operational integration by 1 July 2030. The result would be clearer responsibility for the future of Waihou–Piako–Coromandel, stronger capability to lead through the changes ahead, and meaningful accountability to the communities it serves.

Proposal at a glance

Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako District Councils propose the establishment of the Waihou–Piako–Coromandel unitary authority.

The boundary would comprise the three existing districts and adjacent coastal marine area.

The proposal brings together communities connected through catchments, infrastructure, transport, labour markets and shared provincial interests. It would align responsibility for the Waihou and Piako catchments and the interconnected Coromandel environmental systems more closely with the communities, land, natural ecosystems (such as Kopuatai and Hauraki Gulf) and infrastructure affected by those decisions. This would enable collective governance from the headwaters of these catchments, through the productive land and settlements downstream to Tikapa Moana/Hauraki Gulf which is shared with Auckland.

A mayor (elected at large) and a governing council of 12 to 15 members would make decisions requiring coordination across the wider area. Four to six directly elected statutory local boards would have responsibility for specified local matters and communities of interest and communities of interest.

This model is intended to combine strategic and organisational scale, with meaningful decision-making close to the distinct provincial, rural and coastal communities it would serve.

Regional spatial planning, transport and cross-boundary environmental matters would be established through a coordinated approach with other Waikato authorities. In addition, spatial planning for the Hauraki Gulf, Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari, will be delivered in collaboration with the Auckland Council and the Hauraki Gulf Forum. Future integration of water services arrangements is still being considered.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the three proposing councils outlines guiding principles that form the basis of this proposal. These include principles covering local voice, affordability, iwi and hapū relationships, fair treatment of historic assets and liabilities, gradual rates harmonisation and long-term organisational resilience.

The proposed boundary, governance allocation and transition arrangements would be confirmed through a government-enabled detailed design process involving affected councils, iwi and hapū, communities and other affected parties.

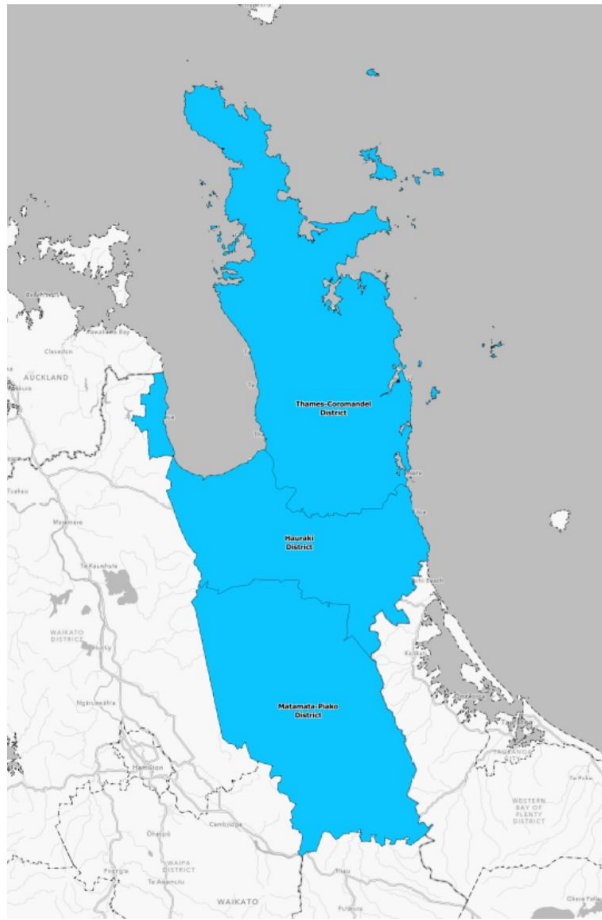


Figure 1: Proposing Councils

2. Eligibility and affected parties

Eligibility

The three proposing councils (Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako) represent the majority of the directly affected territorial authorities.

The Waikato Regional Council is affected through transfer of functions.

Formal council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding are provided in Appendix 1.

Council positions

Council	Position and material interest
Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako District Councils	Formal resolutions of each and Memorandum of Understanding are provided in Appendix 1
Waikato Regional Council	Directly affected by the proposed transfer of regional functions, assets, liabilities, staff and statutory responsibilities within the new boundary. [Insert its formal position when received.]

Possible boundary adjustments affecting catchments straddling the boundaries of the current Matamata-Piako and Hauraki districts warrant consideration. Consistent with the Government's stated catchment-based approach, the proposal supports the Government considering targeted adjustments where necessary to align administrative and catchment boundaries. Other Waikato territorial authorities have interests in regional planning, transport, infrastructure, shared services and environmental matters extending beyond the proposed authority.

Formal council positions are included in Appendix 1, with preliminary effects on affected councils and shared arrangements assessed in Appendix 6.

Parties and stakeholders

The proposed area overlaps with the rohe and areas of interest of Pare Hauraki, Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa and Ngāti Hinerangi. Iwi authorities, hapū, post-settlement governance entities and the Crown have interests arising from Treaty settlements,

statutory relationships, natural resources, representation and the proposed transfer of regional functions. These matters are addressed in Section 4.

Other affected parties include central government agencies, councils, council-controlled and shared-service organisations, council staff, ratepayers, infrastructure providers and the communities represented by the affected councils. Engagement undertaken to date, how it has influenced the proposal and further engagement required are set out in Appendix 1.

Proposed boundary

The proposed boundary, shown in Map 1 in Appendix 3, comprises the three district council areas and adjacent coastal marine area. Map 2 indicates possible boundary adjustments to better align with catchment boundaries. This is discussed further in Appendix 3.

3. Assessment against the five criteria

3.1 Supporting the new planning system

Waihou–Piako–Coromandel would bring land-use and natural environment planning together within one authority. Growth, infrastructure, freshwater, natural hazards and the coastal environment could be planned as connected parts of the same system, reducing fragmentation between regional and district processes and creating clearer accountability for decisions affecting the area.

Integrated planning within the new authority

The Waihou–Piako–Coromandel area is connected to the wider Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Auckland through nationally and regionally significant road, rail, freight and tourism corridors. The proposed unitary authority would bring together local and regional planning responsibilities within its boundary and would continue to be part of an interconnected Waikato system. Transport networks, freight movements, labour markets, tourism, economic development and growth pressures extend well beyond sub-regional boundaries and require coordinated planning across the wider Waikato and upper North Island.

A Waihou–Piako–Coromandel unitary authority would participate in joint governance arrangements with other Waikato unitary authorities for matters that are most effectively planned at a regional scale.

This would include a statutory Waikato Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Committee (or similar joint body) comprising elected members from participating authorities, iwi and hapū representatives, and relevant Crown agencies where appropriate. Such a body would provide oversight of regional spatial planning, transport strategy, major infrastructure corridors, emergency management, climate adaptation and other cross-boundary priorities.

The existing marine spatial plan for the Hauraki Gulf, Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari, will also need to continue to be implemented by this proposed unitary authority, in collaboration with Auckland Council and the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

This approach would retain local decision-making and accountability for place-based matters while ensuring that regionally significant transport and growth issues continue to be planned and coordinated across the Waikato. Building on existing collaborative arrangements it would give the unitary authorities a formal way to coordinate work on wider Waikato issues, while each remains accountable to its local communities.

Aligning authority and environmental boundaries

The boundary would substantially align responsibility for the Waihou and Piako catchments and the interconnected Coromandel environmental systems within one authority. This would enable integrated catchment management with land management, biosecurity, land use, freshwater, flood protection, drainage, natural hazards and coastal planning to be considered together.

Further engagement and detailed design will be undertaken during the next stage to progress this. Detailed design would assess whether boundary adjustments or enduring cross-boundary arrangements would provide the better outcome. The full boundary rationale, maps and cross-boundary catchment assessment are provided in Appendix 3.

Protecting continuity

Existing councils would retain their statutory planning and regulatory responsibilities until functions are legally transferred and the Government's planning reforms are completed.

A coordinated transition programme would protect current planning work, evidence, data, systems, specialist capability and statutory relationships. It would align establishment of the new authority with Waikato-wide planning and provide interim arrangements for functions whose future location had not yet been settled.

Current planning-system progress, function-transfer requirements and regulatory continuity arrangements, and establishment are addressed in Appendix 6 and 7.

Trade-offs and risks

The principal trade-offs and risks are associated with undertaking planning reform and local government reorganisation at the same time.

These include uncertainty while the final national legislative framework is being developed, potential disruption to statutory planning and consenting processes, the complexity of integrating existing plans, data, systems and policies, ensuring that stronger unitary and regional consistency does not diminish appropriate place-based input and pressure on specialist staff.

These would need to be managed through phased implementation, clear transitional accountabilities and close coordination with central government.

Add in 'boxed' case study here on economic benefits eg aquaculture?

3.2 Simplifying local governance

Waihou–Piako–Coromandel would replace separate territorial and regional governance within its boundary with one unitary authority. Communities would have a clearer line of accountability for decisions about land use, infrastructure, environmental management and local services.

Clearer responsibilities

A mayor and governing council would make decisions requiring coordination across the authority, including strategy, regional functions, major infrastructure and organisation-wide funding. Statutory local boards would make specified decisions affecting their communities.

This allocation would provide greater clarity about where responsibility sits. It would also reduce duplication across governance, planning, reporting and organisational support while retaining local decision-making for community services and projects that do not require an authority-wide response.

Regional spatial planning, transport, water services, shared infrastructure and cross-boundary environmental matters would still require formal arrangements with other

authorities and organisations. Simplification therefore means clearer responsibility and fewer internal boundaries, rather than removing the need for regional collaboration.

Design considerations

The governance model would create two elected levels within the authority – a governing council and statutory local boards.

The proposed governance and representation framework is provided in Appendix 2. Detailed design would establish a transparent allocation of responsibilities, funding and accountability between the governing council and boards. It will also consider enabling legislation for representation based on rating units as well as resident population.

Resident and non-resident representation

The relationship between the rating base and resident population differ markedly across the three councils. In Thames-Coromandel around 50 per cent of ratepayers are not resident in the district. A representation model based solely on resident population would not reflect the financial contribution and ongoing interests of this group. The three councils recognise this and agree that the representation model should account for it in a fair way. This may require legislative change to enable representation based on rating units, or a hybrid of rating units and resident population. The detail will be developed in the next stage of this process.

Trade-offs and risks

The principal trade-off is between simplifying governance and retaining effective local decision-making, clear accountability and appropriate visibility of regional functions.

Potential risks include lack of clear boundaries between regional and local decision-making, regional functions becoming less visible, inconsistent delegations or accountability and disruption during the transition from existing governance arrangements.

These would need to be addressed during the detailed design stage, through a clear governance framework, disciplined committee design and transparent allocation of responsibilities.

3.3 Achieving economies of scale

Preliminary analysis indicates that Waihou–Piako–Coromandel would have sufficient operational and workforce scale to build a strong, fit-for-purpose unitary authority. Fixed costs and specialist capability would be spread across the larger organisation, reduce duplication and support coordinated investment across the connected provincial, rural and coastal communities it would serve.

Financial and organisational scale

Based on adjusted 2026/27 information, excluding water services the proposed authority would serve approximately 93,500 people across 57,280 rating units, with estimated annual revenue of \$320.7 million and net assets of \$3.703 billion (this figure excludes assets to transfer in from Waikato Regional Council, value currently unknown).

Efficiencies arise through consolidated governance, leadership and corporate functions, less duplication in planning, reporting, procurement and asset management, and greater purchasing and contracting scale.

The larger organisation is better placed to recruit and retain specialist planning, engineering, environmental, regulatory and project-delivery capability. Bringing regional and territorial responsibilities together enables the transport investment, catchment management, flood protection, land drainage and economic development to be planned around common priorities rather than through separate organisations and programmes.

Financial risks and detailed design

The preliminary figures do not establish the complete opening financial position. The councils have different rating systems, debt positions, service arrangements and investment priorities, and establishment would involve material one-off costs before longer-term benefits can be realised. These preliminary figures do however indicate significant borrowing capacity over the current total debt limit when combined into one entity.

Detailed design would establish the opening balance sheet, quantify transition costs and potential benefits, test rates and debt affordability, and determine the fair treatment of assets, reserves and historic obligations.

Trade-offs and risks

The key risk is that significant transition and integration costs will arise upfront, while efficiencies and other benefits may take longer than expected to be realised.

Other challenges include disruption from system and organisational change, the loss of local knowledge or relationships, standardisation that does not reflect legitimate local circumstances, uneven impacts from rating and debt harmonisation, differing asset condition and renewal needs, overestimating potential savings and increased borrowing capacity creating pressure for higher investment or debt.

These reinforce the need for detailed financial analysis and a transparent benefits-realisation framework.

The financial and organisational assessment, including independently reviewed modelling, is provided in Appendix 4.

3.4 Maintaining local voice

The proposing councils have “strong local voice” as a foundation principle underpinning the authority with a clear line of sight between communities and decision-making – established to ensure fair and effective representation for different communities of interest.

Waihou–Piako–Coromandel combines greater strategic scale with elected decision-making close to the communities affected. The proposed area is a network of provincial towns, rural communities and coastal settlements without a dominant metropolitan centre.

Statutory local boards would be established to protect local influence while the governing council would address matters requiring coordination across the wider area.

Local services and delivery centres would still be retained in local communities.

Representation across the authority

A mayor would be elected across Waihou–Piako–Coromandel. The governing council would comprise 12 to 15 councillors elected **[from geographic wards/through a combination of wards and at-large representation – yet to be confirmed]**.

Four to six directly elected local boards would prepare local board plans and make specified decisions about local rates and priorities, facilities, place-making, grants and

bylaws. Their responsibilities would be protected through legislation rather than delegated at the discretion of the governing council.

This structure recognises that the pressures facing Coromandel coastal settlements differ from those affecting the Hauraki Plains, Matamata-Piako and the upper Waihou communities.

Community, iwi and Māori participation

The community engagement undertaken in the time available shows support among respondents for an “eastern Waikato authority”, alongside a consistent expectation that decisions remain close to communities and that no area be dominated by a larger centre.

Existing Treaty settlement obligations, statutory relationships and relationships with iwi and hapū would transfer without diminution. Te Manawhenua Forum Mo Matamata-Piako and Te Toa Horopū ā Matamata-Piako have had conversation throughout this process and have requested that any head start proposal explicitly recognise and provide for Treaty settlement obligations, statutory acknowledgements, iwi management plans, co-governance arrangements, partnership commitments, and other iwi-related obligations, ensuring these arrangements are transferred, maintained, and strengthened under any future local government structure.

The boundaries of the proposed authority and the catchment authority proposed by the Pare Hauraki settlement are in alignment. The new authority would provide enduring arrangements for iwi and Māori participation in governance and decision-making, with the final representation model developed alongside affected iwi and hapū.

Maintaining local voice requires accessible local services, adequately funded local boards and clear ways for communities to shape priorities between elections.

Trade-offs and risks

The principal challenge is achieving the right balance between unitary [sub-regional] integration and local responsiveness. Too little delegation could leave communities feeling disconnected from decisions. Too much fragmentation could recreate the governance complexity the proposal seeks to reduce.

Other risks include local boards having representation but insufficient authority or funding, boundaries not reflecting genuine communities of interest, inconsistent local service expectations and local governance arrangements becoming overly complex.

Representation options, local-board responsibilities, funding and participation arrangements are addressed in Appendix 2, with engagement findings in Appendix 1.

3.5 Deliverability

Foundation and pathway

The proposing councils have agreed principles covering local voice, affordability, iwi and hapū relationships, fair treatment of historic assets and liabilities, gradual rates harmonisation, clear accountability and organisational resilience. These principles will be used to test detailed-design and transition decisions.

A high-level pathway would involve the following steps.

1. Cabinet agreement to proceed and confirmation of the statutory pathway
2. Government-enabled detailed design involving affected councils, iwi and hapū and other parties
3. Enabling legislation and establishment of a transition body
4. Election and commencement of the new authority's governance in 2028
5. Transfer of functions, people, assets, liabilities, systems and statutory responsibilities in 2030
6. Existing councils would continue exercising their statutory responsibilities until functions are legally transferred. A transition body with clear governance, accountability and independent assurance would oversee implementation and protect service and regulatory continuity.

Dependencies and support required

Establishment will need to be coordinated with planning reform and Local Water Done Well. Those water services with Waikato Waters Limited would remain, requiring the new authority's ownership interests, funding relationships and accountability arrangements to be confirmed without disrupting the company's establishment plan or service delivery.

Government decisions would be required on the final boundary, establishment timetable, local-board powers and transfer of regional functions. Government support would also be required through enabling legislation, timely access to relevant information and agencies, and appropriate funding or transition assistance.

Detailed design would establish the opening balance sheet, transition funding and accountabilities, organisational and workforce requirements, rates and debt arrangements, systems integration and measures to protect service continuity.

The main risks are compressed timeframes, the scale and timing of simultaneous reforms, potential loss of specialist capability, incomplete financial and asset information, transition costs and uncertainty about which regional functions would transfer while the Resource Management model remains under development. Delivery would also be weakened if affected councils, iwi and hapū were involved too late in decisions about boundaries, functions and transition arrangement.

The proposal is sufficiently developed to proceed to detailed design.

Appendix I outlines the proposed establishment pathway, principal delivery risks and workstreams that would form the basis of a detailed implementation programme.

4. Treaty settlements and iwi relationships

Treaty settlements, iwi rights and the Crown's commitments would remain in place. Existing statutory duties, appointments, agreements and relationships would continue without interruption and be given the same or equivalent effect under Waihou–Piako–Coromandel. Detailed design would be undertaken with affected iwi, hapū and post-settlement governance entities, alongside the Crown's engagement process.

Affected arrangements

The proposed area overlaps with the rohe and areas of interest of Pare Hauraki, Waikato-Tainui (in particular Ngāti Hauā), Raukawa and Ngāti Hinerangi. These interests extend across existing and proposed council boundaries, and the relevant settlement arrangements differ between iwi.

The Pare Hauraki Collective Redress Deed (yet to be enacted) provides for a Waihou, Piako and Coromandel Catchment Authority with iwi and local government appointments. The proposal would bring this catchment geography within one unitary authority, more closely aligning environmental governance with the communities and land connected by the catchments. The Catchment Authority's appointment structure and related provisions would need to reflect the final boundary and new local government arrangements.

Affected settlement legislation, deeds, statutory acknowledgements, appointments, notification duties and council relationships are assessed in Appendix 5.

Initial conversations with iwi

Conversations have occurred throughout the process with the Waikato Iwi Chairs, direct contact with iwi leaders and proposal-specific meetings.

The Mayors and Chief Executives also met with mana whenua, chairs of post-settlement governance entities and the chairs of the Pare Hauraki and the Hauraki Māori Trust Board. Iwi have indicated general support for a Waihou, Piako Coromandel proposal based on a catchment model.

The Matamata Piako District Council Te Mana Whenua Forum was brought in at the outset to provide an initial briefing. Settlement information prepared for the proposal has been shared with iwi representatives for review.

Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust support a Waikato-wide model and has emphasised early, adequately resourced co-design and protection of existing statutory arrangements and relationships.

These discussions do not constitute formal agreement across all affected iwi and hapū.

Giving equivalent effect

During detailed design, the councils would work with each affected iwi, hapū and Post-Settlement Governance Entity, alongside the Crown, to identify affected settlement instruments and council responsibilities; preserve statutory acknowledgements, notification duties, appointments, agreements and established relationships; determine how the Catchment Authority and other arrangements would operate; address the proposed any district boundary changes; and develop iwi and Māori participation arrangements without diminishing existing rights or relationships.

Early iwi-specific work would be required to avoid gaps in statutory responsibilities and ensure each existing arrangement has the same or equivalent effect under the new authority.

5. Wider Waikato effects

Benefits to the wider Waikato

For New Zealand, the Waikato is more than a collection of councils. It is a nationally significant region supporting the upper North Island's key growth and freight corridor and

includes international tourist destinations, a major centre for food production, energy, aquaculture and water resources, and home to nationally important river, lake and catchment systems. The region's interdependencies extend beyond existing council boundaries, meaning decisions about Waikato local government have implications both within the region and across New Zealand.

However, the scale, diversity and interdependence of the wider Waikato, mean a single unitary authority would potentially concentrate decision-making in a metropolitan centre distant from the people it serves.

A smaller number of coherent sub-regional authorities preserves both organisational scale and genuine accountability to its communities of interest.

Reflecting community aspirations, councils across the Waikato are advancing parallel unitary authority proposals.

While each authority will assume full responsibility for unitary functions, all proposals recognise that some issues are best planned and managed at a regional scale. A joint committee, or similar governance arrangement, will provide regional leadership on spatial planning, transport, infrastructure, emergency management and other cross-boundary priorities. The detailed design phase would identify these shared functions and determine the most effective mechanisms for their coordination and delivery.

Effects outside the proposed boundary

The proposal does not determine future governance arrangements for councils outside the proposed authority. Catchment and river-management funding would require further assessment. Targeted rates currently generally follow the areas receiving the services, while transferred general-rate contributions and residual regional costs would need to be tested. Specialist teams, systems, contracts and services that could not be separated efficiently may require continuing shared arrangements.

Detailed design would assess service continuity, capability, rates and the allocation of regional costs and revenues for communities inside and outside the boundary. Supporting analysis is provided in Appendices 2, 3 and 5.

6. Decision sought

The councils ask Cabinet to agree in principle that Waihou–Piako–Coromandel proceed through the Head Start process to government-enabled detailed design, with legal establishment at the 2028 local elections and full operational integration by 1 July 2030.

The councils seek Cabinet agreement to:

- provide for officials to work with the proposing councils, affected councils, iwi and hapū, post-settlement governance entities and other affected parties
- confirm the final boundary, governance and representation model, Treaty-settlement arrangements, functions transferring, and financial and organisational design
- develop enabling legislation, establish leadership arrangements, including supporting the appointment of the Chief Executive, and government transition assistance and funding
- return the completed design to Cabinet for final policy and legislative decisions
- consideration of regulatory relief for the council Long Term Plan and representation reviews.

The proposal is sufficiently developed to proceed because it offers a credible opportunity to align accountability with connected catchments and communities, achieve practical organisational scale and retain meaningful local decision-making.

The phased establishment pathway is set out in Appendix 7.

Supporting evidence

This appendix brings together the evidence supporting the proposed Waihou–Piako–Coromandel unitary authority. It records the evidence available at outline-proposal stage and identifies the matters that must be resolved through government-enabled detailed design.

Appendix schedule

- 1. Mandate and engagement evidence**

Resolutions, formal positions, engagement results and the limitation created by the revised boundary.

- 2. Governance**

Proposed two-tier governance model, agreed design principles, allocation of authority-wide and local responsibilities, matters for detailed design and safeguards for meaningful local-board powers.

- 3. Boundary and communities-of-interest evidence**

Proposed boundary maps, consistent demographic data and a short treatment of the smaller cross-boundary catchments.

- 4. Financial, organisational and economic evidence**

Financial tables, properly sourced and updated for the final boundary, plus assumptions, exclusions and known uncertainties.

- 5. Treaty settlements and iwi relationships**

Affected arrangements and parties, engagement undertaken and matters requiring equivalent effect or legislative amendment.

- 6. Wider-Waikato effects and continuing arrangements**

Waikato Regional Council, South Waikato, shared services, spatial planning, transport, catchment management, funding and residual capability.

- 7. Deliverability, principal risks and detailed-design priorities**

one roadmap, one risk table and a concise list of next-phase workstreams.

1. Mandate and engagement evidence

Council mandate and formal positions

Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako District Councils have jointly developed the proposal. Their work has included a collaborative working group, Chief Executive workshops, Treaty settlement mapping, community engagement and an elected-member workshop on 7 and 20 July 2026.

The three councils have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the principles that would guide detailed design. These include protecting local voice, affordability, iwi and hapū relationships, fair treatment of historic assets and liabilities, gradual rates harmonisation, clear accountability and long-term organisational resilience.

Party	Position and evidence required
Thames-Coromandel District Council	Proposing council. [Insert resolution, date and certified minutes or formal extract.]
Hauraki District Council	Proposing council. [Insert resolution, date and certified minutes or formal extract.]
Matamata-Piako District Council	Proposing council. [Insert resolution, date and certified minutes or formal extract.]
Three proposing councils	[Attach the signed Memorandum of Understanding.]
South Waikato District Council	Participated in the initial development of an East Waikato option that included the whole district.
Waikato Regional Council	Would be directly affected by the transfer of regional functions, staff, assets, liabilities, funding and statutory responsibilities within the new boundary. [Insert its formal position when received, or record that no formal position had been received by the submission date.]
Other affected councils and organisations	[Attach or list any formal positions received.]

Community engagement

Engagement undertaken by the three proposing councils tested an East Waikato authority comprising Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, Matamata-Piako and South Waikato District.

Among those who participated, East Waikato was the most frequently selected geographic option in each of the three proposing districts.

District	Participation recorded	Respondents selecting East Waikato
Matamata-Piako	832	89%
Hauraki	656	86.9%
Thames-Coromandel	1322	46%

In Thames-Coromandel, 34 per cent selected a North Bay of Plenty option and 12 per cent selected a Greater Waikato option.

Across the three districts, the recurring priorities were:

- decision-making that remains close to communities
- a fair voice for provincial towns, rural areas and coastal settlements
- avoiding domination by a large metropolitan centre
- keeping costs down and treating inherited debt and locally funded assets fairly
- improved flood, river and environmental management
- continued engagement as governance arrangements are developed.

These results support further consideration of an eastern Waikato authority and have influenced the proposal's emphasis on statutory local boards, financial fairness and catchment-based planning.

The engagement was opt-in and is not statistically representative of the wider population. The affected communities, landowners, iwi and hapū and adjacent Councils may need further conversations before that boundary is confirmed.

Sources: the three council engagement reports and supporting datasets.

2. Governance

Currently there are 38 elected members of the three council territorial authorities (including four Māori ward members). In addition, there are five community boards with a total of 24 representatives.

The proposed governance model will reduce this number.



OUR GOVERNANCE MODEL

A TWO-TIER UNITARY AUTHORITY

Our two-tier governance model gives local communities a strong voice while ensuring effective leadership and decision-making across the region.



Mayors and several elected members from each council met to discuss potential governance structures and agreed on the following:

- local voice matters: local people should be empowered to make decisions and take action
- we want to be strategic and influential nationally while remaining connected locally
- ensure leadership is directly accountable to the people
- reflect non-resident ratepayers in representation across the unitary authority
- recognise obligations to hapū and iwi
- adopt a model people can trust to deliver better outcomes for communities
- remain open to working with the wider Waikato on shared priorities.

What we want in a governance structure:

- a two-tier unitary authority, with both tiers elected by the people: one council covering the Waihou-Piako-Coromandel area and four to six local boards
- a council of 12 to 15 elected members, plus one mayor elected at large
- the council would provide governance and oversight at the unitary authority and Waikato regional level for matters such as spatial planning, land transport and land drainage and flood protection, catchment management, biosecurity and pest control, civil defence, and maritime matters
- local boards would be based on communities of interest have meaningful decision-making powers set up legislation. They would manage local community facilities and places, govern local rates, and adopt local board plans that reflect local priorities and preferences.

Matters to be confirmed in stage 2 of the Head Start process:

- the name of the Council
- local board boundaries, names and number of elected representatives in each
- how to include non-resident ratepayers in representation across the unitary authority
- Iwi and Māori representation
- governance arrangements for Waikato-wide functions

How this high-level governance model simplifies local government while maintaining local voice:

- a single council would represent the Waihou-Piako-Coromandel area, replacing the current regional council and three territorial authorities

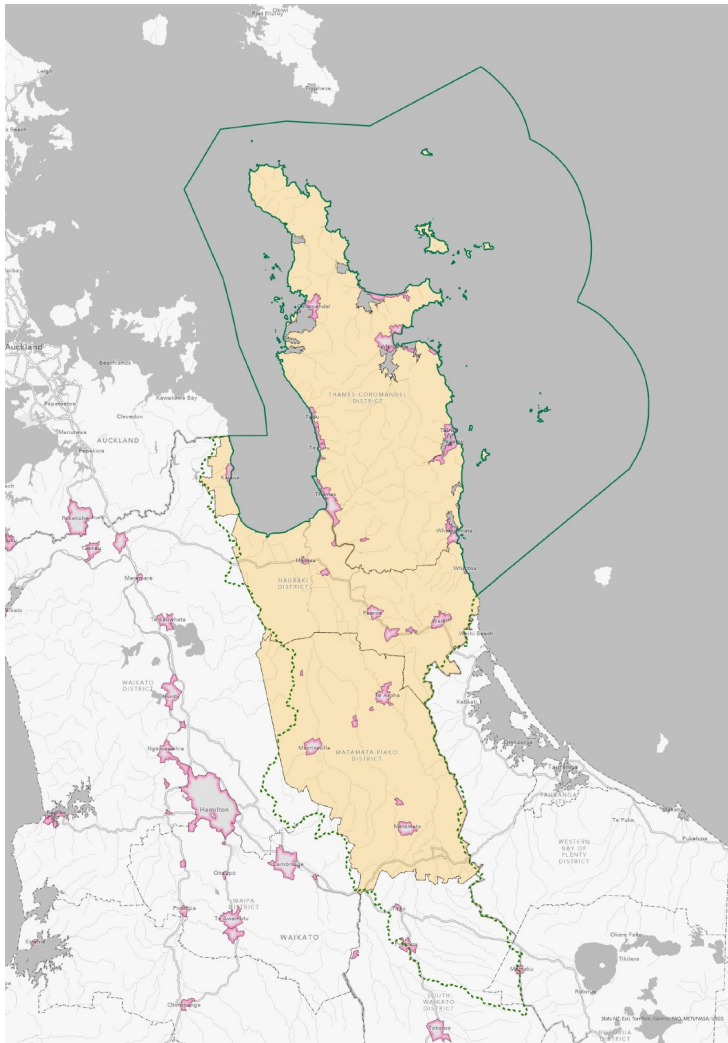
- local boards provide locally elected representatives who are accessible to residents and accountable to their communities
- decision-making remains close to communities, helping local needs and priorities shape service delivery and investment decisions
- more granular representation has a better chance of reflecting diverse communities of interest.

Risks:

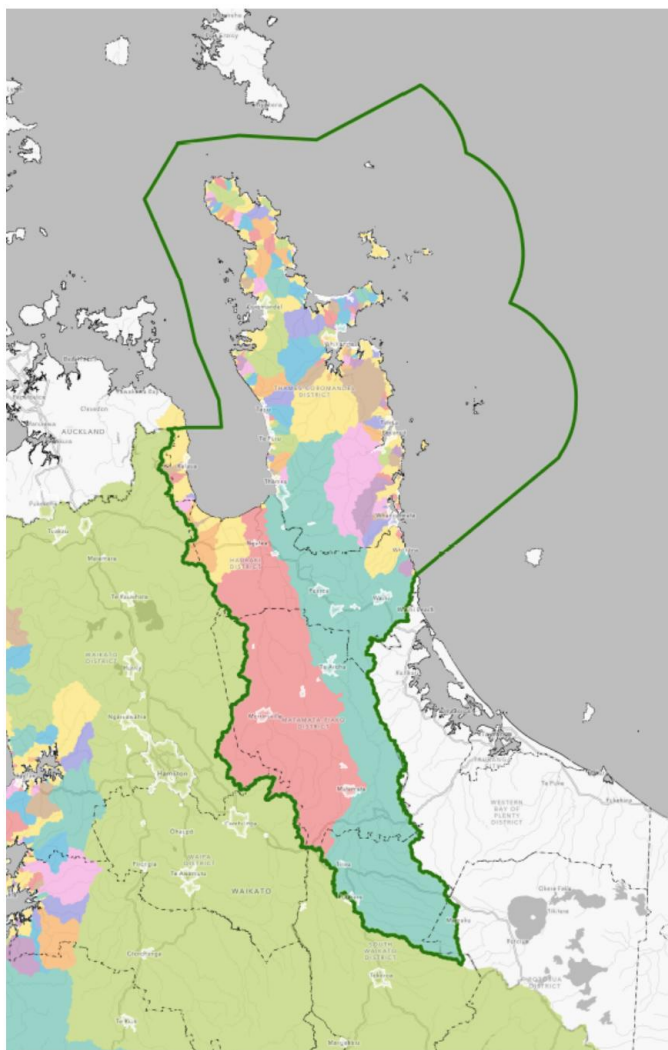
The principal risk is that local boards could have formal representation without sufficient authority, funding or organisational support to influence local decisions. Experience of the Auckland model suggests that devolution has not always worked as intended and that local boards can struggle to represent community priorities within a centralised structure. To manage this risk, legislation should clearly define local-board responsibilities, decision-making powers and funding authority, rather than leaving these matters primarily to the discretion of the governing council.

3. Boundary and communities-of-interest evidence

The proposed authority would comprise the complete Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako districts and, subject to detailed assessment and engagement, may include some boundary adjustments based on catchments.



Map 1 - Shows the existing district boundaries (yellow) against a possible catchment based Unitary boundary (dashed green line) should a catchment based Unitary be confirmed



Map 2- River catchment boundaries (multi colours) shown alongside existing district boundaries (dotted line) against a possible catchment based boundary (Green line). The Waihou River (green) and Piako River (red) are the 2 primary catchments through MPDC and HDC.

Evidence for the three-district area

The proposed area comprises a network of provincial towns, rural communities and coastal settlements without a dominant metropolitan centre. The communities retain

8

distinct identities but are connected through environmental systems, infrastructure, industries, transport routes, labour markets and Treaty relationships.

The Waihou and Piako catchments extend through rural production areas and the Hauraki Plains before reaching the Firth of Thames and Tīkapa Moana / Hauraki Gulf. The Coromandel Peninsula's western catchments also flow to the Firth, while its eastern catchments flow to the wider Gulf. Flooding, land drainage, freshwater quality, biodiversity, biosecurity, sediment, coastal pressures and natural hazards interact across this catchment-to-coast system.

Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari provides an existing marine spatial planning framework for the Hauraki Gulf. It reinforces the connection between decisions affecting land, freshwater and the coastal marine area. The proposed authority would still need to work with Auckland Council, the Hauraki Gulf Forum, iwi and hapū and other organisations with responsibilities extending beyond its boundary.

Economic and infrastructure connections also cross the three districts. Agriculture, dairy processing, forestry, aquaculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism rely on common transport corridors, labour, processing facilities, supply chains and access to markets and ports. Approximately 2,360 kilometres of local roads connect farms, forests, towns and visitor destinations with State Highways 2, 25, 26, 27 and 29.

These connections support treating the three complete districts as a coherent subregion. The Coromandel Peninsula has strong coastal, visitor and non-resident-ratpayer interests; the Hauraki Plains are shaped by agriculture, flood protection and land drainage; and the towns of Matamata-Piako support rural production, processing, manufacturing and tourism. The governance model must continue to reflect these differences.

Demographic baseline

The available combined data provide the following baseline for the three complete districts.

Measure	Three-district baseline
Population at 30 June 2025	93,500
Rating units at 30 June 2025	57,280

Land area	5,232 km ²
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Upper Waihou Catchment

South Waikato District spans both the Waihou and Waikato catchments. Inclusion of the defined upper Waihou area would bring more of the catchment's headwaters, rural land, settlements and infrastructure within the authority responsible for the Waihou system further north.

This establishes a credible catchment rationale for assessing a boundary change.

In addition to catchment alignment, the following should also be considered:

- the exact land, properties, population and rating units proposed to transfer
- community identity and the views of affected communities
- travel, employment, education, retail and service relationships
- infrastructure networks, facilities, contracts and planned investment
- assets, liabilities, debt, reserves and historic obligations
- iwi and hapū interests and relevant Treaty settlement arrangements
- representation and access to local services within the proposed authority
- the financial, organisational and service effects on affected districts
- alternatives to transfer, including retention of the existing boundary with strengthened cross-boundary arrangements.

This work and conversations with stakeholders are part of the detailed design.

Smaller cross-boundary catchments

The Waitakaruru, Waiwarawara and Miranda Stream catchments and an unnamed Miranda tributary catchment include land within Waikato District before passing through Hauraki District to the Firth of Thames. Council records document river and flood-management challenges created by the current division of responsibilities. The existing district boundaries cut across the Piako and Waikato River catchments. Any future council boundary should follow the catchment boundaries where practicable.

Any boundary adjustment should follow a short, catchment-specific assessment of:

- the catchment boundary and affected properties
- the historical basis for the existing council boundary
- iwi and hapū interests and relevant statutory arrangements
- current flood, drainage, environmental and operational responsibilities
- assets, funding, investment and recorded coordination problems
- the effects on councils, communities, landowners and ratepayers.

The appropriate outcome may differ between catchments. If a boundary is retained, enduring arrangements would still be needed for planning, information, monitoring, flood management, investment, funding and incident response.

4. Financial, organisational and economic evidence

The preliminary analysis demonstrates the scale of an authority formed from the three districts. It does not constitute an opening balance sheet or establish a quantified net saving.

Preliminary financial scale

The following figures were compiled from 2026/27 Annual Plan information and exclude water-services activity.

Scale indicator	Preliminary total
Population at 30 June 2025	93,500
Rating units at 30 June 2025	57,280
Land area	5,232 km ²
Contribution to national GDP, 2025	1.5%
Estimated total revenue, 2026/27	\$320,691,000*
Estimated operating expenditure, 2026/27	\$315,779,000*
Estimated net assets at 30 June 2027	\$3,702,956,000#
Estimated property, plant and equipment at 30 June 2027	\$3,538,279,000#
Estimated net debt at 30 June 2027	\$108,859,000
Estimated capital programme, 2026/27–2033/34	\$774,475,000

* Revenue and operating expenditure include estimates for Waikato Regional Council catchment management, flood control and river management directly attributable to the area. They also include a 37 per cent share of the balance of relevant regional revenue and costs, allocated according to rating units.

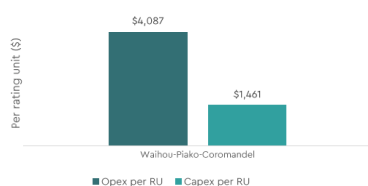
The figures do not include Waikato Regional Council assets.

Source: combined council financial dataset using 2026/27 Annual Plan information and the stated Waikato Regional Council allocation assumptions.

The figures are based principally on the three complete districts. If any boundary changes occurs as a result of detailed design the financial impact will need to be reassessed. The available information for regional operating activity, assets and capital investment means the table cannot be used as the authority's opening financial position.

Average Spend per Rating unit (FY28-FY34)

As a baseline the average spend per rating unit is captured below for all three councils (includes average rating from Waikato Regional Council – applied at a rating unit level) :



Source : Independent Financial Review of Headstart (MartinJenkins) July 2026

Borrowing indicators

Preliminary modelling produced the following indicative position.

Net debt as a proportion of adjusted revenue (July 2027)	34%
Net-debt limit based on a 280% covenant (July 2027)	\$892,902,000
Current net debt (July 2027)	\$108,859,000
Indicative additional borrowing capacity (July 2027)	\$784,043,000
Additional capacity relative to current net debt (July 2027)	7.2 times
Borrowing costs as a proportion of adjusted revenue (July 2027)	2.3%

Source: combined 2026/27 council financial modelling, excluding water services and applying the revenue adjustments used for covenant calculations.

The calculation indicates potential balance-sheet headroom. It does not demonstrate that additional borrowing would be affordable or desirable. The result is sensitive to the

final boundary, the definition of adjusted revenue, transferred regional activity, asset condition, renewal requirements, capital priorities, interest rates and lender covenants.

Organisational scale and potential efficiencies

The three councils currently operate separate governance, executive, finance, people, information-technology, legal, communications, planning, reporting and asset-management arrangements. Potential efficiencies arise from consolidating these functions and systems, coordinating procurement and renewing contracts through a common programme.

The strongest operational opportunities identified are:

- managing approximately 2,360 kilometres of local roads as one network
- building on Hauraki District Council's operational and technical capability in land drainage and flood protection
- bringing together regional flood-protection responsibilities for the Waihou and Piako systems, Thames, the Kauaeranga River and the Thames coastal margin
- planning stopbanks, pump stations, floodgates, drains, rivers, land use and environmental management through one organisation
- using common asset-management systems, investment standards and prioritisation
- supporting specialist planning, engineering, environmental, regulatory and programme-delivery capability across a larger workforce.

Modelling carried out identified that the Waiou-Piako-Coromandel option presented results in a net financial benefit per rating unit.

Integrated basis	Indicative NPV FY28-34	Indicative NPV FY28-40	Forecast break-even year
Waihou-Piako-Coromandel	~(\$450)	~\$700	FY37

Source : Independent Financial Review of Headstart (MartinJenkins) July 2026

Rates and resilience

The preliminary analysis records:

- rates per person ranging from \$1,085 - \$2,236 in 2026/27
- average household rates ranging from \$1,868 - \$2,307 in 2024/25
- average household rates equivalent to 1.8 - 3.3 per cent of 2024/25 median household income, which is a common affordability metric
- population growth over the preceding five years ranging from zero - 8 per cent
- forecast growth to 2034 ranging from a 7.2 per cent decline to 9.7 per cent growth.

The variation strengthens the case for a staged approach to rates harmonisation and transparent treatment of debt, reserves, service levels and historic obligations. It also means the distributional effects of integration need to be tested for different communities and ratepayer groups.

Analysis was completed to understand what the impact would be to the unitary authority if there was a shock as a result of a natural hazard. Two scenarios were applied, a \$50m shock and a \$150m shock.

Waihou-Piako-Coromandel has a low debt-to-revenue ratio, at 129% before the shock and 185% following a \$150 million shock (leaving \$260m headroom).

	FY22 Position	Shock as a % of revenue		Net debt to revenue post- shock		Remaining headroom	
		Net debt-to- revenue limit (LGFA)	Net debt-to- revenue pre- shock	\$50m shock	\$150m shock	\$50m shock	\$150m shock
Waihou-Piako- Coromandel	280%	129%	18%	55%	148%	185%	\$360m \$260m

Source : Independent Financial Review of Headstart (MartinJenkins) July 2026

Financial Position: Waihou-Piako-Coromandel

As part of the independent financial review, key financial observations, assumptions and positions were captured, along with net debt positions and capital expenditure. See below for details.

Observations

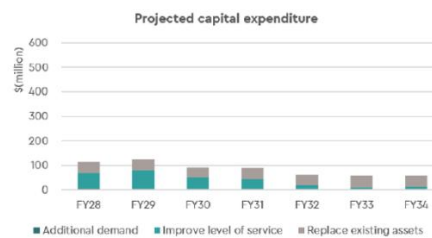
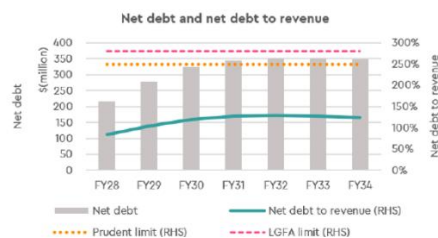
- Capex programme of ~\$0.6bn, tapering off in later years. Spend is ~\$110m from FY28-FY30, and drops to \$57m by the end of the LTP period.
- Almost entirely renewals, with minimal growth-related capital; consistent with modest 3.7% growth.

Key assumptions

Dimension	Amount
Opex efficiencies (% of amenable opex, from FY30)	4 – 6%
Capex efficiencies (from FY30)	0.0 – 0.5%
Integration costs (% of amenable opex)	30%
WRC cost allocation	Rating Units

Core financial position

Dimension	Amount
Opex, excl. dep'n & interest (FY28)	\$224m
Starting net debt (FY28)	\$216m
Projected net debt (FY34)	\$348m
Projected net debt to revenue (FY34)	124%
Capex profile (FY28-FY34)	\$0.6bn



Source : Independent Financial Review of Headstart (Martin Jenkins) July 2026

Economic evidence

The three-district economy contributed approximately \$6.3 billion, or 1.5 per cent, to national GDP in 2025. Its economic base includes agriculture, dairy processing, forestry, aquaculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism.

Infometrics analysis records a Herfindahl–Hirschman Index score of 313 in 2025, compared with 489 across 66 territorial authorities. On this measure, the lower score indicates a more diversified spread of economic activity and less dependence on a small number of industries.

Source: Infometrics economic analysis

5. Treaty settlements and iwi relationships

The proposed area overlaps with the rohe and areas of interest of Pare Hauraki, Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa and Ngāti Hinerangi. These are distinct interests and relationships. They should not be treated as one iwi position or one partnership.

Iwi identified and settlement position

Pare Hauraki comprises 12 iwi, each with its own interests, governance arrangements and settlement position. Other iwi also hold interests within or connected to the proposed area.

Collective or relationship	Iwi	Individual settlement position
Pare Hauraki	Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki	Settlement completed through the Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Claims Settlement Act 2018.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Hako	No Deed of Settlement has been signed. An Agreement in Principle Equivalent was signed in 2011.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Hei	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Hei Claims Settlement Act 2026.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Maru	Deed of Settlement signed in 2017. Implementing legislation remains to be confirmed.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Pāoa	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Pāoa Claims Settlement Act 2025, which came into effect in March 2026.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Porou ki Hauraki	Settlement in progress. No Deed of Settlement has been signed.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Pūkenga	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Pūkenga Claims Settlement Act 2017.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu Claims Settlement Act 2026.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Tamaterā	Deed of Settlement signed in 2017. Implementing legislation remains to be confirmed.
Pare Hauraki	Ngāti Tara Tokanui	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Tara Tokanui Claims Settlement Act 2026.
Pare Hauraki	Ngaati Whanaunga	Deed of Settlement signed. Implementing legislation remains to be confirmed.
Pare Hauraki	Te Patukirikiri	Deed of Settlement signed. Implementing legislation remains to be confirmed.

Waikato relationships	Waikato-Tainui	Land and river settlements are in place, including the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act 1995 and Waikato River settlement legislation.
Waikato relationships	Ngāti Hauā	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act 2014.
Upper-catchment and Waikato River relationships	Raukawa	Settlement and Waikato River arrangements are in place, including the Raukawa Claims Settlement Act 2014.
Matamata-Piako relationships	Ngāti Hinerangi	Settlement completed through the Ngāti Hinerangi Claims Settlement Act 2021.

The table records the individual settlement positions currently identified (*these are subject to confirmation*). It does not imply a shared position within Pare Hauraki or among the other iwi listed.

Arrangement or party	Relevance to the proposal
Pare Hauraki Collective Redress Deed	Recognises the Waihou, Piako and Coromandel catchments as a connected geography and provides for a future catchment authority. Pare Hauraki iwi are at different stages in their individual settlement processes.
Waihou, Piako and Coromandel Catchment Authority	Proposed 14-member body comprising six Pare Hauraki appointees, one appointment involving Raukawa, Ngāti Hauā and Ngāti Hinerangi, and seven local-government appointees. Local-government representation would need to be reconfigured following reorganisation.
Waikato-Tainui	Interests include Waikato River relationships, Te Ture Whaimana and relevant settlement legislation.
Raukawa	Interests extend across the proposed area and upper catchments.
Ngāti Hauā	Interests extend across the proposed area with a specific co-governance arrangement in place for the Waharoa (Matamata) Aerodrome.
Ngāti Hinerangi	Settlement interests are concentrated in and around Matamata-Piako.
Individual council arrangements	Include statutory acknowledgements, notification duties, appointments, relationship agreements and other council-specific responsibilities.

The Crown remains responsible for its Treaty settlement commitments. Reorganisation would not alter Treaty settlements or iwi rights. It would, however, change the local authorities responsible for giving effect to some statutory duties, appointments, agreements and relationships.

Legal succession may carry some responsibilities to the new authority. It should not be assumed that succession alone will provide the same practical or legal effect in every case. The Catchment Authority's local-government appointments may require reconfiguration, while other arrangements may require legislative amendment, Crown action, agreement with affected entities or administrative transfer.

Detailed design needs to produce a settlement-by-settlement obligations register identifying:

- each affected deed, Act, statutory acknowledgement, agreement or other instrument
- the iwi, hapū or Post-Settlement Governance Entity concerned
- the responsibility currently held by each council
- the future responsible authority
- the mechanism needed to provide the same or equivalent effect
- any legislative amendment, Crown decision or agreement required
- catchment interest alignment
- the engagement completed and further work agreed.

This work needs to be undertaken with each affected iwi, hapū and Post-Settlement Governance Entity and avoid any gap in statutory responsibilities or established relationships.

6. Wider-Waikato effects and continuing arrangements

Waihou–Piako–Coromandel would remain part of an interconnected Waikato. Establishment would change where territorial and regional responsibilities sit, but regional planning, transport, catchments, infrastructure, emergency management and shared services would continue to cross authority boundaries.

Effects on adjacent Councils

Any boundary catchment adjustments will have an impact on the Councils affected:

- population and rating base
- land, roads, facilities and other assets
- liabilities, debt, reserves and capital commitments
- staff, contracts, systems and service delivery
- representation and community relationships
- remaining organisational scale, capability and unit costs

- interests in shared organisations and regional arrangements.

These effects have not yet been quantified. Detailed design needs to assess the consequences for both the communities and the Councils. It must also compare transfer with retention of the existing territorial boundary supported by coordinated catchment, environmental and service arrangements.

Effects on Waikato Regional Council

The exact regional functions proposed to transfer remain to be confirmed and may be affected by final national resource-management settings. Detailed design needs to determine:

- which functions transfer, remain shared or require transitional support
- the associated staff, specialist capability, data, systems and contracts
- the assets, liabilities, reserves and capital commitments attached to those functions
- the treatment of statutory responsibilities and existing plans
- the effect on Waikato Regional Council's remaining capability, cost base and services.

Catchment and river-management schemes receive targeted-rate and general-rate funding. Targeted revenue would generally follow the communities and areas receiving the service. The allocation of general-rate revenue, regional investment and residual costs requires further analysis and agreement.

Continuing arrangements

Relationship	Proposed treatment and work required
Regional spatial planning	Continue Waikato-wide participation. Confirm joint governance, representation, evidence, funding and delivery arrangements under the final planning system.
Transport	Manage local roads within the new authority while coordinating strategic connections and regional public transport with other authorities and the New Zealand Transport Agency.
Catchment and environmental management	Establish arrangements for catchments and environmental systems extending beyond the boundary, including information, monitoring, investment and incident response.

Hauraki Gulf and Sea Change	Continue participation in Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari and relationships with Auckland Council and the Hauraki Gulf Forum. Confirm the new authority's representation and implementation responsibilities.
Emergency management	Confirm future group membership, governance, funding, operational coordination and service continuity.
Waikato Waters Limited	Hauraki and Matamata-Piako are shareholders; Thames-Coromandel is not a shareholder at establishment. Confirm future ownership, funding and accountability without disrupting water-services delivery.
Co-Lab	Confirm membership, shareholding and continuation of shared services.
Local Government Funding Agency	Confirm succession, guarantees, covenants and financing arrangements.
Waikato Regional Airport Limited	Confirm the future treatment of Matamata-Piako District Council's interest.
Hauraki Rail Trail Charitable Trust	The three proposing councils are settlors to the Trust, which governs, manages, develops and promotes the Hauraki Rail Trail. Confirm succession to the councils' rights and obligations; future trustee appointment arrangements; continued iwi appointment rights; treatment of trail assets, funding and maintenance responsibilities; and any amendments required to the Trust deed or related agreements.
Services that cannot be separated efficiently	Identify any specialist teams, systems, contracts or functions requiring continued shared delivery or transitional support.

The available information demonstrates that established mechanisms exist for collaboration. It does not establish that the proposal would have no adverse effect on other councils or communities. Residual costs, loss of scale and specialist capability must be assessed directly.

7. Deliverability, principal risks and detailed-design priorities

The proposal has a credible basis for proceeding to detailed design, with three proposing councils, an agreed direction and principles, a proposed geography, an outline governance model and preliminary evidence of financial and organisational scale.

Delivery depends on timely government decisions, enabling legislation, transition support and early involvement of affected councils, iwi and hapū, staff and communities.

Establishment roadmap

Period	Proposed milestone	Principal requirement
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August 2026	Outline proposal submitted	Council resolutions, Memorandum of Understanding and supporting evidence completed
September 2026	Cabinet decision in principle	Confirmation that the proposal may proceed to detailed design
October 2026–March 2027	Government-enabled detailed design	Final boundary, functions, governance, Treaty settlement arrangements, financial design and transition requirements agreed
May 2027	Cabinet consideration of final design	Policy decisions and authority to prepare legislation
Early 2028	Enabling legislation	Establishment framework, transition powers, governance and statutory succession provided
April 2028	Chief Executive appointed	Chief Executive and establishment accountabilities confirmed
October 2028	New council elected and legally established	Day Zero; governance commences, reporting lines of existing council CEs change and the transition plan is approved by December by December by December
October 2028–June 2030	Organisational transition	Functions, people, assets, liabilities, systems and statutory responsibilities transferred in stages
1 July 2030	Integrated authority commences	Day One; one operating authority, followed by a stabilisation period

Existing councils would continue to exercise their statutory responsibilities until those responsibilities are legally transferred. The final pathway should include clear governance, decision gates, independent assurance and contingency arrangements if legislation or individual workstreams are delayed.

Matters for detailed design

Assessment area	Matters for detailed design
Supporting the new planning system	Regional spatial and regulatory planning governance; statutory plan sequencing and transitional provisions; transfer of planning, consenting, monitoring and enforcement functions; interim delegations; integration of plans, evidence, data, systems and ePlans; retention of specialist capability and institutional knowledge; mechanisms for regional, iwi and local input; alignment with the final national planning framework.
Simplifying local governance	Governing-body and committee structure; allocation of regional and local responsibilities; statutory local-board and community-board roles; delegations and accountability; joint governance and resourcing of regional functions; Māori representation and partnership arrangements; financial delegations; council-controlled organisations; mechanisms for reviewing the governance model.
Achieving economies of scale	Transition costs and benefits; benefits-realisation and assurance framework; rating harmonisation and transitional protections; debt and treasury

	arrangements; opening balance sheet; asset condition and renewal requirements; infrastructure priorities; workforce and specialist capability; systems integration; procurement; council-controlled organisations and shared services; local service-level variations.
Maintaining local voice	Governing-body, ward and constituency arrangements; Māori representation; local-board and community-board boundaries; delegated responsibilities; local funding and budget authority; relationship between authority-wide and local decisions; access to representatives, services and staff; representation of rural, urban, coastal and other communities of interest; relationships with iwi, hapū and community organisations; review mechanisms.
Deliverability and service continuity	Legislative pathway; establishment and transition governance; government funding and support; transfer of people, functions, assets, liabilities and statutory responsibilities; operating model; systems integration; workforce retention; service-continuity protections; critical dependencies and decision gates; assurance, reporting and contingency arrangements.
Boundary and communities of interest	Legal boundary mapping and affected-property schedules; verified population, rating-unit and land-area data; settlement and rural-community connections; local identity and community views; commuting, employment, education, retail and service-use patterns; transport and infrastructure relationships; engagement with affected communities, landowners, iwi and hapū; effects on communities inside and outside the boundary; comparison with retaining existing boundaries and strengthening cross-boundary arrangements.
Treaty settlements and iwi relationships	Settlement-by-settlement obligations assessment; legislative amendments; future responsible authorities; Catchment Authority composition; statutory acknowledgements and notification duties; representation and appointment arrangements; iwi-specific engagement; mechanisms to provide the same or equivalent effect; Crown responsibilities and decisions.
Wider-Waikato and cross-boundary relationships	Continuing regional and cross-boundary arrangements; effects on affected councils and remaining communities; shared governance, funding and information arrangements; treatment of functions that cannot be efficiently separated; interests in shared services and council-controlled organisations; ongoing catchment, infrastructure, transport and emergency-management relationships.

The matters identified above would form the basis of a government-enabled detailed-design programme. The evidence supports proceeding to that next phase. Final establishment decisions would follow confirmation of the boundary and regional functions, assessment of the effects on other councils and communities, and agreement on how affected rights, responsibilities, costs and capabilities would be carried forward.