

Kaunihera | Council

Ngā Tāpiritanga – Mēneti | Attachments – Minutes

Attachments – Minutes of a meeting of an ordinary meeting of Matamata-Piako District Council held in the Council Chambers, 35 Kenrick Street, TE AROHA on 11 Feb 2026 at 9:00.

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Note: The attachments contained within this document are for consideration and should not be construed as Council policy unless and until adopted. Should Councillors require further information relating to any reports, please contact the relevant manager, Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.



Draft Annual Plan 2026-27

Council Meeting
11 February 2026

Agenda for today

Topic
Budget – what's changed from last week?
Comparison to LTP
What's the increase for each type of rate and what's the key drivers for the increase?
What do the proposed rates mean for various indicator properties?
Is consultation required? Consideration of the assessment of significance and materiality

Where has the draft rate increase landed?

Today – 11 February – rates increase of 5.92% (last week 6.03%)

What have we changed following last weeks workshop?

- Additional \$171k income from fees and charges (across Cemeteries, Venues, Animal Control)
- Additional staff resource for Animal control \$75k
- Delay of capex projects (eg TA Spa, Waste recovery centre, Library) interest savings \$190k

What else has changed?

- Expected capital spend to 30 June 2026 re-forecast, resulted in \$10.4m lower opening debt figure for 1 July 2026, interest savings \$209k
- Increased forecast interest rates from 4.21% to 4.34%, additional cost \$159k

Proposed 2026/27 rates increase compared to LTP

	Draft Annual Plan 26/27	LTP Forecast year 3	LTP Limit year 3
Total rates increase	5.92%	5.1%	-

Made up of:

Waters rates	11.0%	10.2%	11.0%
Other activity rates	3.2%	2.2%	5.0%

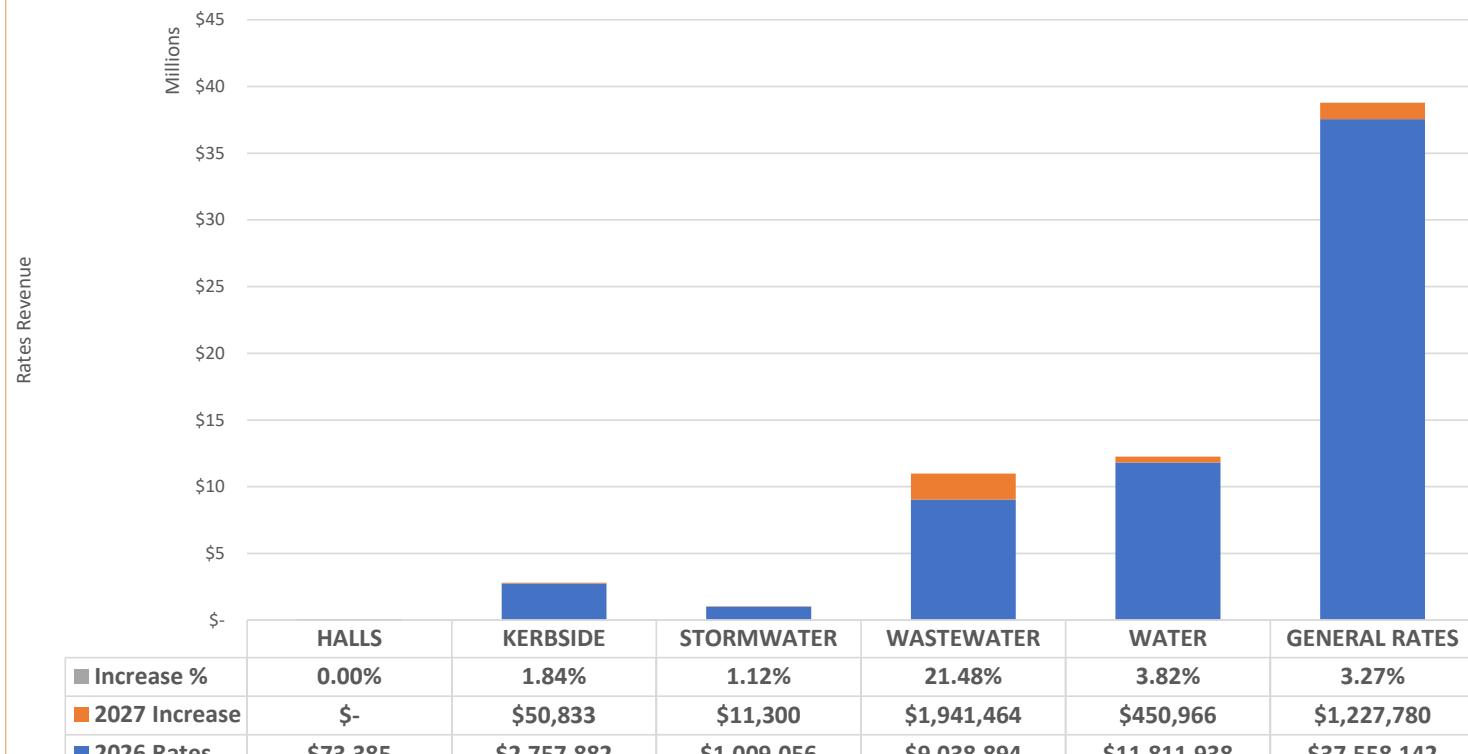
Proposed 2026/27 rates revenue compared to LTP

	Draft Annual Plan 26/27	LTP Forecast year 3	LTP Limit year 3
Total rates revenue	\$65.9m	\$65.4m	-

Made up of:

Waters rates	\$24.3m	\$24.7m	\$24.8m
Other activity rates	\$41.7m	\$40.8m	\$41.9m

Proposed Targeted and General Rates Revenue 2026/27 - total increase 5.92% or \$3.68m



Re-cap – What's driving the key increases in rates?

Wastewater 21.5% or \$1.94m on 2025/26

- Interest costs for Matamata WWTP upgrade \$1.638m
- Depreciation \$237k
- Increased rates funding for desludging \$340k
- Number of other costs including employee market movements \$429k

Off-set by:

- Increased income from trade waste fees \$500k
- Reallocation of overheads \$203k

Re-cap – What's driving the key increases in rates?

Wastewater  21.5% however the impact on ratepayers is more significant this year

Targeted rates for Wastewater	2026 rates	2027 rates	Increase \$	Increase %
Ratepayer contribution	\$ 8,361,319	\$ 10,980,358	\$ 2,619,039	31.3%
Fonterra and Greenlea's contribution	\$ 677,575	\$ -	(\$ 677,575)	(100.0%)
Total Wastewater targeted rates	\$ 9,038,894	\$ 10,980,358	\$ 1,941,464	21.5%

Re-cap – What's driving the key increases in rates?

Water 3.82% or \$451k on 2025/26

- Depreciation \$369k
- Interest costs \$62k
- Reallocation of overheads \$46k

Re-cap – What's driving the key increases in rates?

Water  **3.82% or \$451k on 2025/26**

Targeted rates for Water	2026 rates	2027 rates	Increase \$	Increase %
Water supply	\$ 7,961,378	\$ 8,265,164	\$ 303,786	3.82%
Metered water	\$ 3,850,560	\$ 3,997,740	\$ 147,180	3.82%
Total Water targeted rates	\$ 11,811,938	\$ 12,262,904	\$ 450,966	3.82%

Proposed metered water rate increases at same rate as the targeted supply rate - from \$3.01 to \$3.12 (inc GST)

Re-cap – What's driving the key increases in rates?

General Rates 3.27% or \$1.23m on 2025/26

- Increased employee costs \$1.355m
- Pools and Spas income reduced in line with current levels \$171k
- Open Country Stadium, MM - new operating expense \$50k
- TMF and Councillor fees (legislated) \$60k
- Legal enforcement costs \$50k
- Microsoft 365 licences \$234k
- Reduced Better-off Funding \$101k
- Other minor costs \$32k

Off-set by:

- Additional fees and charges from cemeteries, recreation facilities, animal control, consents, scrap metal \$542k
- Additional rates penalty income \$100k
- Reallocation of overheads to housing \$184k

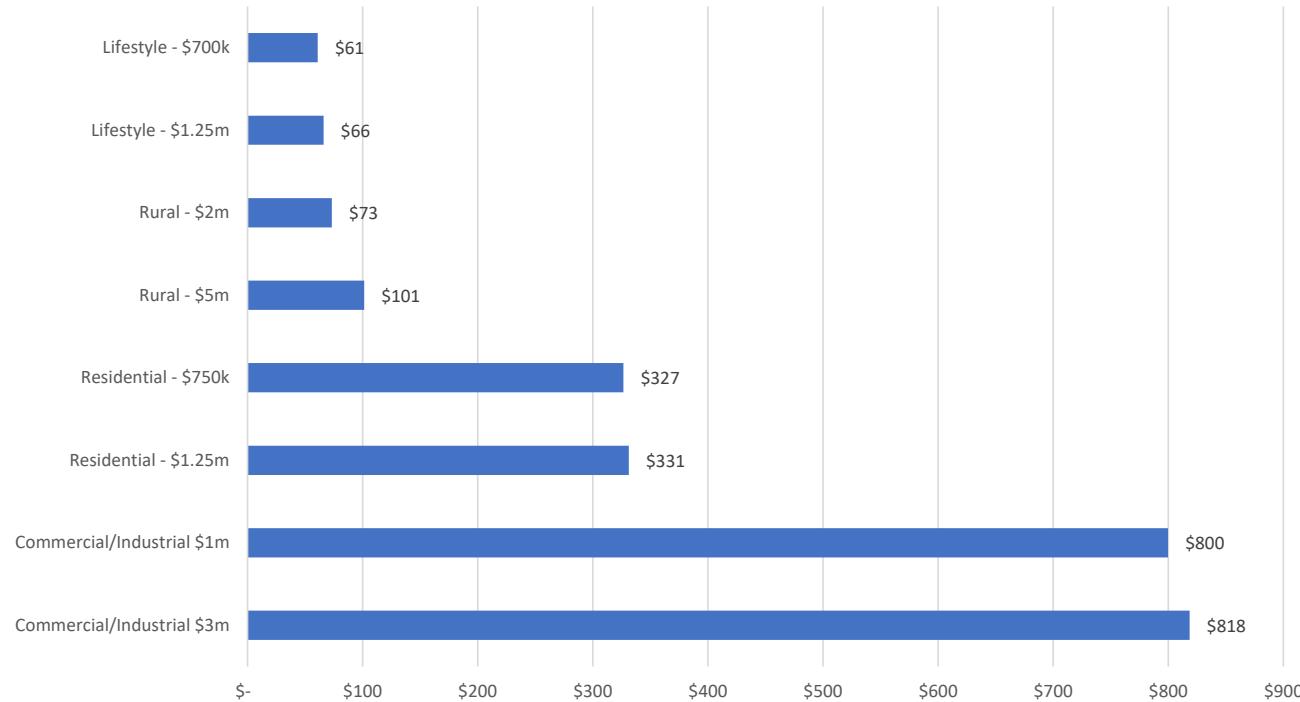
What's the impact of these proposed rate increases on a range of indicator properties?

Capital Value	Residential - serviced					Commercial/Industrial serviced + 2 pens			
	\$ 500,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 550,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,000,000
Total Rates Bill in 2025/26	3,651	3,997	4,343	4,688	5,034	5,039	5,661	7,045	8,428
General rate	696	1,044	1,393	1,741	2,089	766	1,393	2,785	4,178
UAGC	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013
Targeted rates	2,260	2,260	2,260	2,260	2,260	4,050	4,050	4,050	4,050
Total Rates Bill in 2026/27	3,975	4,323	4,672	5,020	5,368	5,834	6,461	7,854	9,246
Increase \$	324	327	329	331	334	796	800	809	818
Increase %	8.9%	8.2%	7.6%	7.1%	6.6%	15.8%	14.1%	11.5%	9.7%

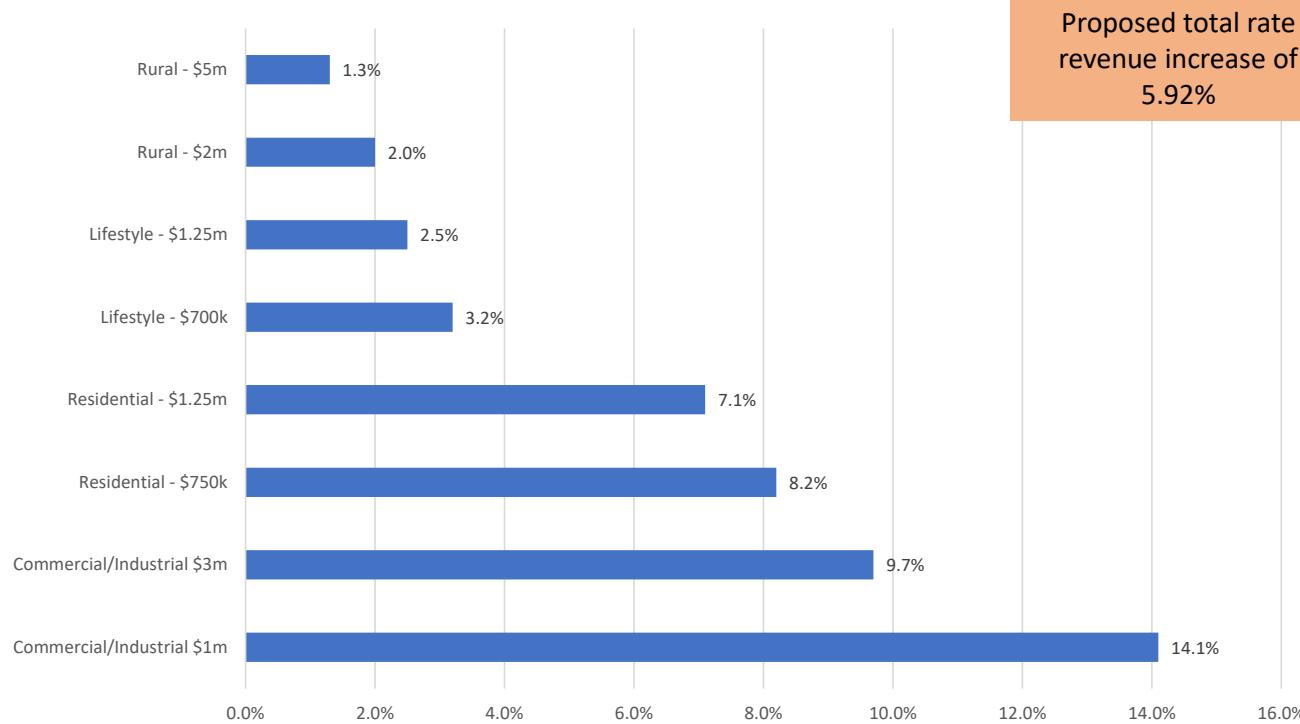
What's the impact of these proposed rate increases on a range of indicator properties?

Capital value	Lifestyle - no services				Rural - no services			
	\$ 700,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 10,000,000
Total Rates Bill in 2025/26	1,927	2,342	2,688	4,417	3,725	5,800	7,875	14,791
General rate	975	1,393	1,741	3,481	2,785	4,874	6,963	13,926
UAGC	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013
Targeted rates	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Rates Bill in 2026/27	1,988	2,406	2,754	4,495	3,799	5,887	7,976	14,939
Increase \$	61	64	66	78	73	87	101	148
Increase %	3.2%	2.7%	2.5%	1.8%	2.0%	1.5%	1.3%	1.0%

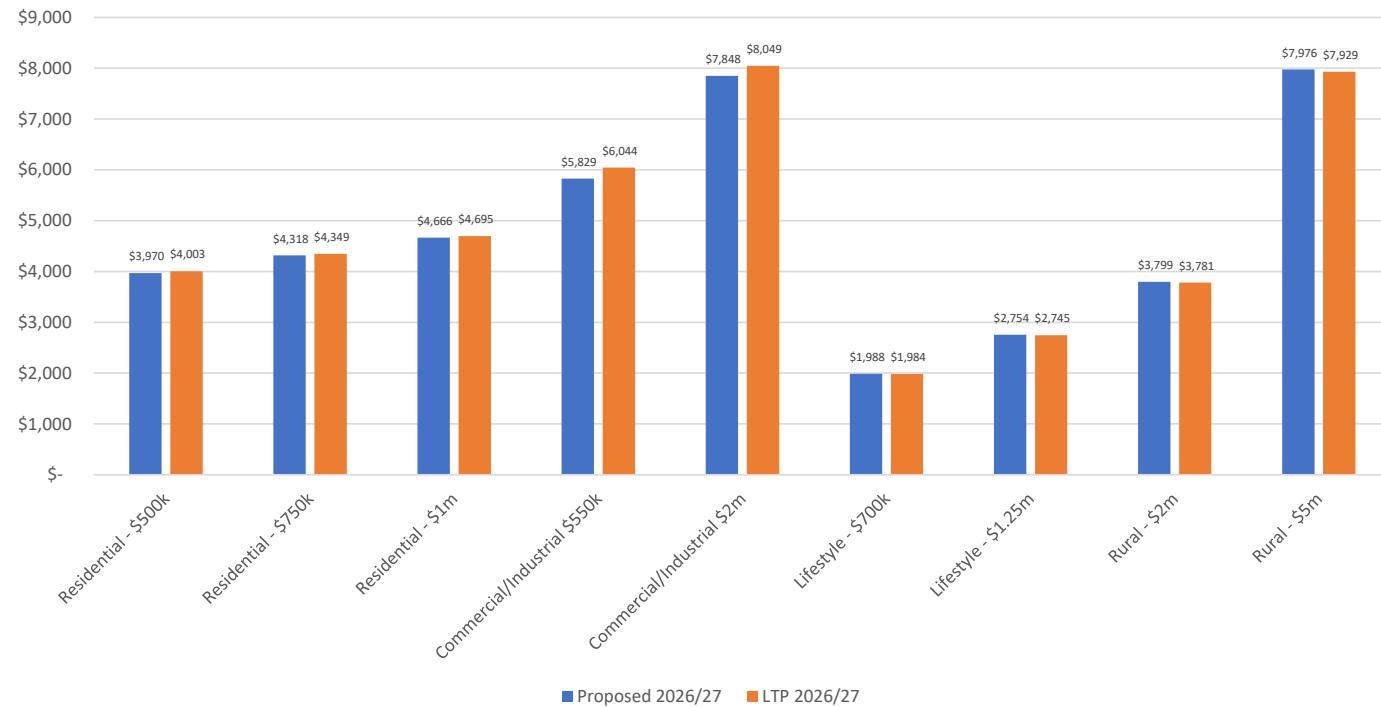
2026/27 Proposed Rates – How much will my rates bill go up next year?



2026/27 Proposed Rates – How much is the rates increase in % terms for my property?



2026/27 Proposed rates bill – How does it compare to what we forecast in the LTP for indicator properties?

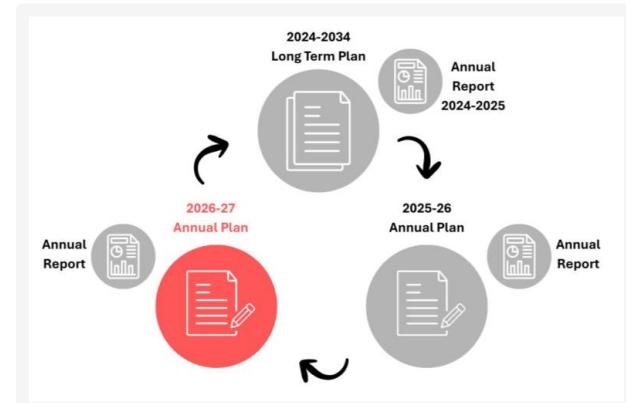


Is consultation required? What the legislation says

Annual Plan purpose:

Budget for 26/27.

Identify variations from the
Long Term Plan for that
year.



Annual Plan consultation:

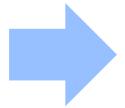
Only necessary if there are
significant or material
variations.



Is consultation required? Roles

Staff

Undertake an assessment using Council's Significance and Engagement Policy and other criteria.



Elected members

Consider the assessment and make the decision on whether consultation is required.

Is consultation required? Assessment of significance and materiality

	Criteria	Rates	Capital projects
1	Degree of change from the LTP	Low	Low
2	Proportion of the community affected	Medium	Low
3	Level of public interest	Medium	Low
4	Consequence for present and future communities	Low	Medium
5	Flow on effect for future plans or budgets	Medium	Medium
6	Cultural significance to Māori	n/a	Low
7	Alignment with iwi aspirations	n/a	Low
8	Financial impact	Medium	Medium
9	Reversibility	Low	Low
10	Effect on level of service of significant activity	n/a	n/a
11	Support of climate adaptation and environmental wellbeing	Low	Low
12	Understanding of community views	Low	Low

Is consultation required? Assessment of significance and materiality

Materiality Criteria	Comment
Does the difference involve a change to the financial strategy or funding impact statement?	The proposed Annual Plan involves only minor changes to the funding impact statement.
Might the difference(s) alter a reasonable person's conclusions about the affordability of the plan?	Limits set in the LTP are one measure of affordability. While the proposed Annual Plan is within the limits set in the LTP for both the waters rate, and the other activities rate, the Annual Plan rates revenue for 3 waters rates is 1.63% lower than LTP forecast (\$401k) and the Annual Plan rates revenue for all other rates is 2.25% higher than LTP forecast (\$917k). On an overall total rates basis, the Annual Plan rates revenue is 0.79% higher than forecast for year 3 of the LTP (\$516k), so less than 1%. On that basis, the conclusion is that the overall proposed Annual Plan budget is largely in line with the LTP.
Might the difference(s) alter a reasonable person's conclusions about the levels of service contained in the plan?	There are no proposed changes to levels of service.
Might the difference(s) lead to a reasonable person deciding (or not deciding) to make a submission on any consultation document	There may be some public interest from those who submitted in support of projects that are now being deferred. There will likely be further opportunities to submit on these during the next LTP consultation.

Is consultation required? Assessment of significance and materiality

The Assessment of Significance and Materiality indicates that the Annual Plan 26/27 does not include significant or material variances to the Long-Term Plan and that therefore consultation is not required.

Local Government Act 2002: “significant, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter, means that the issue, proposal, decision, or other matter has a high degree of significance”.

Significance and Engagement Policy: “If a matter is of medium significance, Council may decide to engage.”

Assessment of Significance and Materiality for the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27, as of 10 February 2026.

Executive Summary

Following a series of workshops with Council, and the direction provided, staff have completed an Assessment of Significance and Materiality for the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 as of 10 February 2026.

This paper summarises the legal requirements regarding consultation, describes what has changed from year 3 of the Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 (LTP) to provide the context upon which the assessment is based, and provides the assessment and analysis of significance and materiality.

Based on this assessment, the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 does not include significant or material differences compared to what was forecast for year 3 of the Long Term Plan.

Staff's draft recommendation is that Annual Plan consultation is not required. It is recommended that an information campaign is undertaken, and that a communications plan be developed on this basis.

Staff also assessed whether section 97 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), regarding certain decisions that can only be made in Long Term Plan or Long Term Plan amendment, applies. The conclusion is that the Draft Annual Plan does not include any such decision, and a Long Term Plan amendment is not required.

Part one: Significance and Materiality Assessment

Requirement for Annual Plan Consultation

Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002 outlines that if the proposed Annual Plan does not include significant or material differences from the content of the Long Term Plan for the financial year to which the proposed Annual Plan relates then Council does not need to consult. To determine if there are significant or material differences, assessments against Council's Significance and Engagement Policy and SOLGM's (Society of Local Government Managers) materiality criteria have been completed.

How to determine Significance and Materiality

Significance

MPDC's Significance and Engagement Policy ([link](#)) provides guidance on how to determine significance, and the appropriate levels of engagement in proportion to the level of significance. In general, the more significant an issue is determined to be, the greater the need for community engagement.

The Policy sets out the matters which must be taken into account when assessing the degree of significance as follows:

Degree of significance – key considerations			
Consideration	Low	Medium	High
Proportion of the community affected	Affects a small subgroup/s	Affects a large subgroup/s	Affects a wide range of people
Public interest	Likely to have little public interest	Likely to have moderate public interest	Likely to have high public interest
Consequences for present and future community	Low consequences for the present and future community (document what these consequences may be)	Moderate consequences for the present and future community (document what these consequences may be)	Large consequences for the present and future community (document what these consequences may be)
Cultural significance to Māori	The issue, proposal, decision, or matter is unlikely to be of cultural significance to Māori and their relationship to culture, tradition, land, water and taonga	The issue, proposal, decision, or matter is likely to be of moderate cultural significance to Māori and their relationship to culture, tradition, land, water and taonga	The issue, proposal, decision, or matter is likely to be of high cultural significance to Māori and their relationship to culture, tradition, land, water and taonga
Alignment with iwi aspirations	The issue, proposal, decision, or matter is strongly aligned with iwi aspirations and/or iwi have expressed support for the matter	The issue, proposal, decision, or matter is moderately aligned with iwi aspirations and/or there is no clear understanding/consensus	The issue, proposal, decision, or matter is not aligned with iwi aspirations and/or iwi have expressed opposition to the matter
Financial impact	Minimal financial impact (can be funded within existing budgets and/or no or minimal impact on rates/debt levels)	Moderate financial impact (not funded within existing budgets and/or moderate impact on rates/debt levels)	Significant financial impact (not funded within existing budgets and/or significant impact on rates/debt levels)
Reversibility	Decision is easily reversed	Decision is moderately difficult to reverse	Decision is highly difficult to reverse
Flow on effect for future plans or budgets	Decision is likely to have a minimal flow on effect for future plans or budgets	Decision is likely to have a minor flow on effect for future plans or budgets	Decision is likely to have a significant flow on effect for future plans or budgets
Effect on level of service of significant activity	Decision is unlikely to affect the level of service of a Significant Activity	Decision is likely to moderately affect the level of service of a Significant Activity	Decision is likely to significantly affect the level of service of a Significant Activity
Supports climate change adaptation and environmental wellbeing	The decision is considered to strongly support the district to adapt to climate change and/or may result in a positive impact on the environmental wellbeing of communities	The decision is considered to moderately support the district to adapt to climate change and/or considered to have a negligible impact on the environmental wellbeing of communities	The decision is not considered to support the district to adapt to climate change and/or may result in a negative impact on the environmental wellbeing of communities
Community views already known	Views of the community are already known	Views of the community are already known however may have changed since views were initially sought	Views of the community are not known
Degree of change from LTP	There are no significant changes to what has already been agreed with	There are minor changes to what has already been agreed with the	There are significant changes to what has already been agreed with

Degree of significance – key considerations			
	the community through previous engagement	community through previous engagement	the community through previous engagement

Significance Assessment

Staff's assessment of the draft Annual Plan 2026/27 against the Significance and Engagement Policy is detailed in the table below.

Criteria	How it applies to Draft Annual Plan 2025/26	Staff assessment of significance	Staff assessment of significance
		Based on proposed rates figures	Based on proposed capital programme
1 Degree of change from LTP	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft overall rate increase (5.92%) is within 1% of the forecast in the LTP (5.1%) The draft water targeted rate increase (11%) is 1% higher than forecast in the LTP (10%) and in line with the LTP limit (11%). The draft other activities rate increase (3.2%) is just over 1% higher than forecast in the LTP (2%) and below the LTP limit (5%). Please see also the financial graphs below. <p>Capital Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waters activities – projects are in line with the LTP except for the Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade which was deferred into the 2026/27 year. Other activities – most projects are in line with the LTP. Te Aroha destination playground will proceed as planned. The Resource Recovery Centre will retain \$100,000 capital in 2026/27 to continue with planning and design, with the other \$400,000 deferred until 2027/28. Te Aroha Library will proceed with investigations in 2026/27 with delivery of the project moved out to 2027/28. Te Aroha Spa will be deferred while further investigations take place. 	Low	Low

Criteria	How it applies to Draft Annual Plan 2025/26	Staff assessment of significance	Staff assessment of significance
2 Proportion of community affected	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates affect all ratepayers and have flow on effects for many renters. The average proposed rates increases are only small variances from what was proposed in the LTP, however the impact on individual ratepayers will differ depending on property value and services provided. The ratepayers set to have a larger than average increase are those with properties in the categories Residential and Commercial/ Industrial. Residential properties make up 60.9% of all ratepayers. Commercial/ Industrial make up 5.9% of all ratepayers. The property types set to have a smaller than average increase are Rural (9.5% of ratepayers) and Lifestyle (17% of ratepayers). Please see graphs below for dollar and percentage increases for each property type. <p>Capital Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water activities – the community is not affected as no projects have been deferred. Other activities – any changes are deferrals not removal of projects so the proportion of the community affected is deemed low. 	Medium	Low
3 Public interest	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is always public interest in what the rates increase will be and there may be particular interest following election of a new Council as to what is being proposed. The average proposed rates are largely in line with the LTP however those with larger than average increases are likely to have more interest. 	Medium	Low

Criteria	How it applies to Draft Annual Plan 2025/26	Staff assessment of significance	Staff assessment of significance
	Capital Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be some interest in the deferment of projects. Consultation on the LTP received the most community feedback on the topic of Te Aroha Spa (60 submissions) with 52% expressing support for the project, and 43% preferring work stop on the project. As projects are deferred by a year and not removed, this has been rated low significance for public interest. 		
4 Consequences for present and future community	Rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present – as the proposed rates increases are largely in line with the forecast figures this is rated as of low significance in respect to consultation. Affordability pressures remain for many in the community however, with any rates increase having an impact. Future – the level at which rates are set this year will have a higher than usual consequence for the future community if the proposed implementation of a rates cap goes ahead. Capital Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consequence of delivering the Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade is positive for current and future community and therefore rated as of low significance for this assessment. The deferment of some other projects mean that these planned improvements and upgrades may not be available to the community in previously proposed timeframes, and may end up costing more as costs tend to increase over time. 	Low	Medium
5 Flow on effect for future plans or budgets	Rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wherever the rates is set in one year becomes the base on which 	Medium	Medium

Criteria	How it applies to Draft Annual Plan 2025/26	Staff assessment of significance	Staff assessment of significance
	<p>future rate increases are calculated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the proposed rates cap goes ahead within the next LTP period, the flow on effects of the rates decision this year could be of higher impact than other years. <p>Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deferring some projects may mean it is more difficult to deliver them in the future due to rising costs and/or the potential implementation of a rates cap and the consequent tightening of budgets. 		
6	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues of cultural significance to Māori have been identified. <p>Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues related to water quality are of high cultural significance to Māori, therefore delivery of the Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade rated low for needing to consult. 	n/a	Low
7	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues of cultural significance to Māori have been identified. <p>Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade in line with iwi aspirations for projects that protect the quality of awa, therefore, since the Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade is being delivered the significance is rated low for needing to consult. 	n/a	Low
8	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial impact of the proposed rates increases on the community is dependent on a number of factors including the value of the property and the services provided. The financial impact on residential ratepayers who make up the majority of ratepayers 	Medium	Medium

Criteria	How it applies to Draft Annual Plan 2025/26	Staff assessment of significance	Staff assessment of significance	
	<p>(60.9%) is forecast to be about \$300 in rates increase (based on the indicator properties, see graphs below)</p> <p>Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade in the 2026/27 year has added cost to the budget for this year. 			
9	<p>Reversibility</p> <p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the Annual Plan is a formal statement of Council's intentions, decisions inconsistent with the Plan are allowed, and thus changes could be made to the Plan. Once the rates have been set it is not possible to reverse this. In the following year, water rates will be set by Waikato Waters Ltd. <p>Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general it would be impractical to change/ reverse projects once they are underway. In the following year the water and wastewater activities will be delivered by Waikato Waters Ltd. 	Low	Low	
10	<p>Effect on level of service of significant activity</p>	<p>Rates and Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has not proposed changes to Levels of Service of a significant activity. 	n/a	n/a
11	<p>Supports climate change adaptation and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for some projects with a climate change element to be delivered (Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade). <p>Capital Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade makes some contribution toward adaptation and environmental wellbeing. 	Low	Low
12	<p>Community views already known</p>	<p>Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community have expressed their views as part of the LTP in 2024. <p>Capital Projects</p>	Low	Low

Criteria	How it applies to Draft Annual Plan 2025/26	Staff assessment of significance	Staff assessment of significance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community have expressed their views as part of the LTP in 2024. There were a range of views expressed on the projects planned for this year, including those that are being deferred. 		

Tally

- High** = 0
- Medium** = 7
- Low** = 13
- Not Applicable = 4

On balance, staff consider that variances between the Long-Term Plan and the Draft Annual Plan 2025/26 are of low-medium significance (scored High Significance on 0 criteria, Medium Significance on 7 criteria, Low Significance on 13 criteria, and Not applicable on 4 criteria).

Consequently, it is staff's assessment that the Draft Annual Plan does not include any significant variances from the LTP for the 2026/27 financial year.

Materiality

In *Preparing an annual plan* (Society of Local Government Managers, 2015), SOLGM provides some guidance on how materiality can be assessed;

For the purposes of this part of the Act, a difference is material if:

“It could, in itself, in conjunction with other differences, influence the decisions or assessment of those reading or responding to the consultation document.”

It is noted that what is and isn't material will be circumstance specific. SOLGM provides the following which can be useful tests to have in mind:

- Does the difference involve a change to the financial strategy or funding impact statement – if the answer is yes then proceed with extreme caution before deciding not to consult
- Might the difference(s) alter a reasonable person's conclusions about the affordability of the plan – if the answer is yes, the change should be regarded as material
- Might the difference(s) alter a reasonable person's conclusions about the levels of service contained in the plan – if the answer is yes, the change should be regarded as material
- Might the difference(s) lead to a reasonable person deciding (or not deciding) to make a submission on any consultation document (for example, has some policy shift been signalled) – if the answer is yes, the change should be regarded as material.

SOLGM Materiality Assessment

Staff's assessment of the draft Annual Plan 2025/26 against SOLGM's materiality criteria is detailed in the table below.

Assessment	Staff/officer comment
Does the difference involve a change to the financial strategy or funding impact statement?	The proposed Annual Plan involves only minor changes to the funding impact statement.
Might the difference(s) alter a reasonable person's conclusions about the affordability of the plan?	Limits set in the LTP are one measure of affordability. While the proposed Annual Plan is within the limits set in the LTP for both the waters rate, and the other activities rate, the Annual Plan rates revenue for 3 waters rates is 1.63% lower than LTP forecast (\$401k) and the Annual Plan rates revenue for all other rates is 2.25% higher than LTP forecast (\$917k). On an overall total rates basis, the Annual Plan rates revenue is 0.79% higher than forecast for year 3 of the LTP (\$516k), so less than 1%. On that basis, the conclusion is that the overall proposed Annual Plan budget is largely in line with the LTP.
Might the difference(s) alter a reasonable person's conclusions about the levels of service contained in the plan?	There are no proposed changes to levels of service.
Might the difference(s) lead to a reasonable person deciding (or not deciding) to make a submission on any consultation document	There may be some public interest from those who submitted in support of projects that are now being deferred. However, there will likely be further opportunities to submit on these during the next LTP consultation.

On balance, it is staff's assessment that the Draft Annual Plan does not include any material variances from the LTP for the 2026/27 financial year.

Part two: Information underpinning the assessment

The information below provides further detail about the draft Annual Plan 2026/27, and any variances compared with year three of the LTP. This information informed the assessments of significance and materiality outlined above.

Financial Strategy and Financial Prudence Benchmarks

As part of the Long-Term Plan, Council adopted its Financial Strategy which includes limits on rates and debt. The LTP also forecast the calculated rates for 3 waters and all other activities for each of the ten years of the Plan.

The following two tables set out the proposed variances from the LTP with regards to the Financial Strategy and the overall financial position of Council, and the proposed calculated rate for the general and targeted rates compared to what was forecast in the LTP.

Table 1 – Variance to Financial Strategy

	LTP Year 3	Draft Annual Plan 26/27
Annual Total Rates Increase	5.1%	5.92%
Three Waters rate increase limit	11%	11%
Three Waters rate increase forecast	10%	11%
All other activities rate increase limit	5%	5%
All other activities rate increase forecast	2%	3.2%
Requirement for Rates Revenue (including targeted rates from metered water charges to large industry and extraordinary water users)	\$65,415,655	\$65,931,641
Total Borrowing	\$147,776,558	\$144,841,337
Debt to Revenue ratio (overall)	169%	164%
Debt to Revenue ratio (three waters)	399%	384%
Capital Spend	\$45,251,694	\$71,468,658
Operational spend	\$95,306,331	\$99,311,888

Table 2 – Comparing proposed rate income with forecast rate income for different rating types

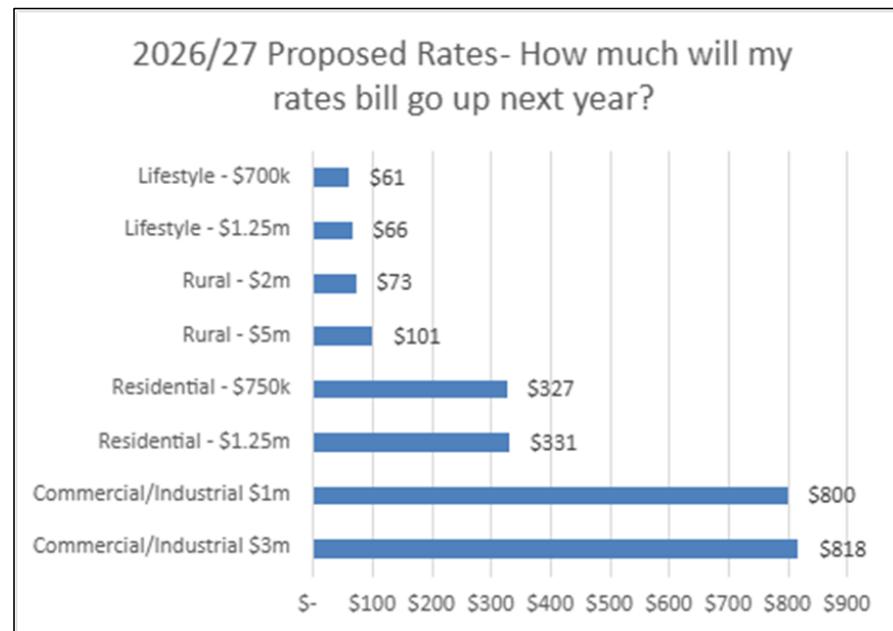
	General and targeted rate income compared to current year					Reason for the change in rates to Y3 LTP?
	Actual 2025/26	LTP Forecast 2026/27	Draft AP Proposed 2026/27	Variance LTP v DAP		
General Rate	\$37,558,142	\$38,075,358	\$38,785,922	1.9%		Key changes include increased employee costs (noting that an organisation structure review was completed post-adoption of the LTP resulting in additional FTEs to meet resourcing pressures). Other increased costs include depreciation, insurance and software, and decreased revenue compared to the LTP, particularly fees and charges from pools and spas.
Water	\$7,961,378	\$7,742,942	\$8,265,164	6.7%		Increased compliance and monitoring costs,

General and targeted rate income compared to current year					
	Actual 2025/26	LTP Forecast 2026/27	Draft AP Proposed 2026/27	Variance LTP v DAP	Reason for the change in rates to Y3 LTP?
					additional staff to meet increasing requirements, estimated costs of Local Water Done well and depreciation.
Metered water	\$3,850,560	\$4,034,037	\$3,997,740	-0.9%	No major change to the LTP.
Wastewater	\$9,038,894	\$11,682,685	\$10,980,358	-6%	Reduction of costs includes interest due to delay in the Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade, and the delay in operational desludging work planned. This is offset to a degree by increased depreciation, and greater recovery of fees and charges from trade waste agreements.
Kerbside Collection	\$2,757,882	\$2,766,260	\$2,808,715	1.5%	Increased contract costs.
Stormwater	\$1,009,056	\$1,036,011	\$1,020,356	-1.5%	Change largely due to increased unfunded depreciation.

The graphs below show the impact of the proposed 2026/27 rates increase on different property types, by dollar value and percentage. The table following then compares the total rates bill for the proposed 2026/27 rates increase with that forecast in the LTP for year 3, in relation to the indicator properties.

Graphs – Impact of proposed 2026/27 rates increases on different property types

a) Increase in rates bill



b) Percentage increase in rates

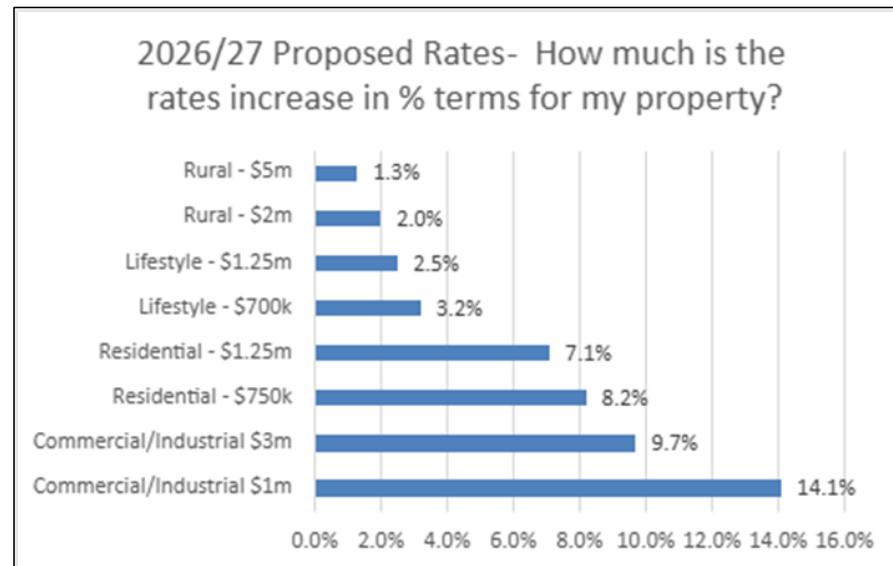
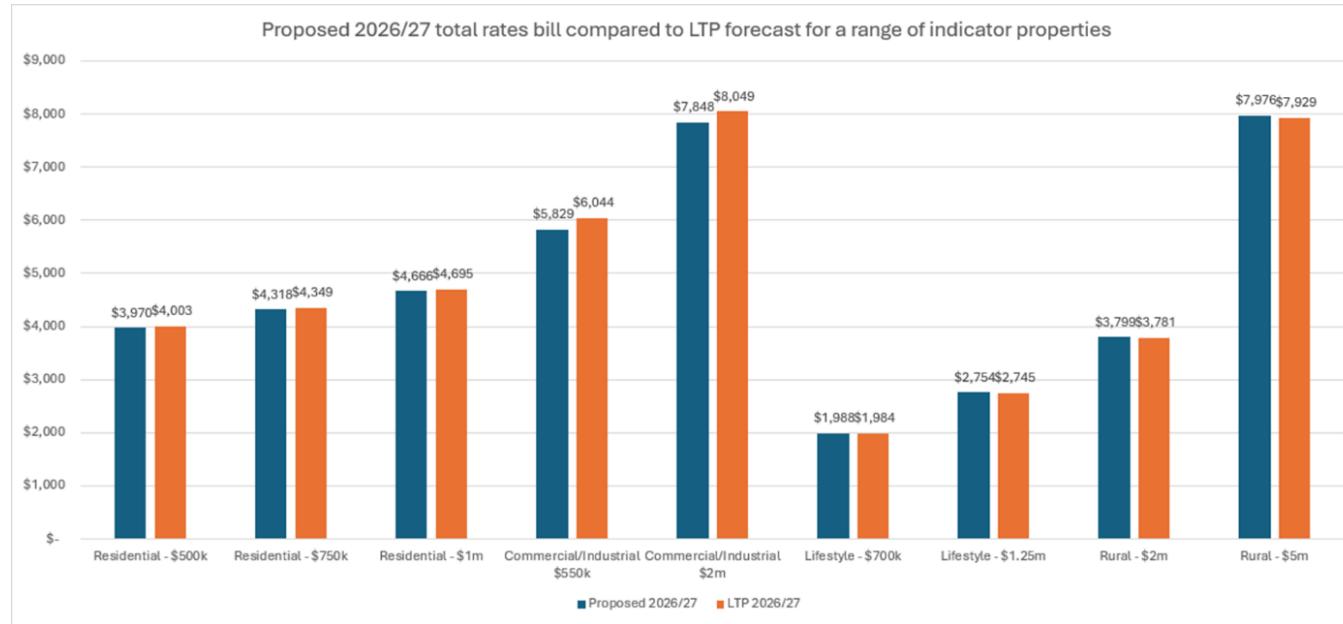


Table 3 - Comparison between proposed 2026/27 total rates bill compared to LTP forecast for a range of indicator properties



Capital Works Programme

There are no significant or material changes to the 2026/27 capital works programme that was included in the LTP. The Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade will be delivered in the 2026/27 year, after being deferred in the prior year. Te Aroha Destination Playground will proceed as planned. The Resource Recovery Centre will retain \$100,000 capital in 2026/27 to continue with planning and design, with the other \$400,000 deferred until 2027/28. Te Aroha Library will proceed with investigations in 2026/27 with delivery of the project moved out to 2027/28. Te Aroha Spa will be deferred while further investigations take place.

Part three: Other consultation considerations

Requirements for a Long-Term Plan Amendment

Under certain circumstances a Long Term Plan amendment is required as per Section 97 of the LGA. A Long-Term Plan amendment requires independent auditing by Audit NZ and also follows the specific requirements for a Long-Term Plan Consultation Document and use of the special consultative process for the consultation on the Amendment.

Staff's assessment of the draft Annual Plan 2026/27 against the criteria in Section 97 is detailed in the table below.

Decisions that can only be made as part of the LTP	Current assessment of Draft Annual Plan
A decision to alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the local authority, including a decision to commence or cease any such activity.	Not triggered. The Draft Annual Plan does not include any proposal to alter significantly the intended level of service provision.
A decision to transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the local authority.	Not triggered. The Draft Annual Plan does not include any proposals to transfer ownership or control of a strategic asset to which Section 97 applies. The LGA has been amended so that Section 97 requirements do not apply to water related activities.

On balance, it is staff's assessment that the Draft Annual Plan does not include any variances from the LTP for the 2026/27 financial year that would trigger the need for an LTP amendment.

Local Government Act decision making

All Council decisions 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.

Staff comments in respect to the criteria in Sections 76 to 82 as they pertain to the draft Annual Plan 2026/27 are detailed in the table below.

LGA 2002 decision making requirements	Staff/officer comment
Section 77 – Council needs to give consideration to the reasonably practicable options available.	Council has options to consider to reduce the proposed rate increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing the level of capital expenditure - Reducing operating expenditure - Reducing level of service (may trigger LTP Amendment)
Section 78 – requires consideration of the views of Interested/affected people	Council needs to consider the view of interested and affected people. This does not in itself require consultation, but Council needs to be satisfied that it has considered community views and preferences. This consideration is addressed in the assessment against the Significance and Engagement Policy above.
Section 79 – how to achieve compliance with sections 77 and 78 is in proportion to the significance of the issue	This consideration is addressed in the assessment against the Significance and Engagement Policy above.
Section 80 – Identification of inconsistent decisions from any Council plan or policy	If a Council decision is “significantly inconsistent” with, or is anticipated to have consequences that will be significantly inconsistent with, any adopted policy or plan of Council it must clearly identify - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the inconsistency; and - the reasons for the inconsistency; and - any intention of the Council to amend the policy or plan to accommodate the decision. This could be addressed through Annual Plan consultation (if Council opts to consult) or by review of the LTP in 2027. This consideration is addressed in the assessment against the Significance and Engagement Policy above. No decisions have been identified that are significantly inconsistent with any Council plan or policy.
Section 82 – this sets out principles of consultation.	Council needs to identify what consultation, if any, is to occur. If Annual Plan consultation proceeds (i.e. Council considers there is a significant or material difference from the LTP) it will need to adhere to the broader principles of consultation and the specific clauses for the Annual Plan consultation (S82A and S95A) related to the Consultation Document. This consideration is addressed in the assessment against the Significance and Engagement Policy above.

On balance, it is staff's assessment that the decision-making requirements for the Draft Annual Plan have been adhered to.

Conclusion

The Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 does not include significant or material differences when compared to what was forecast in the LTP.

On balance, the staff recommendation is that Annual Plan consultation is not required. It is recommended that an Information campaign is undertaken, and that a communications plan be developed on this basis.

Appendix 1 – Definitions and Legislative Requirements

Definitions

Local Government Act 2002

Significant

Significant, in relation to any issue, proposal, decision, or other matter, means that the issue, proposal, decision, or other matter has a high degree of significance. [LGA Section 5]

Material

For the purposes of this section, a difference, variation, or departure is material if it could, itself or in conjunction with other differences, influence the decisions or assessments of those reading or responding to the consultation document. [LGA Section 95A]

Annual Plan Consultation requirements

Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002 says that if the proposed Annual Plan does not include significant or material differences from the content of the LTP for the financial year to which the proposed Annual Plan relates then Council does not need to consult.

If Council determines there are significant or material differences from the content of the LTP then it must produce a Consultation Document. The Consultation Document must explain identified differences, if any, between the proposed Annual Plan and what is described in the LTP.

This could include;

- an explanation of any significant or material variations from the financial statements or the funding impact statement;
- a description of significant new spending proposals, the costs associated with those proposals, and how these costs will be met;
- an explanation of any proposal to substantially delay, or not proceed with, a significant project, and the financial and service delivery implications of the proposal;

If Council does consult it must consult in a manner that gives effect to the requirements of section 82 which are the principles of consultation.

The special consultative procedure (section 83) is not required.

Decisions inconsistent with Long Term Plan

Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2002 also requires that if a decision of Council is significantly inconsistent with, or is anticipated to have consequences that will be significantly inconsistent with, any policy adopted by Council or any plan required by this Act or any other enactment, Council must, when making the decision, clearly identify—

- the inconsistency; and
- the reasons for the inconsistency; and
- any intention to amend the policy or plan to accommodate the decision.

List of capex projects for LTP 2024-2034														
Activity	Sub Activity	CAPEX or Renewal	Comments	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Growth	LOS	Renewal
Land Transport	Land Transport	RENEWAL	Subsidised - Road Renewals	8,015,596	8,119,990	8,297,592	8,468,091	8,638,589	8,816,192	8,986,690	9,157,189	0%	0%	100%
Land Transport	Land Transport	CAPITAL	Local Road Improvements - Subsidised	381,959	138,999	142,039	144,958	147,877	150,917	153,835	156,754	0%	100%	0%
Land Transport	Land Transport	CAPITAL	Matamata Roading Growth Projects	1,080,350	499,327	-	802,844	325,328	-	-	-	73%	27%	0%
Land Transport	Land Transport	CAPITAL	Morrisville Roading Growth Projects	230,084	1,197,530	131,113	-	-	-	-	-	88%	12%	0%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	CAPITAL	MV rec ground development	313,751		327,783		341,254		355,005		0%	100%	0%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	RENEWAL	Waharoa Rest Area Car Park Upgrade									0%		0%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	CAPITAL	TA Domain Redevelopment									0%	100%	0%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	CAPITAL	Destination Playgrounds	1,568,756								0%	100%	0%
Community Facilities	Comm Facilities & Buildings	CAPITAL	Bulk Fund	147,463	141,000	141,000	141,000	141,000	141,000	141,000	141,000	0%	100%	0%
Community Facilities	Pools & Spas	CAPITAL	MV Pool Development			1,100,000	4,950,000	4,950,000	4,950,000			0%	100%	0%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	RENEWAL	Street Furniture Replacement	50,200	51,323	52,445	53,523	54,601	55,723	56,801	57,878	0%	0%	100%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	CAPITAL	Additional Ashes Walls and Cemetery developments	-	76,984	-	80,284	-	83,585	-	86,818	0%	100%	0%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	RENEWAL	Tracks & Track Structures renewals	20,917	21,384	21,852	22,301	22,750	23,218	23,667	24,116	0%	0%	100%
Parks and Open Spaces	Parks & Open Spaces	RENEWAL	Playground Renewals	56,475	57,738	59,001	60,213	61,426	62,688	63,901	65,113	0%	0%	100%
Community Facilities	Public Toilets	RENEWAL	Toilet Upgrades Various	125,500	128,307	131,113	133,807	136,501	139,308	142,002	144,696	0%	0%	100%
Community Facilities	Comm Facilities & Buildings	CAPITAL	Pools & Spas Development of Spas	-	5,229,186							0%	100%	0%
Community Facilities	Housing & Property	RENEWAL	TA Civic Facilities -- Library	220,000	4,180,000							0%	0%	100%
Community Facilities	Parks & Open Spaces	RENEWAL	Internal Carparking renewals	76,500	78,030	79,591	81,182	82,806	84,462	86,151	87,874	0%	0%	100%
Community Facilities	Comm Facilities & Buildings	RENEWAL	Building Renewals	522,919	534,612	546,305	557,530	568,756	580,449	591,674	602,900	0%	0%	100%
Community Facilities	Pools & Spas	RENEWAL	Pools and Spas Plant Renewals	200,000	160,384	163,891	167,259	170,627	174,135	177,502	180,870	0%	0%	100%
Community Facilities	Comm Facilities & Buildings	CAPITAL	New Matamata Sports Stadium									0%	0%	
Strategy and Engagement	Strategies & Plans	RENEWAL	IT Plant	1,587,500	1,337,500	1,287,500	1,317,500	1,387,500	1,037,500	1,487,500	1,057,500	0%	0%	100%
Waste Management	Waste Management	CAPITAL	Minor upgrades of existing Transfer Station									0%	100%	0%
Waste Management	Waste Management	CAPITAL	New Recovery Centre	100,000	2,900,000	2,500,000						0%	100%	0%

List of capex projects for LTP 2024-2034														
Activity	Sub Activity	CAPEX or Renewal	Comments	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Growth	LOS	Renewal
Stormwater	Stormwater	CAPITAL	Resource consent related districtwide stormwater treatment upgrades	-	-	327,783	-	-	348,269	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Stormwater	Stormwater	RENEWAL	Districtwide stormwater reticulation renewals	104,584	-	-	111,506	-	-	118,335	-	0%	0%	100%
Stormwater	Stormwater	CAPITAL	Morrinsville CBD stormwater upgrades	800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Stormwater	Stormwater	CAPITAL	Matamata and Te Aroha stormwater modelling and planning	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50%	50%	-
Water	Water	CAPITAL	Universal Water Metering	-	1,000,000	4,000,000	1,800,000	-	-	-	-	10%	90%	0%
Water	Water	UPGRADES	Te Aroha Water Supply Renewals and Upgrades	1,300,000	1,800,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	84%	16%
Water	Water	CAPITAL	District Wide SCADA & Telemetry Renewals & Upgrades	-	300,000	200,000	400,000	300,000	-	-	300,000	0%	60%	40%
Water	Water	CAPITAL	Matamata Water Supply Treatment Plant Renewals & Upgrades	50,000	2,350,000	3,500,000	500,000	1,500,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	-	58%	36%	5%
Water	Water	RENEWAL & CAPITAL	Water Supply Treatment Plant Renewals and Upgrades	1,732,000	2,650,000	2,350,000	2,100,000	2,000,000	2,700,000	1,700,000	1,700,000	0%	22%	78%
Water	Water	CAPITAL	Hinuera DWQAR, Rolleston intake, Water loss.	1,350,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	100%	0%
Water	Water	RENEWAL & CAPITAL	Water Supply Reticulation	3,527,000	2,100,000	2,600,000	2,100,000	4,100,000	2,600,000	2,600,000	2,600,000	22%	11%	66%
Water	Water	CAPITAL	Morrinsville Water Supply Treatment Plant Renewals & Upgrades	-	250,000	2,350,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	1,200,000	4,500,000	1,000,000	63%	37%	0%
Wastewater	Wastewater	CAPITAL	Wastewater Growth & Consent Driven Upgrades & Consent Renewals	-	-	1,000,000	500,000	-	-	-	1,500,000	17%	50%	33%
Wastewater	Wastewater	RENEWAL	Wastewater - District Wide Plant Renewals	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,600,000	0%	0%	100%
Wastewater	Wastewater	RENEWAL	Wastewater - District Wide Reticulation Network Renewals	2,369,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	0%	0%	100%
Wastewater	Wastewater	CAPITAL	Network Inflow Infiltration Reduction	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	0%	100%	0%
Wastewater	Wastewater	CAPITAL	District Sludge & Biosolids Management	2,500,000	5,800,000	6,000,000	4,500,000	1,500,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	0%	100%	0%
Wastewater	Wastewater	CAPITAL	Matamata Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	30,000,000	5,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	30%	70%	0%
Wastewater	Wastewater	CAPITAL	Morrinsville Wastewater upgrades	1,000,000	2,100,000	-	-	-	-	3,000,000	14,000,000	71%	29%	0%
Corporate Strategy		CAPITAL	Information Technology and Plant	1,587,500	1,337,500	1,287,500	1,317,500	1,387,500	1,037,500	1,487,500	1,057,500	0%	100%	0%
Library		CAPITAL	Books renew	169,000	175,000	175,000	175,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	0%	100%	0%

List of capex projects for LTP 2024-2034														
Activity	Sub Activity	CAPEX or Renewal	Comments	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Growth	LOS	Renewal
Plant		CAPITAL	Plant purchase	580,000	580,000	580,000	580,000	580,000	580,000	580,000	580,000	0%	100%	0%
Plant		CAPITAL	Electric Vehicles and Charging Stations											
Plant		CAPITAL	RTS Equipment											
Plant		CAPITAL	Survey Equipment Roading					50,000				0%	100%	0%
			TOTAL	63,867,053	54,394,794	43,451,509	40,164,499	37,226,514	31,944,946	33,431,564	38,680,208			

Row Labels	Sum of 2026/27	Sum of 2027/28	Sum of 2028/29	Sum of 2029/30	Sum of 2030/31	Sum of 2031/32	Sum of 2032/33	Sum of 2033/34
Community Facilities	1,292,382	10,451,518	2,161,900	6,030,779	6,049,690	6,069,354	1,138,330	1,157,340
Corporate Strategy	1,587,500	1,337,500	1,287,500	1,317,500	1,387,500	1,037,500	1,487,500	1,057,500
Land Transport	9,707,989	9,955,846	8,570,745	9,415,892	9,111,794	8,967,108	9,140,526	9,313,943
Library	169,000	175,000	175,000	175,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000
Parks and Open Spaces	2,010,099	207,429	461,081	216,322	480,030	225,214	499,373	233,925
Plant	580,000	580,000	580,000	580,000	630,000	580,000	580,000	580,000
Stormwater	904,584	-	327,783	111,506	-	348,269	118,335	-
Strategy and Engagement	1,587,500	1,337,500	1,287,500	1,317,500	1,387,500	1,037,500	1,487,500	1,057,500
Waste Management	100,000	2,900,000	2,500,000					
Wastewater	37,969,000	17,000,000	11,100,000	9,100,000	5,100,000	4,000,000	7,000,000	19,500,000
Water	7,959,000	10,450,000	15,000,000	11,900,000	12,900,000	9,500,000	11,800,000	5,600,000
Grand Total	63,867,053	54,394,794	43,451,509	40,164,499	37,226,514	31,944,946	33,431,564	38,680,208



Policy on Dogs & Dog Control Bylaw Review

11 February 2026 - Council Meeting



Purpose of this Agenda Item

- A summary of the review
- A couple of clarifications/questions to discuss prior to adoption of the draft documents.
- Seek Council's adoption of the draft:
 - ❖ Policy on Dogs
 - ❖ Dog Control Bylaw
 - ❖ Statement of Proposal



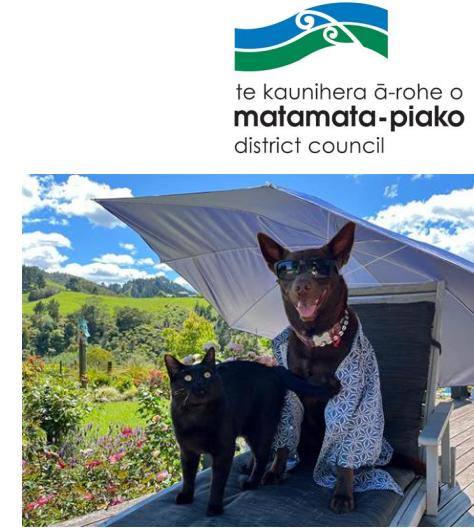
Journey so far...

Background

- Required review under LGA (Bylaw) and DCA (Policy)
- Data analysis: CRMs, Animal Control trends, dog control reports, prior feedback received.

Early Engagement

- Community input through Paw and Order survey
- Operational insights
- In-person events



Elected Member Direction

- Series of workshops to shape key policy and bylaw updates
- Draft documents prepared following feedback



Where are we now?

- ❖ Seeking approval to release the draft Policy and Bylaw for public feedback
- ❖ Further refinements can still be made after considering submissions



Menacing Dog Classifications

Automatic Dog Classification

Certain dog breeds MUST be classified as menacing under the Dog Control Act 1996, regardless of individual behaviour. These are:

- Brazilian Fila
- Dogo Argentino
- Japanese Tosa
- Perro de Presa Canario
- American Pit Bull Terrier

Discretionary Classification

Councils can classify any dog as menacing based on behaviour or incidents under section 33A at its discretion.



Obligations for Owners - must muzzle dogs in public places, and neuter menacing dogs (according to local policies).

Updates following Council Workshop

Staff have made minor amendments to the draft documents to incorporate the feedback and further clarify some areas:



Policy

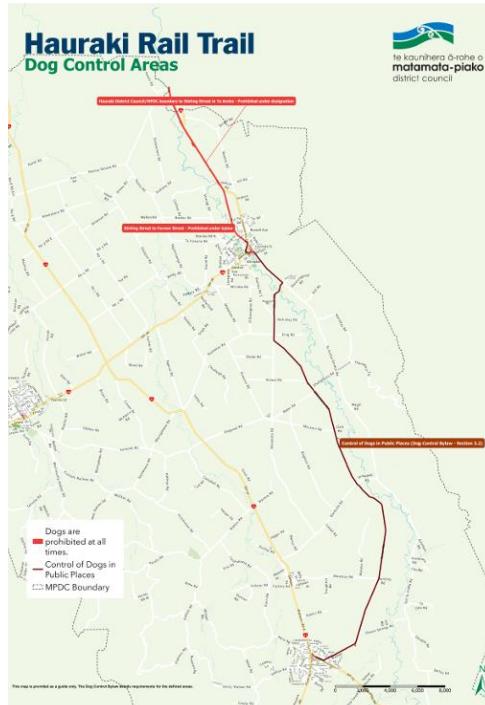
- Added action to address barking (under objective #2).
- Updated Council's policy on the neutering of menacing dogs.
- Clarified the circumstances where Council may destroy a dog.

Bylaw

- Clarified that dogs must be kept under control in a leash control area which means they are being actively managed and not causing a nuisance or a danger.
- Clarifications (in explanatory notes) about the rules along the Hauraki Rail Trail.



Hauraki Rail Trail Map



Hauraki District Council boundary to Stirling Street – **Dogs are prohibited** through a designation

Stirling Street to Farmer Street – **Dogs are prohibited** through Council's Bylaw

Area through Te Aroha CBD and Matamata CBD – **Dogs are prohibited** through Council's Bylaw

All other areas – no specific rules apart from **dogs must be under control**



Hauraki Rail Trail



What we have included in the draft Bylaw

- Dog control rules will vary along the trail: Te Aroha town areas on leash and Te Aroha to Matamata section 'under control'

But what about...

- Having one consistent dogs on leash rule for all parts of the trail within our district (excluding the dog prohibited section)?
- Would this be clearer for the community, support safety, and be easier to manage?

Decision needed: Does Council wish to retain the draft provisions in the Bylaw, or amend?



Statutory Requirements

What's been added to the Statement of Proposal

Expanded s155 LGA analysis: clearer reasoning that a bylaw is the most appropriate way, confirmation the form is appropriate, and NZBORA consistency - included in plain language

Why the recommendation needs a minor update today

To ensure that both the Council report and SoP are explicitly referenced in the resolutions.



Proposed Amended Recommendation



- 3. Council determines that in accordance with section 155(1) of the Local Government Act 2002, a Bylaw (in the form of a Dog Control Bylaw) is the most appropriate way of addressing the perceived problems, **noting that the section 155 assessment is contained in this report and in the associated Statement of Proposal.**
- 4. Council determines that the draft Dog Control Bylaw **2010 (Amended 2026)** meets the requirements of section 155 of the Local Government Act 2002, **as outlined in this report and in the associated Statement of Proposal**, in that it:
 - i. is the most appropriate form of bylaw;
 - ii. does not give rise to any implications under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.



Proposed Amended Recommendation



- Minor update required to the naming of the draft Policy and Bylaw as this review does not constitute a new bylaw, rather it is an amendment:
 - Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026)
 - Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026)





Te Kaupapahere o ngā Kurī | Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026)

DRAFT – FOR CONSULTATION

Department	Policy, Partnerships and Governance
Policy Type	External
CM Reference	TBC
Resolution Date	TBC
Policy Effective From	1 July 2026 TBC
Policy Supersedes	Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2016)
Review Frequency	Alongside Dog Control Bylaw (Not less than once every five to ten years as required by the Local Government Act 2002).
Review Date	1 July 2036 [TBC]
Engagement Required	Special Consultative Procedure (Local Government Act 2002)



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Part 1 Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

1. Background

- 1.1 Dogs are an important part of many households in the Matamata-Piako District, and most Owners take their responsibilities seriously. Dogs can provide companionship, security, and opportunities for recreation. However, when dogs are not properly cared for or controlled, they can create safety risks, cause distress, and create nuisance in the community.
- 1.2 *Council* seeks to balance the benefits of dog ownership with the community's right to enjoy *Public Places* safely. This *Policy* sets out *Council's* approach to managing dogs in a way that promotes responsible ownership, and protects people, property, and wildlife.
- 1.3 This *Policy* has been prepared in accordance with section 10 of the *Act*. In adopting this *Policy*, *Council* has had regard to:
 - a) the need to minimise danger, distress, and nuisance to the community generally; and
 - b) the need to avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to *Public Places* that are frequented by children, whether or not the children are accompanied by adults; and
 - c) the importance of enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public (including families) to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs; and
 - d) the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their Owners.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The *Act* requires all councils to adopt a policy on dogs.
- 2.2 This *Policy* provides the framework for dog management in the *District* and sets out how *Council* will fulfil its statutory duties under the *Act*.

3. Nature and Application of Bylaw

- 3.1 This *Policy* is given effect through the *Council's* *Bylaw* which establishes enforceable rules for dog management in the *District*.
- 3.2 The *Bylaw* includes provisions that:
 - prohibit dogs from specified *Public Places*;
 - require dogs to be on a *Leash* in identified areas;
 - designate *Dog Exercise Areas* where off-*Leash* activity is permitted.
- 3.3 This *Policy* should be read in conjunction with the *Act* and the *Bylaw*.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This *Policy* applies to:
 - all dogs in the *District* (whether registered or unregistered), their Owners, and any person in charge of a dog;
 - all *Public Places* and private ways within the *District* unless otherwise stated.

5. Council's Role

5.1 *Council* is responsible for implementing the *Act* and managing dog-related activities in the *District* to promote public safety, support responsible ownership, and reflect community values. This includes maintaining dog registration records, undertaking enforcement, providing education, and regularly reviewing dog control practices.

6. Owner Obligations and Responsibilities

6.1 Every *Owner* of a dog must comply with the *Act*, the *Bylaw*, and this *Policy* as well as all other applicable legislation, including the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and any rules applying to specific areas (e.g. including Department of Conservation land).

6.2 Responsible dog ownership includes:

- registering dogs annually;
- keeping dogs under control at all times;
- preventing nuisance or danger to people, animals or property;
- removing dog faeces from any location outside the *Owner's* property, including all *Public Places*;
- respecting *Prohibited Areas* and *Leash* control requirements;
- ensuring dogs receive appropriate care, including adequate food, water, shelter, exercise, and veterinary attention;
- meeting identification (e.g., microchipping) and *Neutering* requirements where applicable; and
- Complying with any limits on the number of dogs permitted under the *Council's* *Bylaw*.

7. Cultural Context

7.1 *Council* acknowledges the cultural importance of kurī (dogs) to Māori communities. Kurī have traditionally been companions, guardians, and hunting partners, and are part of Māori stories and traditions.

7.2 *Council* will seek to reflect this connection in its approach to dog management, while working with tangata whenua to ensure practices are respectful and consider tikanga (customs) and culturally significant places (wāhi tapu).

7.3 *Council* acknowledges that areas of cultural significance to Māori, including wāhi tapu, may have their own tikanga and access protocols. The *Owner* or any person in charge of any dog are expected to comply with any rules and avoid taking dogs into such areas unless expressly permitted.

8. Definitions

8.1 For the purposes of this *Policy*, the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
<i>Act</i>	means the Dog Control Act 1996.
<i>Bylaw</i>	means the Matamata-Piako District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026).
<i>Council</i>	means the governing body of the Matamata-Piako District Council and includes any Person delegated to act on its behalf.
<i>Dangerous Dog</i>	means any dog classified as <i>Dangerous</i> under the <i>Act</i> .
<i>District</i>	means the <i>District</i> within the jurisdiction and under the control of the <i>Council</i> .
<i>Dog Exercise Area</i>	means a designated ¹ area identified by <i>Council</i> where dogs may be exercised off- <i>Leash</i> , provided that the <i>Owner</i> or the person in charge remains present and the dog is kept <i>Under Control</i> at all times.
<i>Leash</i>	means a length of cord, chain, or other material that can be attached to a dog at one end and securely held by a <i>Person</i> at the other end, and includes retractable <i>Leashes</i> .
<i>Leash Control Area</i>	means an area identified by <i>Council</i> where dogs must be kept on a <i>Leash</i> at all times.
<i>Menacing Dog</i>	means any dog classified as <i>Menacing</i> under the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Neuter/Neutered</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Owner</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Park</i>	means land owned or controlled by the <i>Council</i> that is acquired or used principally for community, recreational, environmental, cultural, or spiritual purposes that is not held as a <i>Reserve</i> under the Reserves Act 1977.
<i>Policy</i>	means the Matamata-Piako District Council Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026) (this document).
<i>Prohibited Area</i>	means an area where dogs are not permitted as specified in the <i>Bylaw</i> .
<i>Public Place</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Reserve</i>	means the same as in section 2(1) of the Reserves Act 1977.
<i>Under Control</i>	means that the dog is not causing a nuisance, distress, danger, injury, to any person, domestic animal, stock, poultry or protected wildlife, or causing any property damage and; the <i>Owner</i> or the person in charge of a dog has the dog under continuous surveillance and is able to obtain an immediate and desired response from the dog by use of a <i>Leash</i> , voice commands, hand signals, whistles, or other effective means.

¹ For clarity, designate means to formally identify an area via a bylaw as a dog exercise area in which dogs may be exercised at large, in accordance with the *Act*. Designation under the *Bylaw* relates solely to the management of dog access and is separate from designations under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Part 2 Ngā Whāinga o te Kaupapahere | Policy Objectives

9. Objectives

9.1 The objectives of this *Policy* set out what *Council* seeks to achieve in managing dogs within the *District*. They provide clear direction for promoting public safety, responsible dog ownership, and reducing risks such as attacks, nuisance and hygiene issues. These objectives guide decision-making, enforcement, and education initiatives under this *Policy* and the *Bylaw*.

9.2 The following table outlines the objectives – representing the outcomes *Council* seeks to achieve, and the policies that establish the approach for achieving these objectives.

Objective (Outcomes Sought)		Policies (Actions to Achieve the Objectives)	
1. Promote responsible dog ownership across the <i>District</i> .	1.1	Promote available education programmes to enhance responsible dog ownership, improve community awareness, and the prevention of dog attacks.	
	1.2	Use media campaigns to raise awareness about: a) dog registration requirements; b) <i>Council's</i> Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw; c) Owner responsibilities under the <i>Act</i> ; and d) the use of enforcement tools, including infringement notices.	
	1.3	Encourage Owners to attend an approved dog training course where available.	
	1.4	Encourage eligible Owners to apply for the <i>Council's</i> Responsible Owner Rebate.	
2. Minimise the danger, distress and nuisance caused by dogs to the community.	2.1	Require dogs in <i>Public Places</i> to be kept <i>Under Control</i> at all times.	
	2.2	Require dogs in to be on a <i>Leash</i> at all times in specified <i>Leash Control Areas</i> .	
	2.3	Prohibit dogs in specified areas under the <i>Bylaw</i> based on: a) the intensity, type and frequency of public use; b) any identified health and safety risks – especially for vulnerable groups including children, older people, and people with disabilities; c) any ecological values identified; d) the expectations, experiences and feedback of <i>Park/Reserve</i> users; and e) consideration of the <i>Reserve</i> status under the Reserves Act 1977.	
	2.4	Address noise-related nuisance, including persistent or excessive barking through education and support for Owners, and where necessary, using the enforcement powers provided in the <i>Act</i> (such as barking abatement notices and other compliance actions).	
	2.5	Follow an enforcement approach consistent with <i>Council's</i> Enforcement Policy that emphasises compliance with the <i>Act</i> and the <i>Bylaw</i> by prioritising education and support for	

Objective (Outcomes Sought)		Policies (Actions to Achieve the Objectives)	
			Owners, while retaining statutory powers to issue infringement notices and to seize and impound dogs when necessary.
3. Enable public confidence in Public Places.	3.1	Support safe and accessible <i>Public Places</i> by requiring effective dog control and restricting access where necessary.	
			Ensure <i>Prohibited Areas</i> , <i>Leash Control Areas</i> , and designated <i>Dog Exercise Areas</i> are clearly communicated and identifiable, including (but not limited to) signage, maps, and other appropriate communication tools.
4. Maintain the amenity and hygiene of Public Places.	4.1	Require the <i>Owner</i> or any person in charge of any dog to remove any faeces deposited by that dog from any location outside their property, including <i>Parks</i> , footpaths, <i>Public Places</i> , and private property.	
			Encourage the <i>Owner</i> or any person in charge of any a dog to carry dog waste bags and dispose of them properly.
5. Provide Dog Exercise Areas to enable opportunities for dogs and their Owners to meet exercise and recreational needs.	5.1	Designate <i>Dog Exercise Areas</i> where dogs can be exercised off-Leash provided that the <i>Owner</i> or any person in charge of any dog remains present and keeps the dog Under Control.	
			Provide <i>Dog Exercise Areas</i> that are well-maintained, and fenced where appropriate.
6. Ensure sustainable funding for dog control activities.	6.1	Fees and charges will be reviewed periodically and set by <i>Council</i> resolution, in compliance with <i>Council's Revenue and Financing Policy</i> . <i>Council</i> will consult with the community to enable feedback prior to adoption.	
			Levels of service will be outlined in the Long Term Plan.
			Dog registration fees, infringements, and any fines imposed will be allocated to the funding of dog control activities.

Part 3 Te pou tarāwaho o te Kaupapahere | Policy Framework

10. Regulation and Control of Dogs

10.1 Control of Dogs

10.1.1 The *Bylaw* outlines the following requirements to support responsible dog management:

- a) Dogs must not roam at large or gain uncontrolled access to private property, *Public Places* or private ways;
- b) Dogs must be kept on a *Leash* in all urban areas (apart from any areas designated as *Dog Exercise Areas*). The person holding the *Leash* must be capable of physically restraining the dog at all times.
- c) The *Owner* or any person in charge of any dog must remove and dispose of any faeces deposited by that dog from any location outside their property, including *Parks*, footpaths, *Public Places*, and private property.

10.2 Dog Access

10.2.1 The areas subject to dog access rules are identified in Schedules 1–3 of the *Bylaw*, which specify:

- **Prohibited Areas** – dogs are not permitted in these areas unless an exemption applies;
- **Leash Control Areas** – dogs must be on-*Leash* at all times, and the *Owner* or any person in charge of any dog must be capable of physically restraining the dog.
- **Dog Exercise Areas** – dogs may be off-*Leash* but must remain *Under Control* at all times. This means the dog is continuously supervised, responds immediately to the *Owner* or any person in charge of any dog, and does not cause nuisance, danger, injury, or damage.

10.2.2 Any *Public Places* not listed as *Prohibited Areas*, *Leash Control Areas*, or *Dog Exercise Areas* are considered general access areas where dogs are permitted, provided they remain *Under Control*.

10.2.3 *Prohibited Areas*, *Leash Control Areas* and designated *Dog Exercise Areas* will be clearly communicated and identifiable, including (but not limited to) signage, maps, and other appropriate communication tools.

10.3 Controlled Dog Areas and Open Dog Areas

10.3.1 There is no land within the *District* that is included in a controlled dog area or open dog area under section 26ZS of the Conservation Act 1987, nor any land that is a national park constituted under the National Parks Act 1980; or part of Te Urewera, as defined in section 7 of the Te Urewera Act 2014.

11. Dangerous and Menacing Dogs

11.1 Under the *Act*, the *Council* may classify dogs as *Dangerous* or *Menacing*, either by mandatory designation (e.g., specific breeds) or at the *Council*'s discretion.

11.2 Dogs may be classified based on reasons such as attacking a person or animal, rushing or behaving in a threatening manner, showing repeated uncontrolled or aggressive behaviour, or where the *Owner* has been convicted of an offence involving the dog. These classifications are behaviour-based and support public safety and responsible dog ownership.

11.3 Once a dog is classified, *Owners* must strictly comply with additional obligations (e.g. confinement, muzzling requirements).

- 11.4 All dogs classified as a *Dangerous Dog* must be *Neutered*, including those previously classified by another territorial authority and later registered in the Matamata-Piako District.
- 11.5 Dogs registered within the *District* and classified as *Menacing* must be *Neutered*. *Council* may provide exemptions to this in certain circumstances. For example:
 - where Animal Control Officers have considered the seriousness of the incident leading to classification; and
 - the *Owner's* willingness to take proactive steps (such as voluntarily *Neutering* the dog), and
 - the support available to enable compliance (for example, access to *Neutering* vouchers or financial assistance); and
 - whether appropriate measures are in place to prevent the dog from causing further harm, such as secure fencing, containment, use of a run, proof of prior *Neutering*, or owner-initiated surrender where appropriate.
- 11.6 Where a dog has been classified as *Menacing* by another territorial authority, the same *Neutering* requirements and exemption criteria set out in this *Policy* apply when the dog is registered within the *District*.

12. Owner Classification

- 12.1 The *Act* allows *Council* to classify *Owners* as probationary *Owners* or disqualify people from owning a dog where an offence has been committed against the *Act* or any other dog-related *Act*. These classifications will be applied at the discretion of *Council*, except where classification is mandatory under the *Act*.

13. Disqualified Owners

- 13.1 *Owners* will be disqualified from owning a dog if they have been convicted of an offence against the *Act* or any other dog-related *Act*, or if they have committed three or more infringement offences within a continuous period of two years.
- 13.2 Unless there are unusual circumstances in any particular case, the disqualified *Owner* classification will apply for a period of five years.
- 13.3 *Council* may decide not to disqualify an *Owner* if it is satisfied that the circumstances of the offence mean disqualification is not justified, in which case it will classify the person as a probationary *Owner*.

14. Probationary Owners

- 14.1 A person may be classified as a probationary *Owner* if they have been convicted of an offence against the *Act* or any other dog-related *Act*, or if they have committed three or more infringement offences within a continuous period of two years.
- 14.2 *Council* may classify a person as a probationary *Owner* if it is satisfied that the circumstances of the offence so not warrant disqualification as an *Owner*.
- 14.3 Unless there are unusual circumstances in any particular case, the probationary *Owner* classification will apply for a period of two years.

15. Destruction of Dogs

15.1 Under the *Act*, destruction of a dog may be ordered by the District Court following serious incidents such as attacks, rushing, or worrying stock.

15.2 Council may destroy a dog only in situations where a dog is impounded, remains unclaimed after the statutory period, or is surrendered. Where a dog is impounded, Council will take reasonable steps to return the dog to its Owner or identify appropriate re-homing options.

16. Funding

16.1 Dog registration fees will be set to reflect the actual costs associated with the management of dogs and in compliance with *Council's Revenue and Financing Policy*.

16.2 Fines and infringement fees for dog control offences will be credited to the dog control account.

16.3 *Council* operates a voluntary Responsible Owner's Rebate scheme that incentivises responsible dog ownership by offering reduced registration fees to eligible Owners.

16.4 Owners are automatically eligible for reduced dog registration fees if:

- they have not been the subject of justified complaints and have not been prosecuted for dog control offences within the previous registration year; and
- they have not had dogs impounded within the previous registration year; and
- they have not kept an unregistered dog within the previous registration year.

16.5 Dog registration fees paid by Owners of *Dangerous Dogs* will be 50% above the normal rate.

Part 4 Te Whakahaere i te Kaupapahere | Administration of Policy

17. Enforcement

- 17.1 The *Act* and the *Bylaw* provides for the enforcement of matters outlined in this *Policy*.
- 17.2 *Council* will enforce the provisions of the *Act* and the *Bylaw* to protect public safety, maintain amenity, and promote responsible dog ownership.
- 17.3 *Council* will apply a fair, proportionate, and risk-based enforcement approach consistent with its Enforcement Policy that prioritises education and voluntary compliance, escalating to formal enforcement where necessary to address serious or repeated breaches.
- 17.4 Education will be the first step in achieving compliance where appropriate, but immediate action will be taken where there is risk to public safety, animals, or property.
- 17.5 Unless immediate action is required for safety reasons or continuous non-compliance, enforcement will generally follow a staged process: education and advice, warning, infringement notice, impounding or seizure, and prosecution for serious or persistent non-compliance.
- 17.6 Infringement notices will be issued under the *Act* at the discretion of *Council* for offences listed in Schedule 1 of the *Act*.
- 17.7 Unless there are unusual circumstances in any particular case, infringement notices will not be waived.
- 17.8 *Council* retains all statutory powers under the *Act* and may issue warnings, infringement notices, seize and impound dogs, classify dogs as *Menacing* or *Dangerous*, classify Owners as probationary or disqualified, and prosecute for serious offences.
- 17.9 The *Act* and the *Bylaw* will generally be enforced by *Council*'s Animal Control Officers.

18. Monitoring and Review

- 18.1 *Council* will monitor this *Policy* annually using data from the section 10A annual report as required by the *Act* (e.g., number of complaints by category and location, enforcement activity, and registration trends). The section 10A report will be publicly notified and published each year and used to identify trends and operational improvements.
- 18.2 *Council* will formally review this *Policy* at least once every 10 years consistent with the *Bylaw*. An interim review may be initiated where annual monitoring identifies a material adverse trend (e.g., a sustained increase in complaints in a specific location).

Rārangi 1 - Ngā Aratohu o te kōmakatanga Kurī | Schedule 1 – Dog Classification Guidelines²

Scale	Attack Circumstances	Injury	Victim Impact	Action Taken
1.	Victim ³ rushed at, no physical contact made. Dog aggressive and menacing.	No injury to victim.	Low	Verbal/written warning
			High	Written warning
2.	Victim rushed at, physical contact made. Dog aggressive and menacing.	Minor or no bite marks to victim, bruising, minor laceration. There may be bite marks and swelling to bite area.	Low	Written warning
			High	Written warning Menacing dog classification
3.	Victim rushed at, physical contact made. Dog aggressive and dangerous.	Injury to victim, bite marks, laceration and swelling.	Low	Dangerous Dog classification
			High	Dangerous dog classification Possible prosecution
4.	Victim attacked, physical contact made. Dog very aggressive and dangerous.	Limited injury to victim that required medical care.	High	Dangerous dog classification Possible prosecution
5.	Victim attacked, physical contact made. Dog very aggressive and dangerous.	Limited injury to victim that required surgery, serious lacerations requiring medical intervention.	High	Dangerous dog classification Prosecution
6.	Victim attacked, physical contact made. Dog very aggressive and dangerous.	Severe injury to victim that required hospitalisation.	High	Prosecution

² The above table shows examples of the types of attack possible. Not all factors may or need to be present or observed for a classification to be achieved. An Attack Rating Report may be used to assist animal control staff with determining the above classifications and the action required to be taken.

³ Victim refers to any individual - human or animal - who is the target of the dog's aggressive or menacing behaviour. This may include:

- a person;
- another dog;
- livestock or other domestic animals;
- wildlife.



Ture ā-Rohe mō Te Whakahaere Kurī | Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026)

DRAFT – FOR CONSULTATION

Department	Policy, Partnerships and Governance
Policy Type	External
CM Reference	[TBC]
Resolution Date	[TBC]
Bylaw Effective From	1 July 2026 [TBC]
Bylaw Supersedes	Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2016)
Review Frequency	Not less than once every five to ten years as required by the Local Government Act 2002.
Review Date	1 July 2036 [TBC]
Engagement Required	Must meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002, which may involve the Special Consultative Procedure or other consultation in accordance with section 82.



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Part 1 Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this *Bylaw* is to:

- promote responsible dog ownership and protect the community's safety and enjoyment of *Public Places*. It aims to balance the benefits of dog ownership against the need to ensure that the danger, distress, and *Nuisance* of dogs and dog behaviour to the community is minimised and;
- give effect to the *Council's* Policy on Dogs adopted under section 10 of the *Act*.

2. Title and Commencement

2.1 This *Bylaw* is the Matamata-Piako District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026).

2.2 This *Bylaw* comes into force on **1 July 2026**.

3. Review and Revocation

3.1 This *Bylaw* is a review and amendment of the Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2016), which formed part of the Matamata-Piako District Council Consolidated Bylaw 2008.

3.2 On commencement, this *Bylaw* revokes the Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2016).

3.3 *Council* will review this *Bylaw* in accordance with applicable legislation.

4. Scope

4.1 This *Bylaw* applies to:

- all dogs in the *District* (whether registered or unregistered), their *Owners*, and any *Person in Charge* of a dog; and
- all *Public Places* and *Private ways* within the *District* unless otherwise stated.

4.2 This *Bylaw* applies alongside other rules that may govern dog access, including:

- Public conservation land administered by the Department of Conservation, which may have separate requirements; and
- areas of cultural significance to Māori, including wāhi tapu where tikanga (customs) and access protocols may apply; and
- Privately-owned land, where other applicable rules or permissions may govern access.

Explanatory notes:

Council's District Plan identifies certain wāhi tapu and other culturally significant sites; however, there may also be additional areas of cultural significance identified by mana whenua or the administering authority.

The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog is expected to respect tikanga and access protocols, follow posted signs or directions from authorised personnel, and avoid taking dogs into wāhi tapu or other culturally significant areas unless expressly permitted by the relevant mana whenua or administering authority.

5. Enabling Enactments

- 5.1 This *Bylaw* is made pursuant and subject to the Local Government Act 2002, the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Reserves Act 1977 as applicable.
- 5.2 Nothing in this *Bylaw* detracts from any provision of, or the necessity for compliance with, all applicable Acts, regulations, other *Bylaws*, or the Matamata-Piako District Council District Plan.
- 5.3 For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this *Bylaw* limits the *Council's* powers under the *Act* or any other applicable enactment.

6. List of Schedules

- 6.1 The following schedules are adopted and form part of this *Bylaw*:

Schedule 1	Prohibited Areas
Schedule 2	Leash Control Areas
Schedule 3	Dog Exercise Areas
Schedule 4	Maps

7. Explanatory Notes

- 7.1 Text headed 'Explanatory notes' in this *Bylaw* is provided for information purposes only, and:
 - a) does not form part of this *Bylaw*; and
 - b) cannot be considered in the interpretation or application of a provision of this *Bylaw*; and
 - c) may be inserted, amended or removed without any formality.

8. Definitions

8.1 For the purposes of this *Bylaw*, unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
<i>Act</i>	means the Dog Control Act 1996.
<i>Animal Control Officer</i>	has the same meaning as dog control officer, or dog ranger in the <i>Act</i> .
<i>At Large</i>	means a dog that is free, or at liberty in a <i>Public Place</i> , without any physical restraint by a <i>Person</i> . It does not include a dog that is <i>Under Control</i> of a <i>Person</i> in a designated <i>Dog Exercise Area</i> .
<i>Bylaw</i>	means the Matamata-Piako District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) (this document).
<i>Confined/Confinement</i>	means kept within a building or securely within an enclosure on a premises, or securely tethered to an immovable fixture, such that the dog cannot escape.
<i>Council</i>	means the governing body of the Matamata-Piako District Council and includes any <i>Person</i> delegated to act on its behalf.
<i>Dangerous Dog</i>	means any dog classified as <i>Dangerous</i> under the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Disability Assist Dog</i>	means a dog certified by one of the organisations listed in Schedule 5 of the <i>Act</i> as being a dog that has been trained (or is being trained) to assist a <i>Person</i> with a disability.
<i>District</i>	means the <i>District</i> within the jurisdiction and under the control of the <i>Council</i> .
<i>Dog Exercise Area</i>	means a designated ¹ area identified by <i>Council</i> where dogs may be exercised off- <i>Leash</i> , provided that the <i>Owner</i> or the <i>Person in Charge</i> remains present and the dog is kept <i>Under Control</i> at all times.
<i>Leash</i>	means a length of cord, chain, or other material that can be attached to a dog at one end and securely held by a <i>Person</i> at the other end, and includes retractable <i>Leashes</i> .
<i>Leash Control Area</i>	means an area identified by <i>Council</i> where dogs must be kept on a <i>Leash</i> at all times.
<i>Menacing Dog</i>	means any dog classified as <i>Menacing</i> under the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Neuter/Neutered</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Nuisance</i>	means any unreasonable interference with a <i>Person</i> or property, and includes a statutory <i>Nuisance</i> as defined in section 29 of the Health Act 1956.
<i>Owner</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Park</i>	means land owned or controlled by the <i>Council</i> that is acquired or used principally for community, recreational, environmental,

¹ For clarity, designate means to formally identify an area via a bylaw as a dog exercise area in which dogs may be exercised at large, in accordance with the Act. Designation under this Bylaw relates solely to the management of dog access and is separate from designations under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Term	Definition
	cultural, or spiritual purposes that is not held as a <i>Reserve</i> under the Reserves Act 1977.
<i>Person</i>	means a natural <i>Person</i> and includes a corporation sole, a body corporate, and an unincorporated body.
<i>Person in Charge</i>	means a <i>Person</i> (other than the <i>Owner</i>) who has possession, custody, or control of a dog at the relevant time.
<i>Play area</i>	means an outdoor area intended for play activities that includes play equipment or surfaces intended for play, such as playgrounds, skate parks, obstacle courses and the like.
<i>Private way</i>	has the same meaning as defined in section 315(1) of the Local Government Act 1974.
<i>Prohibited Area</i>	means an area where dogs are not permitted as specified in this <i>Bylaw</i> .
<i>Public Place</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .
<i>Reserve</i>	means the same as in section 2(1) of the Reserves Act 1977.
<i>Under Control</i>	means that the dog is not causing a <i>Nuisance</i> , distress, danger, injury, to any <i>Person</i> , domestic animal, stock, poultry or protected wildlife, or causing any property damage and; the <i>Person in Charge</i> of a dog has the dog under continuous surveillance and is able to obtain an immediate and desired response from the dog by use of a <i>Leash</i> , voice commands, hand signals, whistles, or other effective means.
<i>Urban Area</i>	includes: a) all areas zoned as Residential, or Business, under the Matamata-Piako District Plan; and b) all areas zoned as settlements under the Matamata-Piako District Plan; and c) any area where five or more dwellings are constructed within a 250 metre radius. Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the naming or classification of these zones changes in the District Plan, this definition will apply to the equivalent new zones;• includes any subsequent amendments to, or replacement of, the operative District Plan.
<i>Working Dog</i>	means the same as in section 2 of the <i>Act</i> .

Part 2 Te Whakahaere me te waeture o ngā Kurī | Regulation and Control of Dogs**Section A: Control Requirements****9. Confinement and General Control**

- 9.1 No Person shall keep a dog unless appropriate means are provided and used to *Confine* the dog to the Owner's property and prevent uncontrolled access to any other property, *Public Place* or *Private way*.
- 9.2 The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog, must ensure that the dog is kept *Under Control* at all times in any *Public Place* or *Private way*.
- 9.3 The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog must ensure that the dog is on a *Leash* at all times in the *Urban Area* and in any *Leash Control Area*.
- 9.4 Even in areas where off-Leash dogs are permitted, the Owner or Person in Charge of any dog must place the dog on a *Leash* immediately if they cannot maintain the requirements of being *Under Control* as defined in this *Bylaw*.

Explanatory notes:

Dogs must be kept contained on their property, and Under Control in all Public Places. In Urban Areas and Leash Control Areas, dogs must be on a Leash at all times.

Even in locations where Leash requirements do not apply, a dog must still be Leashed if the Owner or any Person in Charge of the dog cannot maintain effective control.

For example, a dog should be on-Leash if:

- *It does not reliably respond to recall commands.*
- *It is easily distracted or prone to running up to other people or animals.*
- *It becomes excited, nervous, or reactive around wildlife, children, cyclists, or other dogs.*

10. Fouling in Public Places

- 10.1 The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog that defecates in any *Public Place*, *Private way*, or land or premises other than that occupied by the Owner must immediately remove the faeces deposited by that dog and dispose of it in an appropriate and hygienic manner.

Section B: Access Requirements**11. Prohibited Areas**

- 11.1 Dogs are prohibited from entering or remaining in any *Public Place* listed in Schedule 1 of this *Bylaw*.

12. Leash Control Areas

- 12.1 Dogs must be kept on a *Leash* at all times in a *Leash Control Area* listed in Schedule 2 of this *Bylaw*.
- 12.2 The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog must be physically capable of restraining the dog.
- 12.3 The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog must ensure that the dog is kept *Under Control* at all times in a *Leash Control Area*.

12.4 Dogs may accompany their *Owner* or any *Person in Charge* in outdoor dining areas within a *Leash Control Area*, provided that:

- the dog does not create a *Nuisance* or pose a risk to people, animals, or property; and
- the operator of the premises permits dogs in the relevant outdoor dining area.

13. Dog Exercise Areas

13.1 Dogs may be exercised off-Leash in any designated *Dog Exercise Area* listed in Schedule 3 of this *Bylaw*, provided they remain under the supervision of a *Person* who can physically restrain the dog and the dog is *Under Control* at all times.

Explanatory notes:

- Dogs are not allowed in any Public Place listed as a prohibited area in Schedule 1.*
- In Leash Control Areas (Schedule 2), dogs may enter only if they are on a Leash and controlled by someone who can physically restrain them. These areas do not override Prohibited Areas - dogs cannot enter Prohibited Areas at any time.*
- In designated Dog Exercise Areas (Schedule 3), dogs may be off-Leash, but they must be controlled by someone who can physically restrain them and remain Under Control. This means the dog is not causing Nuisance, distress, danger, injury, or damage, and the Owner or Person in Charge can constantly monitor the dog and ensure it responds immediately to their direction (whether by Leash, voice, hand signals, whistle, or other effective means).*

14. Signage

14.1 Where appropriate, *Council* will install signage to assist the public to identify areas where dogs are allowed, restricted, or prohibited.

14.2 The absence of signage does not limit, restrict, or otherwise affect the enforceability of this *Bylaw*.

Explanatory notes:

Signage is one of several tools Council may use to communicate dog access rules. Dog access areas may also be identified through maps, Council publications, digital platforms, or other appropriate communication methods. The absence, damage, or removal of signage does not alter the legal status of an area as set out in this Bylaw and its schedules.

Section C: Dog Management and Welfare Requirements

15. Duty to Avoid Nuisances

15.1 No Person shall keep a dog on any land or premise if:

- the dog creates a demonstrable *Nuisance*; or
- the dog poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others; or
- the dog rushes at or intimidates any Person lawfully on public or private land.

15.2 No Person shall cause or permit a bitch in season to enter or remain in a *Public Place* or on any land or premises other than the land or premises of the *Owner* of the dog, without the consent of the occupier or *Person* in charge of that land or premises.

15.3 No Person shall cause or permit a dog suffering from mange or other infectious diseases to enter or remain in a *Public Place* or on any land or premises, other than the land or premises of the *Owner* of the dog or a registered veterinary clinic.

15.4 Every dog described under subclause 15.2 and 15.3 shall be *Confined*, and provided with proper care and sufficient food, water and veterinary care, and adequately exercised during that period of *Confinement*.

16. Minimum Standards for Accommodation and Care

16.1 The *Owner* or any *Person in Charge* of any dog must provide:

- adequate kennelling or other housing sited to ensure adequate shade, warmth and dry conditions, and of a sufficient size to allow the dog to move freely, stretch out, stand up or recline.
 - any kennel or means of *Confinement* shall be so situated as to ensure that the dog shall not, while in its kennel or otherwise *Confined*, be within two metres of the boundary of the *Owner's* property.
- proper care and attention;
- sufficient food and water;
- adequate exercise; and
- veterinary care when required.

Explanatory notes:

The Act allows councils to classify dog Owners as either probationary or disqualified when they have committed offences under the Act or other dog-related legislation. Disqualification generally applies where more serious or repeated offending has occurred, while probationary status may be used where the circumstances do not justify disqualification. These classifications apply for set periods unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Further detail on Council's approach to applying these classifications is provided in the Council's Policy on Dogs.

17. Limit on Number of Dogs to be Kept (Urban Area)

- 17.1 No occupier of a property within the *Urban Area* shall keep or permit to be kept on each separate premises more than two dogs of a greater age than three months without obtaining a permit under this clause.
- 17.2 Every application for a permit shall be accompanied by any fee set by *Council* resolution and issued subject to such terms and conditions required to ensure that a *Nuisance* does not occur.
- 17.3 The applicant must seek the consent of the adjacent property *Owner(s)* or occupier(s) most likely to be affected by the application. Such consent may be withdrawn at any time if there is a valid reason for doing so.
- 17.4 *Council* may cancel a permit where the holder fails to comply with any of the terms or conditions.

18. Requirement to Neuter

- 18.1 If a dog has been found to be *At Large* on more than one occasion within a continuous 12-month period, *Council* may require the *Owner* to have the dog *Neutered*.
- 18.2 Within one month of receiving the requirement, the *Owner* must produce a veterinary certificate confirming that the dog has been *Neutered* or is unfit until a specified date, followed by a further certificate confirming *Neutering*.
- 18.3 The *Owner* may object in writing within 14 days and has the right to be heard. *Council* may uphold or rescind the requirement, following the consideration of evidence and relevant matters.

19. Impounding of Dogs

- 19.1 Any dog found *At Large* in any *Public Place* in breach of this *Bylaw* or on any other land or premises without the consent of the occupier, or *Person* in charge of that land or premise, may be seized by an *Animal Control Officer* and impounded.
- 19.2 The occupier or *Person* in charge of the land, premise or *Public Place* may seize the dog and deliver it into the custody of an *Animal Control Officer* for impounding.
- 19.3 Any dog impounded in accordance with this *Bylaw* shall not be released until the impounding fees set by resolution of *Council* have been paid, including the full registration fee if the dog is unregistered.
- 19.4 If a dog, impounded in accordance with this *Bylaw* is not claimed and the fees payable have not been paid within seven days after the *Owner* has received written notice in accordance with section 69 of the *Act*, that dog may be destroyed, sold or otherwise disposed of by or on behalf of the *Council*.
- 19.5 If the *Owner* of a dog so impounded is not known and cannot be identified from the dog registration label or by any other means, the *Council* may, after the expiration of seven days after the date of seizure of the dog, destroy, sell or otherwise dispose of the dog.

Explanatory notes:

Under the Act, Council can classify a dog as either Dangerous or Menacing.

A dog may be classified as Dangerous if it has attacked or seriously threatened someone, or if the owner admits it poses a risk.

A dog may be classified as Menacing if it has shown aggressive behaviour or if it belongs to one of the breeds or types listed in the Act.

Once a dog is classified, the law requires the owner to follow stricter rules, such as keeping the dog muzzled and on a leash in public, ensuring it is Neutered and microchipped, and keeping it securely contained on their property.

More detail about how Council applies these classifications and what is expected of owners is explained in Council's Policy on Dogs.

Part 3 Te Whakahaere I te Ture ā-Rohe | Administration of Bylaw

20. Fees and charges

- 20.1 The *Council* may, in accordance with applicable legislation, set fees or charges payable for any certificate, licence, approval, permit or consent form or inspection made by the *Council* under this *Bylaw*.
- 20.2 Rebates may be applied at the *Council*'s discretion.

21. Serving of Notices and Orders

- 21.1 Any notice, order or other document which is required by this *Bylaw* to be served or given or sent to any *Person* shall be deemed to have been duly served if delivered to such *Person* or left at their residence or workplace or posted to such *Person* at their last known address.

22. Offences and Penalties

- 22.1 Every *Person* who fails to comply with this *Bylaw* commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or to an infringement fee prescribed under the Local Government Act 2002.
- 22.2 Infringement offences and fees may be issued under the *Act*.
- 22.3 The *Council* may apply to the District Court under section 162 of the Local Government Act 2002 for an injunction restraining a *Person* from committing a breach of this *Bylaw*.
- 22.4 *Council* retains all statutory powers under the *Act* and may issue warnings, infringement notices, seize and impound dogs, classify dogs as *Menacing* or *Dangerous*, classify *Owners* as probationary or disqualified, and prosecute for serious offences.

Explanatory notes:

*Operational dog control powers - such as the seizing or impounding of dogs, issuing infringement notices, and enforcing classification requirements - are exercised under the *Act*. General bylaw enforcement powers are derived from the Local Government Act 2002.*

23. Enforcement

- 23.1 *Council* will apply a fair, proportionate, and risk-based enforcement approach consistent with its Enforcement Policy that prioritises education and voluntary compliance, escalating to formal enforcement where necessary to address serious or repeated breaches.
- 23.2 If, in the opinion of an *Animal Control Officer*, any dog or dogs or the keeping of any dogs is creating or likely to create a *Nuisance* or a breach of this *Bylaw*, the *Animal Control Officer* may issue a written notice requiring actions to remove the *Nuisance* or comply with this *Bylaw*.
- 23.4 Any *Person* who is issued with a written notice under subclause 23.2 of this *Bylaw* shall comply with the notice within the timeframe specified in the notice.
- 23.5 Without limiting subclauses 23.1 to 23.4, *Council* may take any enforcement action available under any relevant legislation.

24. Exemptions

- 24.1 Clauses 11 and 12 shall not apply to a *Disability Assist Dog* or to any *Working Dog* while the dog is working.
- 24.2 Clause 11 shall not apply where *Council* is satisfied that the *Owner* or any *Person in Charge* of any dog, has permitted that dog to enter or remain in a prohibited area for the purpose of attending a veterinary clinic, in which case that dog must be *Under Control*.
- 24.3 Clause 17 shall not apply to any lawfully established boarding kennel, dog day care facility, veterinary clinic or animal hospital, provided the activity is permitted on the site under the Matamata-Piako District Council District Plan or authorised by a resource consent.

This *Bylaw* was made pursuant to a resolution passed by Matamata-Piako District Council on [TBC], resolution number [TBC].

25. Record of Bylaw Review and Amendments

Activity	Date
Full statutory review undertaken and <i>Bylaw</i> approved by <i>Council</i>	[TBC]
Next review required by:	[TBC]

Part 4 Whakaritenga | Schedules

Rārangi 1 - Ngā wāhi turaki | Schedule 1 – Prohibited Areas

The Owner or any Person in Charge of any dog shall not permit that dog to enter or remain in any of the Prohibited Areas listed below except as provided for in clause 24 (Exemptions).

Area Name	Description
District-wide	
Within 15 metres of any children's <i>Play area</i> or individual item of play equipment	
Matamata	
Firth Tower Historical Reserve/Museum Site	All areas excluding the carpark and camping/campervan area.
Kowhai Street Reserve	Kowhai Street, south-western Matamata.
Morrinsville	
Thomas Park	Corner of Anderson Street and Moorhouse Street, central Morrinsville.
Te Aroha	
Section of Hauraki Rail Trail	From Stirling Street (Te Aroha) to the Matamata-Piako District Council/Hauraki District Council boundary. The Hauraki Rail Trail is defined as being the formed Hauraki Rail Trail track including any area between any fences on either side of the formed track and includes any bridges, underpasses and farm access tracks.
Kennedy Street Reserve	Kennedy Street, Te Aroha.
Farmer Street Reserve	Corner of Farmer Street and Shakespeare Street, Te Aroha

Explanatory notes:

Dog access rules apply along the Hauraki Rail Trail within the Matamata-Piako District as follows:

- Stirling Street in Te Aroha to the Hauraki District Council boundary: this section is a Dog Prohibited Area (dogs are not permitted).
- Stirling Street to Princess Street (Te Aroha): Dogs must be on-Leash.
- Te Aroha to Matamata: this section is covered by the general controls of this Bylaw (dogs must be Under Control).

Part of the Trail is managed under a designation (a designation is a planning tool that gives the organisation responsible for the Trail the authority to use and manage the land for the Trail's purposes). Because of this, our dog access rules align with and support the rules established under the designation. Outside the District, dog access rules are set by the relevant council.

Explanatory notes:

This Bylaw does not apply to land administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Dog access is governed under conservation legislation (including the Conservation Act 1987, National Parks Act 1980 and Wildlife Act 1953). Areas may be subject to restrictions, including any identified "controlled" or "open" dog areas. These restrictions are in place to protect sensitive environments and wildlife.

Owners are advised to consult with DOC before entering any DOC-administered land.

Rārangi 2 - Ngā wāhi whakahaere here | Schedule 2 – Leash Control Areas

The *Owner* or any *Person in Charge* of any dog shall not take that dog into any of the *Leash Control Areas* listed below unless the dog is controlled on a *Leash* by a *Person* capable of physically restraining the dog, except as provided for in clause 24 (Exemptions).

These areas exclude *Prohibited Areas* (Schedule 1) and *Dog Exercise Areas* (Schedule 3).

Area Name	Description
District-wide	
The <i>Urban Area</i>	Including all CBD areas in Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha.
Cemeteries	The Matamata, Maukorō, Old Morrinsville, Piako Lawn, Te Aroha and Waharoa Cemeteries.
All Parks and Reserves	Except those that have been listed as either <i>Prohibited Areas</i> (Schedule 1) or <i>Dog Exercise Areas</i> (Schedule 3).
All walking and cycling tracks managed by <i>Council</i>	Except those that have been listed as either <i>Prohibited Areas</i> (Schedule 1) or <i>Dog Exercise Areas</i> (Schedule 3).
Matamata Ward	
Waharoa (Matamata) Aerodrome	All of the area known as and occupied by the Waharoa (Matamata) Aerodrome.
Centennial Drive	From Tainui Street to Broadway, Matamata
Tom Grant Drive	From Rawhiti Avenue to Tawari Street, Matamata
Morrinsville Ward	
Te Miro Forest (Waterworks Road Reserve)	Waterworks Road, between Kiwitahi and Te Miro.
Te Aroha Ward	
Section of Hauraki Rail Trail	From Stirling Street to Princess Street, Te Aroha. The Hauraki Rail Trail is defined as being the formed Hauraki Rail Trail track including any area between any fences on either side of the formed track and includes any bridges, underpasses and farm access tracks.
The Te Aroha Domain and associated track network.	This includes Council controlled and managed tracks.

Explanatory notes:

From the date this Bylaw comes into force (following a period of public consultation), Council will trial the following changes for a period of six months:

- *CBD Areas: The previous “no dogs permitted 8.00am–6.00pm” rule will be replaced with on-Leash at all times.*
- *Hauraki Rail Trail (Stirling Street to Farmer Street): This section will change from Dog Prohibited (no dogs) to an on-Leash. Stirling Street to Princess Street will also be an on-Leash area.*

These trial changes are intended to test public suitability and identify any potential impacts (e.g., safety, Nuisance, amenity, and operational impact) before any long-term change is confirmed. Council will monitor feedback and relevant data during the trial and, at its conclusion, confirm, amend, or revoke the changes amending the Bylaw.

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Rārangi 3 - Wāhi whakaharatau kurī | Schedule 3 – Dog Exercise Areas

A dog may be exercised off-Leash in any of the following areas, provided that it is *Under Control* and the *Owner* or any *Person in Charge* is capable of physically restraining the dog.

Area Name	Description
Matamata Ward	
Furness Reserve	Off Everad Avenue, Matamata
Founders Park	Rawhiti Avenue, Matamata
Peria Road Reserve	Portion excluding memorial plantings and pathway.
Morrinsville Ward	
Murray Oaks Reserve	State Highway 26
Morrinsville Recreation Ground	Former polo fields at the Avenue Road South end of the Park - only at times when there is no organised sports activity or community event in progress.
Holmwood Park	Lower portion near the Piako River.
Te Aroha Ward	
Spur Street Esplanade	Portion near the Waihou River under the footbridge.
Reserve on Spur Street	Portion opposite the netball club and bmx track.

Rārangi 4 - Ngā Mahere I Schedule 4 – Maps

To be added following consultation.

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



Te Kaupapahere o ngā Kurī me te Ture ā-Rohe mō Te Whakahaere Kurī | Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026)

Tauākī Tūtohu | Statement of Proposal

**Hei rapu whakaaro | For Consultation - 23 February
to 19 April 2026**



Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

We're reviewing our Policy on Dogs (Policy) and Dog Control Bylaw (Bylaw) in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). As required by section 10 of the Dog Control Act 1996, we are using the special consultative procedure. Accordingly, this Statement of Proposal is prepared under section 83 of the LGA.

The **Policy on Dogs** sets the overall approach for dog management in the district and includes six objectives to guide decision-making, enforcement, and education initiatives.

The **Dog Control Bylaw** provides the enforceable rules that give effect to the Policy, such as where dogs can and can't go, leash requirements, and responsible dog ownership.

This review aims to ensure both documents are fit for purpose, reflect what we have heard from the community and from operational experience, and provide clear, practical rules for dog owners and the wider public.

Following the strong response to our Paw and Order survey, where more than 1,000 people shared their views on dog access, safety, enforcement, and dog-friendly spaces in Matamata-Piako, we have used this feedback - along with operational experience, to shape the proposed changes to the Policy and Bylaw.

These changes aim to:

- better reflect what the community told us matters most;
- respond to operational issues identified by staff;
- improve clarity and support consistent, effective enforcement;
- promote safe, accessible, and enjoyable public spaces for everyone.

The survey gave us a clear picture of community preferences, but this formal consultation is an important next step. It allows us to check back in with the community on the draft Policy and Bylaw and make sure we've interpreted your feedback correctly and struck the right balance between safety, public amenity and dog-friendly access.

We want to hear feedback from our community - do these changes that we are proposing get it right, and do they reflect what the community told us during early engagement?



Summary of Information – Draft Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw (Amended 2026)

Council is proposing changes to the Policy on Dogs and the Dog Control Bylaw to ensure they remain up-to-date, reflect community expectations, and operational insights, and provide clear and practical rules for managing dogs in the Matamata-Piako District. Both documents were last fully reviewed in 2016, and feedback from more than 1,000 participants in the Paw and Order survey has strongly informed the proposed updates.

The changes aim to improve public safety, encourage responsible dog ownership, and make rules easier for the community to understand and follow. Key proposals include allowing dogs on-leash in the Central Business Districts (CBDs) at all times, allowing dogs on parts of the Hauraki Rail Trail (on-leash), and changing some existing off-leash areas in Matamata to on-leash areas. The proposal also updates policy objectives, clarifies neutering requirements for menacing dogs, and strengthens provisions promoting responsible dog ownership. A six-month trial of the key access changes is proposed to help assess how well they work in practice.

Other options considered include keeping the current rules without amendments, refining the proposed changes after consultation, or revoking the Bylaw altogether. Council's preferred option is to adopt the amended Policy and Bylaw as proposed because it reflects community feedback received to date, addresses safety concerns and operational insights, and supports consistent, enforceable rules.

Further information, including the Statement of Proposal (this document), draft Policy and draft Bylaw, is available at mpdc.nz/letstalk and can also be viewed at any Council office or library.

Consultation is open until **19 April 2026**. Anyone interested in the proposal may provide written feedback during this period and may also ask to speak to Council at a meeting scheduled for 12/13 May 2026. Council staff will contact submitters who request to be heard to confirm speaking arrangements, with both in-person and online options available.

Ngā Take mō te Tūtohutanga | Reasons for the Proposal

Under the legislation, we're required to review the bylaw every ten years and the policy must be reviewed alongside it. These documents were last fully reviewed in 2016 (there have been minor amendments since then), and we want to ensure that they reflect the community that we live in today and the future we aspire to.

We are proposing an amendment to the existing Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw. It does not create a new bylaw. Because the bylaw is being amended rather than replaced, the statutory review period will remain at ten years in line with the Local Government Act 2002.

The current Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw are available for viewing on our website: mpdc.govt.nz/. These documents may also be viewed at any of our Council offices or libraries.

Maps showing our current dog access rules can also be found on our website: [Link to be included](#).



What are the current rules?

The current **Policy** sets out the overall approach and objectives for how the Council manages dogs in the district in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996. It provides the strategic direction and identifies seven key objectives, which are:

1. Minimise danger, distress and nuisance
2. Minimise fouling in public places
3. Provide exercise and recreation opportunities
4. Promote education and awareness
5. Encourage responsible ownership through rebates
6. Fund activities through dog-related fees
7. Recognise the significance of kūrī to Māori.

The current **Bylaw** sets rules to manage dogs in our district. These include requirements for:

Clause	Content
Dogs in public places	Requires dogs to be kept under control at all times.
Prohibited areas	Dogs are not allowed in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Within 15 metres of any playground or play equipment.• The central business districts (CBDs) of Matamata, Morrinsville, and Te Aroha between 8.00am and 6.00pm - 7 days a week.• The Hauraki Rail Trail (the area between Stirling Street and Farmer Street in Te Aroha).• Various local parks and reserves across the district.
On-leash areas	Areas where dogs must be on leash at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All urban areas (excluding designated dog exercise areas).• Prohibited areas (outside of the hours dogs are prohibited).• Waharoa (Matamata) Aerodrome.• Council cemeteries.• Te Miro Forest (Waterworks Road Reserve).• Te Aroha Domain and associated track network.• All parks not specifically listed as either Prohibited Areas or Dog Exercise Areas.• All walking and cycling tracks managed by Council, unless listed as a Dog Exercise Area or Prohibited Area.
Dog exercise areas	Dogs may be exercised off leash (however, must be under the control of a person capable of physically restraining the dog and of exercising oral and visual control). The current dog exercise areas are: Matamata <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Centennial Drive from Tainui Street to Broadway.b) Tom Grant Drive from Rawhiti Avenue to Tawari Street.c) Furness Reserve.d) Founders Park.e) Peria Road Reserve (portion excluding memorial plantings and pathway).

Clause	Content
	<p><u>Morrinsville</u></p> <p>a) Murray Oaks Reserve – State Highway 26. b) The Morrinsville Recreation Grounds Polo Field area only at times when there is no Horse or Sports Activity. c) Holmwood Park (lower portion near the Piako River).</p> <p><u>Te Aroha</u></p> <p>a) Spur Street Esplanade (portion near the Waihou River under the footbridge) b) Reserve on Spur Street (portion opposite netball club and bmx track).</p>
Minimum standards for accommodation	Dog owners must provide suitable shelter with shade, warmth, and enough space for the dog to move comfortably. The shelter must be at least two metres from the property boundary, and dogs must receive proper care, including food, water, exercise, and veterinary treatment when required.
Dog limits	A maximum of two dogs (greater than three months) allowed per property in urban areas. There are no limits in rural areas.
Fouling in public places	There are requirements to clean up dog waste in public places and on land not owned or occupied by the dog owner.
Nuisance provisions	<p>Dogs must not be kept on a property if they cause a nuisance, pose a significant risk to others' health or safety, or rush/intimidate any persons.</p> <p>A female dog in season must be kept securely on the owner's property. The dog shall be regularly exercised under control during this period of containment.</p> <p>If a dog is causing or likely to cause a nuisance or breach of the bylaw, a written notice may be issued requiring the owner to fix the issue. The owner must comply within the timeframe given.</p>
Impounding	<p>Any dog found wandering:</p> <p>a) In a public place or on any other land without the consent of the owner and/or; b) In any public place in breach of the bylaw,</p> <p>May be seized and impounded.</p> <p>Any dog impounded will not be released until all impounding fees set by Council and the full registration fee, if applicable, have been paid.</p> <p>If the dog is not claimed and fees remain unpaid within seven days of the owner receiving written notice in accordance with section 69 of the Act, the Council may sell, destroy, or otherwise dispose of the dog in such manner as it thinks fit.</p> <p>If the owner cannot be identified, the Council may do the same, seven days after the date of seizure of the dog.</p>
Offences and Penalties	Includes the legislative provisions for breaches of the Bylaw.



Here's a summary of what the community has told us so far:

As part of this review, we asked the community for their views on dogs in Matamata-Piako through the Paw and Order survey, which received over 1,000 responses. Key themes identified from the feedback received are summarised below:

- Dogs are an important part of people's lives, and many want more dog-friendly spaces.
- There is strong support for allowing dogs in more public areas, provided they are on-leash, under control, and owners pick up after their dogs;
- Mixed views on CBD access:
 - The majority of people supported dogs on-leash at all times;
 - Others prefer restrictions during peak hours;
 - Some oppose dogs in CBD areas completely.
- Safety is a priority: strong concerns about roaming dogs, aggressive behaviour, and lack of enforcement.
- Clear rules and better education and signage are needed - many people didn't know about the current rules/restrictions about where dogs can and cannot go.
- There is a desire for more and improved dog exercise areas, including fenced spaces, shade, water, and separate areas for small and large dogs.
- Feedback on the Hauraki Rail Trail indicated:
 - The majority of people wanted to allow dogs on-leash;
 - There was also opposition due to the potential safety risks for livestock and cyclists, and hygiene concerns for cyclists and other users of the trail (dog waste left behind).
- The consistent message received was that responsible ownership matters - owners should clean up after their dogs, keep them under control and prevent them from being a danger or a nuisance.

Click [here](#) to view a detailed analysis of community feedback, and how we've reflected this in the drafts.

Te mānuka e kawea ake ana | What we're proposing

We are proposing to amend both the Policy and Bylaw to bring them up to date - making them clearer, easier to understand, and better aligned with current legislation, operational needs, and the feedback the community has shared with us.

1. Proposed changes to the Policy

The proposed updates to the Policy respond directly to key themes from community engagement, particularly the desire for clearer rules, a stronger focus on responsible dog ownership, and improved safety and confidence in public places.

Key changes include:

Streamlining and structural improvements

The Policy has been simplified by adding a clear purpose statement, removing duplicated legislative content, strengthening enforcement provisions, and introducing a new monitoring and review section. Minor updates have also been made to dog classification guidelines to reflect current operational practice.

Refined Policy objectives

The objectives have been reviewed to improve clarity, strengthen their focus on outcomes, and make them easier for the community to understand. Key proposed updates include:



- Consolidating responsibilities such as education, enforcement, and owner obligations under a single objective promoting responsible dog ownership.
- Clarifying that all dogs must be under control at all times, and on-leash in specified areas.
- Refining criteria for prohibited areas to better reflect vulnerable users, reserve status, ecological considerations, and community feedback.
- Adding a new objective supporting public confidence and safety, including better education and clearer information such as signage and maps.
- Clarifying provisions on dog fouling, with expectations for waste removal in all areas outside an owner's property.
- Removing the previous statement that exclusive dog exercise areas would not be provided; the updated Policy supports maintaining and improving designated fenced exercise areas.
- Relocating and expanding the acknowledgement of kurī (dog) within the Policy, with wording developed in partnership with Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako.

Focus on responsible dog ownership

A new section clearly outlines Council's role in dog management and sets expectations for dog owners. This reflects strong community feedback that promoting responsible dog ownership should be a core focus of Council's approach.

Further clarity provided

- We've clarified neutering requirements for dogs classified as menacing and set out when exemptions may apply, including for dogs classified by other councils.
- We're also clarifying the circumstances where a dog may be destroyed:
 - The District Court can order a dog to be destroyed after serious incidents, such as attacks.
 - Council may only destroy a dog if it has been impounded, remains unclaimed after the statutory period or is surrendered, and noting Council will take reasonable efforts to return or rehome the dog.



2. Proposed changes to the Bylaw

We are proposing some significant changes to where dogs can and can't go. We've tried to find a fair balance: opening up more places for dogs to go (with controls like keeping dogs on a leash) while restricting access in other areas to protect safety or where other users need extra protection.

The proposed changes that would open up dog access include:

- **Allow dogs in the CBD areas at all times (on leash)**

Current Rule	Proposed Change
<p>Dogs are currently prohibited from the Central Business Districts (CBDs) of Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha between 8.00am and 6.00pm, seven days a week.</p> <p>Outside these hours, dogs may enter the CBDs but must be on-leash and under control.</p>	<p>Dogs would be permitted in the Central Business Districts (CBDs) of Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha at all times provided they are on a leash and under control.</p> <p>This proposed change reflects strong community support for dog-friendly spaces and aligns with practices in other towns and cities.</p>

- **Allow dogs on some parts of the Hauraki Rail Trail (on-leash)**

Current Rule	Proposed Change
<p>Dogs are currently prohibited from the area of the Hauraki Rail Trail from Stanley Street to Farmer Street (Te Aroha).</p>	<p>Dogs would be allowed on the Hauraki Rail Trail section through Te Aroha (from Stanley Street to Princess Street) provided they are on a leash and under control.</p> <p>From Te Aroha to Matamata, this section of the Hauraki Rail Trail would be subject to the general controls of the bylaw (dogs must be kept under control).</p> <p>This supports recreational opportunities for dog owners while maintaining safety for all trail users.</p> <p><i>Note: The section from Stanley Street in Te Aroha to the Hauraki District Council boundary will remain a no-dog area due to existing restrictions (a designation is in place).</i></p>

Note: If supported by community feedback, the above changes to the dog access rules in the CBDs and Hauraki Rail Trail, will be introduced as a six month trial following adoption of the final bylaw to assess any impacts and ensure it works well for our communities.



The proposed changes that would restrict dog access include:

- **Remove off-leash status for Tom Grant Drive and Centennial Drive (Matamata)**

Current Rule	Proposed Change
Tom Grant Drive and Centennial Drive in Matamata are dog exercise areas which means dogs are allowed to be exercised off-leash.	<p>These areas would be removed as areas where dogs can be exercised off-leash and would instead require dogs to be on-leash areas.</p> <p>This change is proposed to address safety concerns raised in feedback, including conflicts between dogs and other users and the proximity of a playground (in Tom Grant Drive).</p>

- **Prohibit dogs from the Farmer Street Reserve in Te Aroha**

Current Rule	Proposed Change
Dogs are not allowed within 15 metres of any children's play area or individual item of play equipment.	<p>Dogs would not be allowed at the Farmer Street Reserve in Te Aroha.</p> <p>With the planned playground upgrade, most of the park will fall within the 15-metre buffer zone where dogs are already prohibited. To provide a clear and consistent rule, we are proposing to classify the entire area as a prohibited area, similar to our approach in other areas such as Thomas Park (Morrisville), Kowhai Street Reserve (Matamata), and Kennedy Street Reserve (Te Aroha).</p> <p>The 15-metre buffer zone around playgrounds and play equipment will remain in place.</p>

What we are proposing to stay the same

Dog Limits

- We are proposing to retain the current limit of two dogs in urban areas (over three months of age) before a permit is required, with no limit applying in rural areas.

Welfare and Accommodation

- We are not proposing any changes. Dogs must be provided with suitable shelter with shade, warmth, and enough space for the dog to move comfortably. The shelter must be at least two metres from the property boundary, and dogs must receive proper care, including food, water, exercise, and veterinary treatment when required.



Option 1: Adopt the draft Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026) and Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) as proposed to the community

This is Council's preferred option

This option involves adopting the amended Policy and Bylaw with all proposed changes, including allowing dogs (on-leash) in the CBDs and on some areas of the Hauraki Rail Trail, and changing Tom Grant Drive and Centennial Drive in Matamata from off-leash to on-leash areas. These access changes would be trialled for six months to understand any impacts before a decision is made on whether to make them permanent.

Advantages +	Disadvantages -
Reflects strong community feedback from the Paw and Order survey, ensuring the Policy and Bylaw align with current expectations.	Some dog owners may perceive the removal of off leash areas as too restrictive (Tom Grant Drive and Centennial Drive in Matamata)
The major changes around dog access (e.g. CBD areas and the Hauraki Rail Trail) will undergo a six month trial period to ensure any change works for the community.	Additional signage and communication will be required to inform the public of the changes (additional cost).
Provides clarity and consistency for dog owners, the public, and Council enforcement.	Expanded dog access may increase risk of incidents in busy areas like the CBDs and the Hauraki Rail Trail.
Supports public safety by including leash requirements in high use areas.	More dogs in public spaces could lead to hygiene issues if owners do not comply with rules.
Supports inclusivity, dog owners are able to take their dogs to more places with them (for exercise and socialisation).	
The Policy objectives reflect community feedback.	
The draft Bylaw includes some further restrictions to dog access to reflect concerns raised and to support safety for all users of public places.	



Ētahi atu kōwhiringa me whakaaro ake | Other options we could consider

Option 2: Status Quo – Keep the existing Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw as is without any amendments

This option means Council would retain the current policy and bylaw in its existing form and make no changes. The current policy and bylaw would continue to apply as is and would be adopted without the proposed changes made to address identified issues, evolving community needs/preferences and operational matters.

Advantages +	Disadvantages -
Familiarity for dog owners who may be accustomed to current rules.	The existing Policy and Bylaw do not reflect the proposed updates made to reflect local issues and what the community told us.
No immediate cost to update signage or communications.	Feedback indicates that some of the current rules are not well understood, and limited awareness or enforcement may be causing ongoing frustration for the public. This lack of clarity increases the risk of non-compliance, creates ongoing challenges for enforcement, and undermines Council's ability to achieve safe, healthy, and well-managed public spaces.
The current restrictions around dogs in the CBDs and Hauraki Rail Trail may provide a sense of safety for all users of these spaces, including those who may have a fear of dogs.	Safety concerns have been identified in areas proposed for restricted access in Matamata (Tom Grant Drive and Centennial Drive). If no changes are made, this may present an ongoing risk of further incidents.

Option 3: Adopt the draft Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026) and Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) with further amendments.

This option allows Council to adopt the changes as proposed to the community, but incorporate additional refinements based on feedback received during this consultation process.

Note that further community consultation may be required if the changes are significant.

Advantages +	Disadvantages -
Allows for refinement based on feedback received during formal consultation.	May delay implementation if significant changes require additional consultation.
Provides flexibility to address further emerging issues or community suggestions.	Additional consultation would involve further costs and resources.



Option 4: Revoke the current Dog Control Bylaw and do not adopt the draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) as proposed to the community.

Under this option, Council would revoke the existing Dog Control Bylaw and choose not to adopt a new bylaw. The Policy on Dogs would remain in place because it is required by legislation under the Dog Control Act 1996. However, without a supporting bylaw, the Policy would not be implemented or enforced through legally enforceable rules. This means the objectives set out in the Policy would rely solely on voluntary compliance and national legislation (Dog Control Act 1996).

Advantages +	Disadvantages -
Removes the need for ongoing maintenance and review of a local bylaw. This may result in a cost saving by reducing administrative and enforcement costs associated with managing a bylaw.	There would be no legally enforceable rules to support the Policy, making it difficult to achieve its objectives.
May simplify the regulatory framework by relying on national legislation only.	There would be no local rules around dog access/leash requirements etc. - potentially leading to more incidents and higher risks to the community.
	May result in more complaints and less clarity for the community about dog access rules and acceptable behaviours.
	Council would lose an important enforcement tool for managing dog-related issues such as safety risks and nuisance.
	Could be perceived as a reduction in service quality and commitment to public safety and amenity.
	Leaves Council out of step with other local authorities that maintain dog control bylaws, potentially creating confusion for residents and visitors.



Ngā Whakaarotanga ā-Ture | Legal Considerations

Section 10 of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires all councils to have a Policy on Dogs. The Policy must:

- Provide for public safety and reduce nuisance caused by dogs;
- Identify areas where dogs are prohibited, allowed on-leash, or allowed off-leash;
- Specify requirements for dog exercise areas.

In order to give effect to the Policy, Council must implement a Bylaw. The Local Government Act 2002 sets out the procedure for making and reviewing bylaws. Under section 155, Council must determine whether a bylaw:

- is the most appropriate way of addressing the perceived problem;
- is the most appropriate form of the bylaw; and
- gives rise to any implications under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.

These considerations are addressed below:

Is a Bylaw the appropriate means of addressing the perceived problem?

A bylaw is considered the most appropriate mechanism for managing dog related safety, nuisance, and amenity issues in the district. Community engagement, operational experience, and complaint data show the need for clear, enforceable local rules to address:

- safety risks in high use public places;
- conflicts between dog owners and other users;
- nuisance issues such as roaming, fouling, and aggressive behaviour; and
- the need for consistent rules that support responsible dog ownership.

The Dog Control Act 1996 provides a national framework but does not provide the level of local specificity needed to manage dog access and control requirements in particular locations. Without a bylaw, Council would need to rely on education and voluntary compliance alone, which would not adequately address identified risks or community expectations. Alternative regulatory approaches - such as requiring leashing in all public places, were considered but would unnecessarily restrict off-leash exercise opportunities.

A bylaw enables Council to give effect to its Policy on Dogs, tailor dog control rules to local circumstances, provide clarity for the community, and ensure consistent enforcement. For these reasons, a bylaw remains the most appropriate way to address the identified problems.

Is the draft Bylaw the most appropriate form of Bylaw?

The draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) is considered the most appropriate form because it:

- aligns with the Policy on Dogs and the Dog Control Act 1996;
- uses a clear structure with defined terms and schedules specifying dog access requirements and rules;
- provides straightforward, place-based rules that are easy to understand;
- includes appropriate enforcement tools; and
- incorporates reasonable flexibility, including exemptions (e.g., for disability assist dogs).



The draft Bylaw is designed to be practical, accessible, and enforceable.

Is the draft Bylaw consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990?

Summary

The draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) has been assessed against the Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA). The restrictions it introduces relate to dog access and control, not to the movement of people. Any indirect effect on freedom of movement (e.g., people not being able to take a dog into certain areas) is minimal and is justified by the need to protect public safety, prevent nuisance, and manage dogs effectively.

The restrictions are:

- limited to specific higher-risk locations;
- proportionate to the identified issues;
- accompanied by alternative areas for dog exercise; and
- expressly authorised under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Procedural fairness/natural justice (Section 27 NZBORA)

The Council will administer, enforce, and decide matters under the Bylaw in accordance with the principles of natural justice in section 27 of the NZBORA, including providing affected persons with notice of issues raised, a reasonable opportunity to respond, written reasons, and access to review or appeal processes. The Dog Control Act 1996 provides specific mechanisms that give effect to these safeguards, including:

- Objections/hearings for classifications - owners may object to a menacing classification and have the right to be heard, with Council required to consider the evidence and give written reasons;
- Infringement notices and hearings - infringement notices must state the right to request a hearing and the consequences if not exercised ensuring owners can contest alleged breaches in court.

These features, together with the availability of judicial review of Council determinations, satisfy expectations of procedural fairness and align with section 27 of NZBORA.

Rights engaged

- section 18 Freedom of movement - engaged indirectly because restrictions apply to dogs, which can affect where owners can go with a dog.
- Section 19 Freedom from discrimination - potentially engaged for disabled people who rely on disability assist dogs; addressed by an express exemption in the draft Bylaw.

Is there a limit?

Yes. Dog access controls (prohibitions/on-leash areas) are limits on dog presence, with indirect effects on people's movement and participation. The drafting minimises these effects through targeted, place-based rules and by providing alternative exercise areas.

Is the limit prescribed by law?

Yes. The Dog Control Act 1996 expressly empowers territorial authorities to make bylaws controlling dog access, leashing, and exercise areas, and bylaws must be made in



accordance with the LGA. No bylaw may be made that is inconsistent with NZBORA (LGA s155(3)).

Is any limit demonstrably justified under NZBORA?

Yes. The restrictions pursue pressing objectives of public safety, nuisance reduction, and amenity protection; and are rationally connected to those aims. They impair rights no more than reasonably necessary by confining restrictions to higher risk locations and providing alternative off-leash areas; and overall effects are proportionate to the benefits. Accordingly, any indirect impact on section 18 of NZBORA is reasonable and justified in a free and democratic society.

Conclusion: With the explicit disability assist dog exemption in place and the procedural fairness features described above, the draft Bylaw is consistent with NZBORA.

This assessment will be revisited following public feedback, Council deliberations, and any resulting changes to the draft documents, with any impacts reassessed at that time.

Ētahi atu mōhiohio | More information

For more information about this proposal, and to see what else we are seeking feedback on go to mpdc.nz/letstalk

Me pēhea te tuku urupare | How to give your feedback

As part of the consultation process, we encourage everyone in the community to share their views. Feedback may be submitted in writing, and those who wish to speak to Elected Members will be offered a scheduled time to present their views, either in person or online. We also offer New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and other forms of support to make sure people can take part in a way that suits their needs. All submissions will be considered with an open mind before Councillors make their final decision.

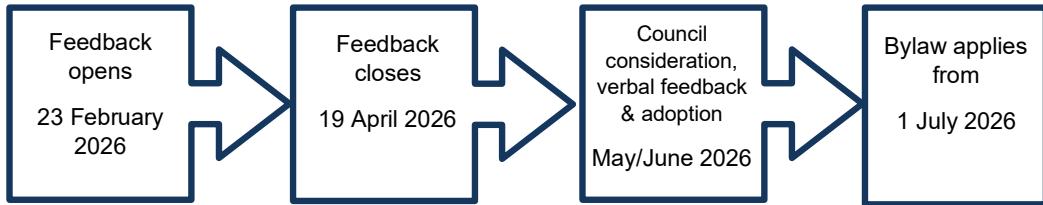
Want to speak to Council?

Anyone making a submission may also request the opportunity to speak to Council. Submitters can indicate this preference when providing their feedback. A meeting for submitters who wish to be heard will be held on 12/13 May 2026. Council staff will contact those who have requested to speak to confirm a time and provide details about the hearing process. Both in-person and online options will be available to support participation.

There are a number of ways you can provide feedback:

- ❑ Online: Go to mpdc.nz/letstalk to fill out the online form.
- ❑ Mail to: Matamata-Piako District Council, PO Box 266, Te Aroha 3342
- ❑ Email: info@mpdc.govt.nz
- ❑ In person: You can drop your feedback form into any of our Council offices or libraries.

Ngā Rā Matua | Key dates





Puka whakahoki kōrero | Feedback form – Draft Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw

Please provide your feedback by 19 April 2026

Name/Organisation:

For individuals please simply write name/names, for organisations please write the full organisation name

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

Town: Matamata Morrinsville Te Aroha Other: _____

Age: Under 18 18–24 25–34 35–44 45–64 65–74 75+

Would you like to speak to the Mayor and Councillors about your feedback?

If you would like to speak to your submission, Council will contact you after consultation closes to confirm the hearing date (expected 12/13 May 2026) and schedule a speaking time. In-person and online options will be available and accessibility support can be arranged if needed.

Yes, I would like to speak to my submission
 No, I do not wish to speak to my submission

Privacy statement: Please be aware that feedback made to Council is public information. Feedback will be used and reproduced for purposes such as reports to Elected Members, which are made available to the public. Submitters will be able to access a summary of submissions and deliberations to understand how feedback has been considered and how decisions were reached.

Note that individual submissions will be made publicly available in full (including your name and any organisation you represent), unless you request confidentiality and this may be able to be accommodated under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Section 1: Overall Position

1. Which of these options do you support?

Option 1: Proposed option: Adopt the draft Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026) and draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) as proposed to the community
 The Policy and Bylaw would be adopted as proposed to reflect current issues and community feedback.

Option 2: Status Quo: Keep the existing Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw as is without any amendments
 Keep the current Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2016) and Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2016) as is without any amendments.

Option 3: Adopt the draft Policy on Dogs 2010 (Amended 2026) and draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) with further amendments.
 Adopt the Policy and Bylaw as proposed to the community with further changes suggested by submitters.

Option 4: : Revoke the current Dog Control Bylaw and do not adopt the draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026).



- Revoke the existing Dog Control Bylaw and do not adopt the draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) as proposed to the community.

Note that the Policy on Dogs would still be adopted as it is required by legislation.

Option 5: Other

You may like to suggest a different option. Tell us what you think would work best.

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____

Section 2: Draft Policy on Dogs

2. Do you agree with the clearer layout of the Policy, and the stronger focus on responsible dog ownership?

- Yes
- No
- Other/I have another suggestion

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____

3. Do you agree with the updated Policy objectives?

- Yes
- No
- Other/I have another suggestion

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____



Section 3: Draft Dog Control Bylaw

Proposed Changes – Prohibited Areas

4. Do you support adding Farmer Street Reserve (Te Aroha) as a prohibited area?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____

Proposed Changes – Leash Control Areas

5. Do you support dogs being allowed in the Central Business Districts (CBDs) at any time, as long as they are on leash and under control?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____

6. Do you support allowing dogs on the Hauraki Rail Trail area in Te Aroha as long as they are on a leash and under control?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____



7. If the community agrees, the above changes to the CBD and Hauraki Rail Trial areas would run as a six-month trial. Do you support trying them out first?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____

8. Do you support changing Centennial Drive and Tom Grant Drive in Matamata from off-leash areas to on-leash areas?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____

Rules proposed to remain the same

9. Do you support the rule of having up to two dogs in town areas (before needing a permit) to stay the same?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____



10. Do you support keeping the current minimum standards for how dogs must be housed and cared for?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure/Other

Additional Comments to support the option chosen above: _____



Section 4: General Feedback

11. Is there anything else you'd like Council to consider as part of this review?

Please provide any further comments below

Please provide your feedback by 19 April 2026



Draft Dog Control Bylaw 2010 (Amended 2026) to be attached.



Issues and Options Report Following Early Engagement

Review of:

- Policy on Dogs**
- Dog Control Bylaw**

Updated following Council workshop held on 26 November 2025



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1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the key issues identified through community engagement as part of the review of Council's [Policy on Dogs](#) (Policy) and [Dog Control Bylaw](#) (Bylaw). The analysis draws on the results from a community survey and public engagement, research into other councils' approaches, feedback from previous consultation processes, relevant Customer Service Requests, staff input, and feedback from Council and its Committees.

This report presents a range of options for addressing the identified issues and provides an evaluation of their respective implications, thereby providing Council with the necessary information to determine the preferred approaches for community consultation to occur in February 2026.

This report has been updated following the Council workshop on 26 November 2025, where staff received direction from Elected Members to revise the Policy and Bylaw in response to the feedback and issues discussed.

2. Executive Summary

Council is undertaking a statutory review of its Policy on Dogs and Dog Control Bylaw to ensure compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Local Government Act 2002, and to respond to evolving community expectations and operational needs.

Early engagement was conducted through the Paw and Order campaign, generating over 1,000 survey responses and targeted feedback from key stakeholders, including CBD businesses, rangatahi, and residents near areas such as the Hauraki Rail Trail. This engagement highlighted recurring concerns about public safety, dog fouling, roaming dogs, and the understanding, clarity and enforcement of existing rules.

This report summarises the key themes from engagement and presents options for Council consideration, including:

- Prohibited Areas – whether to maintain or adjust restrictions in CBDs, the Hauraki Rail Trail and sensitive sites.
- Dog Exercise Areas – addressing strong demand for fenced, safe spaces, particularly in Morrinsville and Matamata, and alignment with reserve management plans.
- Dog Limits and Enforcement – confirming the appropriateness of current limits and exploring further monitoring and compliance measures.

The report evaluates the implications of each option - operational, financial, and health and safety - to provide Council with the necessary information to determine preferred approaches for community consultation in February 2026.

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, staff have updated the report to reflect the direction received.

3. Background

3.1 Legislative Framework

Policy

Section 10 of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires territorial authorities to adopt a policy on dogs for their district, following specific procedures. The policy must be adopted in

accordance with the special consultative procedure outlined in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA).

In adopting a policy on dogs, councils must have regard to:

- a) the need to minimise danger, distress, and nuisance to the community generally; and
- b) the need to avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places that are frequented by children, whether or not the children are accompanied by adults; and
- c) the importance of enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public (including families) to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs; and
- d) the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

Bylaw

Once a policy is adopted, Council must, under section 10(6)(a), give effect to it by making the necessary bylaws under section 20 of the Act and by repealing bylaws inconsistent with the policy (section 10(6)(b)).

The Bylaw contains specific rules and enforcement mechanisms and gives legal effect to the policy. A territorial authority may, in accordance with the LGA, make bylaws for all or any of the following purposes:

- a) prohibiting dogs, whether under control or not, from specified public places;
- b) requiring dogs, other than working dogs, to be controlled on a leash in specified public places, or in public places in specified areas or parts of the district;
- c) regulating and controlling dogs in any other public place;
- d) designating specified areas as dog exercise areas;
- e) prescribing minimum standards for the accommodation of dogs;
- f) limiting the number of dogs that may be kept on any land or premises;
- g) requiring dogs in its district to be tied up or otherwise confined during a specified period commencing not earlier than half an hour after sunset, and ending not later than half an hour before sunrise;
- h) requiring the owner of any dog that defecates in a public place or on land or premises other than that occupied by the owner to immediately remove the faeces;
- i) requiring any bitch to be confined but adequately exercised while in season;
- j) providing for the impounding of dogs, whether or not they are wearing a collar having the proper label or disc attached, that are found at large in breach of any bylaw made by the territorial authority under the Dog Control Act 1996 or any other Act;
- k) requiring the owner of any dog (being a dog that, on a number of occasions, has not been kept under control) to cause that dog to be neutered (whether or not the owner of the dog has been convicted of an offence against section 53 of the Dog Control Act 1996);

- I) any other purpose that from time to time is, in the opinion of the territorial authority, necessary or desirable to further the control of dogs.

The bylaw must be consistent with the policy - with the policy providing the strategic direction, and the bylaw delivering a regulatory tool for enforcement.

3.2 Review Requirement

The LGA requires all bylaws to be reviewed no later than five years after the date on which the bylaw was made and then every ten years thereafter.

The current bylaw is approaching its statutory deadline for review. The Dog Control Act 1996 requires the Policy to be reviewed at the same time, as it underpins the Bylaw. The review will:

- Address community concerns and evolving expectations;
- Ensure legislative compliance;
- Respond to operational challenges and improvements identified.

3.3 Previous Reviews and Amendments

The current Policy and Bylaw were last reviewed in 2016.

The 2016 review updated the documents by clarifying definitions and aligning them with best practice. Changes included updating prohibited areas by removing Hawes Bush (Waharoa) and adding Kowhai Street Reserve (Matamata), Thomas Park (Morrisville) and Kennedy Street Reserve (Te Aroha), as each park falls entirely within 15 metres of play equipment. Amendments were also made to leash control areas to provide further clarity.

The review acknowledged community demand for additional dog exercise areas, particularly in Te Aroha and Morrisville and proposed seeking public feedback on this during consultation. A new clause was introduced requiring owners to keep dogs under control in all public places.

The review further clarified permit requirements for keeping multiple dogs, introduced a formal fees and charges clause, and retained Council's discretion regarding the neutering of menacing dogs. Temporary dog access for events was to be managed through enforcement discretion rather than bylaw amendments.

Since 2016, there have been some amendments undertaken (e.g. new dog exercise areas added in Matamata (Peria Road) and Te Aroha in 2021). It is noted that since the last amendment, demand has continued to grow for:

- More dog exercise areas (especially in Morrisville).
- Stricter management of barking and roaming dogs.
- Stronger enforcement and clearer rules.

3.4 Early Engagement

To support the review of Council's Policy and Bylaw, early engagement was undertaken throughout October-November 2025 to seek community views on dog control issues in the Matamata-Piako District.

The 'Paw and Order' campaign was supported by Digby the Dog to encourage participation.

Early engagement included:

- An online survey, which attracted over 1,000 responses and provided valuable insights into community views and priorities.
 - In total, 1,169 responses were received. 44% of responses came from Matamata Ward (465), followed by Te Aroha Ward (346), Morrinsville Ward (314), and 43 responses were from outside the district.
 - 78% lived in an urban area (town or suburb), with 22% of respondents from a rural area (countryside, farm etc.).
 - 61% of the respondents identified as dog owners, which is significantly higher than the district's average dog ownership rate of 14.26%¹. This indicates the survey results are skewed toward dog owners and should be considered when interpreting the findings.
- Informal feedback from community groups, helping to understand local perspectives and practical challenges.
- Conversations with residents at market days, enabling face-to-face discussions and capturing views from a broad cross-section of the community.
- Targeted engagement with key stakeholders, including CBD businesses, rangatahi (group in Morrinsville), and residents living near the Hauraki Rail Trail (Te Aroha), to ensure that specific interests and concerns were considered.

This approach gives Elected Members a well-informed view of community sentiment - acknowledging that the survey was self-selected and may reflect those with a stronger interest in the issue (e.g., dog owners) - to guide decisions on the review of dog control rules across the district.

Broad engagement is planned during the consultation period to ensure all interested parties have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft proposals.

¹ According to the [2024/25 Dog Control Policy and Practices report](#) there were 5,576 registered dogs. The most recent Statistics NZ population estimate (as at 30 June 2024) for the Matamata-Piako District is 39,100.

4. Issues for Consideration – Policy

4.1 Overview

The current Policy on Dogs is considered largely fit for purpose. The objectives have been modified to align with the community feedback received and further wording amendments to improve clarity, emphasise the importance of responsible dog ownership and to comply with the requirements of the Act.

4.1 Cultural Significance of Kurī

Te Manawhenua Forum mō Matamata-Piako (the Forum) has strongly recommended that the Policy includes acknowledgment of the cultural significance of kurī (dogs) within Māori communities. This recognition is important because kurī hold historical and cultural value, influencing perspectives on ownership, care, and management.

Embedding this acknowledgment within the Policy would help ensure that dog-related rules are culturally responsive and reflect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Forum also suggested exploring options for policy amendments that incorporate this perspective, such as including statements on the role of kurī in Māori culture and considering how this might inform approaches to education, enforcement, and community engagement.

The objective has been removed from the objectives and incorporated into the Policy itself, with wording developed in partnership with, and formally endorsed by the Forum.

4.2 Options for Policy on Dogs

Option 1: Status Quo (No Change)

Retain the current policy as is.

Rationale: The policy is largely fit for purpose and aligns with legislative requirements.

Risk: Missed opportunity to address cultural considerations, reflect community feedback, and make minor usability improvements.

Option 2: Minor Amendments (Recommended)

- Acknowledgment of Cultural Significance of kurī - include a statement recognising the importance of dogs in Māori culture and how this underpins ownership and care.
- Clarify Existing Objectives - Refine wording to set expectations for dog exercise areas (i.e. current wording states: 'exclusive dog exercise areas will not be provided')
- Update Education and Engagement Approach – Reflecting community feedback for increased education on responsible dog ownership.
- Ensure the Policy reflects legislative requirements.

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 2 with expanded provision for dog ownership responsibilities.

Option 3: Significantly Amend the Policy

Undertake a full review of the policy framework.

Consider new provisions such as:

1. Dog Access and Exercise Areas

- Introduce clear, mapped zones for:
 - Off-leash areas (dog exercise areas)
 - On-leash areas
 - Prohibited areas

2. Dog Ownership and Care Standards

- Strengthen provisions around responsible ownership, including:
 - Mandatory microchipping and registration
 - Encouragement of desexing
 - Clear expectations for containment and control
 - Explore partnerships with animal welfare organisations for initiatives such as low-cost desexing and vaccination.

3. Education

- Expand education campaigns to promote responsible dog ownership and reduce roaming, attacks and nuisance.

5. Issues for Consideration - Bylaw

5.1 Prohibited Areas

The current Bylaw prohibits dogs from entering or remaining in certain areas, except when attending a veterinary clinic and under the owner's control. These provisions do not apply to a Guide Dog, Hearing Ear Dog, Companion Dog² or to any Working Dog while the dog is working.

The areas have been determined based on the following criteria within the current Policy:

- a) the intensity, type and frequency of public use;
- b) whether the presence of dogs may create a danger to the health and safety of users of any area;
- c) whether the ecological values of an area have been identified and established as needing protection from animals (including dogs) in any reserve management plan;
- d) the expectations of reserve users.

The current areas prohibited to dogs are as follows:

District-wide

- Dogs are prohibited within 15 metres of any children's play area or individual play equipment throughout the district.
- Dogs are prohibited in the CBD areas of Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha (including service lanes and parking areas) between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm.

Matamata

- Firth Tower Reserve/Museum Site (excluding the carpark and camping/campervan area)
- Kowhai Street Reserve

Morrinsville

- Thomas Park

Te Aroha

- Herries Memorial Park
- Kennedy Street Reserve
- Hauraki Rail Trail - from the north-western point where the trail intersects with Farmer Street.

Areas Recommended to Remain Unchanged

- **Playgrounds:** It is recommended that the prohibition on dogs within 15 metres of children's play areas should remain. This is a clear measure to protect vulnerable people (particularly children) and reduce the risk of dog attacks.
- **Parks Entirely Within 15 Metres of Play Equipment:** These parks are prohibited because the entire park falls within the 15-metre buffer zone. This rationale still applies, so it is recommended that these prohibitions should remain. Examples in the

² The Dog Control Amendment Act 2006 amended these terms to 'disability assist dogs'.

current Bylaw include Kowhai Street Reserve (Matamata), Thomas Park (Morrinsville) and Kennedy Street Reserve (Te Aroha).

- **Firth Tower Historical Reserve:** This site is designated as a Historical Reserve, and allowing dogs would conflict with this purpose. The reserve is also regularly visited by vulnerable groups, such as school children and elderly visitors. Therefore, it is recommended that this prohibition should remain in place.

Areas for Council Consideration

- **Central Business Districts (CBDs):** There are mixed views on whether dogs should continue to be prohibited in CBD areas during business hours. Some feedback supports keeping the current restrictions, while others suggest relaxing the rules to allow dogs in these areas under certain conditions. This is an area for Council to consider and determine whether changes should be proposed for consultation and is discussed in detail below.
- **Hauraki Rail Trail:** It is recommended to review and align the dog control rules for the Hauraki Rail Trail, as the current provisions vary. It is acknowledged that alignment across the full extent of the trail is challenging due to varying land uses (e.g., road reserve, town centres, rural zones). It is also noted that a newer section (Te Aroha to Matamata) has been added since the Bylaw was last reviewed.
 - Designated section: The stretch from Terminus Street in Te Aroha to the Hauraki District Council boundary is subject to a delegation³ that explicitly prohibits dogs from Stirling Street to the boundary. This restriction cannot be changed through a bylaw. The delegation also requires dogs to be on a leash from Stirling Street to the Terminus Street/Thames Branch Railway crossing (area where there is the pedestrian bridge).
 - Farmer Street to Stirling Street: The section was added as a prohibited area in an amended to the bylaw in 2020 due to potential disturbance to stock in rural areas. One side of this section is rural, and the other is urban.
 - Te Aroha to Matamata: The area from the pedestrian bridge in Te Aroha to Matamata currently has no specific rules in the Bylaw, other than the general requirement that dogs must be kept under control at all times in public places.⁴

The Hauraki Rail Trail website provides the following guidance on dog access:

- Section A: **Kaiaua to Thames** – Dogs are allowed between Kopu and Thames. For the rest of the section, only gun dogs are permitted (during duck hunting season only).
- Section B: **Thames to Paeroa** - Dogs are not permitted on this section, except where the trail intersects the urban areas of Thames and Paeroa.
- Section C: **Paeroa to Waihi** - Dogs on leads are permitted in the Karangahake Gorge section of the trail from Waikino Station to the old Karangahake Hall site at the northern end of the Rail Tunnel, and where the trail intersects the urban areas of Waihi and Paeroa only.
- Section D: **Paeroa to Te Aroha** - Dogs are not permitted on this section of the trail except where the trail intersects the urban areas of Paeroa and Te Aroha.

³ The Hauraki Rail Trail has a 'designation' over it (it was previously a railway corridor). A designation is a planning technique used by Ministers, Councils and network utility operators approved as 'requiring authorities' under section 167 of the Resource Management Act.

⁴ Control is defined as: '...a dog physically restricted so that it is not at large and includes any dog inside any enclosure, or a dog under the oral and visual command of a Person exercising the dog in a designated dog exercise area or on any private property'.

- Section E: **Te Aroha to Matamata** - Dogs are not permitted on this section of the Rail Trail except where the trail intersects the urban areas of Te Aroha and Matamata⁵.

The Hauraki Rail Trail Trust, which operates and maintains the trail has provided the following initial feedback to assist in identifying options:

- General Rule: Sections with farmland on both sides are typically designated as no-dog areas.
- Te Aroha to Matamata Section: This part of the trail differs as it follows a roading corridor, similar to Matamata - Firth Tower, where dog walkers commonly use the space. There is no objection to dogs on leash along the Te Aroha to Matamata section.

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to:

- *Continue with the 15 metre buffer around playgrounds and play equipment including parks as prohibited areas that are within the entire buffer zone;*
- *Continue to include Firth Tower Historical Reserve as a prohibited area;*
- *Propose to allow dogs (on-leash) in the CBD areas at all times (subject to community feedback and a trial period);*
- *Propose to allow dogs on leash on the Hauraki Rail Trail within the Te Aroha town boundary (subject to community feedback and a trial period).*
- *The Te Aroha to Matamata section to fall under the general controls of the bylaw (dogs to be kept under control).*

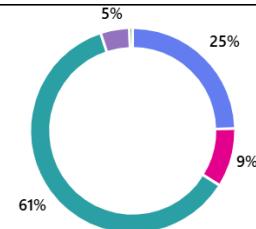
⁵ Note that this information differs from the Bylaw for which there are no specific dog access rules set for this section of the trail.

5.1.1 Dogs in the CBD

Survey Feedback

Currently dogs are not allowed in CBD areas between 8am and 6pm, seven days a week. What do you think the rules should be?

• The current rules are fine - dogs shouldn't be allowed in CBD areas between 8am and 6pm, every day	288
• I think dogs shouldn't be allowed in the CBD at all	108
• Yes to dogs in the CBD, they should be allowed on-leash, anytime	713
• I have other comments or suggestions about dogs in the CBD (please choose this option and specify...)	53
• Other	6



The community provided a wide range of views on dogs in the CBD areas. 61% of respondents supported allowing dogs in the CBDs, with conditions.

Key themes include:

- There was strong support from respondents that dogs should be allowed at any time if they are on a leash and under control. However, most noted there should be conditions attached: owners must clean up after their dogs and some suggested muzzles for large or reactive dogs. Respondents cited overseas examples, lifestyle integration, and companionship as benefits.
- Social and economic benefits were mentioned including that dog-friendly policies could boost local business and concern that visitors with dogs may avoid towns with strict rules. Dogs are seen as part of the family and being able to be part of people's day-to-day lives encourages responsible ownership and socialisation.
- A recurring issue is irresponsible owners and behaviour including dog waste not picked up, aggressive behaviour, and lack of enforcement.
- There is a desire for flexibility with some respondents suggesting relaxing the rules during weekends, off-peak hours, or allowing transit through the CBDs.
- A number of comments were in strong opposition to dogs in the CBDs, citing safety concerns - particularly for children and the elderly, hygiene (dog waste on footpaths and near eateries), and discomfort/fear around dogs. Other issues raised included a risk of tripping or being approached by uncontrolled dogs.
- Many respondents indicated they were unaware of the current restriction and noted that dogs are frequently taken into town. They noted the current rule is not actively enforced and recommended improved signage, penalties, and public education should Council choose to retain this requirement.

Other Feedback

- Additional feedback, including from CBD businesses, indicated that most respondents were unaware of the existing prohibition on dogs in CBDs between 8:00am and 6:00pm. Many noted a lack of signage and enforcement.
- **Support for Change:**

- A majority favoured allowing dogs on a leash at any time. Reasons for support:
 - Dogs are already present in CBDs; rule is widely unknown.
 - Social benefits - dogs bring joy, support elderly and people with anxiety.
 - Practicality - motorhome visitors and café culture often includes dogs.
- **Concerns Raised:**
 - Safety: fear of aggressive dogs, intimidation of children and elderly, cultural sensitivities (some people fear dogs, even when leashed and not displaying aggression).
 - Hygiene: occasional dog waste causing mess and odour, need for bins and clean-up.
 - Enforcement: scepticism about ability to monitor compliance.
 - Support for conditions (e.g., leash required, muzzles for risky dogs, guide dogs exempt).
- **Business Feedback:**
 - Majority supportive of dogs on leash; some businesses rely on dog-friendly culture.
 - A few food businesses opposed dogs inside premises.
 - Concerns about enforcement and clarity of rules.
- **Rangatahi Workshop:**
 - Mixed views - support for safety of tamariki and kaumātua, stronger consequences if rule remains, and education on responsible ownership.
- **Other Themes:**
 - Desire for better education and signage.
 - Suggestions for time adjustments (e.g., shorter restricted hours).
 - Calls for proactive animal control response.

Overall Trend:

Feedback indicates community support for relaxing current restrictions to allow dogs on a leash in CBDs, however concerns remain about safety, hygiene, and enforcement. Education, signage, and clear conditions (leash, control, waste management) are key considerations.

Other Councils' Approaches

Examples from Other Councils:

- **Rotorua Lakes Council:**

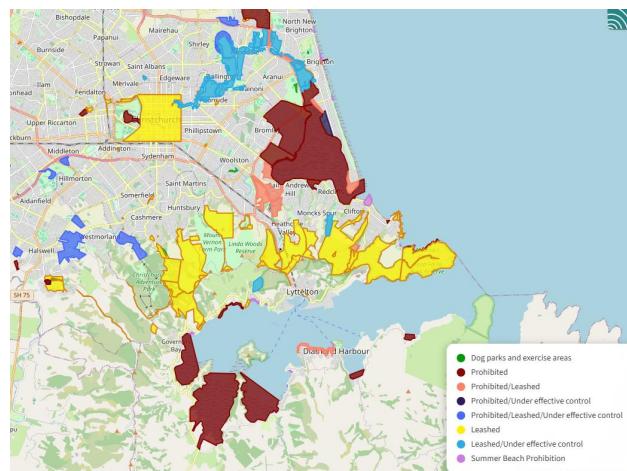
Dogs are completely banned in the CBD (introduced in the late 1980s due to complaints about aggressive dogs and faeces). Recent consultation considered lifting the ban, but the council decided to keep it for now, citing safety and compliance concerns. [Council meeting digest: New dog rules set](#)

- **Auckland Council:**

Dogs are allowed on-leash in most public places, but prohibited in specific areas (e.g., playground surfaces, sports fields, libraries, malls). CBD streets generally require dogs to be on-leash unless signage states otherwise.

- **Christchurch City Council:**

Dogs must be leashed on all roads, footpaths, shared paths, and car parks. Dogs are prohibited from playgrounds, skateparks, and swimming pools. CBD streets fall under the general leash rule. See example map below detailing dog control rules:



- **Thames-Coromandel District Council:**

Dogs must be on-leash in all urban areas, including town centres. Additional seasonal restrictions apply to beaches, but CBD rules are consistent year-round.

[Thames-Coromandel District Council Dog Rules](#)

- **New Plymouth District Council:**

All public places within the New Plymouth CBD area are prohibited to dogs at all times. The prohibition does not apply to any dog registered at a residential address in the New Plymouth CBD area being led directly out of or into the area, provided that the dog is on a leash and does not constitute a nuisance or endanger any person.

- **Southland District Council:**

The Southland District Council has amended its rules to permit leashed dogs in the Te Anau town centre as of October 1, 2025. Previously, the area was prohibited for dogs, but following public consultation, the Council adopted a new policy and bylaw in September 2025 to allow them in a certain area.

General Trend:

- Full bans in CBDs are generally uncommon (Rotorua Lakes Council and New Plymouth District Council include CBD bans). Following a six-month trial to allow dogs in the areas of Ōamaru, the Council agreed to permanent changes⁶.
- Most councils allow dogs on-leash in town centres, with prohibitions limited to sensitive areas (playgrounds, sports fields, environmental concerns).
- Emphasis is generally on leash control, signage, and owner responsibility rather than outright prohibition.

⁶ [Dog Bylaw Trial Changes Adopted by Council](#)

Overall Staff Comment

Staff acknowledge community support for relaxing current restrictions to allow dogs in CBDs, provided they are on a leash and under control. However, operational and safety concerns need to be considered as follows:

Dog Waste Management:

Increased dog presence in CBDs may lead to more dog waste. While most owners are responsible, even occasional non-compliance can create hygiene and amenity issues. Additional waste bins and signage would likely be required.

While signage and dog waste bins can support compliance, these measures will add ongoing costs for installation, maintenance, and servicing. It is important to note that such infrastructure does not guarantee responsible behaviour by dog owners, and monitoring, enforcement and education will still be required to achieve compliance.

Cleaning and Maintenance Costs:

Allowing dogs could increase the need for street cleaning, particularly in high-foot traffic areas and near food premises. This may result in additional operational costs for Council.

Health and Safety Risk to Staff and the Public:

Dogs in busy CBD environments pose a risk of bites or attacks, particularly in crowded spaces or around children and elderly people. Even well-trained dogs can become stressed in high-traffic areas, increasing the likelihood of unpredictable behaviour.

There is also a safety concern related to leashes, particularly in narrower sections of the district's CBD areas where space constraints may increase the risk of accidents.

Increased dog waste can hygiene risks for staff responsible for cleaning and maintenance. Handling waste and maintaining cleanliness may require additional protective measures and training. See below for further discussion on potential impacts identified by operational staff:

Potential Operational Impacts (to be assessed through trial (once confirmed))

Operational staff have identified several potential impacts that may arise if dog waste in public spaces or general-use bins increases. This assessment has been included because the proposed shift to allowing on-leash dog access in the CBD at all times may change how public spaces are used. Any increase in dog presence could lead to operational impacts that warrant consideration.

These reflect precautionary assessments rather than confirmed outcomes, and relate to possible health and safety, workload and cost implications.

Increased dog waste could elevate the likelihood of biological exposure to pathogens, particularly during bin handling and street cleaning activities. Potential contact risks (hand-to-mouth, skin, eye, or respiratory exposure) may increase where bins become contaminated or bags are not properly sealed. A range of mitigation measures will be implemented to protect staff and the public, such as continued hygiene protocols, including proper PPE, and public education.

Operationally, any rise in dog waste may lead to more ground-level contamination, especially if bins overflow or waste is left in inappropriate locations. There could be an increased demand for manual clean-ups, more frequent cleaning rounds, and greater use of equipment, PPE, and cleaning materials. Any residual contamination may affect amenity and create public pressure for enhanced cleaning.

Depending on the outcome of the Council's decisions, community consultation, and the trial, operational cost implications may include the need for additional staff, increased incident response capacity and consideration of more frequent street cleaning to address any residual impacts.

Potential Operational Impacts (to be assessed through trial (once confirmed)) - continued

An increase in dog presence may also lead to a higher number of animal control-related incidents (such as wandering dogs, complaints, conflict between dogs or other incidents), which could require additional responses from Animal Control and place further pressure on existing service capacity.

Importantly, these impacts are indicative only. The planned trial will provide real-world evidence to determine any actual level of impact on community and staff health and safety, workload, and resource requirements, including costs. Findings from the trial will be used to refine assumptions, confirm whether further mitigation measures are needed, and guide any future operational and policy decisions.

Enforcement Challenges:

Current feedback indicates low awareness of existing rules and limited enforcement capacity. Whether restrictions are retained or relaxed, clear signage and targeted education will be essential - either to inform the public about prohibited areas, or to reinforce leash requirements if access is permitted.

Evidence from New Zealand research⁷ indicates that in-person education is significantly more effective than signage for changing behaviour, particularly in contexts such as dog control and outdoor recreation. Studies have shown that signage alone often results in limited compliance unless supported by active engagement strategies, while interactive education fosters greater understanding and long-term behaviour change.

However, in-person education is considerably more resource-intensive and costly to deliver, requiring staff time and ongoing programmes, whereas signage remains a lower-cost but potentially less impactful option.

Issue of Dogs in Shops

Following a dog bite incident and reports of aggressive dogs residing in a commercial property in Te Aroha (February 2025), legal advice was sought on whether the Council's Bylaw prohibits dogs from being in shops within the CBD area. The advice indicated that, while the Bylaw is silent on this specific point, the prohibition likely applies.

Key Points from Legal Advice:

- **Current Bylaw Provisions:**
Schedule One of the Bylaw prohibits dogs from entering or remaining in the CBD areas of Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha between 8:00am and 6:00pm. The CBD area include associated service lanes and public parking areas. Shops/buildings are not specifically mentioned.
- **Definition of Public Places:**
Under section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996, "public place" includes any place open to or being used by the public, whether free or on payment of a charge. It can be determined, therefore that this definition could reasonably encompass shops.
- **Interpretation:**
Although the Bylaw does not explicitly mention shops, the prohibition on dogs entering or remaining in the CBD suggests that dogs cannot be in shops located within that area. Additionally, for a dog to be inside a shop, it would have had to enter the prohibited area first, which may constitute a breach of the Bylaw (if it is within prohibited times).

⁷ Lincoln University (2023). *The effectiveness of safety signs in outdoor recreation settings*.

University of Canterbury (2022). *Reducing Dog Disturbance to Wildlife*.

Department of Internal Affairs (2024). *Dog Control Act Guidance for Territorial Authorities*.

Implications for Council:

- The current wording creates uncertainty for businesses, and for enforcement purposes.
- The Bylaw does not provide exceptions for shop owners to allow dogs on their premises, unlike some other jurisdictions.
- It is recommended that if Council decide to continue to prohibit dogs in the CBD areas, to clarify this position in the Bylaw.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 13 incidents reported⁸

Date	Area	Category	CRM
09/06/2025	Morrisville	Animal Welfare	Dog reported tied up and left outside Woolworths.
23/05/2025	Matamata	Dog Wandering	Dog seen wandering around the Matamata township.
11/03/2025	Te Aroha	Breach of Bylaw	Dogs lunging at customer outside shop. Also concerns about dogs living in shop nearby.
06/03/2025	Te Aroha	Breach of Bylaw	Concern about dogs loose in shop with no muzzles (customers present).
03/03/2025	Te Aroha	Breach of Bylaw	Concern about dogs from shop out on street out of control without muzzles or leads.
28/02/2025	Te Aroha	Dog Bite	Dog attack in shop – two dogs live there and have attacked a customer.
15/12/2024	Morrisville	Dog Wandering	Dog found wandering in town centre.
22/07/2024	Morrisville	Dog Wandering	Dog seen wandering down Studholme Street towards town.
01/07/2024	Te Aroha	Aggressive Dogs	Concern about dog in the entranceway of shop, went to bite a child.
30/04/2024	Morrisville	Dog Wandering	Dog wandering Morrisville Streets - Thames, Moorhouse, Canada.
22/11/2023	Morrisville	Dog Wandering	Dogs reported wandering and heading towards township.
10/11/2023	Te Aroha	Dog Wandering	Dog reported wandering by town clock and darting through traffic.
29/09/2023	Te Aroha	Dog Bite	Dog bite reported – dog was on leash on Boundary Street, near shops.

⁸ This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within CBD areas, as it was compiled using keyword searches and by reviewing incidents logged for the main streets of each town.

Summary:

While there is strong public support for allowing dogs on-leash in CBDs, Council should consider this against potential costs for extra cleaning, infrastructure (such as bins and signage), and enforcement.

The actual impact of allowing dogs in the town centres between 8:00am and 6:00pm is uncertain, as it is unclear how many dog owners currently avoid these areas due to the restriction in the Bylaw. Consequently, the extent of any increase in cleaning or maintenance requirements cannot be predicted.

A balanced approach could include clear conditions such as mandatory leash requirements, waste disposal obligations, and targeted public education.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 6 to allow dogs on leash at all times in the CBD areas (subject to a trial period).

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Dogs are not allowed in the CBD areas of Matamata, Morrinsville or Te Aroha between 8:00am and 6:00pm. At all other times, dogs must be on leash. ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains current rule. Addresses safety and hygiene concerns. Reduces the risk for all users including children and elderly. Allows for Animal Control to act if a dog is causing issues/presenting a risk to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of community (including businesses) support change. Seen as outdated and restrictive. Not actively enforced. Prior community feedback supports active enforcement of bylaws. May need signage and education to support compliance. Potential risk to users remains (outside of prohibited times).
2.	Designate the CBDs as a leash control area at all times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong support from community and businesses. Social/economic benefits for businesses. Aligns with the approach of other councils. May reflect current situation (i.e. there are dogs in town already, and many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown impact on amenity and health and safety (dog waste). Unknown/potential increase in risk of dog attacks/conflict. Potential impact on operational staff (see text box for further detail) Requires enforcement and education (to

⁹ Note that if Council decides to continue with the status quo, it is recommended to clarify whether dogs are allowed in shops (see staff comment above).

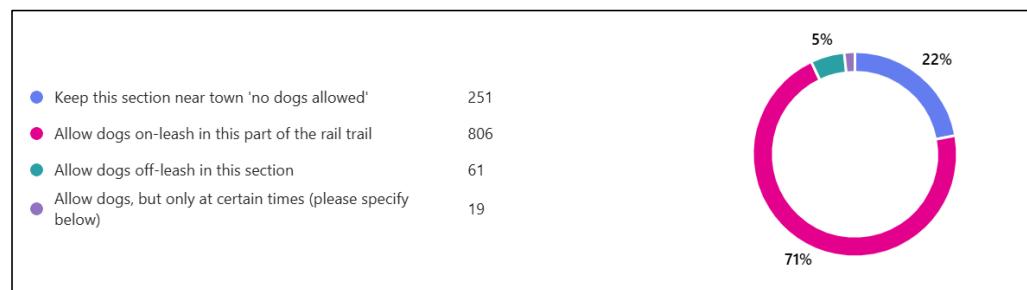
#	Option	Pros	Cons
		businesses are 'dog friendly'.	ensure dogs are on leash).
3.	Adjusted Hours, e.g. dogs allowed (on leash) at weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances flexibility with safety. • Responds to feedback for flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community opposition due to fear of dogs/particular risk to vulnerable people. • May result in an increase to the number of dogs representing an unacceptably high risk to the community. • Complex to communicate and enforce. • May confuse visitors. • Still restrictive for some owners. • Risk to users still remains.
4.	Designated Dog Friendly Zones – Certain areas are dog friendly (dogs must be on leash).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides flexibility. • Supports businesses in dog-friendly areas. • Acknowledges those who are afraid of dogs/may wish to avoid them but also frequent the town centres. • Reduces risk of conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires clear signage and mapping. • Enforcement complexity. • May cause confusion for visitors. • Potential impact on operational staff and cost implications (cleaning).
5.	Seasonal Rules – Dogs allowed in quieter seasons (e.g. winter (on leash)).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces risk during peak summer/events. • Offers flexibility for locals in off-season. • May provide economic benefits to businesses during the quieter period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex to enforce. • May confuse visitors.
6.	Trial Period – Allow dogs at all times for a set period (on leash).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests community tolerance and enforcement. • Data-driven decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of negative incidents during trial. • Requires monitoring and resources.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity for education campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May create uncertainty following completion of the trial period.

5.1.2 Dogs on the Hauraki Rail Trail (Te Aroha)

Survey Feedback

Currently dogs are not allowed on the Hauraki Rail Trail in Te Aroha towards Paeroa (Farmer Street to Stirling Street). What do you think the rules should be?¹⁰



Community feedback on dog access to the Hauraki Rail Trail reveals a mix of support for dogs on the trail and also concerns. While most respondents (71%) support allowing dogs on the trail, they emphasise the need for clear rules and responsible ownership. As noted earlier in this report, the feedback may be heavily influenced by the needs and preferences of dog owners.

Key themes include:

- There was strong support for allowing leashed dogs on this section of the Hauraki Rail Trail. Many cited the trail as a valuable community asset for dog walking.
- Some respondents strongly oppose allowing dogs, citing health and safety risks, poor owner behaviour, and hygiene concerns such as dog waste being left on the trail and potentially spread by bicycles. The primary purpose of the trial as a cycleway was also noted.
- Concerns were raised about safety and conflict on this section of the trail. Some cyclists and walkers reported near misses or accidents due to dogs, with leashes across the trail and unpredictable dog behaviour seen as hazards.
- Other concerns include disturbing stock, especially during lambing and calving and suggestions for seasonal restrictions or stricter enforcement near farmland.
- There were suggestions to find a compromise to suit all users. Suggestions included time-based access, seasonal restrictions, and better signage. And also the installation of dog waste bins and bag stations.
- Many noted that current rules seem to be ignored, with dogs often on the trail and sometimes off-leash. There were requests for clearer signage, education campaigns, and fines for non-compliance.

¹⁰ Limitations of Survey Data

A limitation of this question is that it is not known how many respondents actually use the trail, nor whether there is a significant difference in views between trail users and non-users. This should be considered when interpreting the results, as responses may not fully reflect the perspectives of those most affected by potential changes.

Other Feedback

- Other stakeholder feedback also revealed mixed views. Some respondents believe the trail should remain a prohibited area for dogs due to safety concerns for cyclists. These risks include:
 - Narrow track width and loose surfaces increasing the chance of accidents;
 - Dogs becoming excited or aggressive around bikes, even if normally placid.
- A local resident expressed disagreement with the prohibition on the rural section north of Te Aroha, noting the trail is an ideal location for exercising dogs.
- There were suggestions for time-based off-leash access (e.g., early morning 6:00am – 7:00am) to balance dog owners' interests with cyclist safety. This indicates willingness among some stakeholders to find a middle ground rather than a blanket prohibition.

Other Councils' Approaches

The Hauraki Rail Trail runs through the neighbouring Council areas of Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel. Dog access rules vary across the trail. Dogs are generally prohibited on most sections, with limited exceptions in urban areas and specific segments. For example, dogs are allowed between Kopu and Thames, and on-leash in parts of the Karangahake Gorge, while the section between Kopu and Kaiaua permit only gun dogs during duck hunting season.

Overall Staff Comment

This section of the Hauraki Rail Trail is currently a prohibited area for dogs under the Bylaw, primarily due to the potential for disturbance to stock and safety concerns for cyclists.

Feedback indicates that some dog walkers regularly use this area and consider it an important recreational space. Conversely, feedback from others including cyclists highlights concerns about safety - particularly the risk of collisions, and hygiene issues related to dog waste.

Allowing dogs on-leash in this section appears to be in line with neighbouring councils, such as Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel, which generally permit dogs on-leash on trail sections that run through the urban area (noting that this area differs in that one side of the trail is designated rural).

Parks planning staff note that dogs and bikes are not an ideal mix, particularly given the predominance of e-bikes on the trail, which travel at higher speeds and reduce reaction time. Dogs on long, thin leads can create hazards for cyclists, increasing the risk of accidents. Parks planning also advise against providing dog waste bags and bins along the trail, as these are often misused and are generally only provided at designated dog exercise areas.

Any change would require consideration of operational and health and safety risks, including potential conflicts between dogs and cyclists, enforcement challenges, and hygiene concerns related to dog waste. Staff recommend that Council weigh these factors carefully and, if changes are pursued, implement clear conditions such as mandatory leash requirements, waste disposal obligations, and targeted education to ensure safety and amenity for all trail users.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 3 incidents reported¹¹

Date	Area	Category	CRM
11/10/2024	Te Aroha	Dog Attacked Other Animal or Bird	Dog was attacked on the rail trail heading out to Paeroa.
23/09/2024	Te Aroha	Dog Attacked Other Animal or Bird	Dog attacked by another dog while walking the trail. Dog had muzzle around its neck (not on properly) and was off leash.
12/07/2024	Te Aroha	Dog Bite	Dog attack reported on the trail.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 5 to allow dogs on leash on this section of the Hauraki Rail Trail (subject to a trial period).

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Dogs are not allowed on this section of the Rail Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains current rule. Reduces risk of conflict with cyclists and walkers. Protects stock during sensitive periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seen as restrictive for other users of the trail (dog walkers) Current rule is not widely known and therefore often ignored, and presents enforcement challenges. May require signage to assist in enforcement.
2.	Leash Control Area – Dogs are allowed at all times but must be on a leash.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong community support (71%). Allows shared use of trail for dog walkers and cyclists. Aligns with the approach of other councils (allow dogs in urban areas of the trail - noting that one side of the trail in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of leashes causing hazards for cyclists. Narrower sections of the trail may pose increased risks. Dog waste and poor owner behaviour remain concerns. Unknown impact.

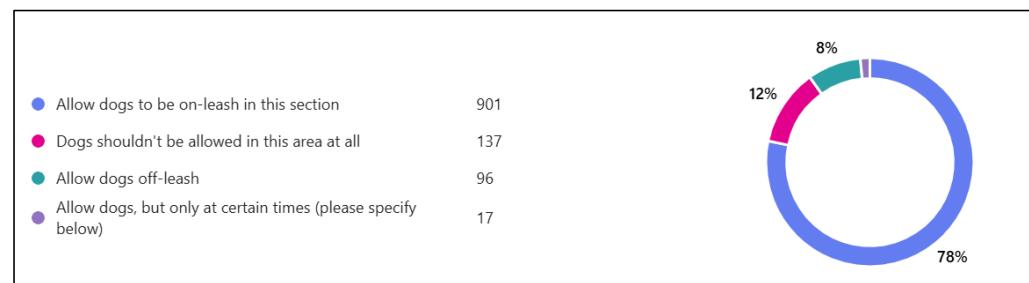
¹¹ This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within the trail areas, as it was compiled using keyword searches.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this section is designated as rural). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May require enforcement and signage.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May reflect current situation (i.e. dogs use this part of the trail already). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May result in an increase to the number of dogs representing an unacceptably high risk to trail users (particularly cyclists).
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May result in stock disturbance (rural area on one side of the trail).
3.	Adjusted Hours – Dogs allowed on-leash outside peak hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances flexibility with safety. Responds to feedback for time-based compromise. Reduces risk during busy hours. Supports exercise routines for owners and their dogs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex to communicate and enforce. May confuse visitors and trail users. Will require signage and education. May result in stock disturbance (rural area on one side of the trail). Still a restrictive option for dog owners.
4.	Seasonal Access - Dogs allowed only during off-peak seasons (on leash).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces conflict during busy summer periods. Protects stock during lambing/calving. Offers flexibility for locals in quieter months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex to enforce and communicate. May confuse visitors and trail users. Limited benefit year-round for dog owners. Will require signage and education.
5.	Trial Period – Allow dogs on this section at all times (on leash) for a set trial period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests community tolerance and enforcement. Data-driven decision-making. Opportunity for education campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of negative incidents during trial. Requires monitoring and resources. May create uncertainty for trail users following completion of the trial period. May result in stock disturbance (rural area on one side of the trail).

5.1.3 Dogs on the Hauraki Rail Trail (Te Aroha to Matamata)

Survey Feedback

Currently there are no specific rules about dogs on the section of the Rail Trial from Te Aroha to Matamata. What do you think the rules should be?



Community feedback on dog access to the Te Aroha to Matamata section of the Hauraki Rail Trail shows a majority support for allowing dogs (with conditions) to protect users in a shared space. Again, it is noted that the feedback may be heavily influenced by the needs and preferences of dog owners.

Concerns voiced about safety, livestock, and enforcement remain prominent.

Key themes include:

- The majority (78%) of respondents support dogs on-leash (and under control) at all times. Many see the trail as a valuable walking option, especially for rural residents.
- There were some respondents who supported off leash access for dogs if well trained and responsive.
- There is some opposition to dogs on this section of the trail altogether citing the primary use of the trail as a cycleway. Some respondents shared negative experiences with aggressive or uncontrolled dogs and there were concerns about cyclist safety, livestock disturbance, and dog waste. There were numerous complaints about owners not picking up after their dogs.
- There were some suggestions to limit dog access to early mornings or evenings to avoid peak cycling times and a few suggested restricting dogs during busy summer months or farming seasons.

Other Feedback

Feedback from informal engagement with users of the trail when undertaking engagement in the Matamata CBD generally reflected support for dogs being allowed on leash in this section.

Other Councils' Approaches

As per the commentary above, neighbouring councils have prohibited dogs from sections of the trail designated as rural. Note that this section of the trail is on road reserve.

Overall Staff Comment

This section of the Hauraki Rail Trail differs from other parts of the trail as it follows road reserve rather than KiwiRail corridors, farmland and stopbanks. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the section (particularly closer to Matamata – along Tower Road) is well-used by dog walkers, indicating that it is already functioning as a shared space for multiple users.

The Bylaw hasn't been reviewed since this section was built. Therefore, allowing dogs on-leash along this section would require further engagement with adjacent farmers and landowners to understand any concerns regarding stock safety, property access, or potential conflicts.

Operational considerations include the need for clear signage, education and waste disposal requirements, and Council could consider waste bins at key points (alongside the Hauraki Rail Trail Charitable Trust). Health and safety risks - such as potential dog-cyclist interactions and hygiene hazards for staff managing waste - should also be factored into decision-making.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 3 incidents reported¹²

Date	Area	Category	CRM
21/06/2025	Te Aroha West	Dog Wandering	Runner was rushed at and chased by dogs.
11/03/2024	Matamata	Aggressive Dog	Dog came out from property on Tower Road and chased person on bike causing the cyclist to have to go onto the road to avoid the biting dog. The customer reported that other trail users had experienced being chased by the same dog.
11/12/2023	Matamata	Aggressive Dog	A cyclist reported two dogs, including a Rottweiler, behaving aggressively along the trail near Tower Road, causing fear and forcing riders to turn back.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 1 to retain the status quo for this section of the Hauraki Rail Trail (dogs must be kept under control).

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – No specific rules (dogs must be kept under control).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No change to the current situation.• No additional enforcement or signage required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not address community desire for clarity.

¹² This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within trail areas, as it was compiled using keyword searches.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
2.	Leash Control Area – Dogs are allowed at all times but must be on a leash.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong community support (78%). Allows shared use of trail for dog walkers and cyclists. Provides clear, simple rule. May reflect current situation (i.e. dogs use this section already). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of leashes causing hazards for cyclists. Narrower sections of the trail may pose increased risks. Dog waste and poor owner behaviour remain concerns. Unknown impact. May require enforcement and signage. May result in an increase to the number of dogs representing an unacceptably high risk to trail users (particularly cyclists). May result in stock disturbance (trail passes by farmland).
3.	Adjusted Hours – Dogs allowed on-leash outside peak hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balances flexibility with safety. Responds to feedback for time-based compromise. Reduces risk during busy hours. Supports exercise routines for owners and their dogs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex to communicate and enforce. May confuse visitors and trail users. Will require signage and education. May result in stock disturbance (trail passes by farmland). Still a restrictive option for dog owners.
4.	Seasonal Access - Dogs allowed only during off-peak seasons (on leash).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces conflict during busy summer periods. Ad protects stock during lambing/calving. Offers flexibility for locals in quieter months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex to enforce and communicate. May confuse visitors and trail users. Limited benefit year-round for dog owners. Will require signage and education.
5.	Trial Period – Allow dogs on this section at all times (on leash) for a set trial period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests community tolerance and enforcement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of negative incidents during trial. Requires monitoring and resources.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
•	Data-driven decision-making.	• May create uncertainty for trail users when trial period ends.	
•	Opportunity for education campaign.	• May result in stock disturbance (trail passes by farmland).	

5.1.4 Other Prohibited Areas

Survey Feedback

Should we add any other areas to the 'no dogs allowed' list?

Summary of Responses

Community feedback on expanding the areas where dogs are prohibited is highly polarised. While some respondents support additional restrictions in sensitive areas (e.g. cemeteries, and sports fields), others oppose further restrictions, instead calling for better enforcement of existing rules and more education for dog owners.

Opposition to Expanding Restrictions

Many respondents expressed strong opposition to adding more “no dogs” areas, citing:

- Responsible ownership: Well-behaved, leashed dogs should be allowed in most public spaces.
- Over-regulation concerns: Further restrictions would unfairly penalise responsible owners.
- Need for inclusion: Dogs are part of the family and should be welcome in shared spaces.
- Focus on enforcement: Emphasis should be on enforcing existing rules (e.g. leash use, waste pickup), not creating new ones.

Support for Additional Restrictions

A smaller group supported expanding the “no dogs” list, particularly in:

- Cemeteries and urupā: Seen as sacred and inappropriate for dogs.
- Sports fields: Concerns about hygiene, safety, and dog waste.
- Playgrounds and schools: Risk to children and discomfort for families.
- Environmental and wildlife areas: Protection of native fauna and flora.
- Te Miro Mountain Bike Park: Reports of dog-related bike accidents and hygiene issues.

Suggested additions:

- Te Aroha Domain (due to off-leash issues)
- Boyd Park (dog waste and off-leash concerns)
- Shared paths and cycleways

Enforcement and Education

Overall, there was strong support for:

- Better enforcement: More patrols, fines, and follow-up on complaints.
- Clearer signage: Especially at entrances to restricted areas.
- Public education: Campaigns on areas where dogs can and cannot go, leash use, waste disposal, and respectful behaviour.

Alternative Suggestions

- Time-based access: Allow dogs in some areas during off-peak hours (e.g. sports fields when not in use).
- Designated zones: Separate areas for dogs and non-dog users within shared spaces.
- Incentives for responsible ownership: e.g. certification for well-trained dogs.

Other Councils' Approaches

Under the Act, councils may prohibit dogs from specified public places to protect public safety, wildlife, and amenity values.

Common prohibited areas across councils include:

- Playgrounds and play equipment;
- Sports fields and stadiums;
- Cemeteries;
- Museums, Halls, and War Memorials;
- Sensitive wildlife areas.

Prohibited areas tend to focus on high-risk or sensitive locations to protect vulnerable community members and address environmental concerns.

Overall Staff Comment

Respondents who supported expanding prohibited areas highlighted cultural sensitivities (particularly cemeteries and urupā), hygiene and safety concerns in spaces used by children and families (such as sports fields and playgrounds), and environmental protection in wildlife habitats and bush tracks. Specific sites suggested included Te Aroha Domain, Boyd Park, Wairere Falls, shared paths, and Te Miro Mountain Bike Park, where dog-related incidents have been reported. It should be noted that the Wairere Falls tracks are located on public conservation land and are subject to the Conservation Act 1987, rather than a bylaw. Any restrictions in this area would therefore fall under the Department of Conservation's management rather than Council's.

Staff consider the current list of prohibited areas achieves an appropriate balance between public safety, cultural values, and amenity protection. For example, dogs are already prohibited within 15 metres of any children's play area or individual item of play equipment. Additionally, smaller parks where the entire area or the majority of the area is within 15 metres of play equipment are prohibited, and the historic Firth Tower precinct is also a prohibited area (excluding the carpark and camping/campervan area).

Areas frequently mentioned in feedback - such as cemeteries, Te Miro Forest, and Te Aroha Domain - are currently leash-control areas rather than prohibited areas. Council may wish to consider whether these areas should be elevated to prohibited status, particularly where cultural sensitivities or high-risk activities (e.g., mountain biking) are present. Any changes would require clear signage, public education, and enforcement planning to support compliance.

Some tracks managed by Council are located on land not owned by Council, such as Fish & Game land (e.g., Howarth Memorial Wetlands). Council bylaws apply only to public places within the district or land under Council ownership or management. Where tracks cross land owned by other parties, dog access is determined by the landowner or controlling agency.

Sensitive Environments

Tracks in kauri areas pose a risk of spreading *Phytophthora agathidicida* (kauri dieback disease) if dogs wander off tracks. Current practice requires dogs to be on-lead, but options include strengthening education and enforcement or prohibiting dogs in high-risk areas.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 10 incidents reported¹³

Date	Area	Category	CRM
01/05/2025	Matamata Cemetery	Dog Fouling	Dog owner allows dog to run off-leash and does not pick up after it.
10/03/2025	Te Aroha Domain	Aggressive Dog	A dog approached another dog and its owner and attempted to attack the leashed dog.
29/01/2025	Boyd Park (Te Aroha)	Aggressive Dog	Aggressive dog reported off-leash.
09/01/2025	Te Aroha Domain	Dog Bite	Dog attack caused fatal injuries to a dog being walked in the Domain. The dog that attacked was on leash but the owner did not have control.
22/07/2024	Te Aroha Domain	Dog Wandering	Customer reports there are a lot of dogs wandering in this area.
21/06/2024	Boyd Park (Te Aroha)	Dog Wandering	Dog dragging a chain seen wandering.
20/05/2024	Te Aroha Domain	Dog Wandering	Report of dog without a collar wandering into the Domain.
28/03/2024	Te Aroha Domain	Dog Wandering	A dog rushed toward a customer entering the Domain with two dogs
29/02/2024	Boyd Park (Te Aroha)	Breach of Bylaw - Dogs	Aggressive dogs are regular off-leash in the park.
10/11/2023	Te Miro Mountain Bike Park	Dog Bite	While riding their bike, customer reports they were chased down and bitten by a dog.

¹³ This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within the areas most commonly mentioned, as it was compiled using keyword searches.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 1 to retain the status quo. Following this, staff identified that a planned upgrade to the playground in Farmer Street Reserve (Te Aroha) would extend the footprint of the play area and recommend that this be added to the draft Bylaw as a prohibited area.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Retain current list of prohibited areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintains current balance between safety, amenity, and the needs of dogs and their owners.No additional costs to support enforcement (unless Council chooses to do so).Community familiarity with existing rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Does not address concerns raised about cemeteries, and other suggested areas.May be perceived as an insufficient response by those seeking stronger protections.
2.	Add Areas – Expand prohibited areas to include cemeteries and other sensitive sites identified in feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responds to cultural and safety concerns.Reduces risk of dog-related incidents in vulnerable areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">May be viewed as over-regulation by dog owners.Will require signage and education.May result in increased enforcement workload and potential community pushback.
3.	Remove Areas – Reduce current prohibited areas (e.g. allow dogs on-leash in some areas currently prohibited)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases flexibility for dog owners.May improve community satisfaction for those who oppose restrictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Potential increase in safety risks and hygiene issues.May lead to complaints from non-dog owners.

5.2 Dog Exercise Areas

Council is not legally required to provide designated dog exercise areas. However, these areas are offered to provide safe spaces for dogs to exercise off-leash, support responsible dog ownership, and reduce potential conflicts in public places and shared areas. They also respond to growing community expectations for dog-friendly facilities.

When considering dog exercise areas, Council must take into account the status of the land under the Reserves Act 1977 and to ensure compliance with relevant reserve management plans.

The current Policy states that Council will not provide exclusive dog exercise areas; however Council may wish to review whether this approach remains appropriate.

Key Considerations for Dog Exercise Areas¹⁴:

- Location and Accessibility: Areas should be conveniently located and accessible for dog owners while minimising impacts on other park users.
- Safety and Containment: Fencing is often requested to prevent dogs from roaming and to provide peace of mind for owners.
- Surface and Maintenance: Grassed areas are preferred for durability and ease of cleaning/maintenance. Maintenance requirements increase with higher use.
- Amenities¹⁵: Community feedback frequently requests additional features such as:
 - Agility equipment for enrichment and training.
 - Water stations for dogs.
 - Waste bins and bag dispensers.
- Size and Capacity: Larger areas are desirable for exercise and socialisation, but land availability, cost, and multi-use factors are limiting factors.
- Signage and Rules: Clear signage is essential to outline expectations (e.g., dogs under control, waste disposal).

Summary of Considerations for current dog exercise areas

The following areas are designated as dog exercise areas. These are areas where dogs can be exercised off-leash but must remain under the visual and oral control of the owner. Staff have provided commentary based on community feedback received and this is discussed further in the report.

Area	Considerations	Recommendation
Matamata		
Centennial Drive (from Tainui	Feedback indicates this area is heavily used by multiple groups and some	Review appropriateness of retaining off-leash status.

¹⁴ During consultation for the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (see Appendix 12, page 139), the community provided feedback on dog exercise areas, revealing two contrasting preferences:

- Manicured spaces – well-maintained grassy areas for dogs to run freely.
- Rugged environments – natural, less-structured spaces for dogs to explore.

These opposing views highlight the need for flexibility in design and management of dog exercise areas.

¹⁵ Provision of amenities has varied over time, with decisions often made on a case-by-case basis. For example, fencing was funded by a community group in Matamata, while Council provided fencing in Te Aroha. To ensure consistency and clarity going forward, it is recommended to establish development standards for dog exercise areas to include what amenities will be provided and under what circumstances.

Street to Broadway)	users believe this may not be suitable as an off-leash area. Volunteers managing the space report frequent issues with dog waste left behind by owners.	
Tom Grant Drive (from Rawhiti Avenue to Tawari Street)	Similar safety issues noted to Centennial Drive with the added complexity that there is a playground in this area. There are no concerns reported by the Committee who manage this space, however.	Consider the appropriateness of this area remaining as an off-leash dog exercise area.
Furness Reserve	No concerns raised.	Consider further signage/education around playground area.
Founders Park	Concerns about lack of fencing, and proximity to a busy road. Anecdotal feedback suggests this area is not well-used by dog owners.	Retain current status. No change recommended.
Peria Road Reserve (portion excluding memorial plantings and pathway)	Generally positive feedback; some reports of dog conflicts. Area is fenced and considered safe for off-leash use.	Consider appropriateness of retaining off-leash status, given the development of Peria Road Reserve.

Morrinsville¹⁶

Murray Oaks Reserve – State Highway 26	Concerns around a lack of fencing and close proximity to the state highway. A railway line also runs through the site.	Recommend reviewing appropriateness of retaining off-leash status. Noting however, that this area has been a dog exercise area for many years.
Morrinsville Recreation Ground Polo Field area (only at times when there is no horse or sports activity)	This area is generally praised for its size which reduces dog conflicts. There are some concerns about dog waste.	Retain the current off-leash status, but amend the Bylaw to specify that dogs are not permitted during events, as the existing provision only restricts access during horse or sports activities.
Holmwood Park (lower portion near the	Feedback mentions flooding and weed control issues.	Retain current status. Address operational issues (e.g. weed control) as part of park maintenance. <u>Flooding Constraints</u>

¹⁶ A Preliminary Site Investigation is currently underway in Morrinsville to assess opportunities for additional dog exercise areas.

**Piako
River)**

The park is partly located within the Piako River floodplain. This means that sections of the park will experience temporary flooding during river flood events. No drainage works can fully mitigate this risk, as it is inherent to the floodplain environment. Any development or planning for this area should take this limitation into account.

Te Aroha

Spur Street Esplanade	Concerns about flooding and lack of fencing along the Waihou River. Positive feedback about variety of space and opportunity for dogs to run.	Retain current status. The absence of fencing near the river presents a safety risk, and periodic flooding limits usability. These environmental factors make permanent infrastructure improvements challenging. Debris from flooding would also create maintenance issues for any fence along the river, noting that the park is already fenced on three sides and there is a fully fenced dog exercise area approximately five minutes walk from this park.
Reserve on Spur Street	Positive feedback on existing fencing. Suggestions for shade and additional amenities.	Retain current off-leash status. Consider operational enhancements such as shade provision, seating, and dog-friendly amenities (water stations, waste bins).

Indicative Costings for new areas

The following information provides an indication of the potential costs involved in setting up new/additional dog exercise areas. This is based on averaging the costs for the Te Aroha Dog Exercise Area (Reserve on Spur Street) and Matamata Dog Exercise Area (Peria Road)

Estimation (Annual):

Mowing: \$12,500

Spraying: \$1,500

Rubbish bin servicing: \$1,000 (including dog waste bags)

Gardening depending on plantings: \$1,500

Total: **\$16,500**

Other council's approaches to providing dog exercise areas

Across New Zealand, councils adopt a mix of strategies to balance dog exercise needs with public safety:

- **Hamilton City Council:**

- Recently created done a dog off lead area (dogs off lead but shared space with other users) and also dog exercise areas which are exclusively for dogs only.
- They are experimenting with having designated off-leash areas on the outskirts of sports fields over specific times of the day.

- **Christchurch City Council:**

- Provides a network of designated dog parks and exercise areas.
- Focus on fencing, safety, and education to minimise incidents.
- Policy includes clear obligations for owners and enforcement measures.

- **Waikato District Council:**

- Offers fenced dog parks and beach areas for off-leash exercise.
- Seasonal restrictions apply in high-use areas (e.g., beaches during summer).

- **Hauraki District Council:**

- The Council aims to balance the desire for dogs to have off-leash freedom with the need to protect the community and wildlife by ensuring dogs are under control, and owners are responsible. The Council provides specific designated off-leash areas and details rules for places like beaches, which have seasonal restrictions.

Best Practice Trends:

- Fully fenced dog parks with double-gated entry for safety.
- Clear signage and waste disposal facilities (although there are some examples of Council's removing bins).

- Separate zones for small and large dogs (becoming more popular).¹⁷
- Integration of dog exercise areas into reserve management plans.
- Education campaigns to promote responsible dog ownership.

¹⁷ Hamilton City Council received similar feedback during its Dog Control Bylaw consultation but noted that implementing separate zones was challenging and costly. By implementing two areas there are increased operational costs (e.g., more fencing and gates).

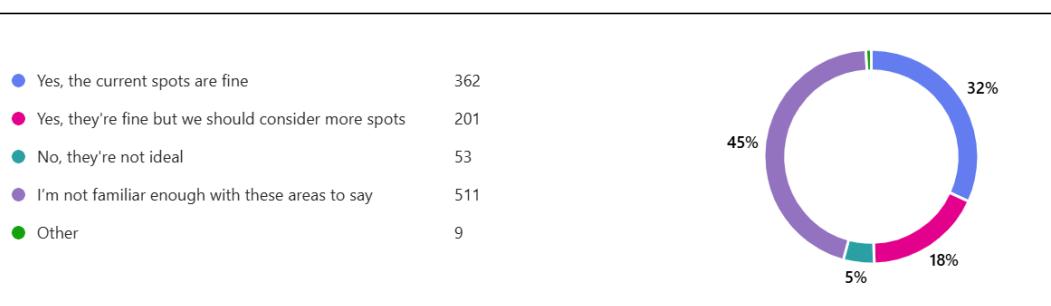
5.2.1 Dog Exercise Areas in Matamata

Survey Feedback

Matamata has five dog exercise areas

- **Centennial Drive (Tainui Street to Broadway)**
- **Tom Grant Drive (Rawhiti Avenue to Tawari Street)**
- **Furness Reserve**
- **Founders Park**
- **Peria Road Reserve (excluding memorial plantings and pathways)**

Do you think these are in the right spots?



If no - which exercise areas aren't in the right spots and what's letting them down?

Community feedback indicates mixed satisfaction with the current five designated dog exercise areas in Matamata. While some respondents feel the locations are appropriate, many express concerns about safety, fencing, signage, and dog owner/dog behaviour.

There is strong support for expanding and improving facilities, particularly at Swap Park, which is frequently mentioned as a de facto dog exercise area.

Key themes include:

- Positive feedback was received about the centrality and accessibility of current areas - with Peria Road Reserve being praised for being fenced and purpose built.
- Widespread support for fenced, safe off-leash areas.
- Concerns about unfenced parks near busy roads and playgrounds. Founders Park was raised as a safety concern.
- There were complaints about a lack of infrastructure including few waste bins, no bag dispensers and a lack of signage about dog rules. At the same time there were requests for clearer signage, waste bins, and a request for separate zones for small and large dogs.
- Swap Park is overwhelmingly suggested as a new or formalised dog exercise area (further comment below).
- Concern about multi-use areas such as Centennial Drive and Tom Grant Drive as off-leash areas. These areas are noted as being popular with walkers, cyclists and children. There are also reports of dog attacks and intimidation and dog waste is

often left behind by dogs off-leash. Some users regard off-leash dogs as inappropriate in these spaces.

Suggestions for New or Improved Areas

- **Swap Park:**
 - This was most frequently mentioned - in over 80 responses.
 - Seen as spacious, underutilised, and naturally suited for dog exercise.
 - Suggestions include fencing part of the park, adding bins, and formalising its status.
- **Other Suggestions:**
 - Pohlen Park
 - Bedford Park (note that this park is privately owned)
 - New subdivisions (e.g., Longlands, Peakedale):

Desired Features:

- Fencing: Strong support for fully enclosed areas to protect dogs and people.
- Separate zones: For small and large dogs to reduce conflict.
- Accessibility: Paths suitable for elderly and disabled users.
- Signage and bins: Clear rules and waste disposal infrastructure.

Other Feedback

Feedback from a volunteer group requested Tom Grant Drive be on-leash, noting surprise that it was currently off-leash. This was not well known.

Overall Staff Comment

Staff acknowledge the strong community desire for improved dog exercise facilities, particularly the provision of fenced areas and enhanced infrastructure such as bins, bag dispensers, and clear signage. Feedback highlights that these improvements are seen as essential for safety, convenience, and responsible dog ownership.

At the same time, staff recognise the need to balance community expectations with affordability for the community. Establishing new or upgraded facilities involves significant upfront capital costs for fencing, surfacing, and amenities, as well as ongoing maintenance and operational expenses. These include regular cleaning, waste management, and repairs to ensure the spaces remain safe and functional.

It is noted that there is currently no allocated funding for new or upgraded facilities. Should Council wish to progress this as a priority, funding would need to be considered as part of the upcoming Annual Plan 2026/27 or into the next Long Term Plan.

When identifying potential new sites, Council should consider the originally intended purpose. For instance, Swap Park was set aside in the 1980s for future sportsfields and is now increasingly used for informal recreation. This demonstrates that intended purposes may evolve over time as community needs change.

Future planning should consider historical intentions with current and emerging patterns of use to ensure these spaces deliver maximum value for residents. Ideally, this process should be guided by a master plan that identifies the best use of land and anticipates future needs, ensuring investment decisions are strategic and aligned with long-term community outcomes.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 21 incidents reported in the current Matamata dog exercise areas¹⁸

Date	Area	Category	CRM
19/06/2025	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog reported to be weaving through traffic.
05/06/2025	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Wandering	A couple of dogs reported loose on Tom Grant Drive.
23/05/2025	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog wandering off leash by Tawa Street and Centennial Drive.
23/05/2025	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog wandering off leash by Tawa Street and Centennial Drive (same dog as CRM above).
19/05/2025	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog walker reported that another dog is off-leash and following – near Bedford Park.
28/04/2025	Peria Road	Dog Wandering	Dog roaming without owner in dog park.
23/04/2025	Peria Road	Dog Wandering	Dog roaming without owner – is a regular visitor to the park.
25/03/2025	Peria Road	Breach of Bylaw – Dogs	Man reported living in car outside dog park. Dog is tied up inside the gated area, meaning no-one can get though.
23/01/2025	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Bite	Runner bitten by dog that rushed out of its property.
23/01/2025	Tom Grant Drive	Aggressive Dog	Report from observer to the dog bite incident above.
23/12/2024	Centennial Drive	Animal Welfare	Request to uplift dog who has been left behind.
19/12/2024	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Off-leash dog followed walker through the drive.
25/10/2024	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Bite	Walking down Tom Grant Drive by swing, dog approached and bit person on the leg.

¹⁸ This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within current Matamata dog exercise areas, as it was compiled using keyword searches.

Date	Area	Category	CRM
17/10/2024	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog loose on Tom Grant Drive.
09/07/2024	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Bite	Resident reported witnessing a dog fight and a person bitten at Tom Grant Drive playground, raising concerns about off-leash areas near children's play spaces. The CRM notes the area is currently off-leash, and staff discussed potential bylaw changes and increased patrols.
21/06/2024	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog wandering on Tom Grant Drive.
16/06/2024	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Two dogs reported to be roaming.
20/05/2024	Centennial Drive	Dogs Not on Lead or Leash in Parks and Reserves	A resident expressed concern about Centennial Drive and Tom Grant Drive as off-leash areas, citing repeated incidents of loose dogs approaching her leashed dog and dog waste not being picked up. Suggestion to restrict off-leash dogs to designated areas (Peria Road).
20/05/2024	Tom Grant Drive	Dog Wandering	Dog has been found wandering.
06/05/2024	Centennial Drive	Dog Wandering	Stray dog roaming the area.
01/09/2023	Centennial Drive	Dog Attacked Other Animal or Bird	Dog rushed off its property and tried to attack dog being walked on leash.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 3 to change Centennial Drive and Tom Grant Drive in Matamata from off-leash exercise to leash-control areas.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Retain the current five designated dog exercise areas with no changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to the current situation. Maintains existing arrangements familiar to dog owners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address safety concerns (unfenced areas near roads/playgrounds). Fails to respond to strong community

#	Option	Pros	Cons
2.	Status Quo + Safety Improvements Keep current areas but add fencing at Founders Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional budget required. Peria Road Reserve already meets fenced area expectations. Addresses key safety concern at Founders Park. Lower cost than creating new areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demand for improvements. Ongoing complaints about signage, bins, and dog owner behaviour. Centennial Drive and Tom Grant Drive safety concern remains. Centennial Drive and Tom Grant Drive safety concern remains. Does not meet demand for additional fenced areas or separate zones. May be seen as insufficient by community. Upfront cost for fencing.
3.	Remove Centennial Drive and/or Tom Grant Drive as Dog Exercise Area (Designate as on-leash area).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to strong feedback about safety and inappropriate off-leash use. Reduces risk of dog attacks and intimidation in high-use pedestrian/motor vehicle/cyclist area. Reduces risk to vulnerable users (e.g. play area in Tom Grant Drive). Reduces risk of accidents – motor vehicle vs. dog. Improves experience for non-dog users and volunteers who maintain the parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces number of designated exercise areas in Matamata. May inconvenience dog owners who currently use Centennial Drive/Tom Grant Drive. Requires enforcement and communication.
4.	Formalise Swap Park as Dog Exercise Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to overwhelming community support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue has been canvassed before and ruled out due to the

#	Option	Pros	Cons
5.	Expand network with new areas based on housing growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(80+ mentions in the Paw and Order survey and also supported during the previous bylaw consultation).Opportunity to create a model fenced area with separate zones and amenities.Meets strong demand for more fenced, safe spaces.Supports growth in new subdivisions.Opportunity to design inclusive, accessible facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">need for a masterplan for the use of the park, some opposition by local residents, and the identification of Peria Road as an alternative location.Very high cost option.Requires consultation with other park users.Longer implementation timeframe.High capital and operational cost.Requires land availability and planning.Longer implementation timeframe.

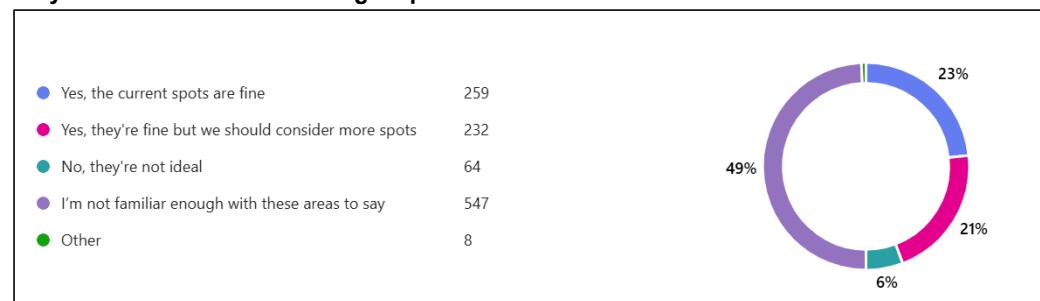
5.2.2 Dog Exercise Areas in Morrinsville

Survey Feedback

Morrinsville has three dog exercise areas:

- **Murray Oaks Reserve (State Highway 26)**
- **Morrinsville Recreation Grounds Polo Field¹⁹ (when no horses/sports are active)**
- **Holmwood Park (lower portion near the Piako River)**

Do you think these are in the right spots?



If no - which exercise areas aren't in the right spots and what's letting them down?

Positive feedback was received for the Morrinsville Recreation Ground – appreciated for the large space and community feel. However, there were also reports of uncontrolled dogs, dog waste and shared use with sports fields leading to conflict.

Morrinsville residents expressed strong interest in improving dog exercise areas, with concerns raised about safety, accessibility, and infrastructure. While some support the current locations, many feel they are inadequate due to lack of fencing, proximity to roads, and limited access.

There is support for a fully fenced, centrally located dog park, with the Lockerbie area and Riverview Road emerging as preferred locations. Key themes include:

- Majority support fenced, safe off-leash areas.
- Concerns about current sites, especially Murray Oaks Reserve due to the proximity to SH26 and railway line. The State Highway has a speed limit of 100 km/h and there are 2-4 active train lines running per day through the reserve. It is unfenced and perceived as unsafe. Holmwood Park was described as flood prone and seasonally unsuitable – near to the river with steep banks.
- Current areas are on the town's outskirts with the Lockerbie area frequently suggested for a new dog exercise area.
- Infrastructure improvements (bins, signage, water stations, agility equipment) are frequently requested.

¹⁹ Note that polo has not been played at this site for some time. The grounds are primarily booked for events such as the A&P Show and Motorama, and are otherwise available for use when no bookings or activities are scheduled.

- There is a need for clearer rules and better enforcement, especially around leash use and shared spaces.

Suggestions for New or Improved Areas

Most Frequently Suggested:

- Lockerbie:
 - Mentioned in over half of the suggestions.
 - Rapidly growing residential area with many dog owners.
 - Suggested locations include under the oak trees, near Oak Eatery, and Rushton Road.
- Riverview Road:
 - Spacious, and near the river walk.
 - Seen as ideal for a dedicated dog park.
- Wisely Reserve:
 - Underutilised and partially fenced.
 - Potential for agility equipment and shaded areas.

Desired Features:

- Fencing and gates
- Water stations
- Agility/play equipment
- Separate zones for small and large dogs
- Accessible paths for elderly and disabled users

Other Feedback

Asset Planning staff attended the Kiwanis One Day Fun Day and engaged with residents about their local dog exercise areas.

Most participants expressed a strong preference for using the Morrinsville Recreation Ground to exercise their dogs, primarily because its large size helps prevent conflicts between big and small dogs.

Suggested improvements included enhancing existing spaces with improved facilities such as agility equipment and pest control, providing fenced areas for safety, and creating more varied landscapes for dogs to play and infrastructure like dog waste bins.

Specific site feedback noted that Holmwood Park and Murray Oaks require maintenance, with fencing requested at Murray Oaks and bins at Holmwood Park. While the Recreation Ground was praised for its size, concerns were raised that smaller areas could lead to more dog conflicts. Additionally, some participants observed that many dogs are regularly off-lead in the Howarth Memorial Wetlands in Te Aroha.

Overall Staff Comment

Staff acknowledge the strong community interest in improving dog exercise areas in Morrinsville, with clear feedback highlighting the need for fenced, safe off-leash spaces, better infrastructure, and improved accessibility.

While the Morrinsville Recreation Ground is valued for its size and community feel, concerns remain about uncontrolled dogs, dog waste, and conflicts arising from shared use with sports fields. It is noted that the Morrinsville Recreation Ground Framework Plan contains Council's long-term vision for the reserve to enhance usability for all users and contains a smaller²⁰ off leash area, with opportunities to enhance amenities. No budget is currently allocated for these enhancements in the short term, meaning any significant changes will likely occur over the medium to long term, subject to future funding decisions and prioritisation in the Long Term Plan.

Current designated areas, such as Murray Oaks and Holmwood Park, are widely perceived as inadequate due to safety risks (e.g., proximity to SH26 and railway lines), seasonal flooding, and lack of fencing.

There is majority support for a fully fenced, dog park located in the central/northern area of town to support housing growth, with Lockerbie and Riverview Road emerging as the most frequently suggested sites. Staff note that a preliminary site investigation is currently underway for Riverview Road, which will assess its suitability for a dedicated dog park and inform future decisions. This study will consider factors such as site size, accessibility, environmental constraints, and cost implications. The primary issue for this site is that it is listed on the Hazardous Activities and Industries List (HAIL), meaning contaminated land considerations will need to be addressed as part of the feasibility assessment.

Additionally, there is growing interest in providing a dog exercise area in the northern part of Morrinsville, where housing development is increasing. The Riverview Road site may not fully address this need.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 1 Incident reported in the current Morrinsville dog exercise areas²¹

Date	Area	Category	CRM
24/07/2023	Morrinsville Recreation Ground	Dog Wandering	Three dogs reported roaming near kids playing soccer.

²⁰ The Framework Plan includes an area that is larger than the fenced dog exercise area in Te Aroha.

²¹ This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within current Morrinsville dog exercise areas, as it was compiled using keyword searches.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 1 to retain the status quo, while noting that a Preliminary Site Investigation is in progress to assess opportunities for additional dog exercise areas in Morrinsville. This investigation will occur outside the timeframe of the current Bylaw review.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Retain the current three designated dog exercise areas with no changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No change to the current situation. Maintains existing arrangements familiar to dog owners.• No additional budget required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not address safety concerns (unfenced areas near roads and railway).• Fails to respond to strong community demand for additional areas/improvements.• Ongoing complaints about signage, bins, and dog owner behaviour.
2.	Status Quo + Minor Safety Improvements Keep current areas but add fencing at Murray Oaks. Note: cannot be fully fenced due to railway. Add requirement for dogs to be on-lead during events at Morrinsville Recreation Ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mitigates safety concerns at Murray Oaks.• Lower cost than creating new areas.• Addresses gap in current Bylaw whereby dogs could be off leash at the Morrinsville Recreation Ground during events (currently only refers to sports activity).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not address railway line issue.• Current areas remain on outskirts.• Does not meet demand for fully fenced central/northern dog park.• May be seen as insufficient by community in response to Lockerbie and Riverview requests.
3.	Consider new dog exercise Area in central/northern area of town. Explore feasibility of adding a new fenced dog exercise area in central/northern area of Morrinsville (e.g., Lockerbie or Riverview Road).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responds to strong community support for fenced, safe off-leash areas.• Opportunity to design inclusive, accessible facilities.• May reduce multi-use conflicts in areas like Morrinsville Recreation Ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource intensive - requires site investigation and planning.• High capital and operational cost (unbudgeted).• Longer implementation timeframe.

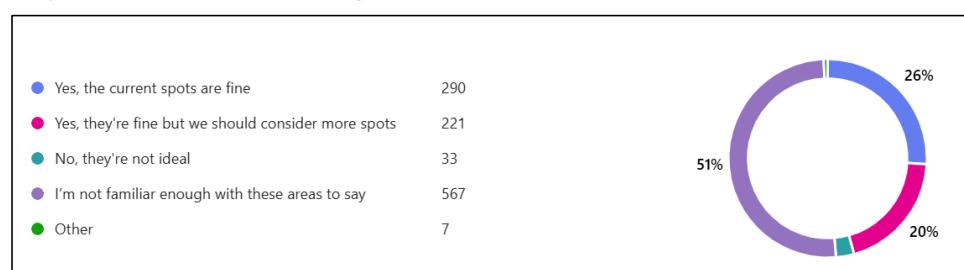
5.2.3 Dog Exercise Areas in Te Aroha

Survey Feedback

Te Aroha has two dog exercise areas:

- Spur Street Esplanade (near the Waihou River under the footbridge)
- Spur Street Reserve (opposite netball club and BMX track, Boyd Park)

Do you think these are in the right spots?



If no - which exercise areas aren't in the right spots and what's letting them down?

While residents appreciate having designated dog exercise areas, feedback highlighted some concerns about their location, usability, and safety. The Spur Street Esplanade area was noted as frequently unusable due to flooding and poor drainage, and the proximity to the river creates safety risks.

Accessibility is a recurring issue, with requests for additional dog exercise areas on the opposite side of the river and in more central locations to cater to residents with mobility challenges or limited transport. Infrastructure gaps - such as shade, seating, water stations, and clear signage were widely noted, alongside requests for better enforcement of leash rules and improved maintenance.

Key themes include:

- Flooding and Poor Drainage
Both designated areas are frequently unusable after heavy rain or when the river rises. Spur Street Esplanade - the area under the footbridge is particularly affected.
- Safety Concerns
The proximity to the river poses risks due to strong currents; fencing is inadequate. Owners worry about dogs accessing the river and potential drowning hazards.
- Size and Amenity
Current areas are considered too small, leading to overcrowding and dog conflicts. The limited provision of shade and seating reduces the comfort and usability of these areas for dog owners
- Location and Accessibility
Both areas are close together on one side of the river, leaving other parts of town underserved. Some residents request additional dog exercise areas on the opposite side of the Waihou River and in more central locations to address accessibility issues for people with mobility challenges or without transport.

- Dog Control and Enforcement
Complaints were received about uncontrolled dogs in wetlands and sports fields (Boyd Park).
There is a perception that rules are not enforced, leading to safety and hygiene issues, with dog waste a recurring concern.

Suggestions for New or Improved Areas

New Locations:

- Areas on the opposite side of the river, near residential zones, and possibly Tui Park.
- Spread out smaller parks rather than concentrating in one area.

Improvements to Existing Areas:

- Better fencing, especially near the river.
- Shade trees, seating, and water stations.
- Agility equipment for stimulation.

Policy and Enforcement:

- Clearer signage with fines and rules.
- Stronger enforcement of leash laws and off-leash boundaries.

Other Feedback

Staff attended the Te Aroha market to talk directly with residents. The following feedback was received:

- The reserve needs a double gate system like Matamata has.
- Suggestion for Skidmore Reserve and Tui Park to be an off-leash area for dogs.

Overall Staff Comment

The two designated dog exercise areas in Te Aroha were introduced during the 2016 review of the Dog Control Bylaw in response to concerns about the previous location near the wharf on the opposite side of the river. The Spur Street Esplanade area was established and continues to be maintained largely through volunteer efforts, reflecting strong community involvement.

Staff acknowledge the suggestions for additional areas. Any decision to create new sites will need to be carefully balanced against community demand across the wider district, available resources, and competing priorities.

Suggested improvements may be considered by Council, noting cost implications and need for staged implementation. Future planning should prioritise safe, accessible, and well-equipped dog exercise areas that meet community needs while aligning with Council's long-term vision for dog friendly facilities in the district and budgetary considerations.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – there were no incidents reported in the current Te Aroha dog exercise areas²²

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 1 to retain the status quo (retain the dog exercise areas in Te Aroha).

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Retain the current two designated dog exercise areas with no changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change to the current situation. Maintains existing arrangements familiar to dog owners. • No additional budget required. • Spur Street Reserve already meets fenced area expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address safety concerns (unfenced area, flooding). • Fails to respond to community demand for additional areas/improvements. • Ongoing complaints about signage, bins, and dog owner behaviour. • Does not address accessibility for residents on the opposite site of the Waihou River.
2.	Status Quo + Some Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing (where possible). • Adding shade trees, seating, agility equipment. • Improve drainage where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances usability and safety. • Lower cost than creating a new area - enhances existing infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upfront costs and ongoing maintenance • Does not address accessibility for residents on the opposite site of the Waihou River.
3.	Establish an additional fenced dog exercise in a central location (e.g., Tui Park or Skidmore Reserve).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses accessibility and safety concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High upfront cost and ongoing maintenance. • Requires balancing with demand and priorities in other towns across the district. • Longer implementation timeframe.

²² This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received within current Te Aroha dog exercise areas, as it was compiled using keyword searches.

5.2.4 General Feedback on Dog Exercise Areas

Which dog exercise areas in our district are your favourites and why?

Community members shared a wide range of preferences and experiences with dog exercise areas across the district. While many respondents appreciate the existing facilities, others highlighted issues with safety, accessibility, and infrastructure.

There is strong support for fenced, shaded, and well-equipped spaces, with Peria Road (Matamata), Morrinsville Recreation Ground, and Spur Street Reserve (Te Aroha) emerging as the most frequently praised locations.

Key themes include:

Most Popular Dog Exercise Areas

Peria Road (Matamata)

- Most frequently mentioned favourite. Praised for:
 - Secure fencing
 - Water access
 - Shade and seating
 - Dog waste bins
- Suggestions for improvement:
 - More shade trees
 - Agility equipment
 - Separate zones for small and large dogs

Morrinsville Recreation Ground

- Valued for:
 - Large open space
 - Fencing and visibility
 - Shade and social atmosphere
 - Link to Morrinsville River Walk
- Suggestions:
 - Better fencing for small dogs
 - Water stations
 - Seating and lighting
 - Agility course and pedestrian gate

Spur Street Reserve and Esplanade (Te Aroha)

- Both upper and lower areas mentioned.
- Appreciated for:
 - Fencing
 - Trees and shade (especially under the footbridge)

- Water access
- Suggestions:
 - Better fencing near the Waihou River
 - Seating and shade in upper area
 - Agility equipment

Other Areas Mentioned

- Centennial Drive & Tom Grant Drive (Matamata): Popular for shaded walking, bins, and accessibility.
- Swap Park (Matamata): Loved for its open space and informal use, though not officially designated as a dog exercise area.
- Holmwood Park (Morrinsville): Mentioned for quietness and river access.
- Wetlands (Te Aroha): Enjoyed for scenic walks, though there are concerns about off-leash dogs and wildlife protection.

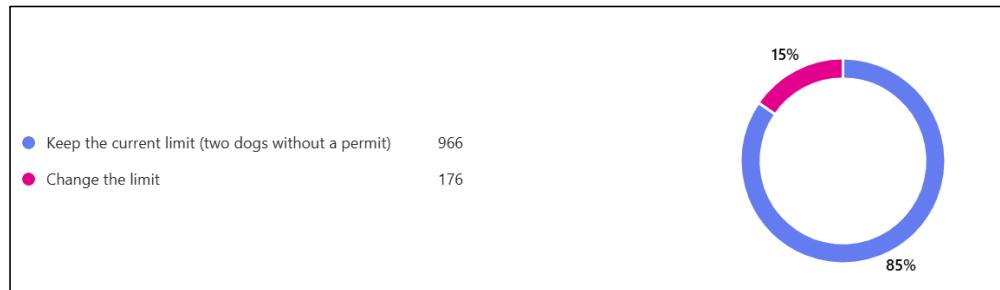
How do you and your dog/s usually travel to the dog exercise areas?



5.3 Dog Limits

Survey Feedback

At the moment, you can keep up to two dogs without needing a permit. To have more than two dogs, you need a permit and approval from your neighbours. *This doesn't include puppies under three months old.* There is no rule no limit for rural areas.



Pop your suggestions or general feedback about dog limits here.

While 85% of respondents supported the existing two-dog limit in urban areas, comments were also received advocating for either stricter controls or greater flexibility, depending on the owner's responsibility, property size, or dog breed.

Key themes include:

- Support for the current limit. many argued that the issue is not the number of dogs, but the behaviour of owners. Reasons for supporting the status quo included:
 - Noise and nuisance concerns: More dogs can lead to excessive barking and roaming.
 - Urban density: Smaller sections in town are not suitable for more than two dogs.
 - Fairness: The permit system allows for exceptions depending on circumstances. There were mixed views on requiring consent from neighbours. Some support it as a safeguard, whilst others see it as unfair or open to abuse due to neighbour disputes.
- A smaller group advocated for reducing the limit to one dog or requiring permits for all dogs, citing:
 - Public safety: Concerns about aggressive or roaming dogs.
 - Noise and hygiene: Barking, dog waste, and poor containment.
 - Overbreeding: Worries about backyard breeders and unregulated litters.

Suggestions included:

- Mandatory desexing unless a breeding licence is held.
- Permits for all dogs, not just for more than two.
- Breed-specific restrictions (e.g. banning "dangerous" breeds).
- Some respondents supported raising the limit to three or more dogs, especially for:
 - Responsible owners: Those with well-trained, registered, and contained dogs.
 - Special circumstances: Fostering, elderly pet care, or multi-generational households.

- Small or quiet breeds: Some suggested limits based on dog size or breed.
- There were concerns that the current rules are not enforced and the following suggestions were made:
 - Regular inspections.
 - Stronger penalties for non-compliance.
 - Better monitoring of unregistered or roaming dogs.
- Several respondents questioned why dogs are limited but cats are not. There were suggestions for similar rules for cats due to their impact on wildlife.

Other Feedback

There was no specific feedback (other than the survey responses) related to the number of dogs per household (e.g. from registered breeders).

Other Councils' Approaches

Typical limit:

- Two dogs per household in urban areas without special consent.
- Owners wishing to keep more than two dogs usually need to apply for a multi-dog permit or exemption.

Factors considered for permits:

- Property size and suitability.
- Impact on neighbours and amenity.
- Ability to manage dogs responsibly (e.g., containment, noise control).

Urban vs Rural:

- Rural properties often allow more dogs without a permit due to larger land areas.

Councils typically aim to balance animal welfare, public safety, and neighbourhood amenity by limiting dog numbers in residential areas and requiring permits for higher numbers. This approach helps reduce noise, roaming, and conflict while supporting responsible ownership.

Overall Staff Comment

The current two-dog limit remains appropriate and consistent with best practice across New Zealand. However, Council may wish to consider strengthening enforcement and education to address concerns about compliance and responsible ownership.

CRMs (01/07/2023 – 30/06/2025) – 1 Incident reported²³

Date	Area	Category	CRM
06/05/2024	Te Aroha	More Than Two Dogs	Customer thinks there are more than two dogs at neighbouring property.

²³ This dataset may not encompass all CRMs received regarding dog limits. The 'more than two dogs on urban property' category was searched.

Date	Area	Category	CRM
on Urban Property			
11/04/2024	Te Aroha	More Than Two Dogs on Urban Property	There are 5-6 dogs on property.
05/04/2024	Te Aroha	More Than Two Dogs on Urban Property	Report of at least five dogs at property. They try to attack neighbouring dog.
24/01/2024	Morrisville	More Than Two Dogs on Urban Property	There are four dogs on the property and they often bark.

Options

Following the Council workshop held on 26 November 2025, Elected Members provided direction to proceed with option 1 to retain the status quo – to allow up to two dogs without a permit in urban areas.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
1.	Status Quo – Allow two dogs without a permit (urban areas). No limit in rural zones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong community support (85%). Familiar and enforceable. No additional enforcement required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address concerns about overbreeding or aggressive dogs. Current enforcement challenges remain.
2.	Increase the Limit - Allow three or four dogs per property before a permit is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to feedback seeking flexibility (for responsible owners). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of increased noise and nuisance in urban areas (a growing trend). Enforcement burden may grow.
3.	Decrease the Limit - Reduce to one dog per property before a permit is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses concerns about safety, hygiene, overbreeding, dog behaviour and nuisance issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low community support. May be seen as overly restrictive. Increased permit applications and administrative costs. Challenging to monitor/enforce.

#	Option	Pros	Cons
4.	Tiered approach - Different limits for urban vs rural/lifestyle properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reflects property size and density differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adds complexity to rules.May not have community support.Increased permit applications and administrative costs.

5.4 General Feedback

The general feedback received reveals a divide between responsible dog owners seeking more inclusive, dog-friendly policies and residents frustrated by roaming dogs, nuisances such as barking, safety concerns, a perceived lack of enforcement, and irresponsible ownership.

While many appreciate existing dog exercise areas and facilities, there is a strong demand for better enforcement, more infrastructure, and greater accountability for dog owners.

Roaming and Uncontrolled Dogs (Most Frequent Concern)

- Widespread frustration with dogs roaming the streets, noted in Waharoa, Te Aroha, and Morrinsville. Reports of attacks on pets, intimidation of walkers, and property damage.
- Many feel unsafe walking their dogs and/or with children due to aggressive or loose dogs.
- Perception of inaction from Council and animal control officers is common.

Key suggestions:

- Increase animal control staffing and patrols.
- Enforce existing bylaw more consistently.
- Introduce a “three strikes” rule or demerit system for repeat offenders.
- Impound or rehome dogs from negligent owners.

Dog Waste and Infrastructure

- Dog waste on footpaths, parks, and berms is an issue.
- Lack of bins and bag dispensers in key walking areas (e.g. Centennial Drive, Peria Road, Lockerbie).
- Some owners leave bags behind or discard them improperly.

Key suggestions:

- Install more bins and bag dispensers in high-traffic areas.
- Regularly maintain and refill dispensers.
- Enforce fines for non-compliance.

Requests for More Dog-Friendly Spaces

- There is demand for greater access for dogs in:
 - CBDs (on-leash)
 - Hauraki Rail Trail
 - Bush tracks and walkways

Key suggestions:

- Allow on-leash access in CBDs and other public spaces.
- Create more fenced dog exercise areas (especially in Morrinsville).
- Introduce agility equipment, shade, seating, and water stations in parks.

- Time-based access or certification for responsible owners.

Enforcement and Education

- Strong demand for better enforcement of leash rules, barking complaints, and registration.
- Calls for education campaigns and mandatory training for owners.
- Some suggest licensing dog owners rather than limiting dog numbers.

Key suggestions:

- Offer subsidised or free dog training.
- Introduce a “responsible dog owner” certification.
- Increase visibility and responsiveness of animal control.

Dog Registration and Equity

- Many feel registration fees are too high, especially for:
 - Rural owners who don’t use urban facilities.
 - Responsible owners who feel they’re subsidising irresponsible ones.

Key suggestions:

- Offer discounts for:
 - Desexed dogs
 - Responsible owners
 - Gold card holders
 - Dogs NZ members
- Consider a “good behaviour bond” or tiered registration system.

Dog Welfare and Owner Accountability

- Concerns about:
 - Dogs chained 24/7
 - Lack of shelter, food, or exercise
 - Backyard breeding

Key suggestions:

- Enforce welfare standards.
- Partner with vets for low-cost desexing.
- Introduce a licensing system for breeders.
- Mandatory desexing unless licensed to breed.

Inclusivity and Community Wellbeing

- Many view dogs as family members and want them integrated into daily life. Others, especially non-dog owners, express concerns about safety, noise, and hygiene.



Plunket Proposal for Thomas Park

Parks and Facilities Planning Team



Locality Map



Proposed Building



Existing carport area proposed for building site



Recommendation



Tūtohunga | Recommendation

That:

1. The report is received;
2. Council provides landowner approval in principle for the Plunket Society to relocate and install an additional building on Thomas Park, subject to all relevant statutory, regulatory, and consent requirements being satisfied; or Council declines to provide landowner approval for the Plunket Society to relocate and install an additional building on Thomas Park.
3. Council approves an amendment to the existing ground lease with the Plunket Society to formally incorporate the additional building, subject to final legal terms being agreed.
4. Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive (or their delegated representative) to undertake all necessary administrative and legal actions to give effect to these resolutions.

