



ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRE-ELECTION REPORT 2025

FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE, TANYA WINTER
JUNE 2025



TĒNĀ KOUTOU KATOA, NĀKU TE ROUROU, NŌU TE ROUROU, KA ORA AI TE IWI WITH MY BASKET AND YOUR BASKET, THE PEOPLE WILL THRIVE

You are probably reading this report because you intend to stand for Council in the local government election in October 2025, right? That is fantastic! I want you to know that there is nothing political in this report. It does not need Council endorsement or approval.

This report is MY view on the challenges and opportunities in our rohe (district) and for the Council, and the leadership I think we need to tackle the challenges and make the most of the opportunities.

Tanya Minter
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



TĀ TĀTOU ROHE OUR DISTRICT

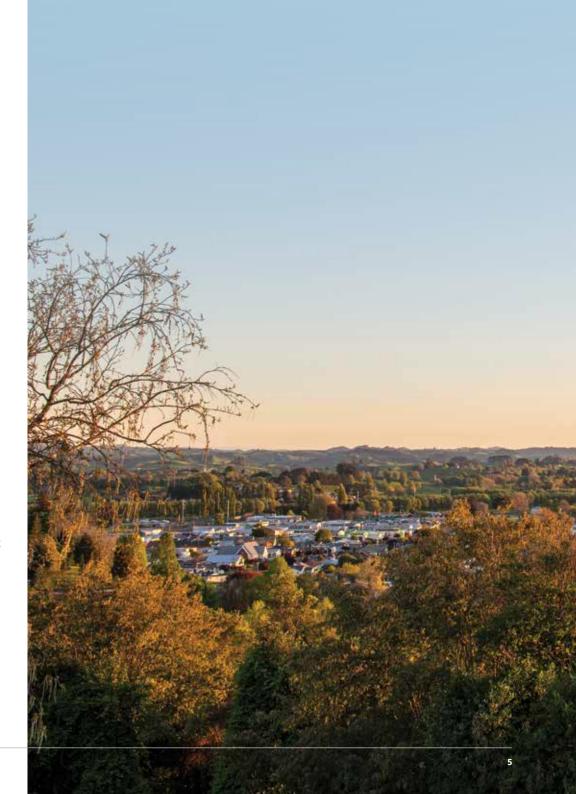
It's a challenging time for our District, as we continue to grow and adapt in the face of Government reforms and the volatility of global conditions.

The Government has required councils to change the delivery of water and wastewater services - referred to as Local Water Done Well. Our Council has assessed the best option for our District and is joining six other councils in the region in establishing a separate council-controlled organisation (CCO) for the management and delivery of water services (referred to as Waikato Water Ltd).

Population projections are expected to be updated later in 2025, but recent forecasts indicate the District could to grow by up to 30% over the next 30 years (that's another 3500 people!). This growth is welcome, as it will help lift the economic and social wellbeing of residents, and we have been planning for it.

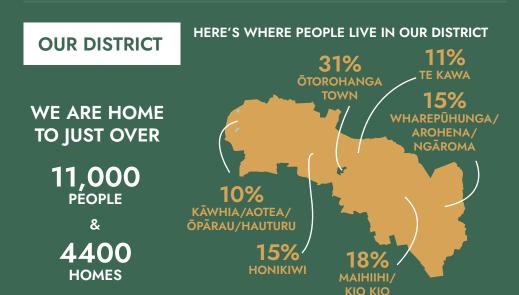
In developing our 2024-2034 Long Term Plan (LTP), our Council took a 'steady as she goes' approach - ensure prudent financial management but continue to invest for the future of our District. The Council has, with community support, adopted three concept plans covering the whole district. In the LTP, significant funding over three years was confirmed to support the implementation of these concept plans.

The adoption of an Economic Wellbeing Strategy in 2024 demonstrated the Council's desire to more closely integrate economic development outcomes with wider community wellbeing.



DISTRICT PROFILE

(Source: Stats NZ and Infometrics)



OUR POPULATION HAS GROWN BY 15% IN 11 YEARS, AND IS PROJECTED TO CONTINUE TO GROW AT THE SAME RATE

OUR POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

Babies/Pre-Schoolers (0-4) 6.5%
Primary Schoolers (5-9) 7.1%
Middle Schoolers (10-14) 7.7%

Secondary Schoolers (15-19) 6.3%

Tertiary education (20-24) 5%

Young Workforce (25-34) 12.4%

Parents and Homebuilders (35-49) 19.4%

Mature Workers (50-59) 12.2%

Empty Nesters and Retirees (60-69) 12%

Seniors (70+) 11.4%

HOUSING AND INCOME



65%
HOME OWNERSHIP

\$452,412

COMPARED WITH \$881,338 FOR NZ

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

25%

COMPARED TO 39% FOR NZ

39%

LOWER AVERAGE WEEKLY RENT THAN NZ AVERAGE





\$66,417

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME COMPARED WITH \$78731 FOR NZ

1 in 5 of our residents live in areas rated as the most deprived in Aotearoa NZ, while 1 in 15 live in areas rated as the least deprived

11% of us are on a benefit, such as job seeker, supported living and solo parent support

Ōtorohanga District Council Pre-Election Report

ECONOMY

\$70,502

GDP (GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT) PER CAPITA



\$758M

DISTRICT GDP - UP 2.4% FROM 2023

TOP INDUSTRIES BY GDP

\$280M	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING
\$75M	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SAFETY
\$44M	MANUFACTURING
\$42M	RENTAL, HIRING, AND REAL ESTATE SERVICES
\$36M	CONSTRUCTION
\$31M	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES
\$22M	RETAIL TRADE
\$21M	HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

TOP INDUSTRIES BY JOBS



1487 work in agriculture, forestry and fishing

538 work in Public Administration and Safety

422 work in Construction

354 work in Manufacturing

265 work in retail trade

work in Education and Training

work in Professional,
Scientific and Technical
Services

work in Health Care and Social Assistance

OUR POPULATION IS BECOMING MORE DIVERSE



88% BORN IN AOTEAROA NZ 12%
BORN
OVERSEAS

OF OUR POPULATION

76% identify as European /European decent

identify as being of Māori decent

4% identify as Asian

3% identify as Pacific

(note total exceeds 100% as people can identify as more than one ethnicity)

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING OUR COMMUNITY OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS ARE:

Housing availability & affordability

Lifting the involvement in local decision-making & community participation

The post Treaty settlement environment for iwi & opportunities for partnership

Climate change, managing our waste & living sustainably

Economic wellbeing, social cohesion and adapting to change

Rebuilding trust in authority, institutions and with each other

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into our internal processes and interface with our customers



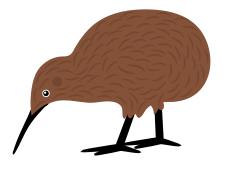


TĀ TĀTOU KAUNIHERA OUR COUNCIL

Council is in good shape, and we have some of the lowest rates in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We are the 9th smallest council in Aotearoa and yet I think we punch above our weight. We are a small team of around 60 staff, and we are expected to deliver the full range of services just like the bigger councils. This can stretch us a bit sometimes and means that most staff wear more than one hat.

How well we perform was recently independently assessed under the Te Korowai (CouncilMARK) system. I'm proud to say that our performance was rated as an 'A'. But we're not resting on that as we seek to continue to improve.





10

SOME OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING ARE:

Attracting & retaining good staff

Managing cost pressures from inflation & supply constraints

Understanding and adapting to resource management planning reform

Transitioning our water services responsibilities to a new regional entity from mid-2027 and ensuring the Council organisation remains viable

Exploring new ways of leveraging the Council's role and resources to enable greater community benefit

Adapting to climate change, reducing risk and building resilient infrastructure



LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IS HAPPENING — THE BIGGEST IN A GENERATION

The Government's reform programme will impact every aspect of Council operation – from infrastructure planning and service delivery to decision-making. Recent and proposed changes to legislation are directing council activities, structure and decision-making, with less ability for councils to work with communities on developing and delivering on local needs and aspirations. While ŌDC have supported the localism kaupapa of Local Government NZ, it's fair to say that local government is becoming less local.

Directed by new legislation governing water services delivery, our Council has signaled an intention to be part of a soon-to-be-established regional water services entity (CCO), jointly owned by councils across the Waikato region but operating independently of these councils. This means water services activities currently undertaken by our Council will be undertaken by this new entity from mid-2027.

Water Services activity currently accounts for around 13% of our total budget, which includes all of the Council admin and other organisational support activities (i.e not just the staff running our treatment plants or maintaining the networks). The transfer of Water Services to the new regional entity raises the question about the financial sustainability of the Council organisation after mid-2027.

Add to that, are the expected impacts on our existing planning services through changes to the Resource Management Act 1992. A likely outcome is the demise of District Plans in favour of a new regional planning regime, with a single resource management plan covering the entire Waikato region. There is less certainty about what this new regional planning arrangement will be and the knock-on effects for our Council.

We have a project underway to assess the impact of these changes – from both a budget perspective and staff impact. As a small organisation, many of our staff wear multiple hats, so not all roles can neatly transfer over to a new Water Services entity or a regional planning regime. If the Council organisation post these changes is unlikely to be financially sustainable, the structure of the Council will need to change to create scale efficiencies. That could mean substantially increasing our shared service arrangements between and across councils in the region and/or some sort of local government reorganisation. At the most extreme it could mean amalgamating with at least one other council.

While the Government has stated that council amalgamations are not something they are pursuing, for smaller councils like Ōtorohanga that may be an inevitable outcome of the reforms currently in train.

HOW DOES ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL WORK?

The Council is made up of two parts: governance (Mayor and 9 Councillors) and organisation (Chief Executive and staff)

GOVERNANCE

The Mayor and Councillors make decisions on the direction of Council and employ the Chief Executive.

MAYOR

9 COUNCILLORS

4 Standing committees

- Risk and Assurance
- Chief Executive Review
- Grants and Awards
- Creative Communities Scheme

Other local government committees Council has representation on:

- Emergency Management
- Regional Transport

Community Boards

- Ōtorohanga
- Kāwhia

Council staff provide advice to elected members, implement Council decisions and look after the district's day-to-day operations.



ORGANISATION

The Chief Executive employs all Council staff, leads the organisation and works with the Leadership Team to implement the Council's decisions.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Group Manager Business Enablement
- Group Manager Engineering & Assets
- Group Manager Strategy & Community
- Group Manager Regulatory & Growth

Staff also work alongside our communities through community boards and funding committees, and by directly engaging with partners, stakeholders, residents, community groups and iwi.

OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

Council is in a strong financial position, with the expected year-end (30 June 2025) position to be a higher surplus than forecast in the 2024/25 Annual Plan. This has been achieved through reduced expenditure, including holding staff positions vacant for longer, strong project planning and delivery and delaying projects where it was prudent to do so. More detail on our finances is provided in the financial section.

8%

OF TOTAL COUNCIL SPEND

TRUSTED LEADERSHIP

- Providing leadership and governance
- Listening to communities
- Building Tiriti-based partnerships
- · Providing clear and timely communication
- Ensuring great performance and service delivery by Council

69% OF TOTAL COUNCIL SPEND

RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

- · Roading/footpaths, road safety
- Collecting, treating and getting rid of wastewater
- Taking, treating, storing and distributing water
- Collecting and disposing of stormwater
- Maintaining and operating flood protection works including seawalls
- Climate change work

6% OF TOTAL COUNCIL SPEND

STRONG COMMUNITIES

- Libraries
- Civil Defence
- Enabling communities to take collective action on issues important to them
- Providing funding and other support to organisations and community groups
- Art and culture
- Promoting the District and supporting local businesses

9% OF TOTAL COUNCIL SPEND

VIBRANT PLACES & SPACES

- Facilities and public spaces, such as halls, parks and reserves
- Cemeteries
- Public toilets
- Ōtorohanga swimming pool

2% OF TOTAL COUNCIL SPEND

RESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Kerbside rubbish and recycling services
- Transfer stations/recycling depots
- · Waste minimisation planning and delivery
- Education

6% OF TOTAL COUNCIL SPEND

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC SAFETY

- Providing planning and regulatory services to manage the natural and physical resources of the district
- Environmental health and animal management services





OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MANA WHENUA IS ONE OF PARTNERSHIP

We have focused on strengthening our partnership with mana whenua. This journey has taken us across the district to different marae, to historic and cultural sites of significance

Our relationships have been an intentional focus, and in working with Māori, with the belief to enable positive futures for our communities. To date, nurturing our relationships genuinely has been at the heart of our engagement with Māori.

In light of this relationship focus, Council has developed a Māori Engagement Framework that recognises the unique status of Māori as tangata whenua and seeks to weave Te Ao Māori perspectives into Council operations and services. By doing so, Council demonstrates its commitment to fostering respect for Māori identity and heritage, to building authentic partnership, and acknowledges the contributions of Māori to the broader community.

Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Mahuta ki te Hauāuru, Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti Uakau, Te Patupō and Ngāti Te Wehi have historic and territorial rights in Ōtorohanga district. Mana whenua interests are represented by 22 local marae and seven iwi organisations.



NGA MARAE



IWI ORGANISATIONS:

- Waikato-Tainui
- Te Nehenehe Trust
- Raukawa Charitable Trust
- Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo
- Apakura Rūnanga Trust
- Ngāti Te Wehi
- Ngāti Te Patupō
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Mahuta ki Te Hauāuru

KEY PROJECTS/ INITIATIVES OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

CONTINUING TO PROGRESS LOCAL WATER DONE WELL

Continuing to progress the work we started last year to meet the new requirements under the governments legislative framework for Local Water Done Well. This includes working on the 'behind the scenes' details for a seamless transition to a different water services delivery model for the District.

LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER 2025

and on-boarding the new council and community boards will be a big focus for elected members and staff alike.

COMMUNITY PLACES AND SPACES

Our strategy of improving and making better use of community places and spaces will continue to be in the spotlight. This includes ongoing implementation of the Ōtorohanga Town, Kāwhia, Aotea, Ōpārau and Rural concept plans. We will also be progressing the Huipūtea Reserve Development Plan and upgrading the Jervois Street (Kāwhia) toilets.



INITIATIVES - CONTINUED

ROADING NETWORK

Our road network continues to be our largest spend area. We have had to adjust our programmes as a consequence of lower than anticipated funding allocations from NZTA particularly for activities like footpaths and road safety. However, the basics are well covered and network resilience remains a priority.

LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

The government has embarked on a range of legislative reforms and changes affecting both resource management and building control that Council will need to respond to and implement.

ECONOMIC WELLBEING STRATEGY

Implementing our Economic Wellbeing Strategy and doing more with Council resources, particularly with procurement, to support local businesses under our Te Punga o te Hapori (Anchor of the Community) programme.

CONSIDERING THE FUTURE OF THE COUNCIL ORGANISATION

Considering the future of the Council organisation in light of expected changes with water services delivery and wider central Government reforms.

KĀWHIA SEA WALLS

Progressing the renewal of consents and maintenance/upgrade works for the Kāwhia sea walls.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Assessing the risk to Council infrastructure from climate change impacts and updating asset management plans accordingly.

Working with communities on understanding the impacts of climate change and identifying options and timeframes for adapting to those.

RUBBISH AND RECYCLING

Review and retendering of the kerbside rubbish and recycling contract, and aligning Council waste management and minimisation services with the Government's recently adopted waste strategy.

SOLAR ENERGY

Working with The Lines Company to install solar systems on key Council buildings as a way of reducing our energy costs.

WASTEWATER PLANT

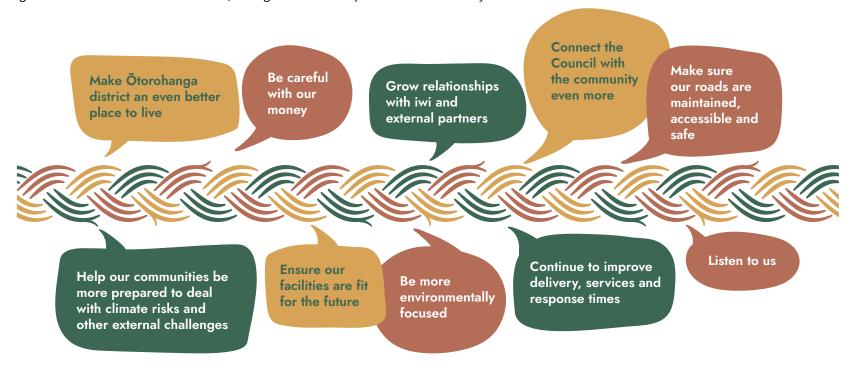
Upgrading the Ōtorohanga wastewater plant in line with consent conditions and operational requirements.

TŌ HAUTŪTANGA YOUR LEADERSHIP

Councils are constantly changing and a diverse range of leadership skills will be required to take us into the future.

Prior to the last central Government elections, it was likely that we would see a greater move away from being infrastructure and regulation focused, to making sure all members of our community have a quality of life. However, the current Government has signaled councils need to refocus on delivering essential services and core infrastructure and intend mandating this through significant reform of the Local Government Act 2002. In future councils may not have a legislative mandate to progress community wellbeing.

Notwithstanding the Government's reform intentions, during the recent LTP process our community told us ...



Balancing Government change and the range of community aspirations will be central to an incoming Council, along with considering what a future Ōtorohanga District Council looks like. Future leaders will need to successfully navigate this, both within and beyond the Council.

Ötorohanga District Council Pre-Election Report



LEGAL STUFF AND BUDGETS

The preparation of and information in this document is a legal requirement placed on the Chief Executive Officer of the Council, by section 99A of the Local Government Act 2002.

This section contains the following information:

- · A Summary Balance Sheet for the three years leading up to the date of the election (being 2022/23, 2023/2024 and 2024/25) and for the three years after the election (being 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28).
- · A Funding Impact Statement for the three years prior to the date of the election and the three years after the election
- · Details of the major projects proposed in the 3 years following the election
- · A statement comparing rates, rate increases and borrowings to limits specified in the Long-Term Plan.

SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION

The information provided in this section is a summary of what can be found in the following publicly available documents. Readers who want more detail should refer to the following audited documents, which are available on our website (www.otodc. govt.nz):

- · 2022/23 Annual Report
- · 2023/24 Annual Report
- · 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan

The data shown in the tables that follow are:

- The financial results for the Council for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years as per audited annual reports.
- The budgets and projections for the 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years as per the audited 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan.

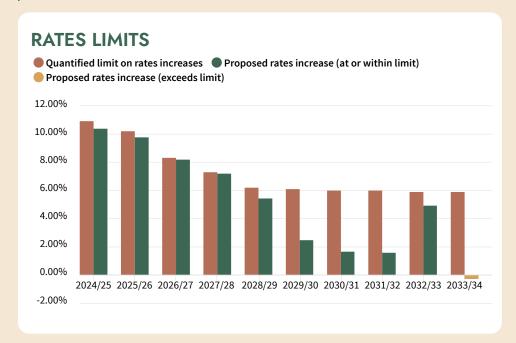


LEGAL STUFF AND BUDGETS

As part of the Long-Term Plan process, Council is required to set a Financial Strategy. Part of this Strategy sets limits on rates; rates increases and borrowings. The following graphs are from the 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan and show how Council is expecting to perform against those limits.

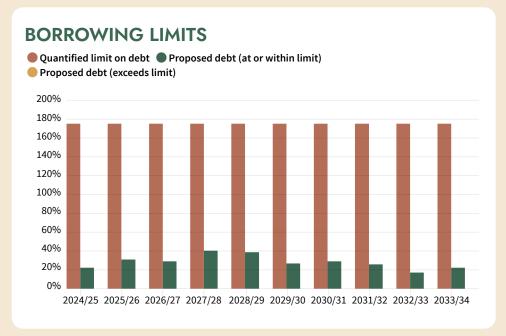
RATES LIMITS

The Council has set a limit on rates that they will not exceed prior year rates plus an increase of the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) plus a percentage – being 8% for 2025/26, 6% for 2026/2, 5% for 2027/28 and then 4% from 2028/29 onwards. The LGCI is a measure similar to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) but taking account of the types of items Councils purchase, as opposed to the CPI which uses goods that households purchase.



BORROWING LIMITS

The Council has set a limit on borrowings that they cannot exceed 175% of total revenue for each financial year.



Ōtorohanga District Council **Pre-Election Report**

PROSPECTIVE BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR COMMENCING 1 JULY 2025

The Balance Sheet shows the assets and liabilities of the Council and the level of ratepayer equity at the end of each financial year.

	2022/23 ACTUAL (\$000)	2023/24 ACTUAL (\$000)	2024/25 PROJECTED (\$000)	2025/26 PROJECTED (\$000)	2026/27 PROJECTED (\$000)	2027/28 PROJECTED (\$000)
ASSETS						
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	2,207	2,272	3,170	2,241	2,426	2,555
Inventory	37	31	31	32	33	34
Prepayments	-	171	-	-	-	-
Trade and other receivables	4,958	4,926	2,295	2,409	2,460	2,512
Loan receivable	4,000	-	250	250	250	250
Total current assets	11,203	7,401	5,746	4,933	5,169	5,350
NON-CURRENT ASSETS						
Intangible assets	5	109	157	195	195	183
Investments	7,799	7,675	7,847	8,011	8,182	8,345
Property, plant and equipment	394,510	411,335	405,132	409,209	411,931	442,342
Loan receivable	1,706	1,468	1,500	1,250	1,000	750
Total non-current assets	404,020	420,587	414,636	418,665	421,308	451,621
Total assets	415,223	427,987	420,382	423,598	426,477	456,971
LIABILITIES						
Current liabilities						
Employee benefit liabilities	517	585	401	421	430	439
Income in advance	1,677	1,126	741	778	794	811
Provisions	1	1	1	1	1	1
Trade and other payables	4,328	4,958	2,715	2,825	2,874	2,924
Borrowings	6,000	4,000	-	-	-	-
Development and financial contributions in advance	527	567	541	541	541	541
Total current liabilities	13,050	11,237	4,399	4,565	4,640	4,715
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES						
Borrowings	448	5,448	6,223	9,223	9,223	13,275
Employee benefit liabilities	27	34	46	49	50	51
Provisions	13	12	16	16	16	16
Total non-current liabilities	487	5,494	6,285	9,287	9,288	13,342
Total liabilities	13,538	16,730	10,684	13,852	13,929	18,057
Net assets	401,685	411,257	409,699	409,745	412,548	438,914
EQUITY						
Retained earnings	165,967	171,100	164,002	163,835	164,057	165,311
Reserve funds	2,954	3,104	3,023	3,074	3,125	3,234
Revaluation reserves	232,763	237,053	242,673	242,837	245,366	270,369
Total equity attributable to ODC	401,685	411,257	409,699	409,745	412,548	438,914
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ALL OF COUNCIL FUNDING IMPACT STATEMENT

The Funding Impact Statement shows how funds raised from rates and other sources are used to fund Council's expenditure.

	2022/23 ACTUAL (\$000)	2023/24 ACTUAL (\$000)	2024/25 PROJECTED (\$000)	2025/26 PROJECTED (\$000)	2026/27 PROJECTED (\$000)	2027/28 PROJECTED (\$000)
SOURCES OF OPERATING FUNDING						
General Rates, Uniform Annual General Charges, Rates Penalties	7,018	7,642	8,571	9,504	10,291	10,683
Targeted Rates	7,668	8,072	8,928	9,744	10,435	11,391
Subsidies & Grants for Operating Purposes	4,538	4,175	4,099	4,177	4,271	4,365
Fees & Charges	993	957	1,067	1,095	1,117	1,140
Interest and Dividends from Investments	446	403	25	26	26	27
Local Authorities Fuel Tax, Fines, Infringement Fees, & Other Receipts	597	656	701	704	733	752
Total sources of Operating Funding	21,260	21,905	23,390	25,250	26,873	28,357
APPLICATION OF OPERATING FUNDING						
Payments to Staff & Suppliers	16,254	18,623	20,698	21,071	22,003	21,554
Finance Costs	482	807	221	327	327	485
Other Operating Funding Applications	1,562	1,630	1,091	1,112	1,136	1,160
Total application of Operating Funding	18,297	21,060	22,010	22,510	23,466	23,199
Surplus (deficit) in operating funding	2,963	845	1,381	2,740	3,407	5,159
SOURCES OF CAPITAL FUNDING						
Subsidies & Grants for Capital Expenditure	3,091	4,073	4,248	4,333	4,431	4,528
Development & Financial Contributions	24	98	10	10	10	11
Increase (Decrease) in Debt	2,207	3,725	4,033	1,338	977	740
Gross Proceeds from Sale of Assets	89	78	60	153	203	186
Total sources of Capital Funding	5,412	7,973	8,351	5,834	5,621	5,465
APPLICATION OF CAPITAL FUNDING						
Capital Groweth	11	19	425	409	158	162
Capital Level of Service	1,708	3,501	300	230	224	402
Capital Renewals	7,622	8,368	10,633	10,340	9,580	11,044
Increase (Decrease) in Reserves	-966	-3,071	-1,626	-2,405	-934	-983
Total application of Capital Funding	8,374	8,817	9,732	8,574	9,028	10,624
Surplus (deficit) in operating funding	-2,963	-844	-1,381	-2,740	-3,407	-5,159
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MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

The table shows the major projects for the next three years (2025-2028).

	LTP 2025/26	LTP 2026/27	LTP2027/28
LAND TRANSPORT			
Drainage renewals	499000	520457	427770.88
Footpath Renewals	124000	129751.29	387411.0
WATER SUPPLY			
Arohena Drinking Water Upgrades	100000	0	(
WASTEWATER			
Clarifier and dewatering plant	400000	0	
STORMWATER			
Domain Drive & Kakamutu Rd Stormwater investigation	100000	0	
FLOOD PROTECTION			
Flood Pump Rebuilds	50000	0	
VIBRANT PLACES AND SPACES			
Huiputea Reserve management Plan Implementation	30000	31260	
Jim Barker Memorial - New Turf	0	135460	
Refurbishment of Pensioner Housing	25000	26050	2660
Replacement of boat ramps	0	0	6384
Town Concept Plan Implementation	600000	625200	

Ōtorohanga District Council **Pre-Election Report**

