

## **4. Towns we are proud of**

### **Quality Urban Living**

#### **Why is this important?**

South Waikato has considerable diversity in its urban areas. The largest town of Tokoroa has a forestry heritage, while the smaller town of Putaruru has a more rural atmosphere. The northern gateway village of Tirau boasts boutique retail services and a “corrugated iron” theme, and the western settlement of Arapuni provides tranquil lakeside living and eco-tourism opportunities. Community consultation has identified that South Waikato people take pride in their towns and villages but would like to see them further developed. A 2005 South Waikato Household Survey revealed that one of the top three issues for residents was to improve the attractiveness of South Waikato’s towns.



#### **How are we doing?**

There is relatively little information available for gauging the quality of urban life in the South Waikato, however information that is available suggests that residents would like more done to improve the attractiveness and liveability of the District’s towns and villages.

#### **Attractive urban areas**

Attractiveness of the physical environment contributes to the District image and social and economic development. At present little specific information is available on the extent to which people feel pride in their local area. Council will look at addressing this information gap over the coming years.

There are an estimated 2,160 street trees in Tokoroa, but no current estimates for the number of street trees in other towns in the District. Council plants approximately 40-50 new trees per year as replacements for trees that have been removed or as requested by residents. Throughout the District there are a lot of street trees that are reaching the end of their life and need to be replaced. As part of the development of a Street Trees Policy over the next few years, Council will undertake a street trees survey to provide information on condition, age and numbers.

In some parts of the South Waikato, neighbourhood groups have organised themselves to help beautify their local area. Council is keen to promote more of this type of activity to help foster community pride and raise the attractiveness of the District’s urban areas.

The 2005 Community Outcomes Household Survey asked respondents to rate the strength of their town or area in terms of businesses and shops. The results show that 47% of South Waikato residents rated businesses and shops as good or excellent. A further 30% scored businesses and shops as average, while 15% scored them weak or poor. Respondents from Tirau were most likely to rate the strength of businesses and shops as good or excellent, while respondents from Tokoroa and Putaruru were more likely to rate their businesses and shops as average or below average.

*Rating of community strengths – Businesses and shops 2005*

	Good or excellent	Average	Weak or very poor	Not specified	Total
South Waikato District	47%	30%	15%	8%	100%
Tokoroa residents	23%	41%	28%	7%	100%
Putaruru residents	29%	41%	17%	12%	100%
Tirau residents	89%	8%	0%	4%	100%

Source: SWDC Community Outcomes Household Survey 2005

**Mobility access**

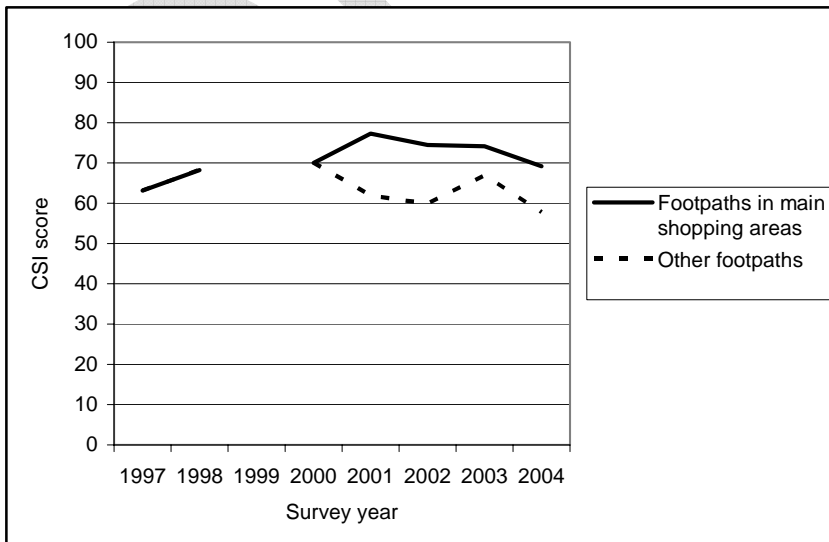
New Zealand has an aging population profile and an increasing number of people with mobility-related disabilities. Improved mobility access can enable greater participation in society by people living with disabilities.

At present little specific information is available on the extent of perceived barriers to accessing local services. Council will look at addressing this information gap over the coming years.

Council and Environment Waikato subsidise the Paratransit mobility transport service in the District. This supports discount taxi fares for people with disabilities, including the operation of vehicles equipped with wheelchair hoists. Council also has an ongoing commitment to the installation of mobility crossings as required.

According to results from Council's Resident Satisfaction Survey, satisfaction with footpaths in main shopping areas peaked in 2001 but has subsequently declined. The main concern appears to be slippery tiles in the Tokoroa CBD. There is a relatively lower level of satisfaction with footpaths outside the main shopping areas, with the main concern being repairs and maintenance. Council has set itself targets to improve its level of service in relation to footpaths.

*Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) – Footpaths*



Source: SWDC Resident Satisfaction Survey

**Clean, tidy urban environments**

A clean, healthy environment is important for people’s physical and emotional wellbeing. Data on the prevalence of graffiti in the District are currently being compiled. Graffiti has been raised as a major concern by many residents. According to Police records, during 2005/06 there were 317 incidents of intentional damage (including graffiti) reported to the Tokoroa and Putaruru Police Stations combined, with an overall resolution rate of 42.3%.

In the 2004 Resident Satisfaction Survey, respondents were asked to score how satisfied they were with Council picking up litter in public places. The resulting Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) score of 68.6 reflects reasonable to good service but with room for improvement. The CSI for litter control has improved over the past decade.

In the 2004 Resident Satisfaction Survey, respondents who had used public toilets in the past year were asked to score how satisfied they were with the public toilets. The resulting CSI score of 64.3 reflects reasonable service but with room for improvement. Comments from people who were dissatisfied tended to relate to the cleanliness of toilets and being short of supplies. The CSI for public toilets has improved over the past decade.

During the year to June 2006 Council received 8 service requests relating to littering, 12 relating to abandoned rubbish and 51 about abandoned vehicles. Systems have recently been improved to ensure consistent recording of all service requests, to help identify future trends.

*Complaints to Council about littering, rubbish and street cleaning*

Service requests	Year to June 2006
Abandoned Rubbish	12
Abandoned Vehicles	51
Litter	8
Street Cleaning	2
Street Sweeping	1

Source: SWDC Service Requests

## What is being done?

Key initiatives to improve urban living in the District include:

- Council contracts for urban maintenance
- Local Area Concept Plans
- Mainstreet Minders in Putaruru and Tokoroa
- NZ Urban Design Protocol
- Potential development of reserve and beautification committees
- South Waikato District Plan
- South Waikato Graffiti Strategy
- South Waikato Physical Activity (Leisure) Strategy (forthcoming)
- Spring Clean South Waikato
- SWDC Reserve Management Plans
- SWDC Roding, Footpaths and Crossings Policy
- SWDC Street Trees Policy (forthcoming)

## Lead Partners

- Arapuni Residents' Association
- Council contractors
- Environment Waikato
- Fast Forward Tokoroa contractor (TANGS)
- Police
- Putaruru Residents' and Ratepayers' Association
- Service Clubs (eg, Lions Club)
- South Waikato Residents' and Ratepayers' Association
- Raukawa Trust Board
- South Waikato District Council (SWDC)
- South Waikato Safer Community Council (SWSCC)
- Tirau Business Association
- Tirau Community Board
- Vibrant Putaruru contractor (PIP)

## 5. A better environment for our children

### Environmental Wellbeing

#### Why is this important?

South Waikato residents take considerable pride in their natural and rural environments, especially the vast areas of farmland, exotic forest, native vegetation, rivers, lakes and freshwater springs. The natural environment is a defining characteristic of the South Waikato District, and maintaining the area's environmental wellbeing is essential to economic prosperity and overall quality of life. In a 2005 South Waikato Household Survey, the quality of the environment (including air, land and water) was most frequently identified as a major strength of the District.



#### How are we doing?

The South Waikato generally has a clean and green natural environment, however there is room for improvement in terms of waste minimisation, energy conservation and other actions that residents and businesses could take to preserve the environment for future generations.

#### Caring for the environment

Overall, people in the Waikato region tend to have positive attitudes towards the environment. The biggest concerns for people are water quality, waste and air pollution. Key actions undertaken by South Waikato people to protect the environment include recycling plastic, paper, glass and tins/cans, planting trees and properly disposing of waste.

#### Top five actions taken to protect the environment 2003

Actions	South Waikato District	Waikato Region
Recycled plastic	43%	38%
Recycled paper	40%	35%
Recycled glass	35%	35%
Recycled tins/cans	34%	28%
Planted trees/plants	16%	15%
Disposed rubbish/waste properly	15%	12%

Source: Environment Waikato Environmental Perceptions Survey/MARCO Benchmark Report

#### Kaitiakitanga

Kaitiakitanga, or guardianship of the environment, is a traditional Māori value and a key community outcome for Raukawa. The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) includes specific provisions for iwi to fulfill their traditional kaitiakitanga role by ensuring they have adequate input into resource consent processes. The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) also requires councils, within their general decision-making duties, to take into account the relationship of Māori culture and traditions in relation to ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

### ***Young people and the environment***

South Waikato communities feel it is important to involve young people in activities that protect and enhance their environment. This provides new knowledge and skills, and fosters a positive attitude to environmental issues.

Current community planting projects with Council involve about 200-250 children each year, split evenly between Te Waihou Walkway and Lake Moana-nui. Anecdotally there was a slight increase in numbers in 2006 compared to recent years.

One of the objectives of Council's Waste Management Plan 2005 is to educate the community about the benefits of waste minimisation. At present the level of environmental education undertaken by Council is fairly low-key. In 2006 this included hosting a forest monitoring workshop, visiting Te Waotu School to talk about water, promoting Arbor Day and other activities that engage local school children, and promoting the District kerbside recycling service.

According to information provided by Environment Waikato, other initiatives undertaken or supported in the South Waikato District includes the Enviroschool Awards programme (Tokoroa North School, Te Waotu School, Tainui Full Primary School), forthcoming education to farmers on effluent and nutrient management, The Waste Exchange (0800 NO THROW, [www.nothrow.co.nz](http://www.nothrow.co.nz)) and Waikato Waste Advisory Service.

Further community education activities will be undertaken as part of the Tokoroa Warm Homes Clean Air Project over the coming years to raise awareness of how to improve air quality.

### ***Waterways and sensitive areas***

South Waikato people take considerable pride in their natural environment. From the creeks that run through farms, to the many hydro lakes in the District, we are constantly reminded of fresh water but often forget how important it is. In order to preserve this precious resource, we need to think about how well we are looking after it.

Stream health monitoring reveals a mix of satisfactory and good levels of stream water quality throughout the District. Ten of 19 sampling sites used to assess stream water quality with the Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment Kit (SHMAK) in recent years were rated excellent. Three sites had recorded improvements in their rating, while only one site was considered poor.

Clean Streams Fencing and Soil Conservation Fencing undertaken by Environment Waikato is shown in a map in the South Waikato State of the Environment Report. Streamcare groups have been established for several streams in the District. Voluntary work by members of the community has seen water quality and stream health remain satisfactory to excellent.

According to information received from Environment Waikato in late 2006, detailed auditing of a random selection of dairy farms across the Waikato Region in 2004 indicated compliance rates of 43 percent compliance and 16 percent serious non-compliance in relation to farm effluent discharges. Helicopter monitoring in 2005 highlighted a 25 percent serious non-compliance rate. Early indications of helicopter monitoring in 2006 are consistent with the results from 2005.

Initial discussions have taken place between Raukawa Trust Board, Environment Waikato and Council about the possibility of involving local hapū and marae in water quality monitoring. There is potential to work in a partnering way to identify sites of significance, educate other people about these sites, and monitor and restore the health and mauri (spirit) of degraded waterways.

*SWDC Stream Water Quality Monitoring*

Sampling Sites	2002	2006
Oraka Stream – Butler and Te Whetu Roads	☺	☺
Oraka Stream – Cr Ngatira/ Te Whetu Roads	☺	☺
Oraka Stream – Pinedale/ Paerata Road Intersection	☺	☺
Oraka Stream – Domain Road	☹	☹
Oraka Stream – Galway Crescent	☺	☹
Oraka Stream – Okoroire Road	☺	☹
Oraka Stream – Langlands Road	☺	☹
Whakauru Stream – Cougar Park Mountain Bike Track Bridge	?	☺
Whakauru Stream – Behind Tokoroa East Primary School	☹	?
Whakauru Stream – Dunham's Park	☹	☺
Whakauru Stream – Northfield Place Reserve	☹	☺
Whakauru Stream – Paraonui Road Bridge	☹	☹
Matarawa Stream – Jim Currie Reserve – State Highway 1	?	☺
Matarawa Stream – Outfall from Lake Moana-nui	☺	☹
Pokaiwhenua Stream – Puriri/Galaxy Road – Tikitiki Stream Tributary	☺	☺
Pokaiwhenua Stream – Behind Tokoroa Shooting Club	?	☺
Pokaiwhenua Stream – State Highway 1 Bridge	☹	?
Pokaiwhenua Stream – Wiltsdown Road Bridge	☹	☹
Mangawera Stream – Spaniels Road	☺	☺
Ngatuwera Stream – State Highway 1 Reserve	☹	☺
Mokaihana Stream (Ngatuwera Tributary) – Lower Crimp Road (CHH Ltd)	☺	☺
Waimakariri Stream – State Highway 5	☺	☺

Source: SWDC Environmental Monitoring Officer/South Waikato State of the Environment Report 2006

**Community waste and recycling**

New Zealanders throw away 3.6 million tonnes of “rubbish” every year, around 65% percent of which could be recycled or composted instead. While the Government is working on ways to address New Zealand's rubbish problem, it is local actions that will really make the difference.

Waste generation in the South Waikato has reduced as recycling volumes have increased. The annual volume of waste to landfill fell from 1,570 kg per person in 2001 to 1,160 kg per person in 2004. However when compared with regional and national rates (841 and 790 kg per person respectively), South Waikato's volume of waste to landfill is still relatively high.

Recycling tonnages in the District have increased by 18% over the past five years, which could be attributed to increasing environmental awareness and greater availability of recycling options and facilities.

In the 2004 Resident Satisfaction Survey, 82.0% of respondents rated their satisfaction with household rubbish collection as average, good or very good. In

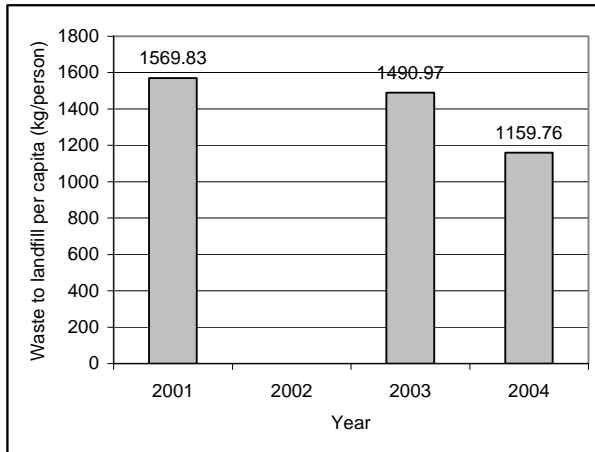
the same survey, 94.3% of respondents rated their satisfaction with the household recycling service as average, good or very good.

*Waste to landfill 2004*

	South Waikato	Waikato Region	New Zealand
Volume of waste to landfill (tonnes)	27,222	175,850	3,001,000
Population	23,472	216,147	3,800,000
Volume per resident (kg/person)	1,160	841	790

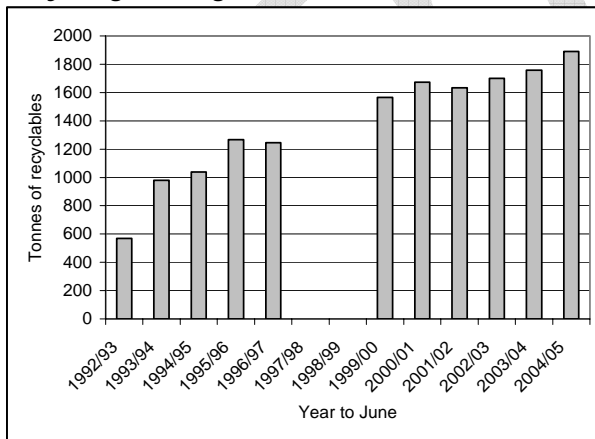
Source: South Waikato State of the Environment Report 2006

*Per capita volume of waste to landfill, South Waikato District*



Source: South Waikato State of the Environment Report 2006

*Recycling tonnage, South Waikato District*



Source: South Waikato State of the Environment Report 2006

**Sustainable economic growth**

South Waikato people value the characteristics that define their District, including the quality of the natural environment. There is a desire for economic activity to be in keeping with the District's character and environment.

In 2004/05 the average herd size in the South Waikato was 297 and the average productive farm size 103 ha, compared to the slightly lower 2001 levels of 289 cattle and 95 ha respectively.

In total there were 1,793 resource consents held in the South Waikato District as at 20 September 2006 including pending applications as well as finished and current works. The consents cover a wide variety of activities including discharge to land and water (eg, farm effluent), well construction, surface water and ground water take (eg, water supply, irrigation), discharge to air (eg, industrial) and land deposit and disturbance.

According to information received from Environment Waikato in late 2006, South Waikato District Council has a high level of compliance with regards to wastewater treatment resource consents. Environment Waikato is unaware of any significant non-compliance. Large industries within the South Waikato District are associated mainly with the timber industry. Sites generally have a high level of compliance, although there are some isolated problems that Environment Waikato is currently dealing with.

Noise monitoring data in 2006 showed a slight increase throughout the District compared to 2003 and 2001 surveys. The number of odour complaints in the South Waikato increased in 2005 compared to previous years.

In a 2005 Household Survey, quality of the environment (including air, land and water) was the most frequently identified major strength of the District. Overall 58% of respondents rated "quality of environment" as good or excellent and a further 26% rated it as average.

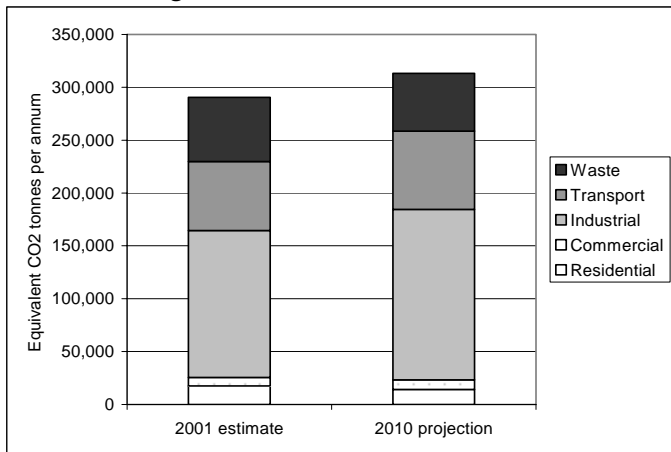
### **Energy**

The majority of climate scientists in the world agree that climate is changing due to human activity, and it is now only a matter of how quickly it changes. Even if climate change wasn't occurring, policies to conserve energy would still make sense for economic, health and environmental reasons. Policies are needed to prepare the District for an increase in extreme weather events and flooding, as well as to mitigate our contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions.

As at 2001, the South Waikato was giving off an estimated 1.25 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, of which industrial processes contributed 91.1%. In addition, agricultural emissions contribute CH<sub>4</sub>, which is typically generated by the digestion process of farm stock, especially cattle.

Council monitors community and corporate energy efficiency initiatives as part of its Local Action Plan for Climate Protection (forthcoming). Council is a member of CCPNZ (Communities for Climate Protection NZ). Energy efficiency and conservation initiatives in the District include the South Waikato Healthy Homes Project and specific corporate initiatives by the Fonterra Lichfield site, Carter Holt Harvey Kinleith and South Waikato District Council. Council projects include Energy Audits of the Tokoroa Indoor Pools complex, reuse of methane gas by-products to heat untreated sludge at the Tokoroa Wastewater Treatment plant, and replacement of inefficient street lamps throughout the District.

Greenhouse gas emissions forecast, South Waikato 2001-2010



Source: SWDC Environmental Monitoring Officer

**What is being done?**

Key initiatives to improve environmental wellbeing in the District include:

- Industry-led energy initiatives
- Local Action Plan for Climate Protection (forthcoming)
- Local Area Concept Plans
- Relationship Agreement between SWDC and Raukawa Trust Board (forthcoming)
- South Waikato District Plan
- South Waikato Economic Development Strategy
- South Waikato Healthy Homes Project
- South Waikato State of the Environment Report
- Spring Clean South Waikato
- SWDC Asset Management Plans (Landfills, Road Network, Stormwater, Wastewater, Water Supply)
- SWDC Reserve Management Plans
- SWDC Stock Crossings Policy
- SWDC Stormwater Policy
- SWDC Waste Management Plan
- Tokoroa Clean Air Warm Homes Project
- Waiora Project

**Lead Partners**

- Carter Holt Harvey Ltd
- Communities for Climate Protection NZ (CCPNZ)
- Council contractors
- Department of Conservation
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA)
- Environment Waikato
- Fast Forward Tokoroa contractor (TANGS)
- Fonterra
- Jim Barnett Reserve Management Committee
- Lichfield/Tirau Reserves Management Committee
- Mighty River Power
- Ministry for the Environment
- Other large businesses
- Raukawa Trust Board
- Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ

- South Waikato Achievement Centre
- South Waikato Environmental Initiatives Committee
- South Waikato District Council (SWDC)
- South Waikato Economic Development Trust (SWEDT)
- Tirau Business Association
- Te Waihou Walkway Public Working Party
- Vibrant Putaruru contractor (PIP)
- Waikato Biodiversity Forum
- Waikato Primary Health Organisation (PHO)
- Waikato River Trails Trust

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### ***Where to from here....***

For the first time, information about the full spectrum of community wellbeing in the District has been brought together in one place. The challenge now is how to turn this information into action. South Waikato's Community Outcomes provide a shared framework for all stakeholders to discuss progress towards sustainable development.

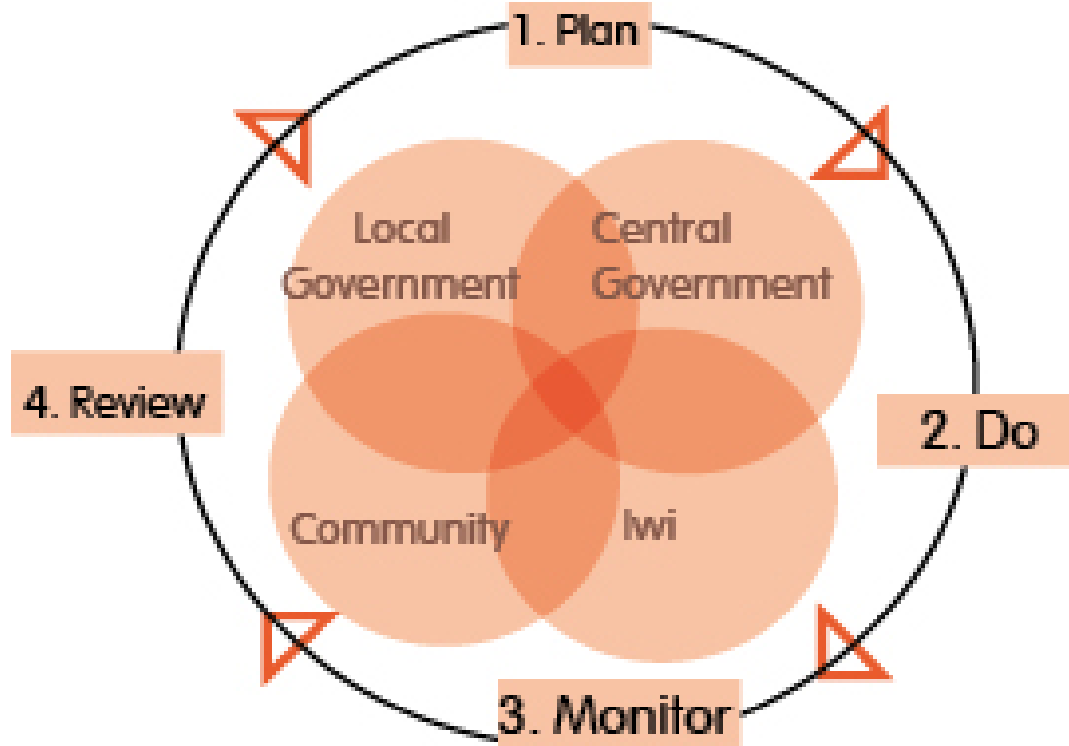
Key issues that have been identified through this Draft Baseline Report include:

- Improve youth transitions from school to work and training, and reduce the District's high rate of student stand-downs and suspensions.
- Increase tourism opportunities through the development of a Tourism Strategy and roll-out of District Branding.
- Continue the focus on employment and business opportunities, particularly aiming to increase the number of skilled jobs and train workers to fill these jobs.
- Promote wide support for the Raukawa Reo Strategy, arts and cultural facilities and events and other initiatives that promote cultural wellbeing.
- Provide more activities and facilities for young people and make the District a great place to grow up.
- Improve outcomes for the District's young people, particularly in terms of increased engagement in community activities, educational attainment and reduced levels of teen parenthood.
- Promote increased physical activity and healthier lifestyles.
- Pay continued attention to road safety on both local roads and State Highways.
- Tackle urban air quality and housing issues through insulation projects and community education on cleaner home heating.
- Put more resources into environmental education and initiatives to promote waste minimisation, energy efficiency and conservation.

This Draft Reference Report will be revised in 2007 and published as a baseline Reference Report. South Waikato's Sustainability Indicators will be monitored and highlights brought to the attention of policy makers and the public as they come to hand. From 2007 the State of the District Report will be published on an approximately three-yearly basis.

The Local Government Act creates new obligations for Council to collaborate with local groups and organisations including Māori, Central Government agencies, non-government organisations, businesses and other private sector groups. The aim is to work collectively towards the achievement of South Waikato's Community Outcomes to achieve ongoing improvement in community wellbeing.

*Working together towards Community Outcomes*



In October 2005, Council launched a strategic approach of partnering towards the achievement of Community Outcomes by hosting a South Waikato Needs Summit attended by key stakeholder organisations. Lead Organisations and Lead Partnerships in each Community Outcome area were invited to take responsibility for moving forward. Several key partners were identified at the 2005 Needs Summit, and others signaled their interest through engagement in subsequent consultation throughout 2006. Council will continue this dialogue over the coming years.

The 2005 South Waikato Needs Summit was the start of an ongoing discussion about working together to achieve Community Outcomes, including "who does what" and opportunities for joint planning. At the next Needs Summit, in late 2006, stakeholders will have access to much better information about needs in the District and progress towards Community Outcomes. This Draft State of the District Report will be maintained online with a range of other key research and consultation reports at [www.southwaikato.govt.nz/communityoutcomes](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz/communityoutcomes).

## South Waikato's Strategic Framework

A central part of "who does what" is the high level strategies that drive community progress in the District. During 2006/07, Council is committed to initiating and updating several key strategies including the District Youth Strategy, Physical Activity (Leisure) Strategy and Arts and Culture Strategy. The District Strategic Framework below shows Council's view of the headline strategies for the District. This Framework will be refined over time through consultation and partnership with other agencies.

South Waikato's Strategic Framework



### Further Information

Council is seeking to continually improve the information in its Community Outcomes Monitoring Programme. To have your say on this Draft State of the District Report, obtain further information about South Waikato's strategic planning documents, or discuss Community Outcomes generally, contact:

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