

REPORT WITH RESOLUTION

9.2 2027-2037 Long Term Plan '*Draft Strategic Framework*' Report

Report To:	Council
Meeting Date:	Thursday, 28 May 2026
Author:	Stella Luoni-Morgan
Author Title:	Corporate Strategy and Planning Manager
Interim Executive Manager:	Planning and Performance Manager

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to approve Council's revised strategic framework (included as Attachment one) as the basis for preparing the 2027-37 Long Term Plan.

Recommendation

That the Council:

- a. Receives and notes the report titled '2027-2037 Long Term Plan '*Draft Strategic Framework*' Report (2026-158).
- b. Approves the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan '*Draft Strategic Framework*' (Attachment one) as the basis for preparing the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan.

Council Resolution

Planning and Performance Manager, Gary Knighton and Corporate Planning and Strategy Manager, Stella Luoni-Morgan presented the report and responded to questions from the Councillors.

CNCL2026-59 ***Moved / Second***

Cr Thomas / Cr Teokotai

That the Council:

- a. Receives and notes the report titled '2027-2037 Long Term Plan '*Draft Strategic Framework*' Report (2026-158).
- b. Approves the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan '*Draft Strategic Framework*' (Attachment one) as the basis for preparing the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan.

Carried

Executive Summary

The Draft Strategic Framework sets out Council's vision and goals for the South Waikato District and provides the foundation to prepare the 2027-2037 Long Term Plan.

Context

All councils are required to have a 10-year Long Term Plan (LTP) setting out Council's direction and approach to delivering services and infrastructure that meet community needs and explains how those activities will be funded. The LTP is refreshed every three years, with an annual plan prepared in the intervening years. Councils must have new LTP's in place by 1 July 2027.

As a starting point for developing its strategic direction Council considered the South Waikato Environmental Scan (SWES) (Attachment 2) at a workshop earlier this year. This document outlines the key challenges and opportunities facing Council including climate change, disruptive technology, geopolitical uncertainty, rising infrastructure costs, and affordability pressures. Since then, further challenges have emerged, including for example steep fuel cost increases following the recent Middle East conflict, which will impact on the cost of Council's service delivery and long-term costs in the short to medium term and local government reform. Whilst changes such as rates capping and other efficiency and structural changes were signalled in the report, the Government's recent announcement of the 'Head Start' programme, to streamline local government, and the tight timelines for doing so, creates great uncertainty and significant change for all Councils in their forward planning. It also means establishing and working to a clear vision and direction based on the needs of the South Waikato community is even more important.

Council remains committed to contributing to stated community outcomes for — a thriving community, a sustainable environment, and a robust economy, but has reframed the vision and goals to better reflect its priorities for the future, including how South Waikato's interests can continue to be best represented in a changing local government environment.

Discussion

This strategic framework forms the cornerstone of the Long Term Plan and provides overarching guidance to staff and Council as they consider how best to meet the community's infrastructure, service and broader community needs. The framework is presented as a draft. Community feedback will be sought on Council's proposed strategic approach as the LTP process progresses. Formal consultation is expected to take place in March and April next year.

Strategic Framework

Vision: South Waikato — a vibrant district grounded in a proud heritage, and a place of opportunity and possibility.

Community Outcomes: A thriving community, a sustainable environment, and a robust economy.

GOAL 1: A Strong Local Economy – leveraging local strengths to drive opportunity and growth.

GOAL 2: Education and Jobs for Our People – advocating for education-to-employment pathways for all our people, especially our rangatahi.

GOAL 3: Healthy Spaces and Environment – protecting the health and mana of our district so communities can prosper, now and in the future.

GOAL 4: Reimagined District Leadership – leading through change, to ensure the needs of our community to thrive are met.

Further detail outlining what Council means by each of these goals is provided in Attachment 1.

Options

Alternative option: Maintain the status quo (that is, retain the 2024–2034 Strategic Framework).

This option would not reflect the approach of the new Council elected in October 2025, nor would it respond to the challenges that have emerged since the previous Long-Term Plan was adopted. While the community outcomes remain largely unchanged, the revised framework better reflects the direction and priorities of the current Council.

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

NA

Consultation (Internal and External)

The strategic framework is presented as a working draft and will be consulted on publicly with the community as the LTP progresses.

Financial Considerations

NA

Risks

NA

Significance & Engagement Policy

Council is required to consult on the LTP as per sections 93 and 94 of the Local Government Act 2002. As a legislatively prescribed consultation process is required, the Significance and Engagement Policy does not apply. This does not preclude other engagement processes being undertaken.

Reference

Attachments

1. Attachment 1_ Draft Strategic Framework (29 May 2026)
2. Attachment 2 ECM_697577_v1_Environmental Scan 2025 - Final (1)