

Future Local Government Workshop

9 July 2026
NPDC Council Chambers



Opening Karakia

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
Kia hī ake ana te atakura
He tio, he huka, he hau hū
Tūturu o whiti whakamaua kia tina
Tina!
Hui ē! Tāiki ē!



Simplifying Local Govt - original proposal

1. Remove Regional Councillors
2. Establish Combined Territory Boards (CTB)
 - Regional council governance
 - Develop Regional Reorganisation Plan within 2 years
3. Govt review of regional council functions – March 2026
4. Legislation to be passed by mid-2027
5. CTB to implement Reorganisation Plan once approved
 - Implementation proposed from late 2029 (est)

Head Start Pathway

- Voluntary, streamlined option for councils ready to change now
- Open to councils who want to form new Unitary Authorities.
- Instead of developing a Regional Reorganisation Plan, councils will submit an outline proposal focused on structural change.
 - Proposals can cover all or part of a region
- Officials will assess proposals against predetermined criteria.
- For those that progress, officials will work with councils on the detailed design of the proposal for Cabinet consideration in early 2027.
- Delivering the new planning system remains core business for all councils

Proposal requirements & eligibility

Who can submit a proposal?

- ✓ Two or more territorial / unitary authorities
- ✓ Regional and sub-regional groupings
- ✓ Cross-boundary groupings

They must represent a majority of:

- ✓ directly affected territorial authorities; or
- ✓ population across directly affected areas.

Who can't submit a proposal?

- ✗ Minority groupings
- ✗ Regional councils
- ✗ Auckland council
- ✗ Individuals/other organisations

Central Government will entertain **more than one unitary authority in a region** if:

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

Head Start Assessment Criteria



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



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



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



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



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

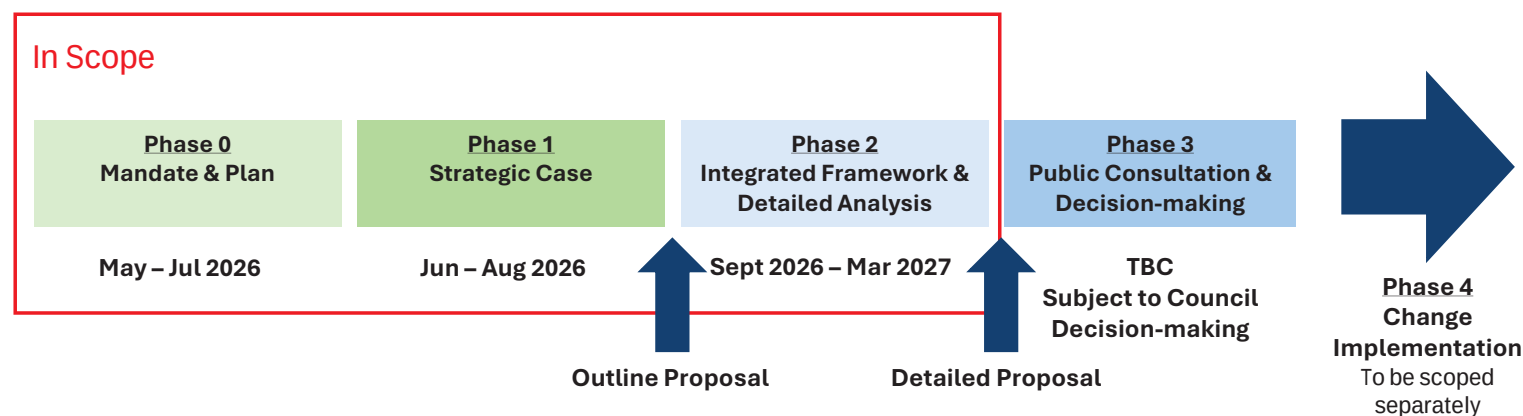
Head Start timeline



Backstop approach

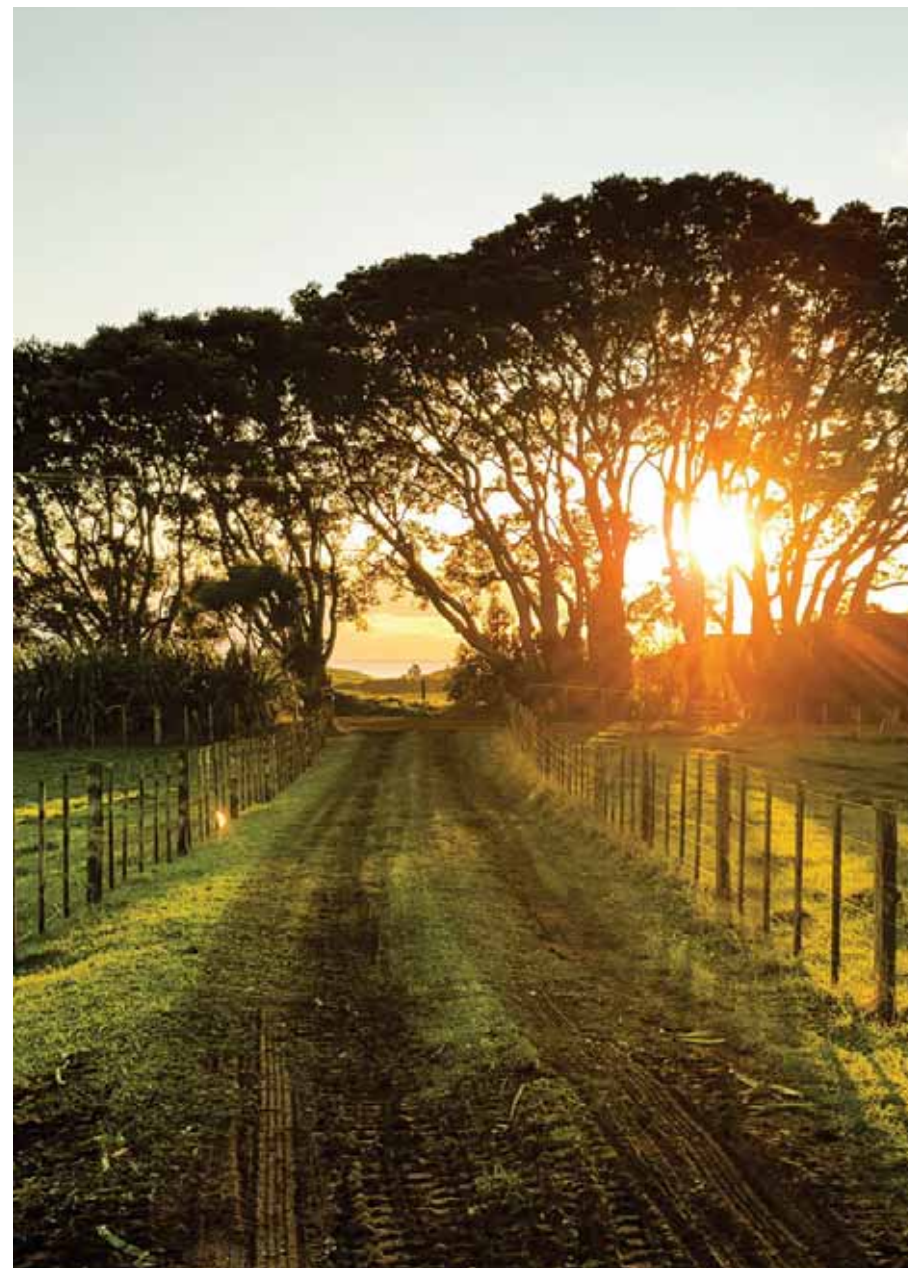
- Councils that do not progress through Head Start pathway will be subject to a compulsory backstop process
- Backstop process will begin following 2028 local elections
- Regional councillors will not be elected in 2028
- Interim body formed to govern regional councils and develop plans for regional reorganisation. Membership of the interim body is still being considered.
- Backstop model will be confirmed in 2027 and reflect learnings from the Head Start process
- Legislation for backstop will be enacted before nominations open for the 2028 local elections.

Future Local Government Programme



- The programme establishes a **structured, multi-phase approach** to exploring future local government arrangements in Taranaki.
- It is focused on developing a **robust evidence base**, identifying a small number of credible configuration options, and providing decision-ready advice
- It is not about progressing a predetermined structural outcome.

Taranaki context



Regional Snapshot

130,300
Population

57,599
Rating Units

7,944 km2
land area

New Plymouth

90,100 pop.
69% of regional population

\$163,789,320 Total Rates Burden

37,324 Households 

\$4,388 Residential rates per rating
unit 

Stratford

10,500 pop.
8% of regional population

\$20,243,396 Total Rates Burden

5,469 Households 

\$3,701 Residential rates per rating
unit 

South Taranaki

29,800 pop.
23% of regional population

\$57,737,082 Total Rates Burden

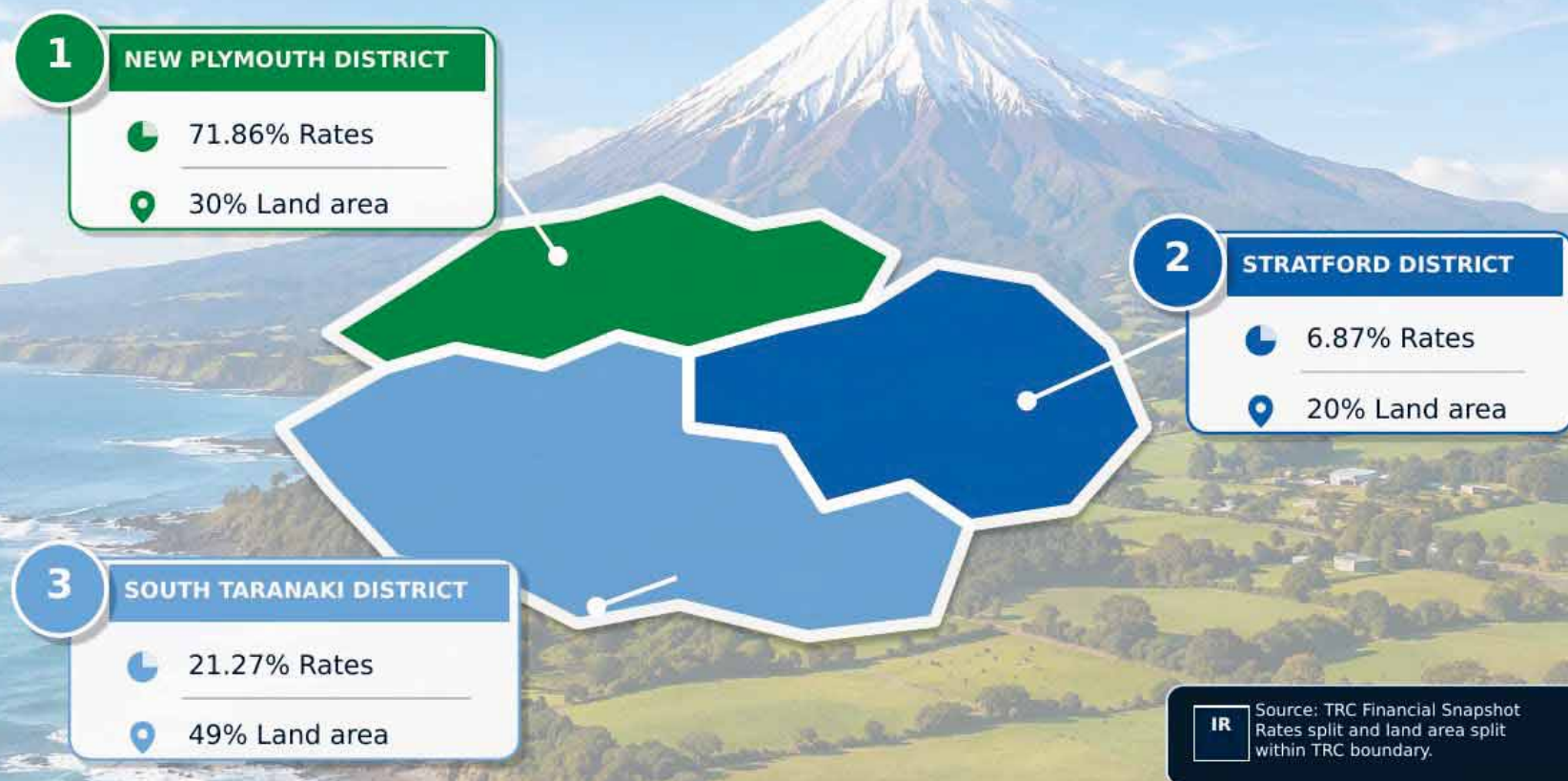
14,806 Households 

\$3,900 Residential rates per rating
unit 

Financial context – TRC rates split

Total Rates vs Land Area Share

% of total TRC rates revenue and land area within the Taranaki Regional Council boundary



Where Revenue (Total Rates) Comes From

NPDC 71.86%
STDC 21.27%
SDC 6.87%

Targeted Rates

Stadium, River Control
& Passenger Transport
NPDC 85.88%
STDC 9.91%
SDC 4.21%

What Drives Cost Allocation

Land Area Split
STDC 49%
NPDC 30%
SDC 20%

% of total land area within the TRC boundary

Financial context

Rounded 2024/25 Annual Report figures. Asset per rating unit shown as broad bands, not precise values

New Plymouth

\$384m

Current Debt

\$4.4b

Total assets

Rating units

39,700

Debt/ assets



~9%

Largest asset base and highest debt
in dollar terms

Stratford

\$39m

Current Debt

\$538m

Total assets

Rating units

5,100

Debt/ assets



~7%

Smaller scale but comparable asset
depth on a broad-band basis

South Taranaki

\$168m

Current Debt

\$1.6b

Total assets

Rating units

14,500

Debt/ assets



~10%

Higher asset depth, with debt similar
to the regional average ratio

Economic movement – Taranaki mid-2026



Dairy

Dairy: Dairy sector conditions remain strong, supported by high payout forecasts. Strong farm incomes are supporting investment activity across parts of the regional economy.



Oil & Gas

Oil and gas – The sector continues to undergo structural change and adjustment. Workforce retention, investment certainty and future energy pathways remain key considerations.



Residential sales

Residential house sales – Housing market activity has improved from 2022–24 levels, though still below 2021 peak. Activity varies across the region, reflecting different market conditions and housing demand.



Labour market

Labour market - Employment conditions have softened. Unemployment has increased but remains below the national average (4.2% in Taranaki vs 5.3% nationally).



People movements

People moving into and out of Taranaki - Population growth has levelled off. Migration patterns continue to be influenced by employment, lifestyle factors and access to services. New Plymouth the main destination for new residents seeking services, healthcare and retirement living.



Transportation & Roading Considerations

Sarah Downs, GM Operational Excellence

9 July 2026

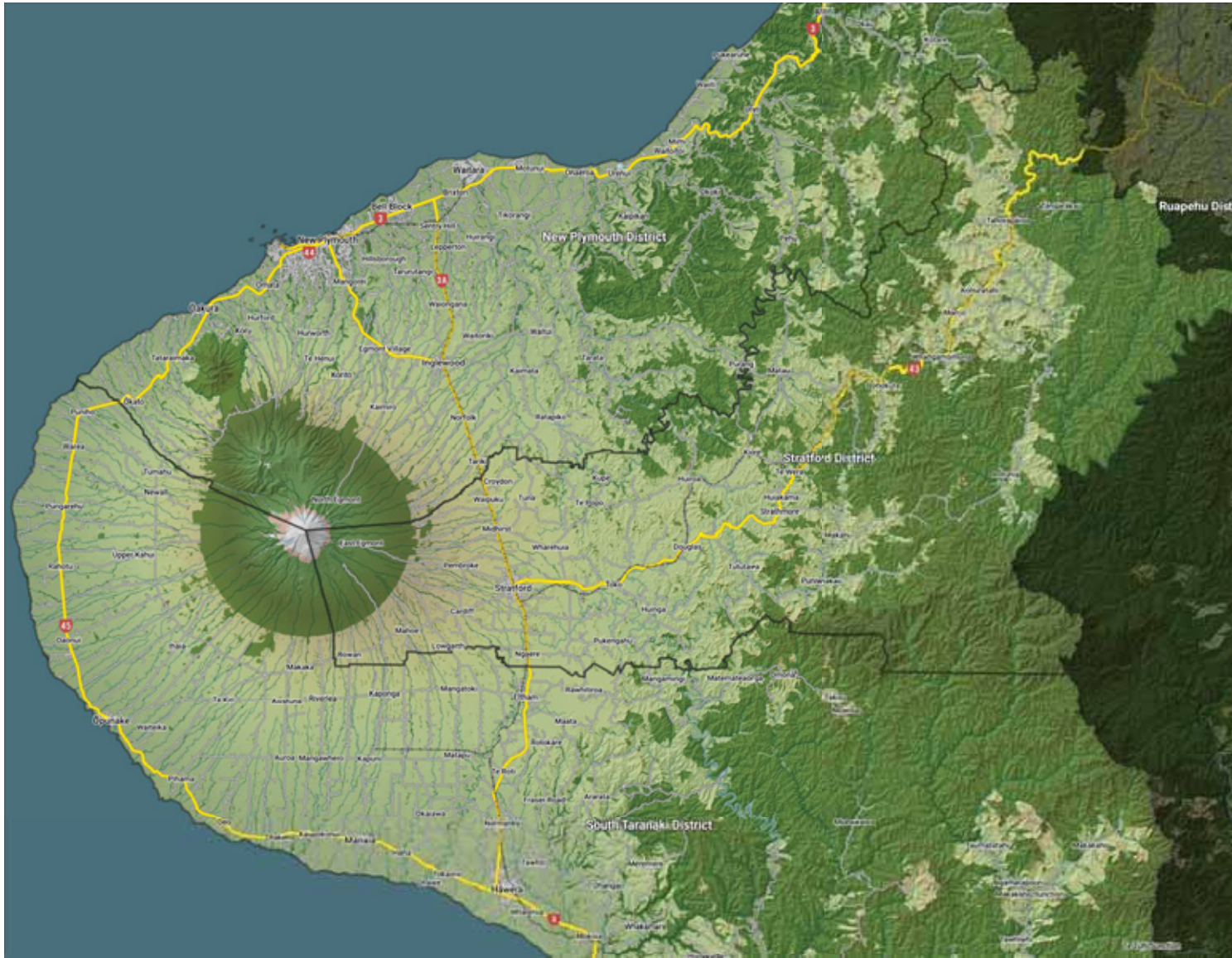


Te Kaunihera-a-Rohe o Ngāmotu
New Plymouth
District Council

Transport as a System

- Strategic direction is set by Government Policy and directs how funding is prioritised
- Transport networks operate across district boundaries
- Planning, funding and delivery involve multiple organisations
- Responsibilities are currently distributed across Councils
- This session provides context to support future discussion





Current Roles in Transport

Regional role (TRC)

- Regional Transport planning and strategy
- Lead the RLTP development
- Public transport planning/delivery
- Coordination with NZTA

Territorial role (NPDC)

- Local road network planning/delivery
- Maintenance, operations and renewals
- Integration with urban growth and land use



Points of Connection



- Shared input into long-term and regional planning
- Interdependencies between regional priorities and local delivery
- Coordination with national funding and policy settings
- Linkages with land use, growth and resilience planning



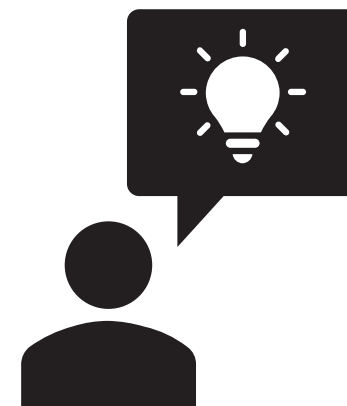
Funding & Planning Context

- Current Funding Assistance Rates (FAR) vary across districts
- These are influenced by a range of factors (including deprivation rates/socio-economic factors)
- Structural arrangements can influence:
 - How funding is allocated
 - How planning is undertaken
 - How councils engage with national agencies
- Regional transport planning requirements may vary depending on structure



Points to Consider

- How to reflect both regional and local perspectives
- How planning and delivery interfaces are managed
- How funding distribution is understood across the region
- What information is needed to support future decisions





Pātai?





Regional functions and pressures

Daniel Harrison & Abby Matthews

Taranaki Regional Council

Working with people | caring for Taranaki



Taranaki Regional Council OUR WORK

Total assets
\$188m

Total debt
\$72.8m

FTE
227

\$57.8m
Total TRC operating
expenditure 2026/2027



\$27.3m
Total TRC rates revenue
2026/2027

TARANAKI

Land area
723,610ha

Marine area
5,457km²

93% Rural
7% Urban

5,000+
wetlands

Population
130,300

530
Named rivers & lakes

2.5%
of Op Ex
HAZARDS
We reduce flood risk, protect people and property, keep communities safe during storms, and support a coordinated regional response.

4
flood schemes maintained
\$19.6m
flood protection assets
\$585,000
for emergency management

5%
of Op Ex
GOVERNANCE
We provide strong regional leadership, support iwi and hapū aspirations and ensure Taranaki has an effective voice with government.

3 legislatively mandated iwi partnerships
6 Treaty settlement mandated iwi representatives
15,200 children participated in education programmes

11 Councilors

11.5%
of Op Ex
REGIONAL ASSETS
To support a strong and vibrant region, we keep key regional assets safe and well maintained and create spaces for people to gather and connect.

\$24m
49 leasehold properties worth
137,000 visitors to three regional gardens
780,000 bus trips in 2025

1 Harbour Master at Port Taranaki

66,500
Total Mobility Scheme services provided

19%
of Op Ex
TRANSPORT
To keep people and our economy moving, we make it easier to get around, connect people and places and keep the port safe.

We help build a prosperous Taranaki through managing and protecting natural resources, safeguarding the region against hazards, regional infrastructure delivery and strong regional advocacy.

412 Key Native Ecosystem areas recognised

479 pest plant infestations identified and controlled 2024-2025
4,350 properties in possum control programme covering
235,000ha

27%
of Op Ex

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT
We work with landowners to reduce erosion, improve water quality, protect wildlife and control pests, to keep our land and waterways resilient.

8.25m
riparian plants planted since 1996

35%
of Op Ex

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
To support a healthy environment and strong economy we manage how natural resources are used, monitor the environment to track change, and ensure rules are followed.

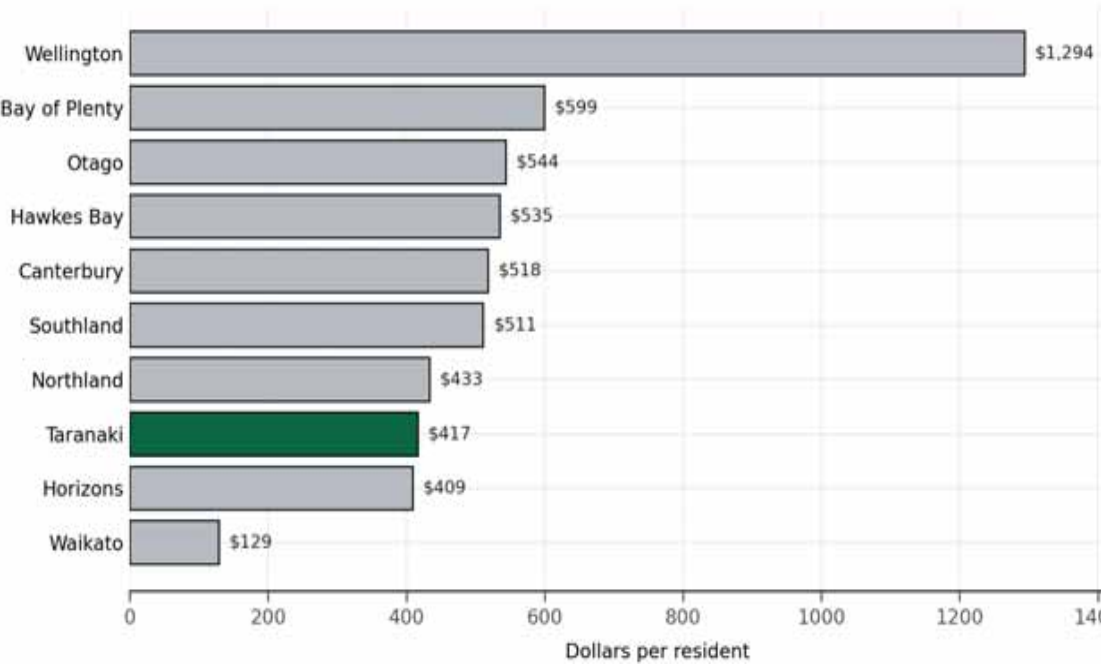
2,260 consents regularly monitored
5 regional RMA plans
116 real-time environmental monitoring stations
382 environmental incidents responded to 2024-2025
401 resource consent applications processed 2024-2025

Taranaki Regional Council - National Benchmarking

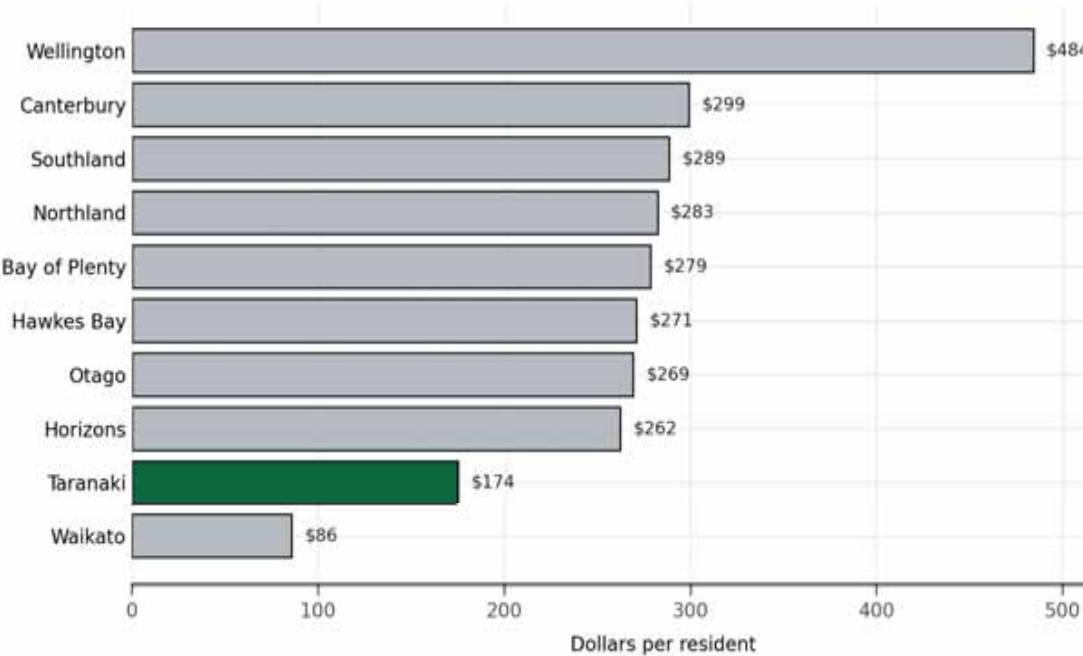
TRC is comparatively small and lean in the regional council benchmark data

TRC has one of the lowest rates burdens per capita across regional councils

Total expenditure per capita, 2024/25



Total rates per capita, 2024/25



TRC benchmarks as a comparatively lean regional council. The 2024/25 total expenditure and total rates are among the lowest, suggesting TRC is not starting from a high-cost or high-rating position

Ko te mana whakahaere rohe

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE



Working with people | caring for Taranaki



Regional leadership & governance

Governance

- 11 councillors + 6 iwi representatives

Partnerships and relationships

- Ngāti Maru Joint Management Agreement
- Mana Whakahono ā Rohe
- Waitara River Committee
- Maunga Redress Act

Education

- >90 schools and >15,000 students per year



Ko ngā ture whakahaere rawa

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Resource management planning

- 5 regional RMA plans
 - Freshwater plan stop and pivot
- Transition from RMA to new Planning and Natural Environment instruments
 - Regional spatial planning
 - Environmental limits
 - Risk and resilience
 - Roading and transport
- Regional Steering Group
 - Four councils, iwi reps

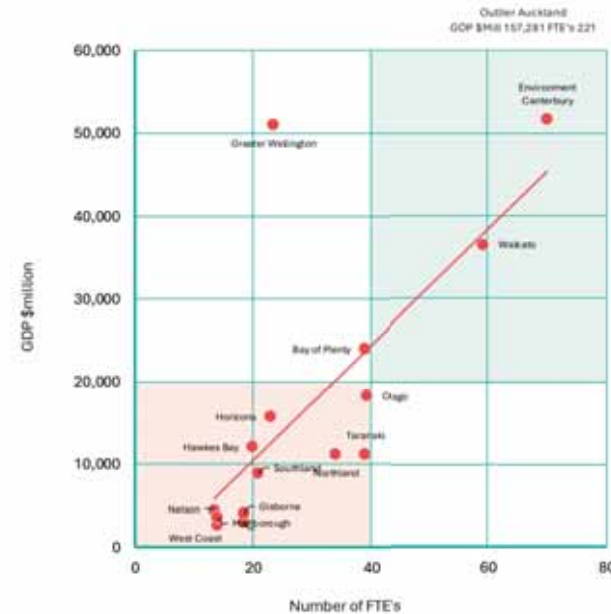
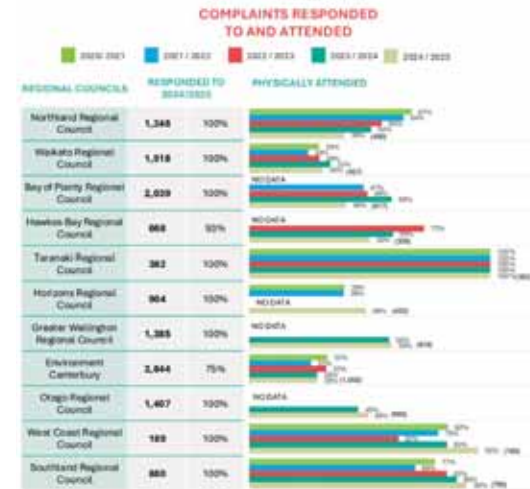


Consents and compliance

- Around 400 consents processed each year
- 2,260 consents regularly monitored
 - including industry, dairy farm effluent, water takes, wastewater, forestry
- Around 100 tailored compliance programmes
 - 97% = good/high level of environmental performance
- Why?
 - environmental protection
 - provides communities with confidence (social licence)
 - contributes baseline information for consent renewals
 - demonstrates environmental sustainability (consumer confidence)

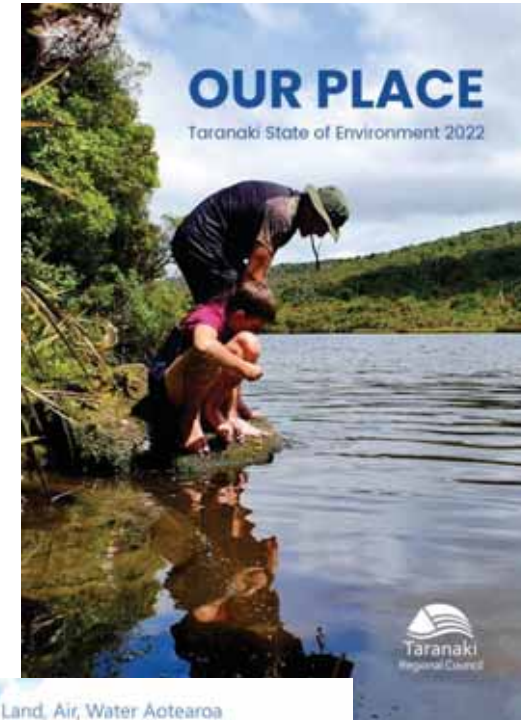
Pollution incidents and response

- ~400-500 incidents annually, (mainly air/odour, earthworks, discharges)
- All attended; of these, ~100-150 non-compliant (most PA)
- Most addressed using low-level tools (abatement notices and letters), more serious breaches with infringements and enforcement notices or orders
- Few prosecutions, but successful
- Challenges in centralising CME service and de-coupling from state of environment monitoring and science



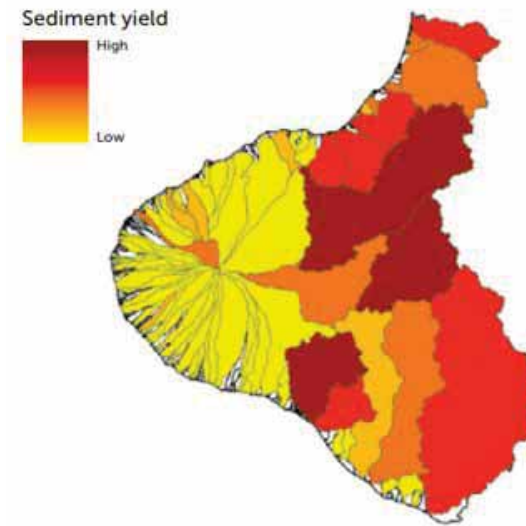
State of environment monitoring

- Regular monitoring of air, biodiversity land and water
- 116 real-time environmental monitoring stations
- NEMS
- LAWA and Environmental Data
- Why?
 - Informs consents, compliance, pollution response, public health, policy development and effectiveness
 - Efficiencies in scale and scope
 - RM reform will bring new requirements including data sharing

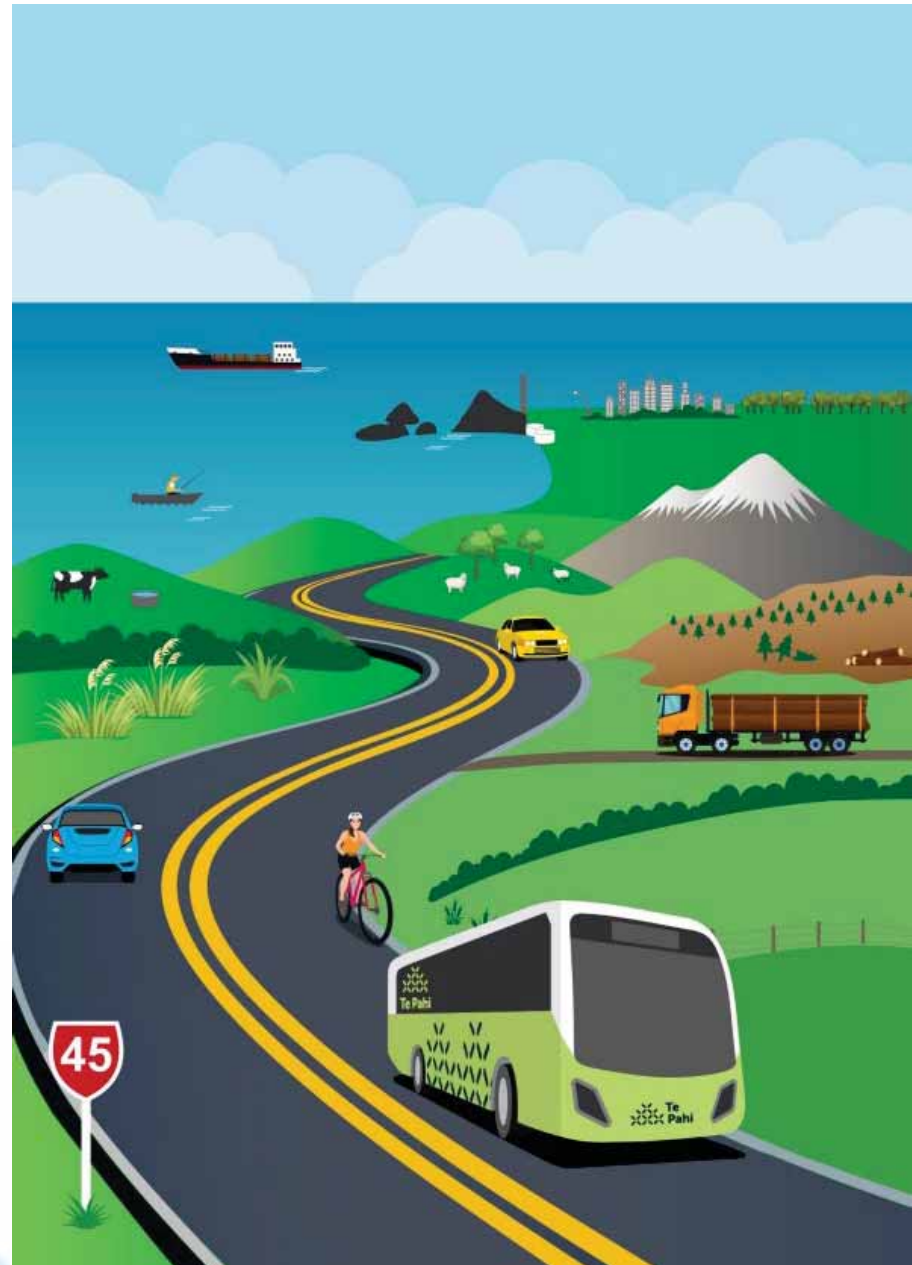


Environmental science investigations

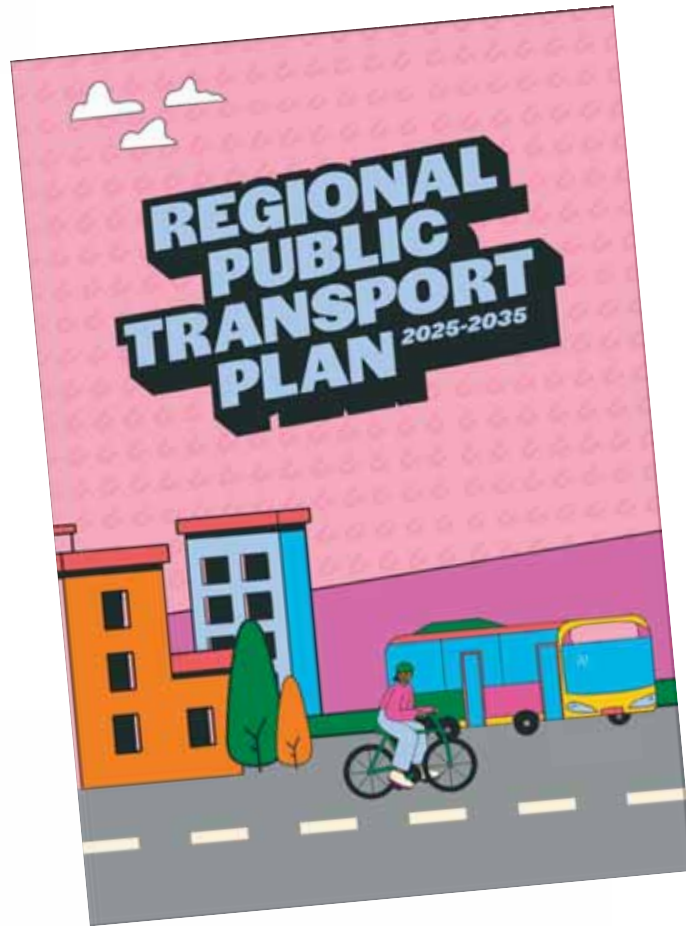
- Iwi monitoring and mātauranga Māori
- Local partnerships – Taranaki Catchment Communities, universities, industry, land-owners, Venture Taranaki
- Why?
 - Informing policy development and implementation
 - Targeting land management, freshwater improvement



Ko ngā kawenga waka
TRANSPORT



Regional transport



- Transport planning and services
 - Land transport plan
 - Better Travel Choices
- Navigation and safety
 - Port Taranaki



Ko ngā noninga ā-rohe

REGIONAL FACILITIES



Taranaki Regional Council gardens

- Tūpare
- Pukeiti
- Hollard Gardens



TRC gardens events and workshops

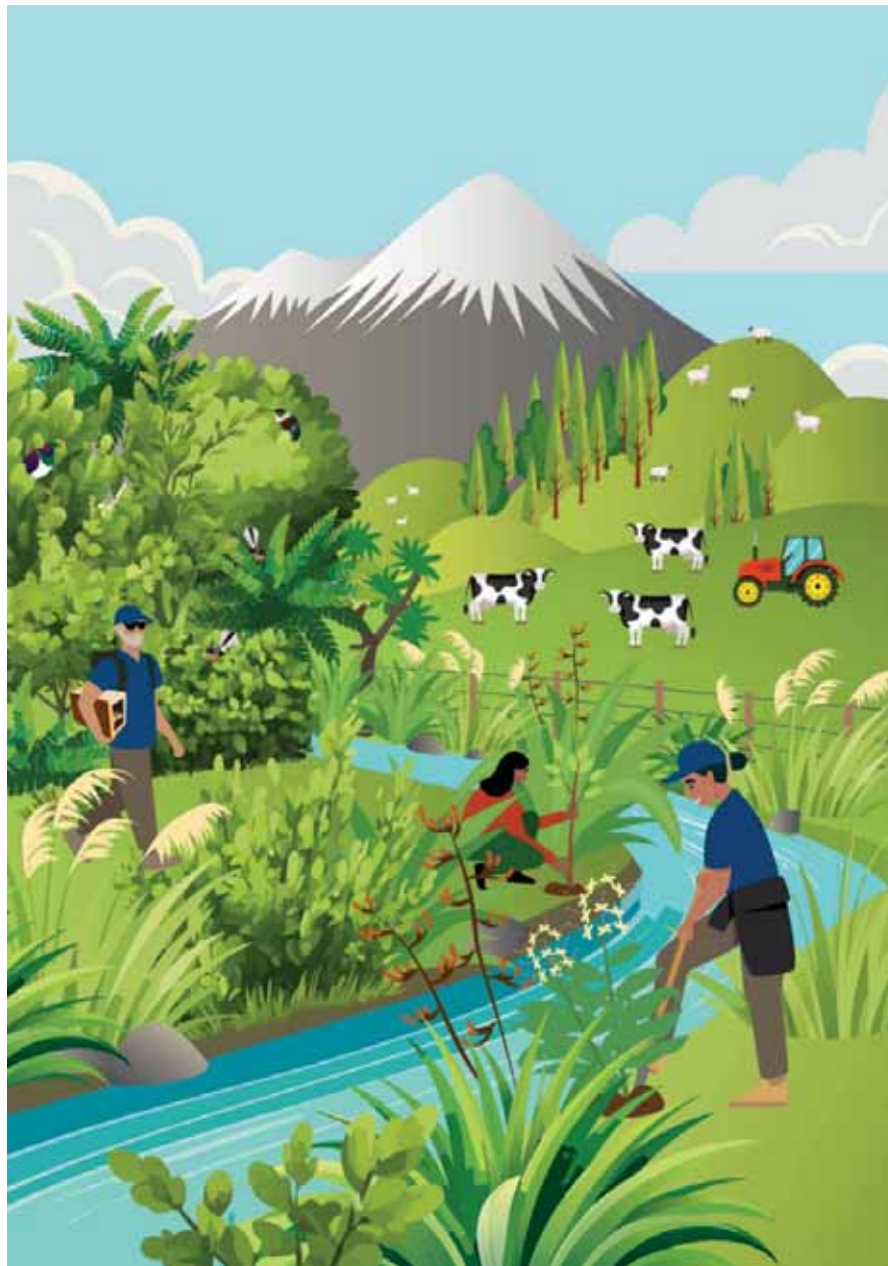


Venues

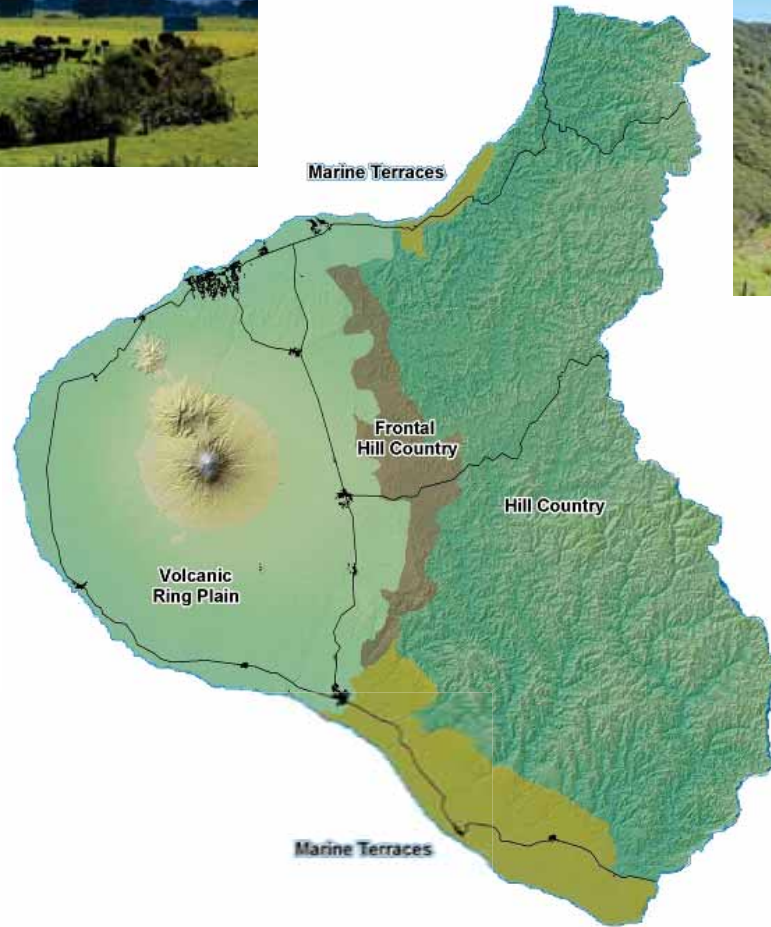


*Ko te mana whakahaere riu
hopuwai*

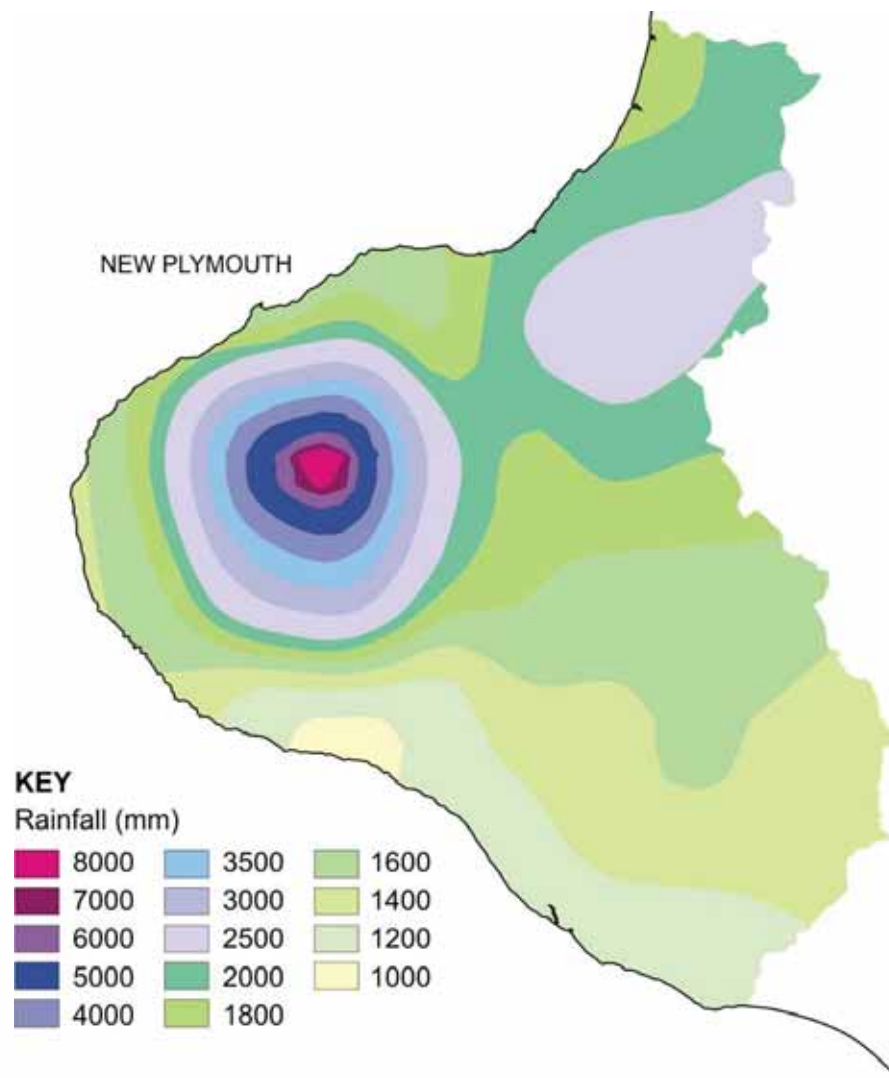
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT



723,610 ha



Rainfall



Hill Country programme

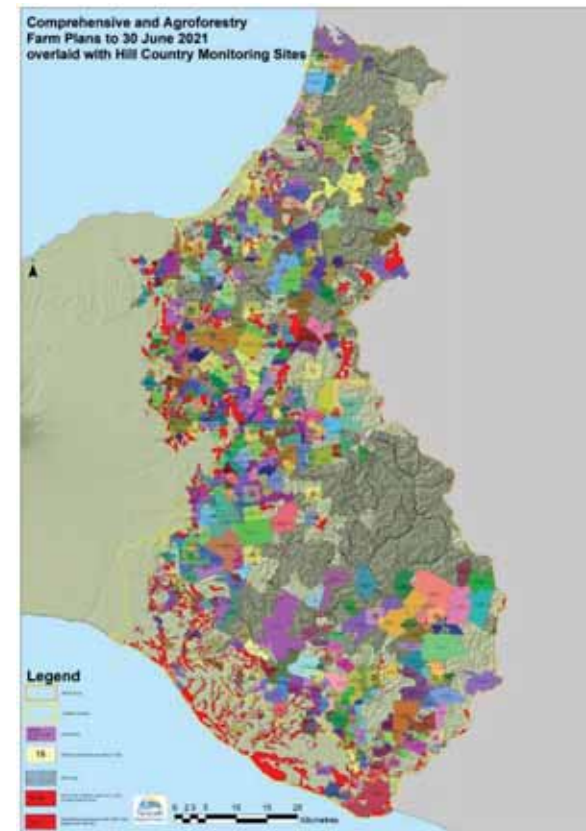


Devastating for productive
land and communities



Hill Country

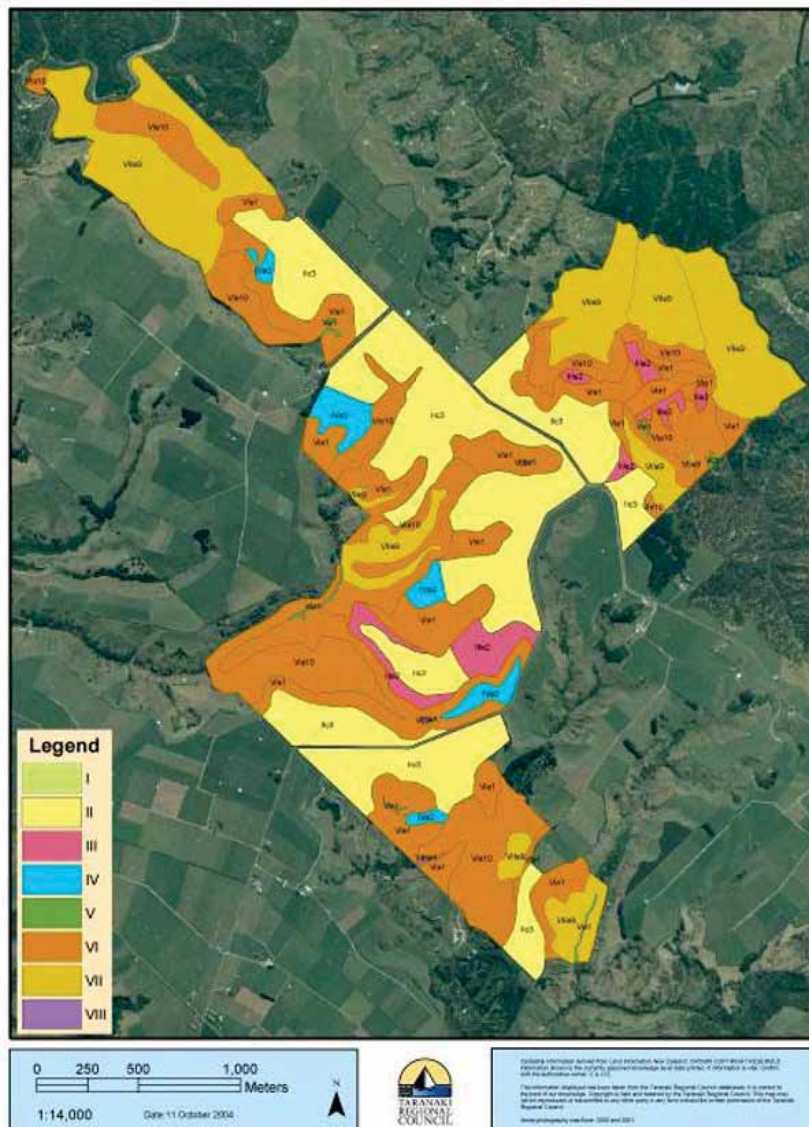
- 86% of farmland has a Farm Plan
- Water quality & soil conservation
- Technical Advice
- \$1M MPI erosion control grants delivered annually
- Inform FWFPs
- Wetlands



LUC Mapping at Farm Level



FP137 Carver - Land Use Capability



Hill Country Farm Plans

Spaced poplar plantings



Root reinforcement of soil



“Big things from small beginnings”

a 34-month-old Veronese poplar tree

Farm forestry

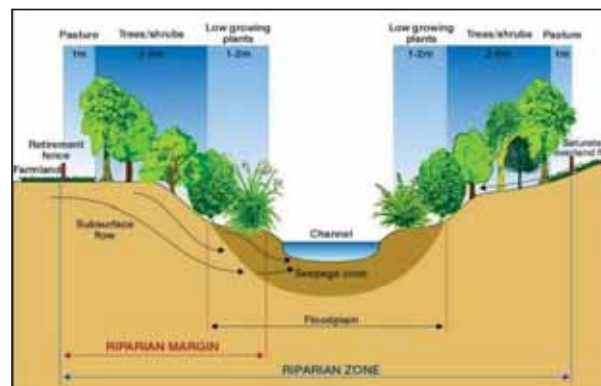


Native forest reversion



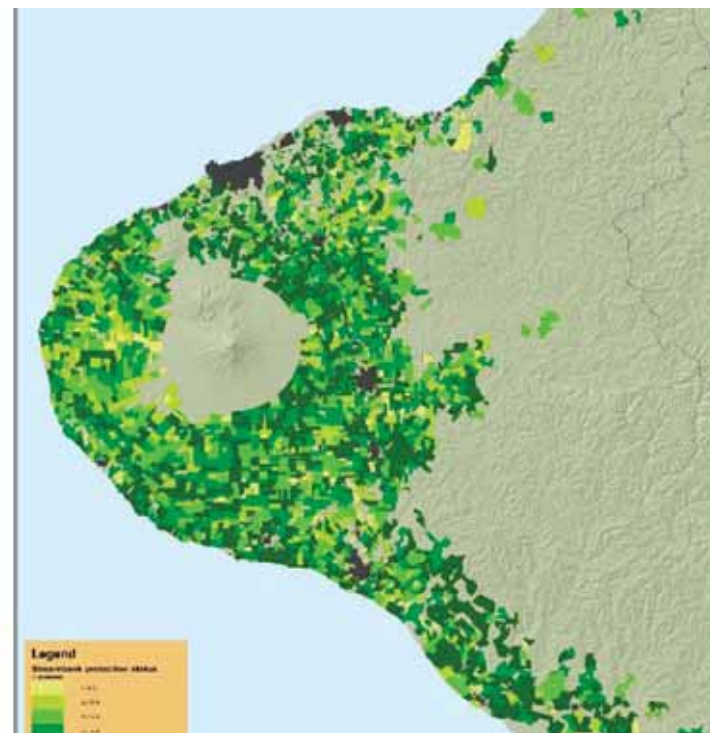
Riparian Management

- Interception runoff/sediment
- Shading
- Biodiversity
- Stock management
- Reticulated water



Riparian Programme – 30 yrs, 230,000ha

- 3,053 plan holders
- 90% fenced, 84% vegetated – total 18,532kms
- 8.3 million native trees
- Transforming Taranaki landscape - 6,000 ha - corridors from mountain to sea
- Largest revegetation project in NZ on private land without subsidies or rules





Natural filter



Monitoring to inform





ENVIRONMENT SERVICES



Clear mandate and direction



Biosecurity

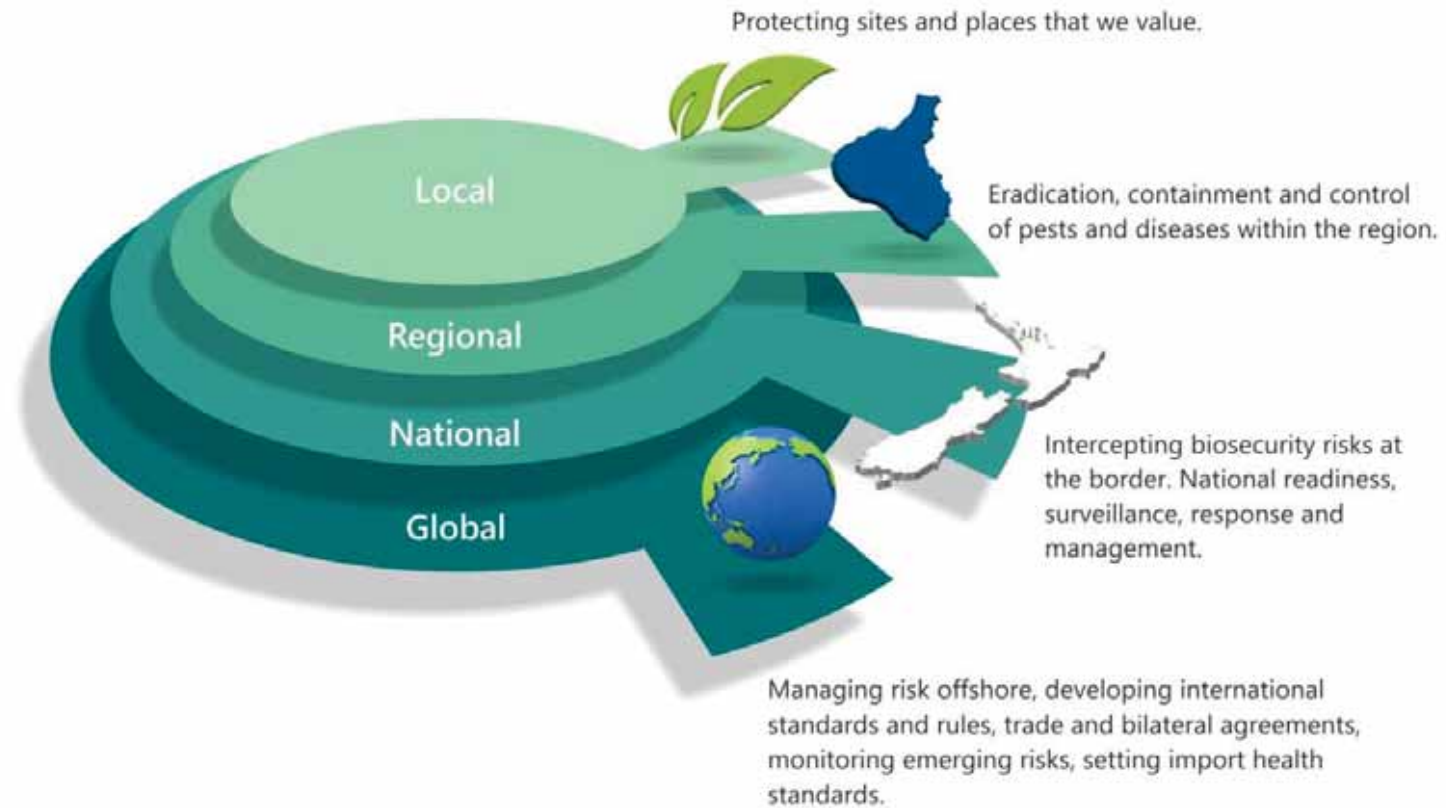


Biosecurity is the actions and measures taken to protect our environment, community and economy from the spread of pests and diseases.

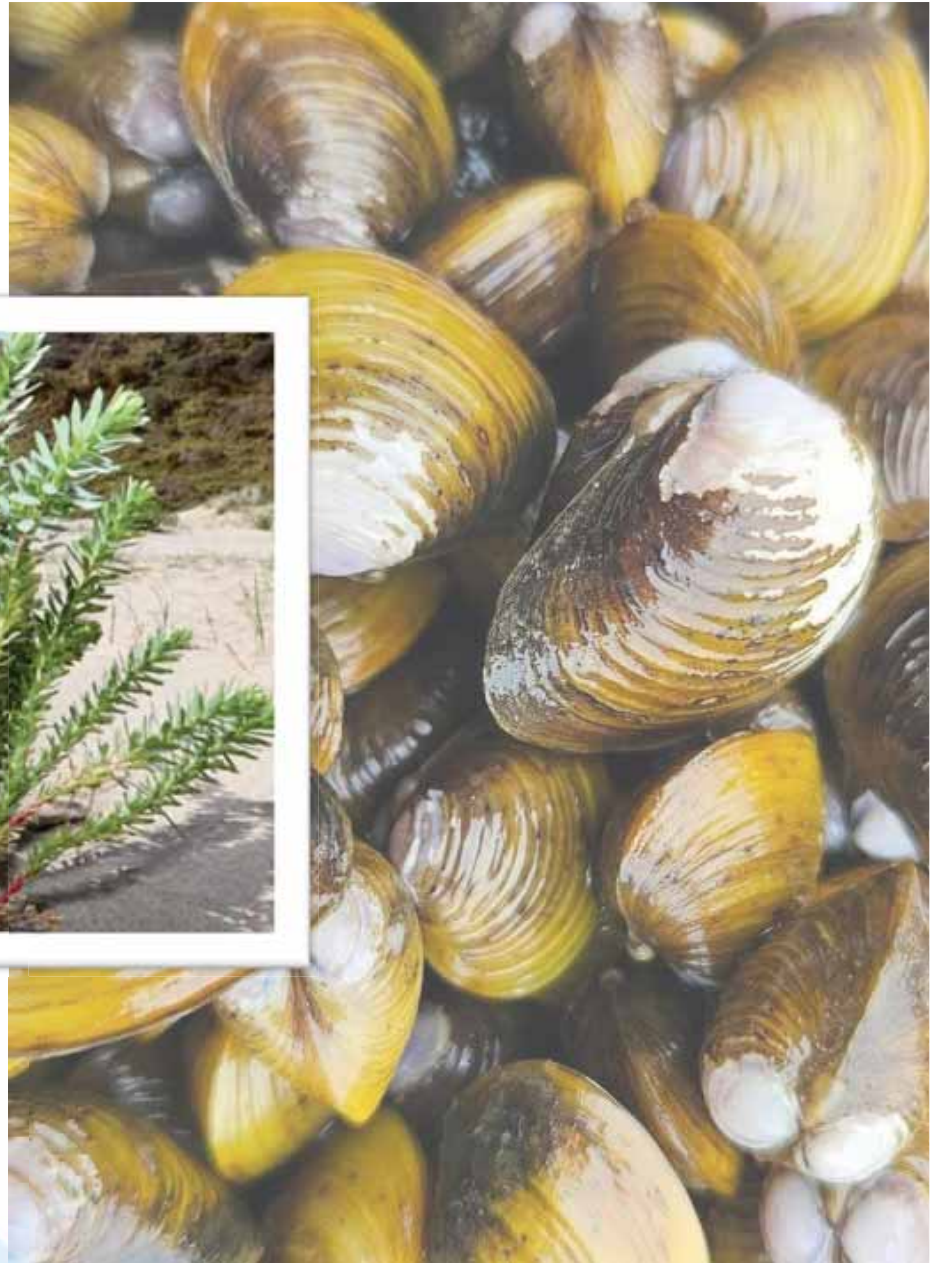


Simply: biosecurity prevents invasive pests and diseases from destroying our way of life.

Biosecurity from local to global



Pathways



Current Biosecurity in Taranaki

TRC Role - Work done under Biosecurity Act 1993

- Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-2028 (covering over 720,000ha)

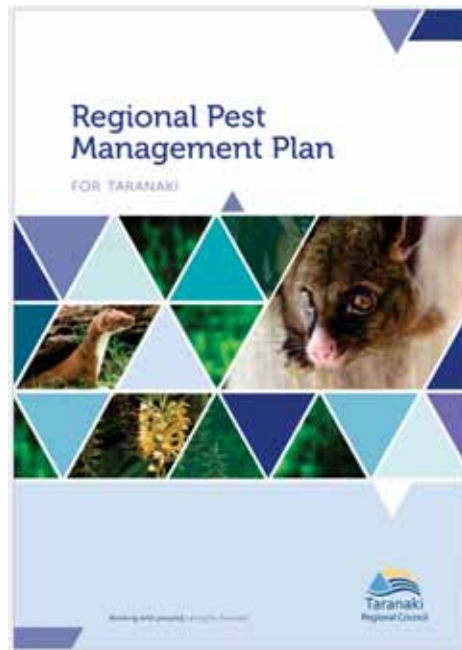
TRC Role – Outside of Biosecurity Act 1993

- Biosecurity Strategy 2018 – 2038 – Regional Strategy
- Check, Clean, Dry Programme - National freshwater campaign
- Towards Predator-Free Taranaki - National campaign

Other agencies/groups doing biosecurity work in Taranaki

- MPI, DOC, District Councils, NZTA, Kiwirail, OSPRI, KVH, Port Taranaki, iwi/hapū, nurseries, industries, community groups and individuals.

Regional Pest Management Plan

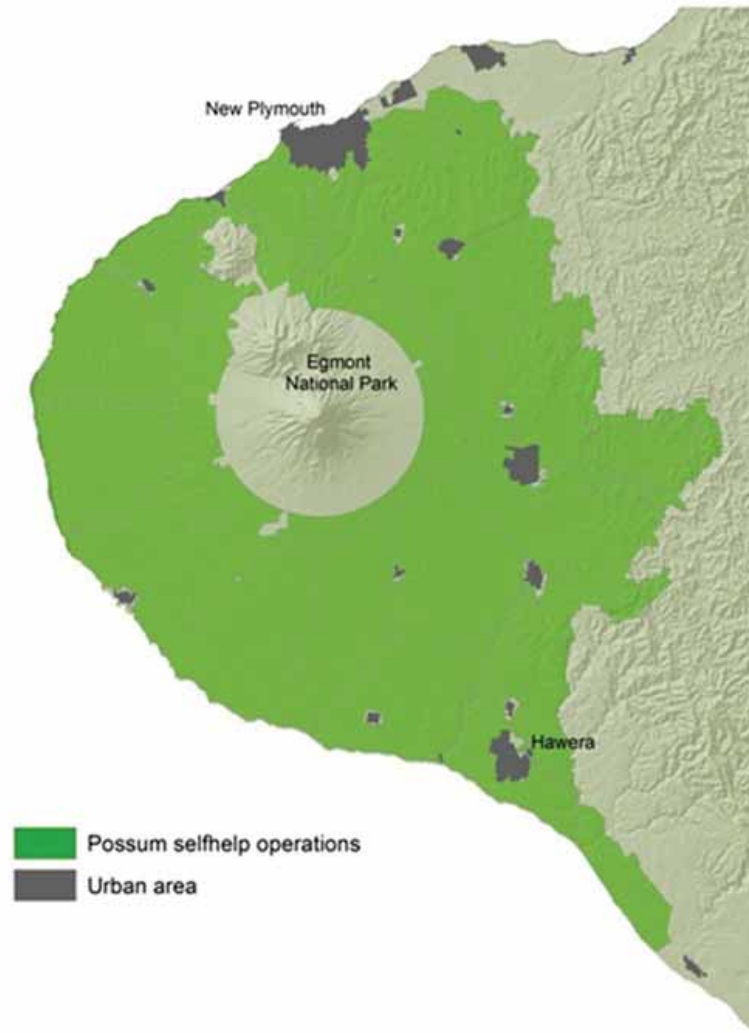


- Eradication species
 - 5 plants
 - Moth Plant
 - Maderia Vine
 - Senegal Tea
 - Giant Reed
 - Climbing spindleberry
- Sustained control species
- 11 x plants, 4 x animals



Possum Control Programme

- Longest running community possum control programme in the world
- Covers 235,000ha.
- Over 4500 properties
- Minimises effects on pastoral production, animal health (TB) and indigenous biodiversity
- Landowner DIY programme with enforcement backstop





Taranaki Taku Tūrangā

Towards Predator-Free Taranaki



PREDATOR FREE 2050
TUIA TE TAIAO

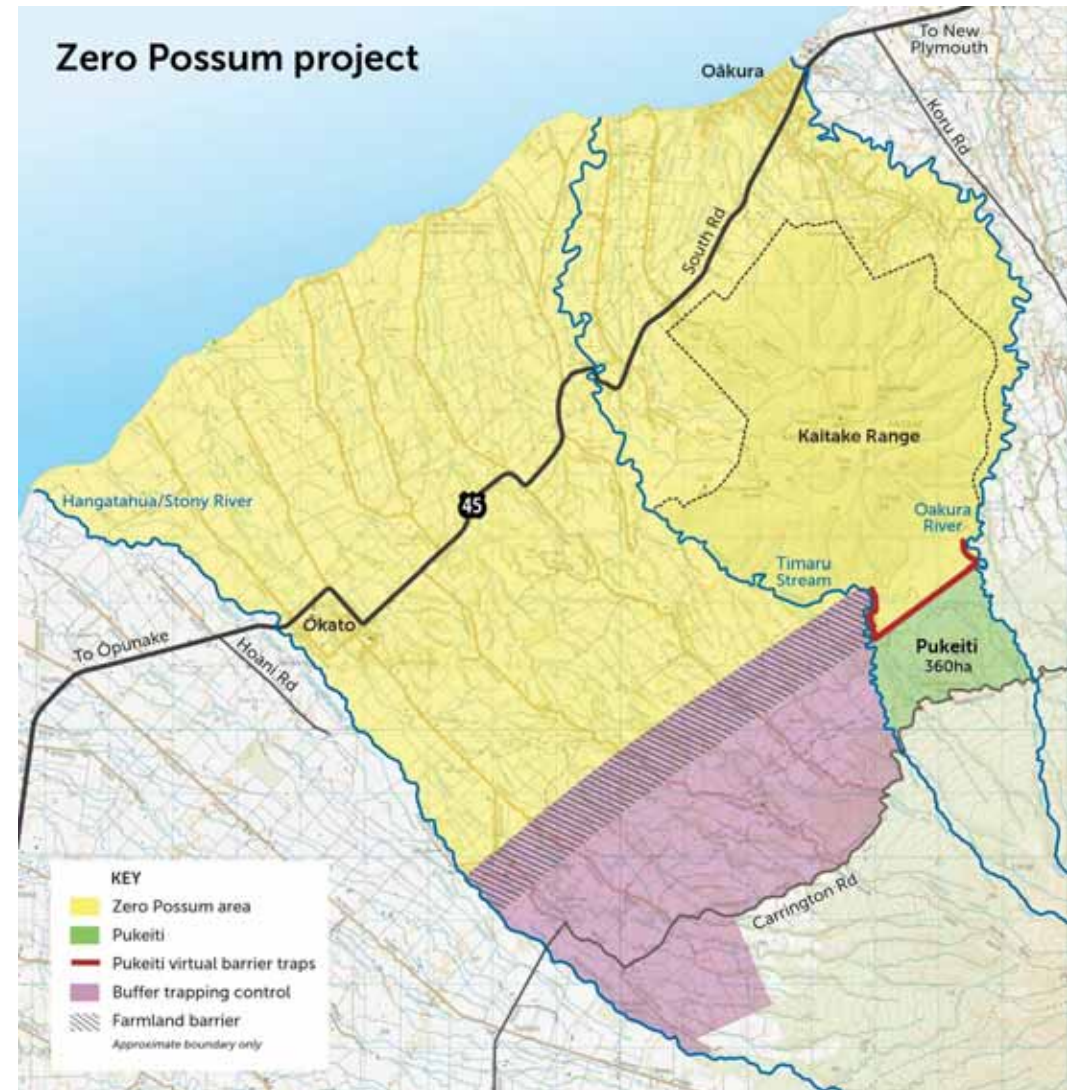


Rural Mustelid programme



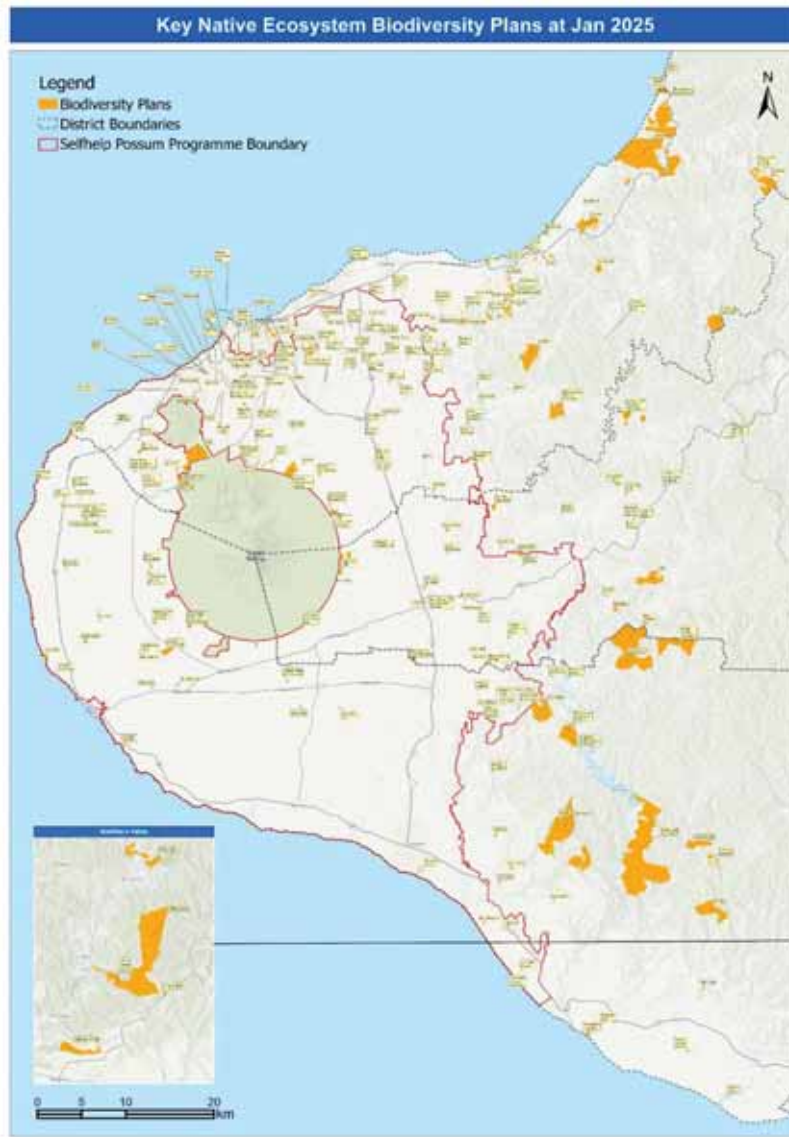
Project workstreams

- Urban Predator control
- Zero Possum Trial
- Research & monitoring outcomes

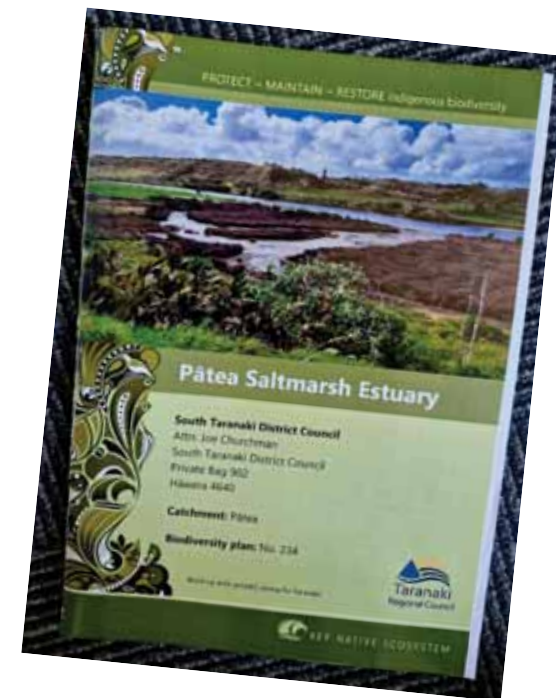


Biodiversity Programmes





- 412 Key Native Ecosystems
- 271 Biodiversity Plans
- New ones added each year
- 5 Biodiversity Officers involved in delivery



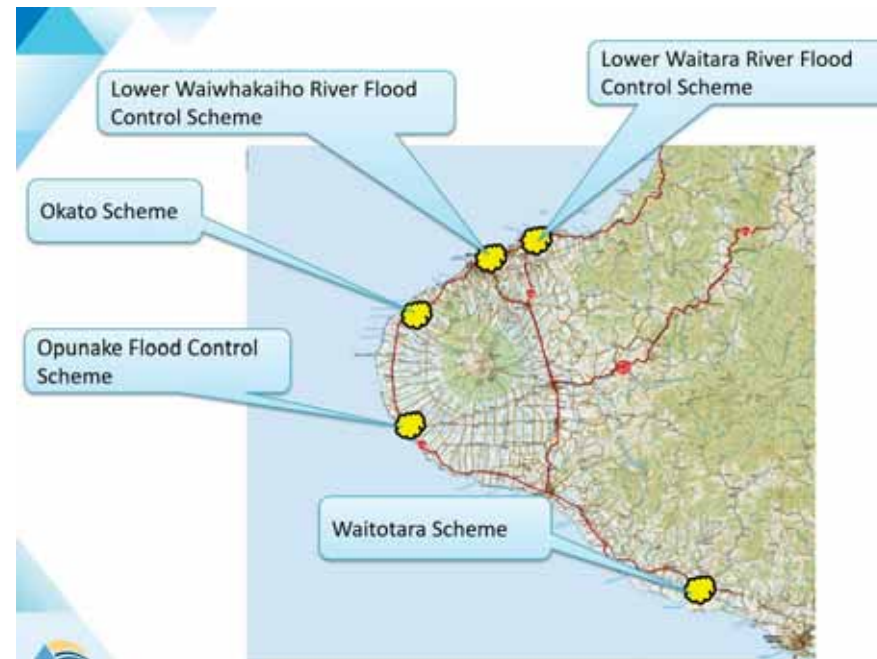


RIVER CONTROL & FLOOD PROTECTION



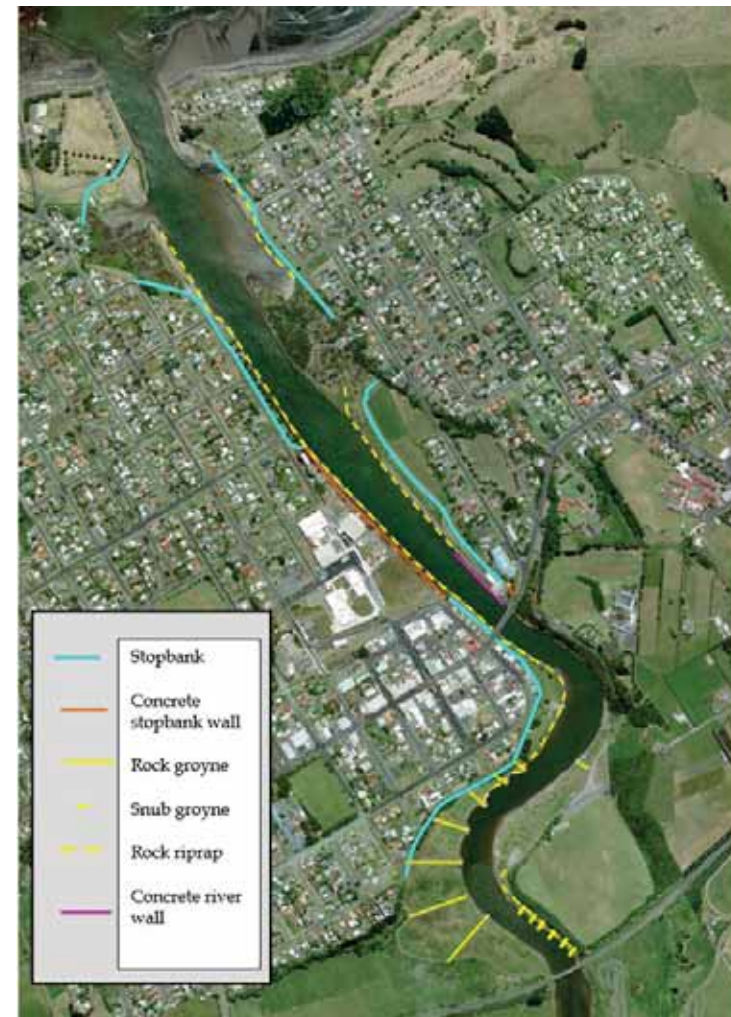
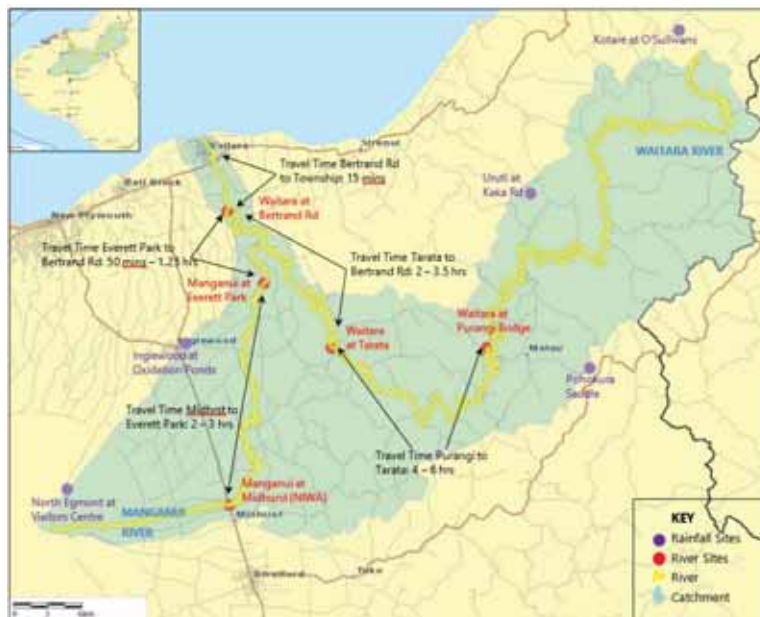
Schemes Overview

- Protecting the community is our priority
- Five key flood protection and river management schemes



Lower Waitara FPS

- Protection standard:
- 3840 cumec (m³/sec) flood event
 - 2700 cumec - 1% AEP in 2012
- 500mm freeboard
- Allowance for climate change out to 2065



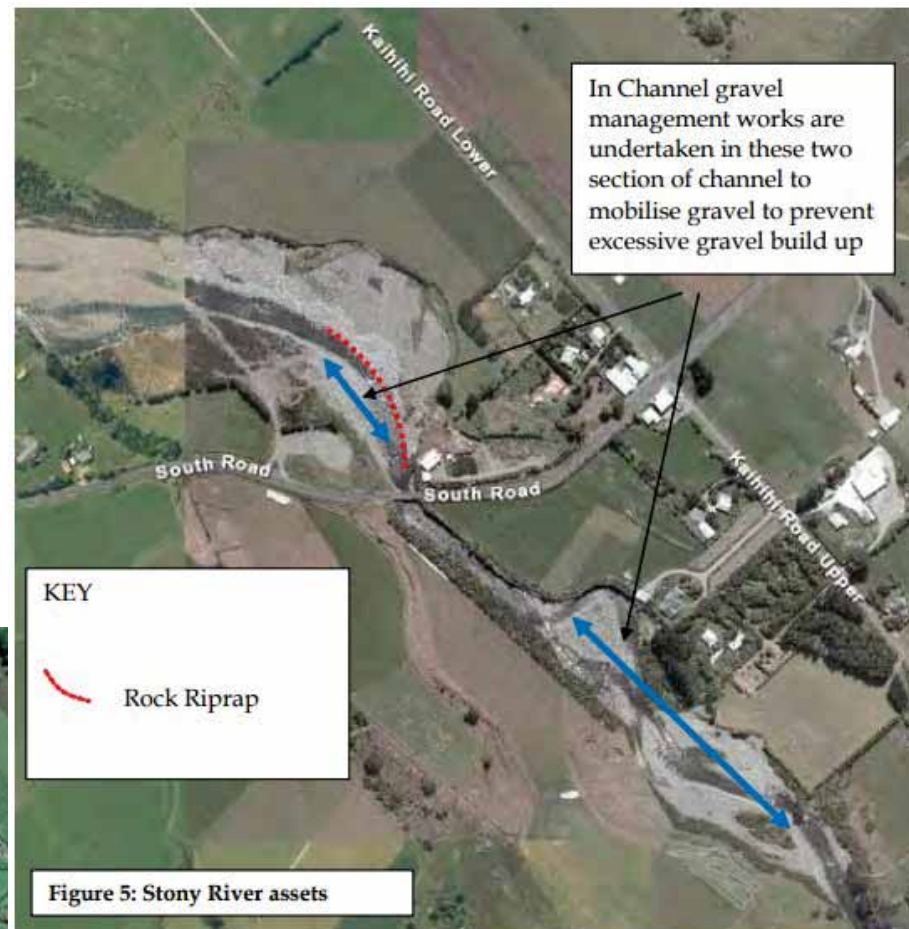
Lower Waiwhakaiho FPS

- Protection standard:
- 1,180 cumec flood in Waiwhakaiho River with 500mm freeboard and climate change allowance through to 2060
- 73 cumec flood in Mangaone Stream with 300mm freeboard



Ōkato FPS

- Hangatahua (Stony) River and Kaihihi Stream
- No formal protection standard
- Channel management, rock protection, guide banks



Ōpunake FPS

- Protection standard:
- 12 cumec – 1% AEP
- Diversion of Hihiwera Stream to Otahi Stream and Waiaua River, away from Opunake

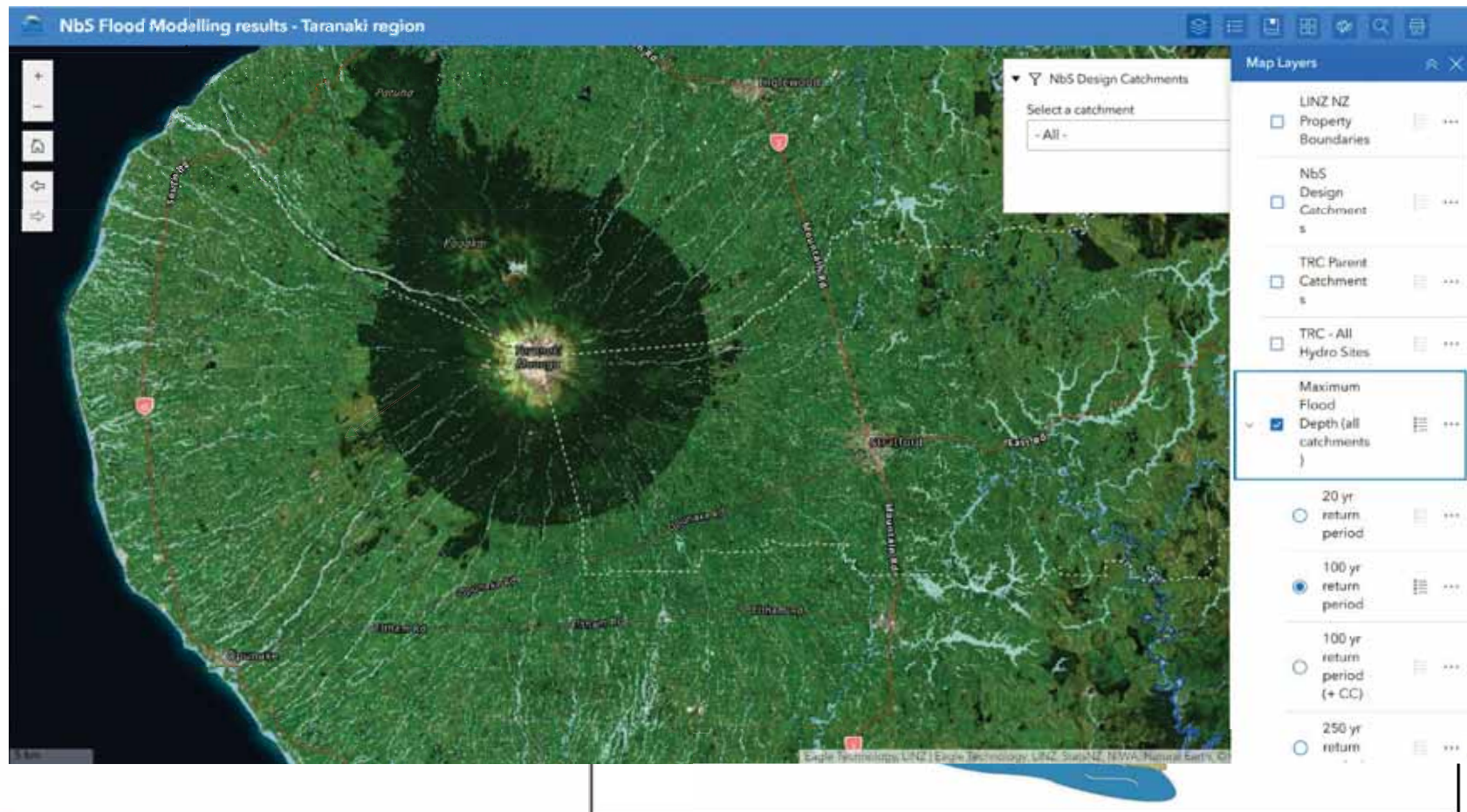


Waitōtara RMS

- Catchment area 1200 km², Eastern Hill Country, high sediment loads
- No hard/grey assets
- Willow planting
- Willow control
- No formal protection standard



Flood modelling



- Flood
Env

- 



Civil Defence role



- TRC's Environmental Data team monitors weather systems across the region in real time
- TRC Flood Manager provides critical intel to CDEM (TEMO) to ensure appropriate activation and response
- TRC field staff connect with contacts across the region providing intel at a regional, district, catchment, and individual rural property scale



Thank you



Short Break (10mins)



Shaping Taranaki's Future survey

- Open 15-28 June 2026
- 532 responses
- Findings a useful indicator of community views, but not definitive. Further engagement needed.
- Focus on values, opportunities, concerns and what “local voice” means
- Did not ask model preference due to early stage of process
- Full results available after workshop



Top 3 opportunities

1. Cost savings and efficiency

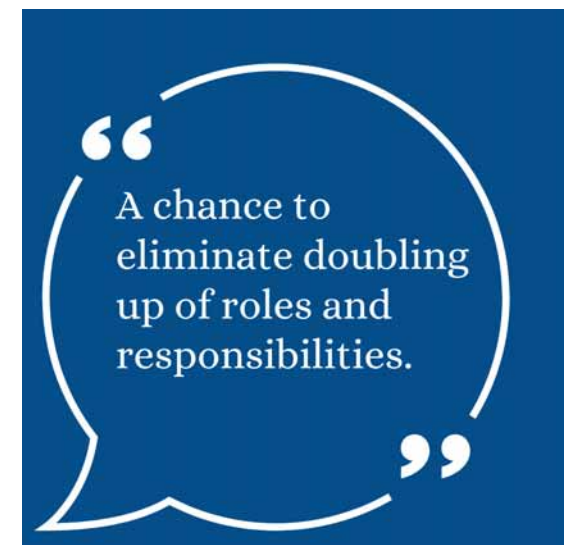
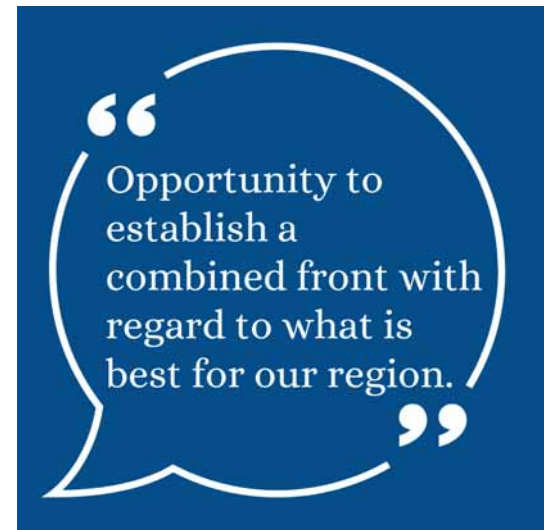
Reducing duplication, streamlining “back office” functions, cutting management layers and bureaucracy, lowering rates, controlling spending, economies of scale.

2. Greater regional coordination

“One voice for Taranaki”, regional planning, better alignment, stronger voice when dealing with central government.

3. Improved service delivery, consistency and simplicity

Consistent rules across the region, simplified processes (especially consenting), faster decision-making and less red tape, a “one-stop shop” for council services.



Top 3 concerns

1. Loss of local voice, representation and identity

Smaller towns being overlooked, New Plymouth dominating decision-making, loss of direct access to decision-making, erosion of local identity and community-specific needs.

2. Centralisation of power and reduced accountability

Reduced democratic influence, one large entity harder to hold accountable, decisions moving further away from communities, loss of checks and balances between councils, influence shifting to unelected officials.

3. Costs, inefficiency and risk of “bigger bureaucracy”

Scepticism about financial benefits, high transition costs, risk of more complex bureaucracy, doubt that savings will materialise, potential for duplicated services to persist, rising rates.

“

That Stratford and South Taranaki will end up with the scraps from New Plymouth's table.

”

“

No real cost savings and a bigger bureaucracy that listens even less to the community

”

Head Start Assessment Criteria



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



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



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



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



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

Indicative Additional Assessment Criteria



Treaty Settlements and iwi/hapū/Māori partnerships: The model will maintain Treaty settlement arrangements and existing commitments, and enable effective participation by iwi, hapū and Māori in local government decision-making.



Financial resilience: The model will support affordable, equitable, and sustainable funding over the medium to long term, and maintain financial stability across local government in the region.



Support growth and investment: The model will enable the attraction and effective deployment of investment to support regional economic growth and development in the region.



Workforce retention and attraction: The model will support the attraction and retention of critical workforce capability for local government functions within the region.



Future flexibility: The model can be adapted over time in response to change without requiring further structural reform. Changes could include population growth or decline, service pressures, future policy and legislative reforms, and evolving community needs.

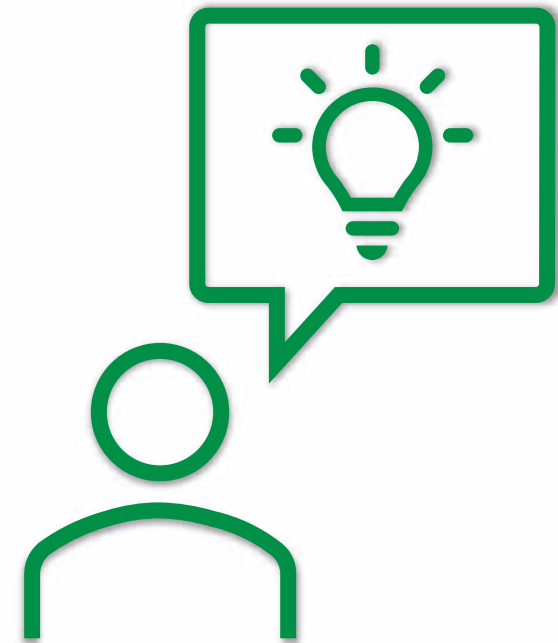
Assessment Criteria Activity

STEP 1: Break out into the 4 tables around the Chambers

Each table has a copy of the Head Start Assessment Criteria, the Indicative Additional Assessment Criteria and sticky dots.

STEP 2: Using the sticky dots (four per participant):

- A. Each participant to indicate the **two** Head Start Assessment Criteria that are most important to you; and
- B. Each participant to indicate the **two** Indicative Additional Assessment Criteria that are most important to you.



Governance Model Options



Governance Models – Context for Session

Before we begin...

- This is an exploration exercise, **not a decision-making session**.
- The models are **intentionally high-level** and do not yet include all design details.
- Please **hold questions and discussion** as we move through the models.
- There will be **dedicated time after lunch** to explore implications, issues and opportunities in detail.



Māori Representation & Partnership

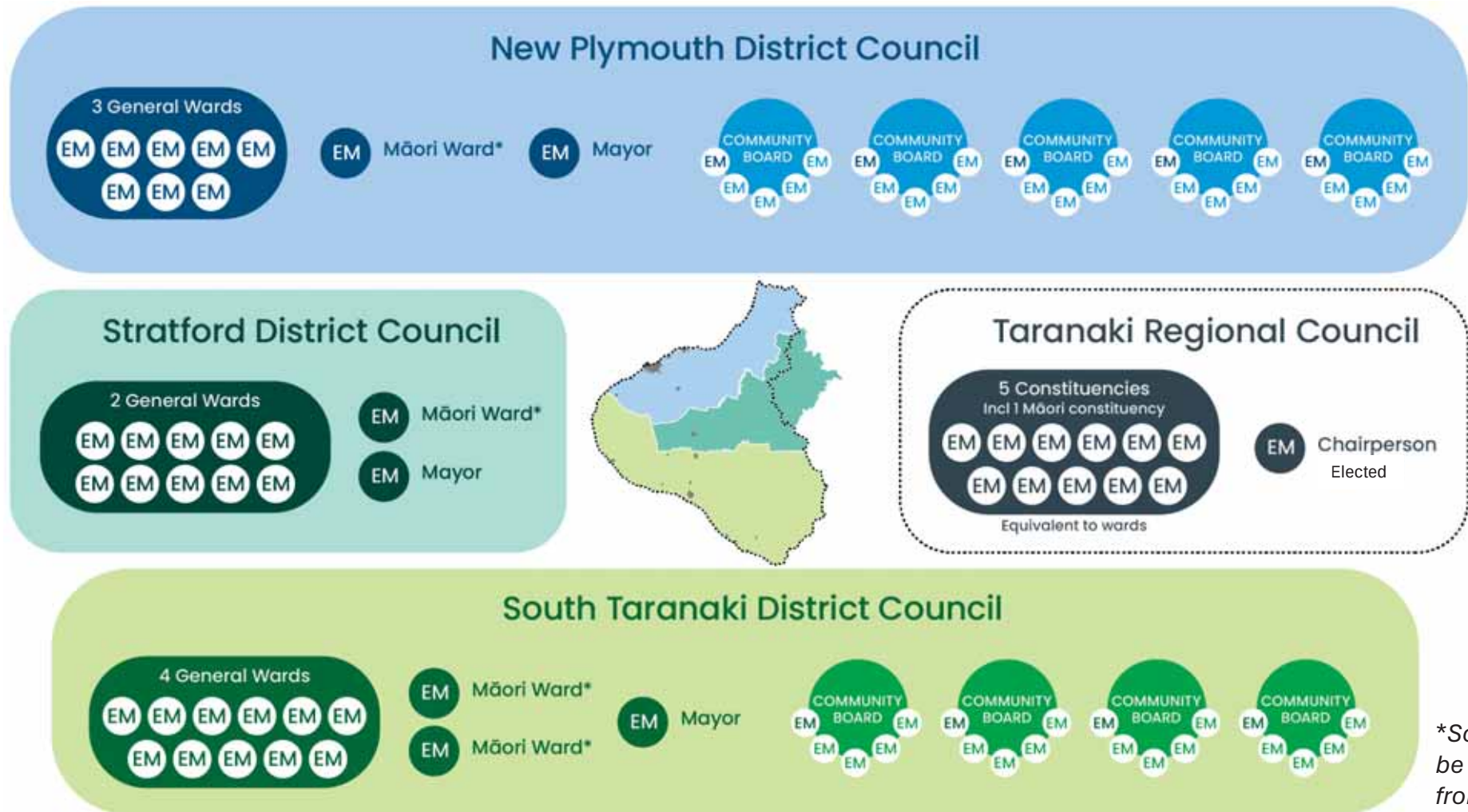
We recognise that Māori representation, participation and partnership arrangements are a critical consideration within any future governance model, requiring further exploration, engagement and design with iwi and hapū across Taranaki.

Future arrangements will need to:

- Provide continuity of existing Treaty settlement commitments and existing participation arrangements,
- Retain strong local iwi and hapū voices through councils, local boards, community governance structures, and/or other place-based arrangements

This remains an important area for further discussion and development, and should be considered alongside, rather than constrained by, the Governance models presented.

Taranaki local government representation arrangements



Approach to Model Development

- The models are designed to support discussion, not signal a preferred outcome.
- Developed from New Zealand and international governance experience, and informed by Taranaki's unique context.
- Intended to test a range of approaches across a spectrum from greater regional integration through to stronger local autonomy.
- Focused on governance arrangements rather than detailed organisational or service delivery design at this stage.
- Designed to help identify strengths, risks and trade-offs associated with different approaches.

Caveat: No model is likely to score highest against every assessment criterion. Aiming to find governance arrangement(s) that best balance the outcomes that matter most to Taranaki.

Governance Models Draw on Existing Experience

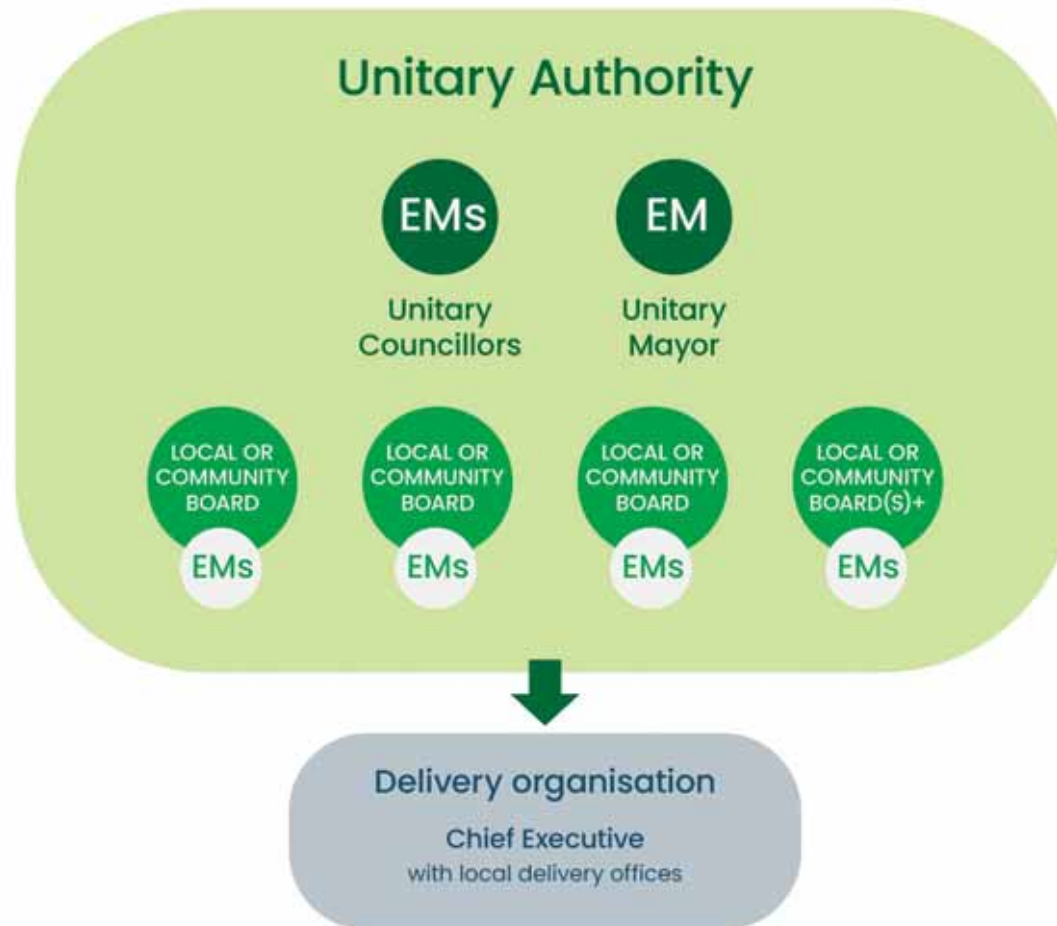
The models are not theoretical concepts. They draw on governance arrangements operating elsewhere in NZ and internationally, including:

- Auckland Council and other New Zealand unitary authorities
- United Kingdom Combined Authority models
- Australian regional subsidiary and shared service arrangements
- Other existing New Zealand local government models adapted for a Taranaki context.

Caveat: current thinking is that a Representation Review-type process will be required for any detailed proposal to consider communities of interest and inform ward numbers and boundaries, the number of boards and elected members.

Model 1 – Single Unitary Authority

- Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for all local government functions in the region.
- One Long-Term Plan.
- One delivery organisation, with local delivery offices.
- Key design choices relate to the second tier of governance/representation.



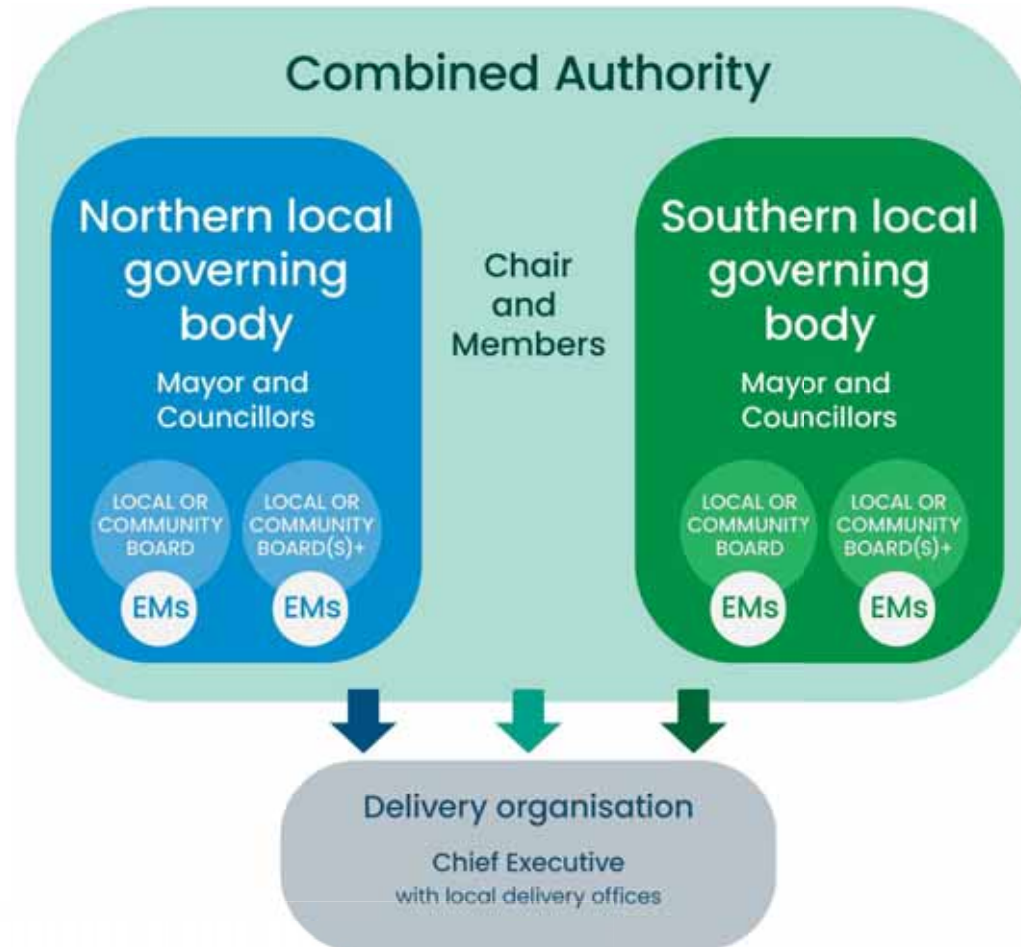
Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002.

Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect.

The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Model 2 – Combined Authority

- Combined Authority governs and charges rates for regional-scale functions.
- Combined Authority sets region-wide service standards for local-scale functions, informed by local input.
- Local governing bodies govern and charge rates for local-scale functions within their respective territories (meeting region-wide service standards).
- One delivery organisation, with local delivery offices.
- Evolving thinking includes potentially having three Long-Term Plans. Staggered so that Combined Authority's LTP is first.



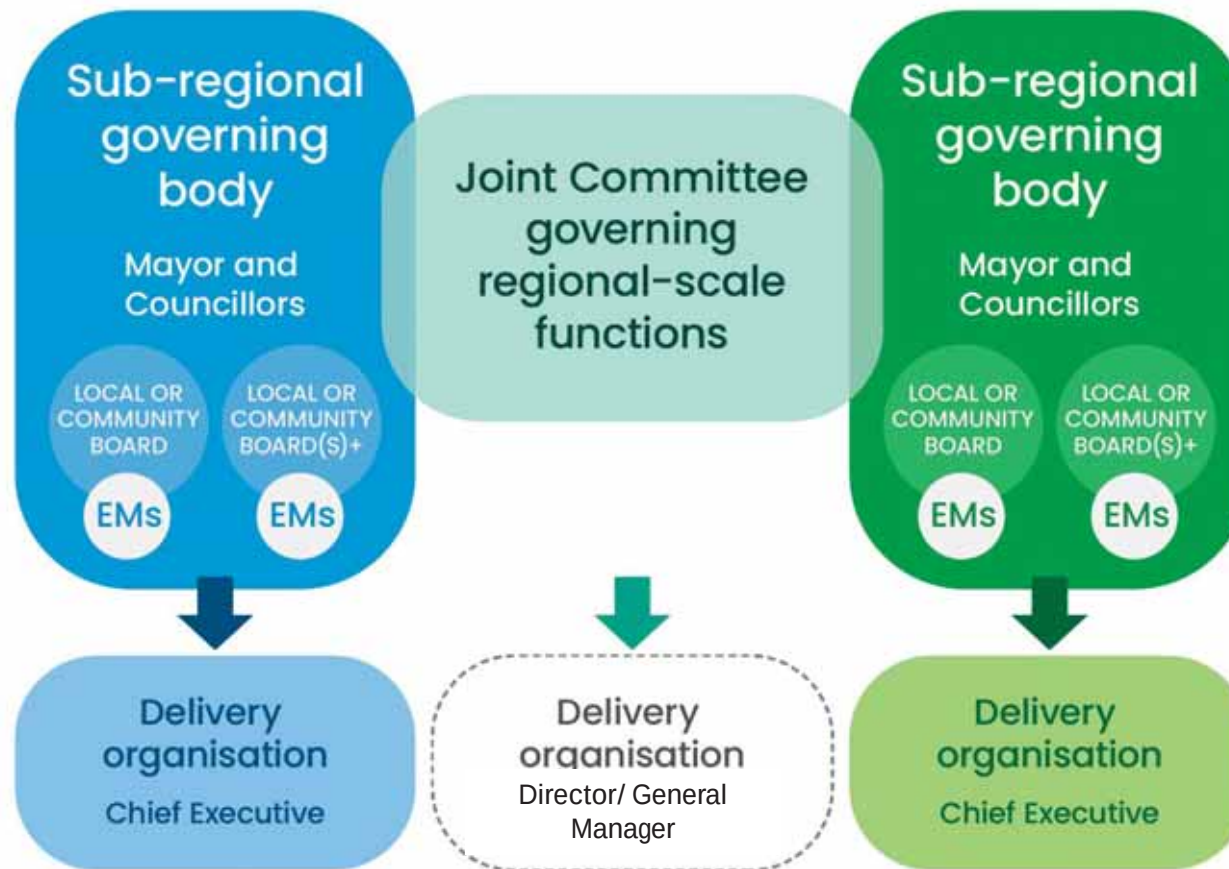
Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002.

Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect.

The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Model 3 – Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee

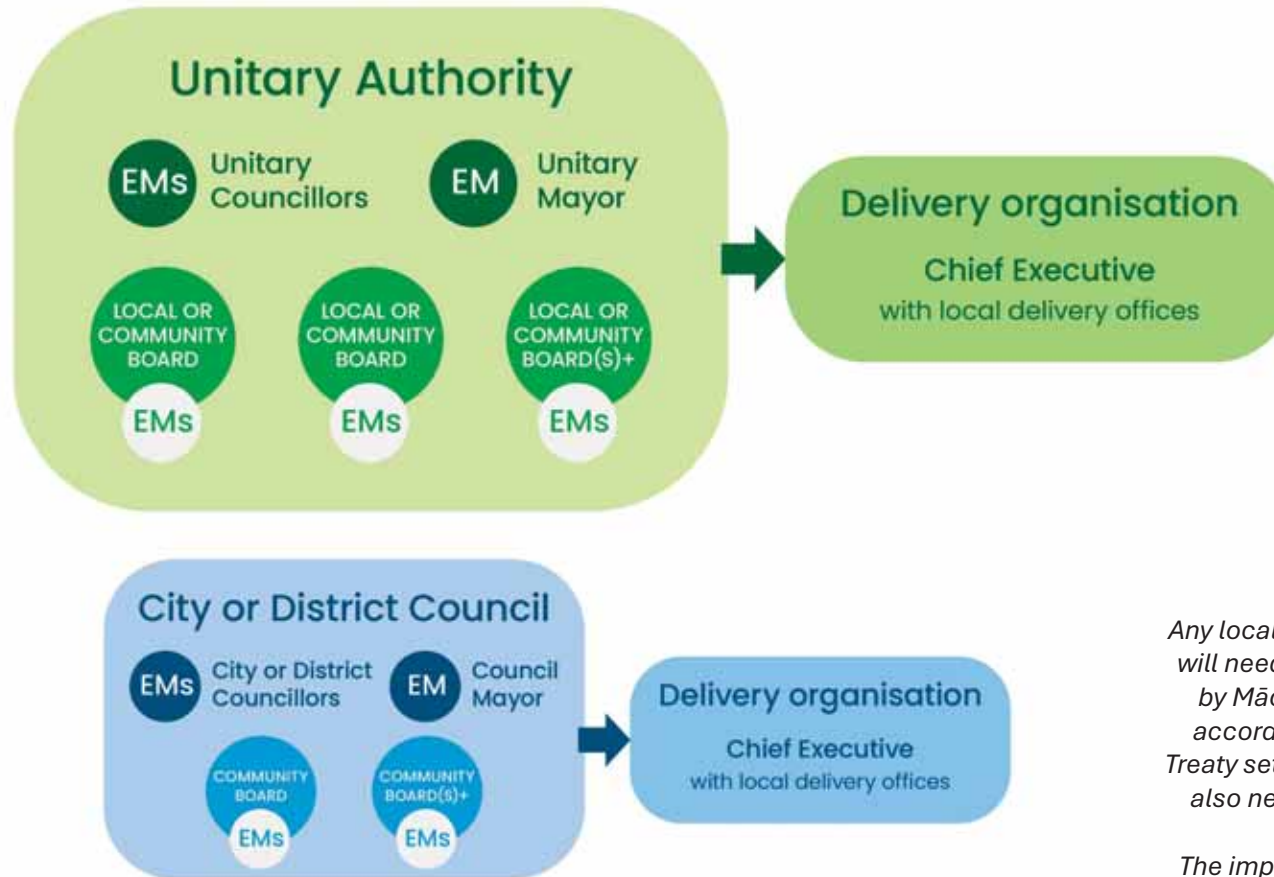
- Region divided into two sub-regions.
- Each sub-regional governing body governs all local government functions in its area. Two Long-Term Plans.
- Joint Committee governs regional-scale functions. Members appointed from sub-regional governing bodies.
- Regional scale functions may be delivered by a third delivery organisation, or by one or both of the other delivery organisations, or via a CCO.



Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002. Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect. The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Model 4 – One Unitary Authority and a City or District Council

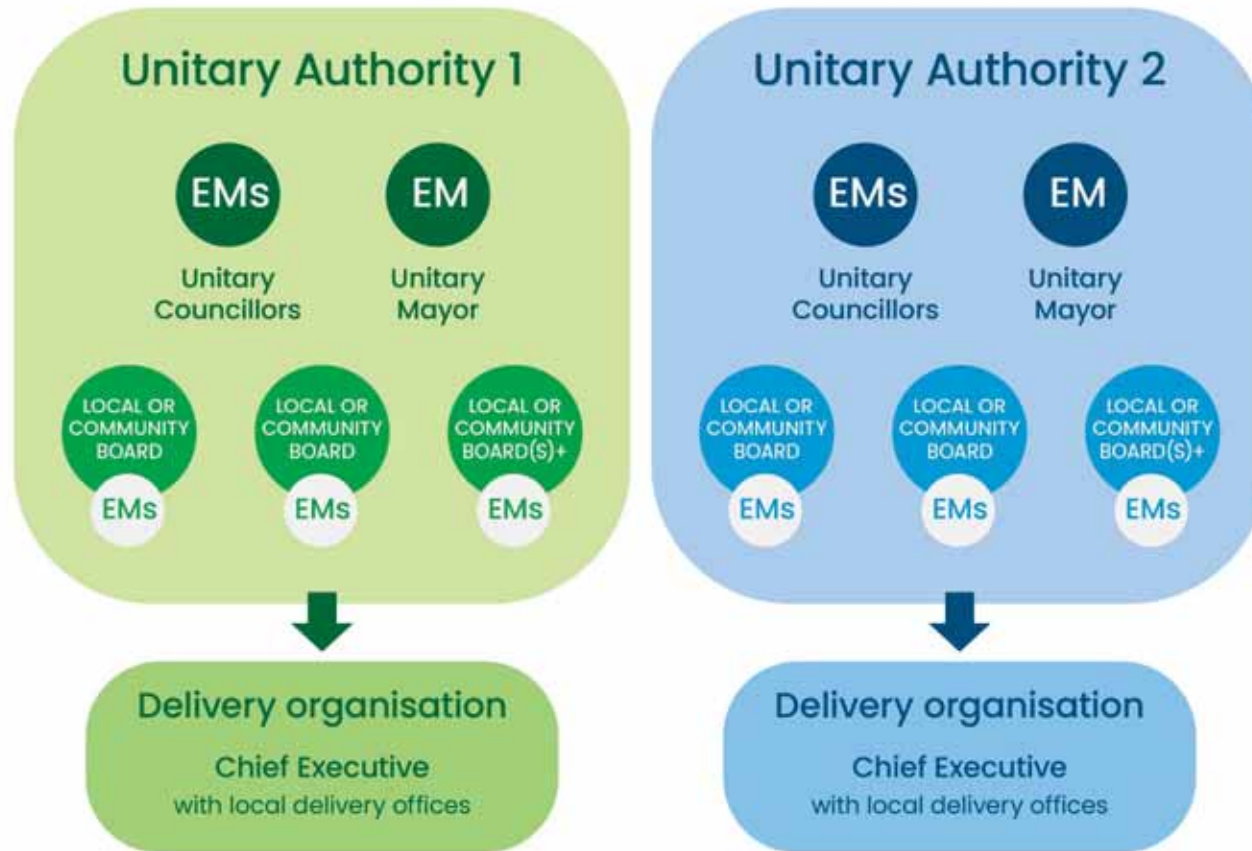
- Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for regional-scale functions.
- Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for local-scale functions for its local territory.
- City/District Council governs and charges rates for local-scale functions for its territory.
- Two Long-Term Plans and two delivery organisations.



Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002. Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect. The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

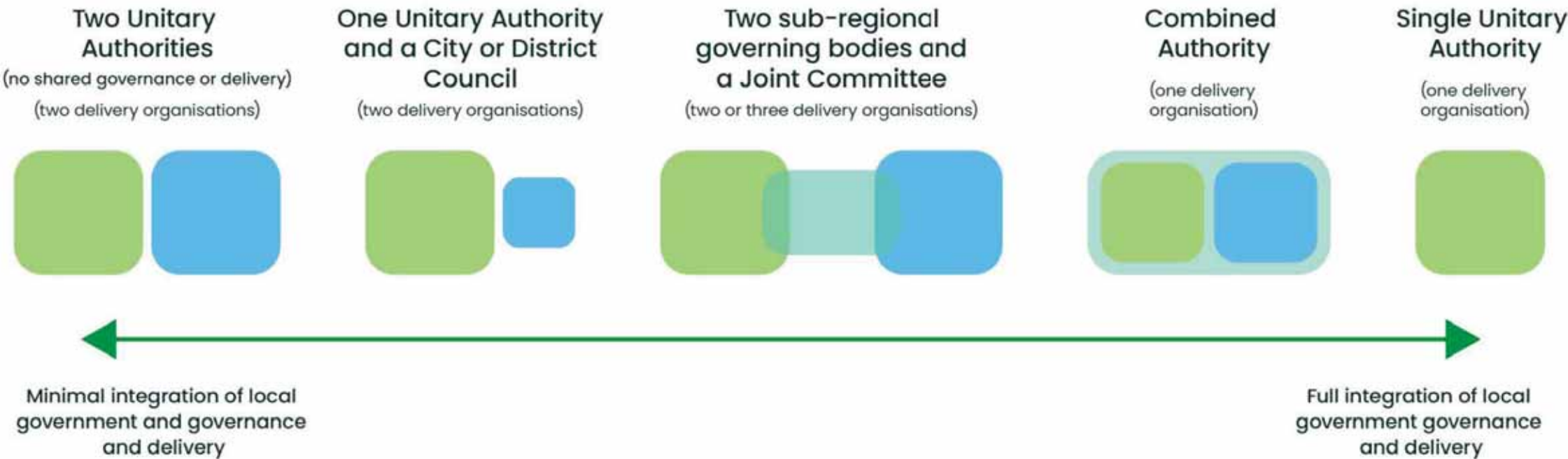
Model 5 – Two Unitary Authorities (no shared governance or delivery)

- Region divided into two.
- Each Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for all local government functions in its area.
- Two Long-Term Plans and two delivery organisations.
- No shared governance or delivery arrangements.



Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002. Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect. The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Models sit along a continuum



← *Taranaki status quo is further this way

Lunch (30mins)



Breakout Sessions

Instructions

- Please break out into 6 groups
- Two groups to remain in Chambers, others to breakout into the Plymouth, Ngāmotu, Mishima and Kunming Rooms (Ground Floor)
- Facilitators will guide you from there



Short Break (10mins)



Report Back & Synthesis

Purpose: To build a shared picture across the room

Exploration of:

- Potential areas of alignment
- Key points of difference
- Emerging themes



Close & Next Steps

- Culmination of workshop outputs and discussions, engagement survey results
- Continue working with South Taranaki District Council and Stratford District Council to explore opportunities for alignment.
- TRC Extraordinary meeting 28th July and NPDC Extraordinary meeting 29th July to consider next steps including potential Outline Proposal submission.

Closing Karakia

Kia uruuru mai

A hau ora

A hau kaha

A hau māia

Ki runga

Ki raro

Ki roto

Ki waho

Rirerire hau

Pai mārire



Future Local Government Joint Workshop

9 July 2026

Reference pack for participants

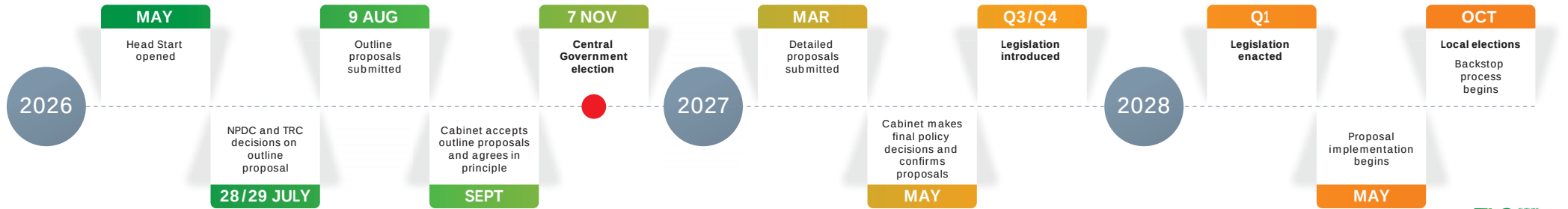
DRAFT MATERIALS – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

This booklet contains draft documents and reference information prepared to support workshop discussions only. The content is provided for information and feedback purposes only and does not represent a final position, decision, policy, plan, or commitment by Council. Materials may be revised following further analysis, engagement and decision-making processes.

Contents

Timeline	4
TRC functions	5
Head Start Assessment Criteria	6
Indicative Additional Assessment Criteria	7
Current representation arrangements	8
Continuum of models	10
Model 1: Unitary Authority	11
Model 2: Combined Authority	15
Model 3: Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee	19
Model 4: One Unitary Authority and a City or District Council	23
Model 5: Two Unitary Authorities (no Shared governance or delivery)	27

Head Start Timeline



Taranaki Regional Council

OUR WORK

Total assets
\$188m

Total debt
\$72.8m

FTE **227**

\$57.8m
Total TRC operating expenditure 2026/2027



\$27.3m

Total TRC rates revenue 2026/2027

TARANAKI

Land area
723,610ha

Marine area
5,457km²

93% Rural

7% Urban

Population
130,030

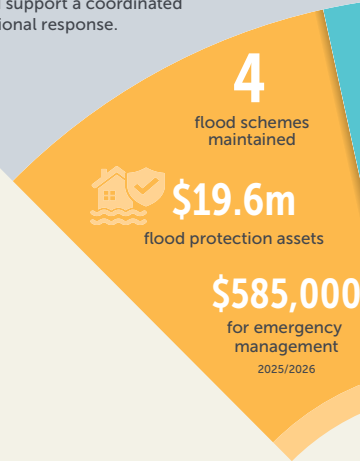
5,000+ wetlands

530 Named rivers & lakes

2.5%
of Op Ex

HAZARDS

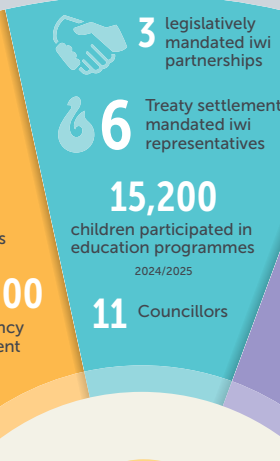
We reduce flood risk, protect people and property, keep communities safe during storms, and support a coordinated regional response.



5%
of Op Ex

GOVERNANCE

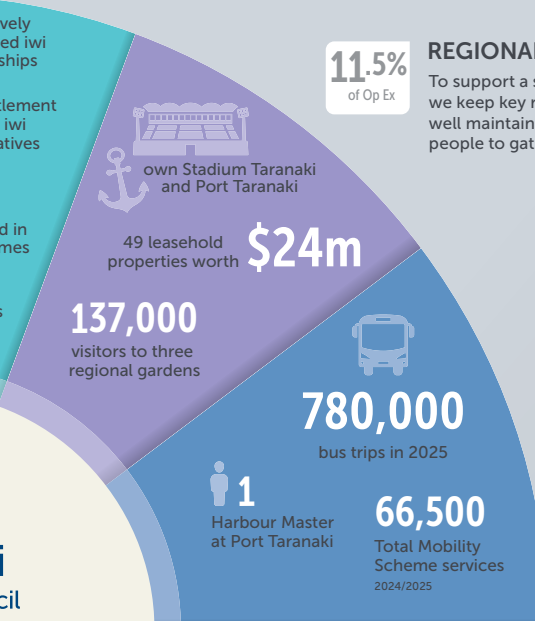
We provide strong regional leadership, support iwi and hapū aspirations and ensure Taranaki has an effective voice with government.



11.5%
of Op Ex

REGIONAL ASSETS

To support a strong and vibrant region, we keep key regional assets safe and well maintained and create spaces for people to gather and connect.



19%
of Op Ex

TRANSPORT

To keep people and our economy moving, we make it easier to get around, connect people and places and keep the port safe.

We help build a prosperous Taranaki through managing and protecting natural resources, safeguarding the region against hazards, regional infrastructure delivery and strong regional advocacy.

412 Key Native Ecosystem areas recognised

479 pest plant infestations identified and controlled 2024/2025

4,350 properties in possum control programme covering **235,000ha**

27%
of Op Ex

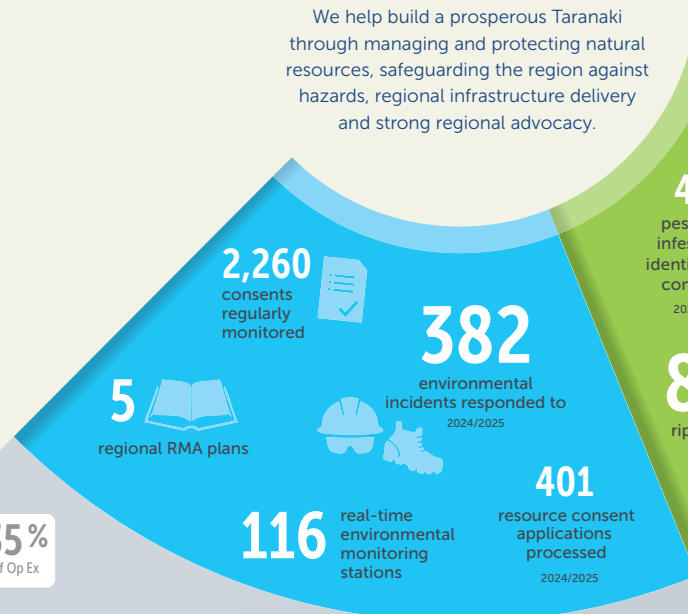
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

We work with landowners to reduce erosion, improve water quality, protect wildlife and control pests, to keep our land and waterways resilient.

35%
of Op Ex

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

To support a healthy environment and strong economy we manage how natural resources are used, monitor the environment to track change, and ensure rules are followed.



Head Start Assessment Criteria



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



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



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



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



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

Indicative Additional Assessment Criteria



Treaty Settlements and iwi/hapū/Māori partnerships: The model will maintain Treaty settlement arrangements and existing commitments, and enable effective participation by iwi, hapū and Māori in local government decision-making.



Financial resilience: The model will support affordable, equitable, and sustainable funding over the medium to long term, and maintain financial stability across local government in the region.



Support growth and investment: The model will enable the attraction and effective deployment of investment to support regional economic growth and development in the region.



Workforce retention and attraction: The model will support the attraction and retention of critical workforce capability for local government functions within the region.



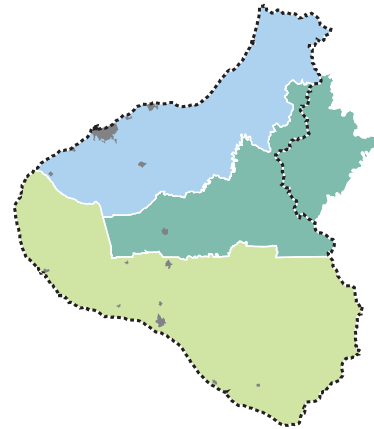
Future flexibility: The model can be adapted over time in response to change without requiring further structural reform. Changes could include population growth or decline, service pressures, future policy and legislative reforms, and evolving community needs.

Taranaki local government representation arrangements

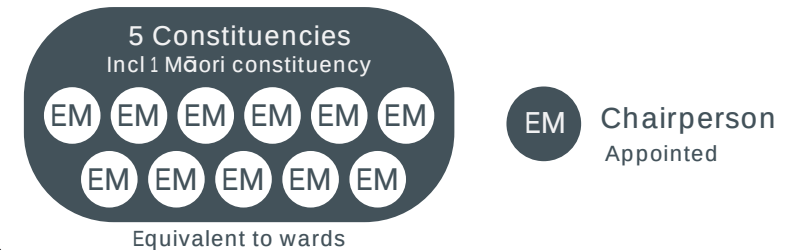
New Plymouth District Council



Stratford District Council



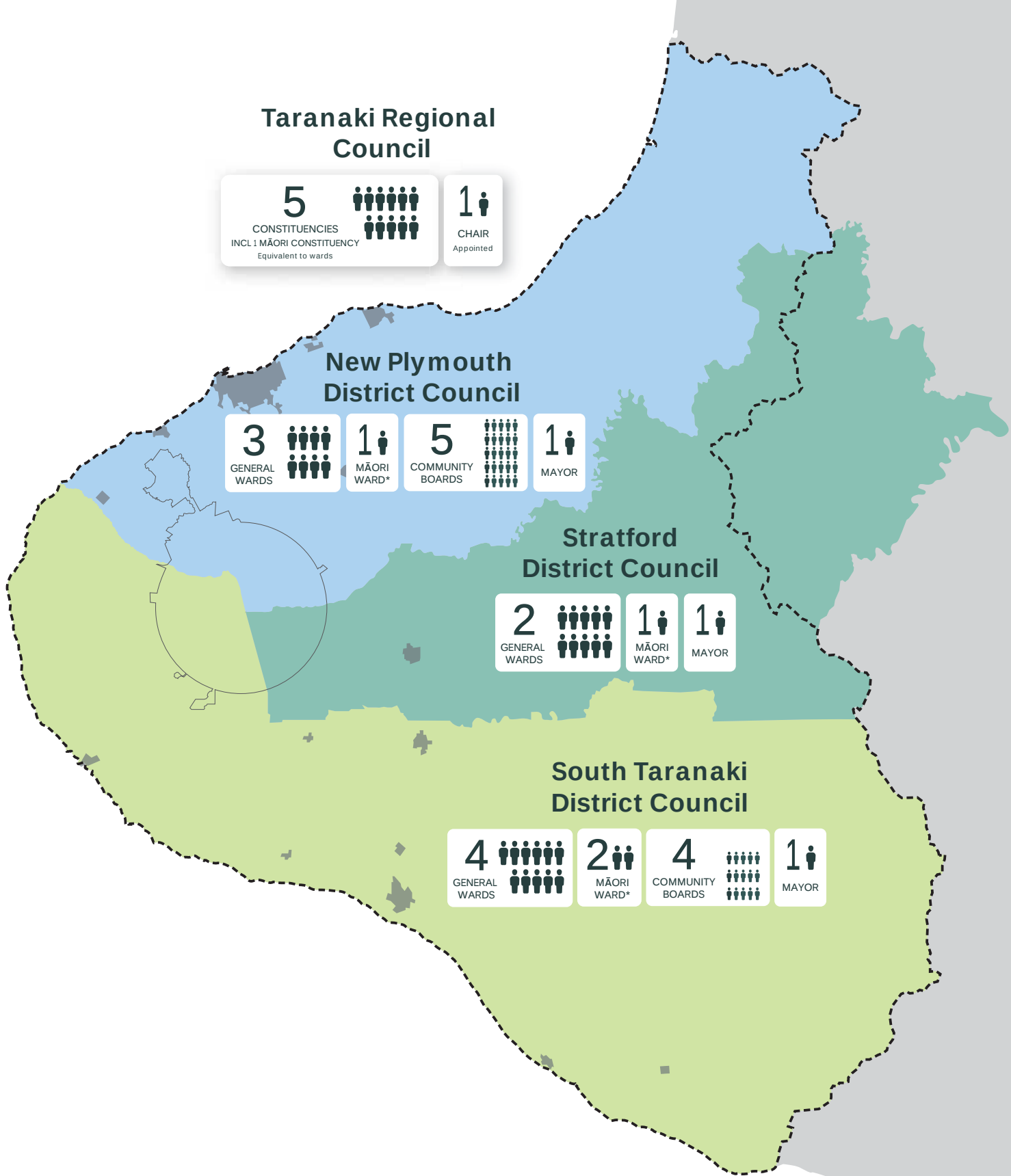
Taranaki Regional Council



South Taranaki District Council



Current Taranaki local government representation arrangements

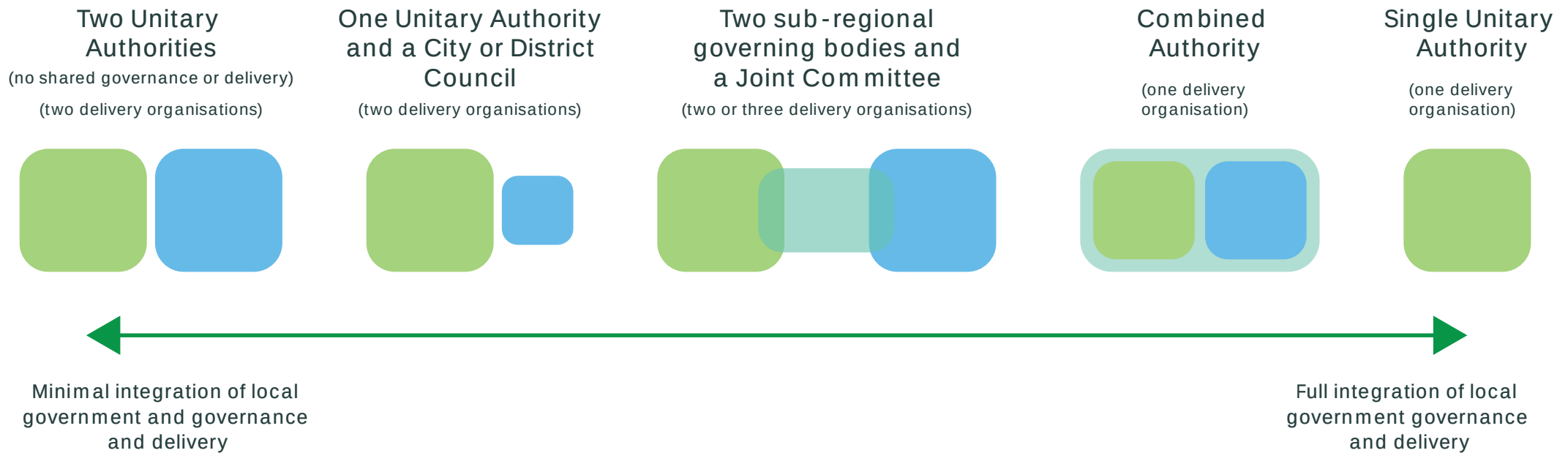


KEY

----- Taranaki Regional Council boundary

*Scheduled to be removed from 2028

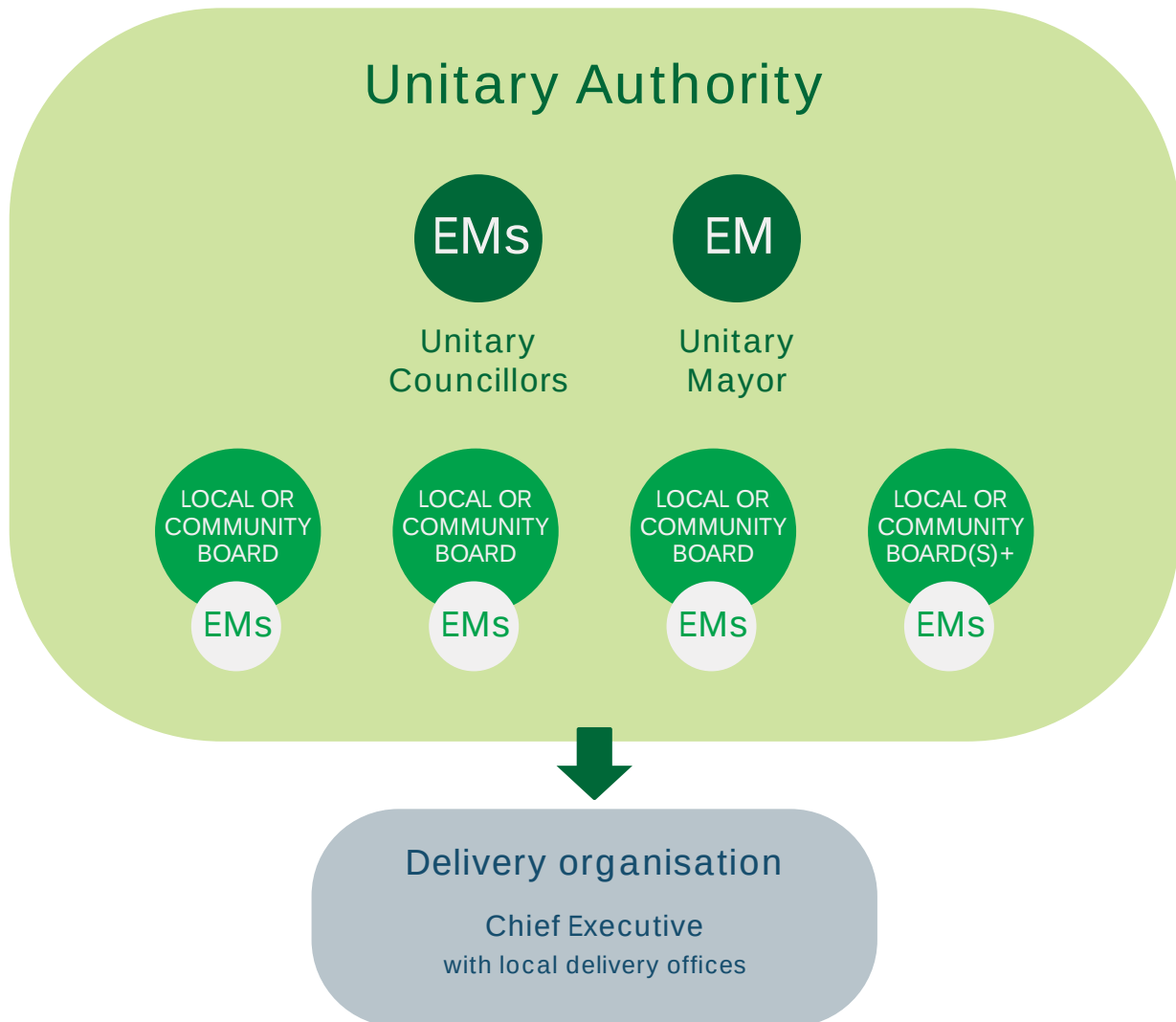
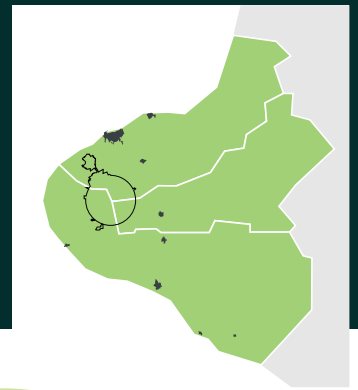
Models sit along a continuum



← *Taranaki status quo is further this way

MODEL 1:

Single Unitary Authority



- Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for all local government functions in the region.
- One Long-Term Plan.
- One delivery organisation, with local delivery offices.
- Key design choices relate to the second tier of governance/representation. For example, the Unitary Authority could have Community Boards (status quo), Local Boards (Auckland Council model) or a new second tier entity could be proposed.



Preliminary Functional Assessment

Model 1 – Single Unitary Authority

Indicative assessment – High opportunity



Single Unitary
Authority

(one delivery
organisation)



Functional benefits

- Creates the strongest opportunity to integrate regional and district services, assets and planning.
- Enables a single, efficient, regional approach to transport, planning, regulation, flood management and emergency management.*
- Reduces duplication across council functions, systems and corporate services.
- Simplifies governance and decision-making across the region and has the potential to unify service levels for customers.
- Supports greater consistency in service delivery, customer service levels and regulatory processes.
- Retains regional functions at a regional scale, supporting a single regional spatial plan, natural environment plan and regional land transport plan.
- Retains environmental management, monitoring, planning, biosecurity and flood work at regional scale, allowing these activities to operate at the scale they were designed for.
- Preserves specialist regional capability, avoiding the fragmentation of technical teams, monitoring networks and supporting systems.

** Initial analysis suggests 34 of 44 NPDC functions can be governed regionally.*

Functional limitations

- Highest level of organisational change and implementation disruption, given that it fully integrates local governance.
- Transition could divert resources from major reform programmes and service delivery.
- Requires careful management of regulatory and enforcement functions where council activities are being monitored by the same organisation.
- Some specialist regional activities may require protection to avoid being overshadowed by larger district service priorities. i.e. regional gardens with curated plant collections.
- Risk of regional functions losing priority, in a council dominated by former district services.

Overall assessment

Provides the greatest opportunity to improve efficiency, coordination and service integration across the region. While transition impacts would be significant, it has the strongest functional case over the longer term.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level functional assessment only. This analysis assumes current council functions and assets are "lifted and shifted" into any new governance arrangement and does not speculate on future organisational design or service changes. Detailed functional analysis is scheduled for the next stage of the programme.

Preliminary Treaty Settlement Arrangement Assessment

Model 1 – Single Unitary Authority

Indicative complexity - Low/moderate complexity



Single Unitary
Authority

(one delivery
organisation)



Key considerations

This model appears to provide the most straightforward pathway for maintaining existing Treaty settlement obligations and iwi partnership arrangements.

Existing district-level relationships and settlement obligations would largely transfer into a single authority covering the relevant rohe. Most current arrangements could continue within a single governance structure, although careful consideration would be required regarding the future design of committees and delegated authorities within this structure.

Key issues include:

- How existing iwi-appointed representatives currently associated with regional council functions are incorporated into the new structure.
- Whether voting rights and delegations are maintained, modified or expanded.
- Ensuring existing Treaty settlement arrangements continue to operate effectively within the new governance model.
- Designing committee structures that appropriately support Māori participation in decision-making across both regional and local matters.

Overall assessment

While significant legal and governance design work would still be required, this model appears likely to involve the least disruption to existing settlements, relationships and governance arrangements.

Disclaimer: Preliminary assessment only. The indicators above reflect the likely complexity of maintaining or replacing existing Treaty settlement arrangements, iwi partnership mechanisms and Māori participation arrangements under each model. They do not represent a judgement on the quality of outcomes for Māori and would require detailed engagement with iwi, hapū and Treaty partners.

Preliminary Financial Assessment

Model 1 – Single Unitary Authority

Relative cost scale opportunity

Indicative assessment - Very high opportunity

Highest scale opportunity due to one organisation, one governance structure, one main corporate platform set and the least duplication.

Estimated savings as a % of total expenditure 4.66%.

Single Unitary
Authority

(one delivery
organisation)



Transitional complexity and cost

Indicative assessment – **Very high** transition costs

Full consolidation into one council. Requires integration of governance, leadership, staff structures, systems, rating arrangements, LTP/planning processes, policies, assets, liabilities, customer service and service delivery. Cleanest end-state but largest transformation effort.

Estimated timeline 5-7 years.

Debt and assets

Debt position – **Favourable**

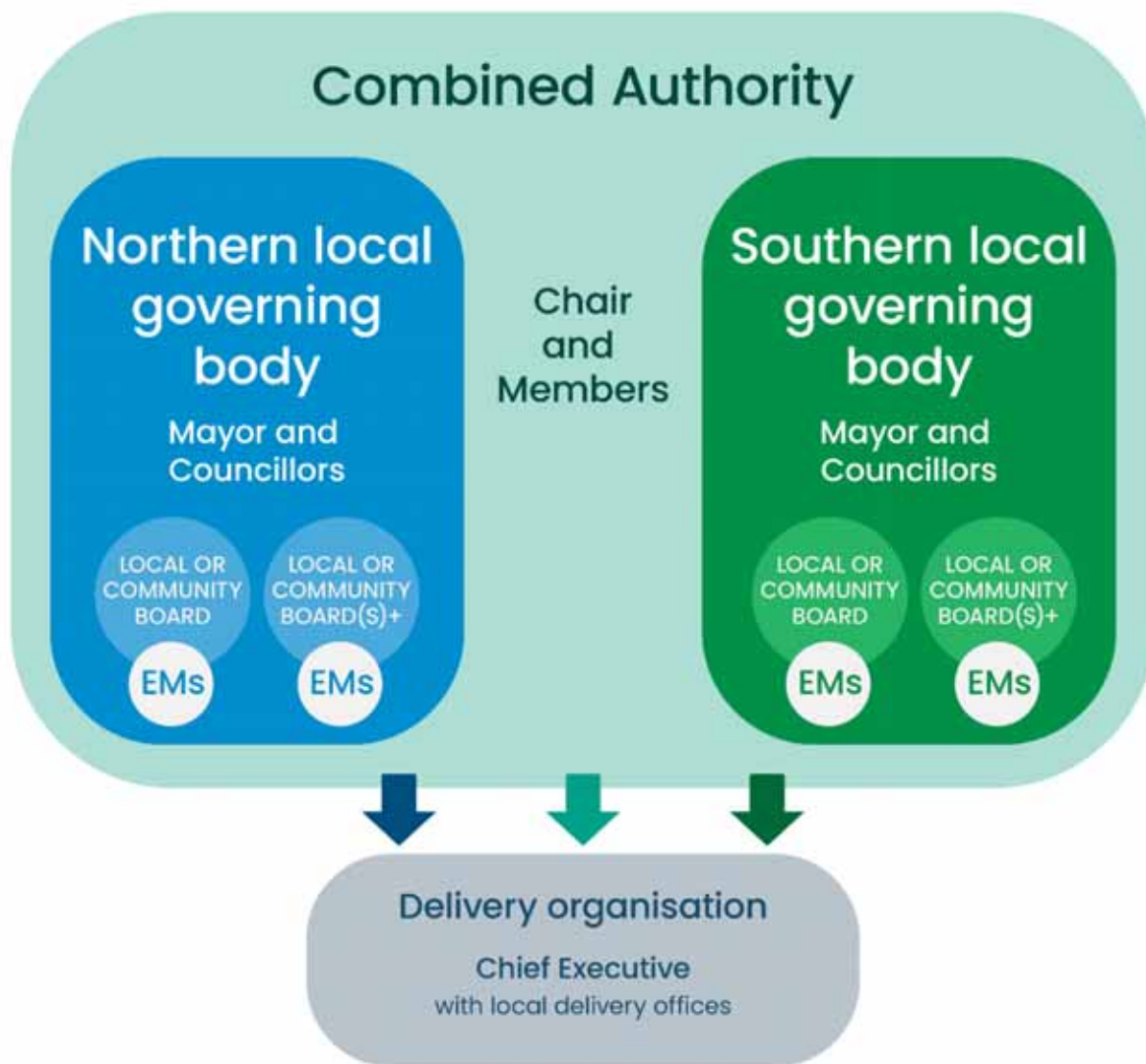
Asset position - **Strong**

Creates a balanced regional position with moderate debt burden and strong asset backing across all rating units.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level assessment only. This analysis is based on available LTP, 2024/25 Annual Report and other publicly accessible data. Detailed financial modelling is scheduled for the next phase of the programme and will utilise 2025/26 Annual Report data when it is available.

MODEL 2:

Combined Authority



- Combined Authority governs and charges rates for regional-scale functions.
- Combined Authority sets region-wide service standards for local-scale functions, informed by input from local governing bodies.
- Local governing bodies govern and charge rates for local-scale functions within their respective territories (meeting region-wide service standards).
- One delivery organisation, with local delivery offices.
- Evolving thinking includes potentially having three Long-Term Plans. Staggered so that Combined Authority's LTP is first.



Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002. Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect. The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Preliminary Functional Assessment

Model 2 – Combined Authority

Indicative assessment – Moderate/high opportunity



Combined
Authority
(one delivery
organisation)



Functional benefits

- Enables regional delivery of a broader range of functions where participating councils agree.
- Creates opportunities to integrate planning, transport, regulation, compliance and enforcement, flood management and other shared services.*
- Creates opportunities for regional management of key regional assets such as flood assets, gardens and Stadium Taranaki, as long as participating councils agree.
- Retains regional functions at a regional scale. Benefits include:
 - Allowing for one regional spatial plan, natural environment plan and regional land transport plan.
 - Keeps environmental management, monitoring, planning, biosecurity and flood work at regional scale, maximising value.
 - Avoids splitting the Regional Council's small specialist teams and technical systems.
- May reduce duplication through shared corporate services and systems.
- Provides flexibility to increase regional service delivery over time.

**Initial analysis suggests 34 of 44 NPDC functions can be governed regionally.*

Functional limitations

- Benefits depend on the willingness of multiple governing bodies to delegate functions.
- More complex governance arrangements than a single authority.
- Significant transition effort required, which could divert resources from major reform programmes.
- Regulatory and enforcement functions require careful separation where councils regulate their own activities.
- Long-term effectiveness depends on maintaining alignment between participating councils.
- Some specialist regional activities may require protection to avoid being overshadowed by larger district service priorities. i.e. regional gardens with curated collections.
- Risk of regional functions losing priority, in a council dominated by former district services.

Overall assessment

Offers many of the functional advantages of a unitary authority but with greater governance complexity and reliance on ongoing inter-council agreement. Likely to improve coordination and integration compared with the current state.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level functional assessment only. This analysis assumes current council functions and assets are "lifted and shifted" into any new governance arrangement and does not speculate on future organisational design or service changes. Detailed functional analysis is scheduled for the next stage of the programme.

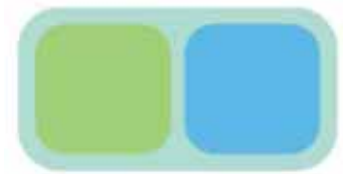
Preliminary Treaty Settlement Arrangement Assessment

Model 2 – Combined Authority

Indicative complexity - Moderate complexity



Combined
Authority
(one delivery
organisation)



Key considerations

This model remains potentially workable but introduces additional complexity because governance responsibilities would be shared between regional-level and sub-regional entities.

The key question is where existing regional council functions sit. If the Combined Authority performs functions broadly equivalent to those currently undertaken by Taranaki Regional Council, existing iwi governance arrangements may be easier to adapt. If responsibilities are transferred to individual councils, additional arrangements may be required to ensure Māori participation in those decision-making processes.

Key issues include:

- The responsibilities and powers of the Combined Authority.
- How existing iwi-appointed representatives currently associated with regional council functions are incorporated into the new structure.
- Whether Local Governing Bodies would also require Māori participation arrangements.
- Potential impacts on existing catchment-based arrangements, particularly if Local Governing Body boundaries split the Waitara catchment.
- Potential implications for the Waitara River Committee and associated Joint Management Agreements.

Overall assessment

The complexity of this model is highly dependent on functional allocation and boundary decisions. Existing arrangements could potentially transition relatively smoothly, but poor alignment between governance structures, functions and catchments could create significant challenges.

Disclaimer: Preliminary assessment only. The indicators above reflect the likely complexity of maintaining or replacing existing Treaty settlement arrangements, iwi partnership mechanisms and Māori participation arrangements under each model. They do not represent a judgement on the quality of outcomes for Māori and would require detailed engagement with iwi, hapū and Treaty partners.

Preliminary Financial Assessment

Model 2 – Combined Authority

Combined
Authority

(one delivery
organisation)

Relative cost scale opportunity

Indicative assessment – Moderate to high opportunity



Moderate opportunity: regional scale is possible, but two unitary authorities and shared governance entity/CCO interfaces reduce net benefits.



Estimated savings as a % of total expenditure 3.19%.

Transitional complexity and cost

Indicative assessment – **High** transition costs

Still requires establishment of two unitary authorities, but the shared governance entity / CCO could reduce duplication for regional scale or specialist delivery functions. Complexity remains high due to entity establishment, governance design, service agreements, funding arrangements and accountability mechanisms, but the transition risk is likely lower than two unitary authorities because some functions can remain shared.

Estimated timeline 4-6 years.

Debt and assets

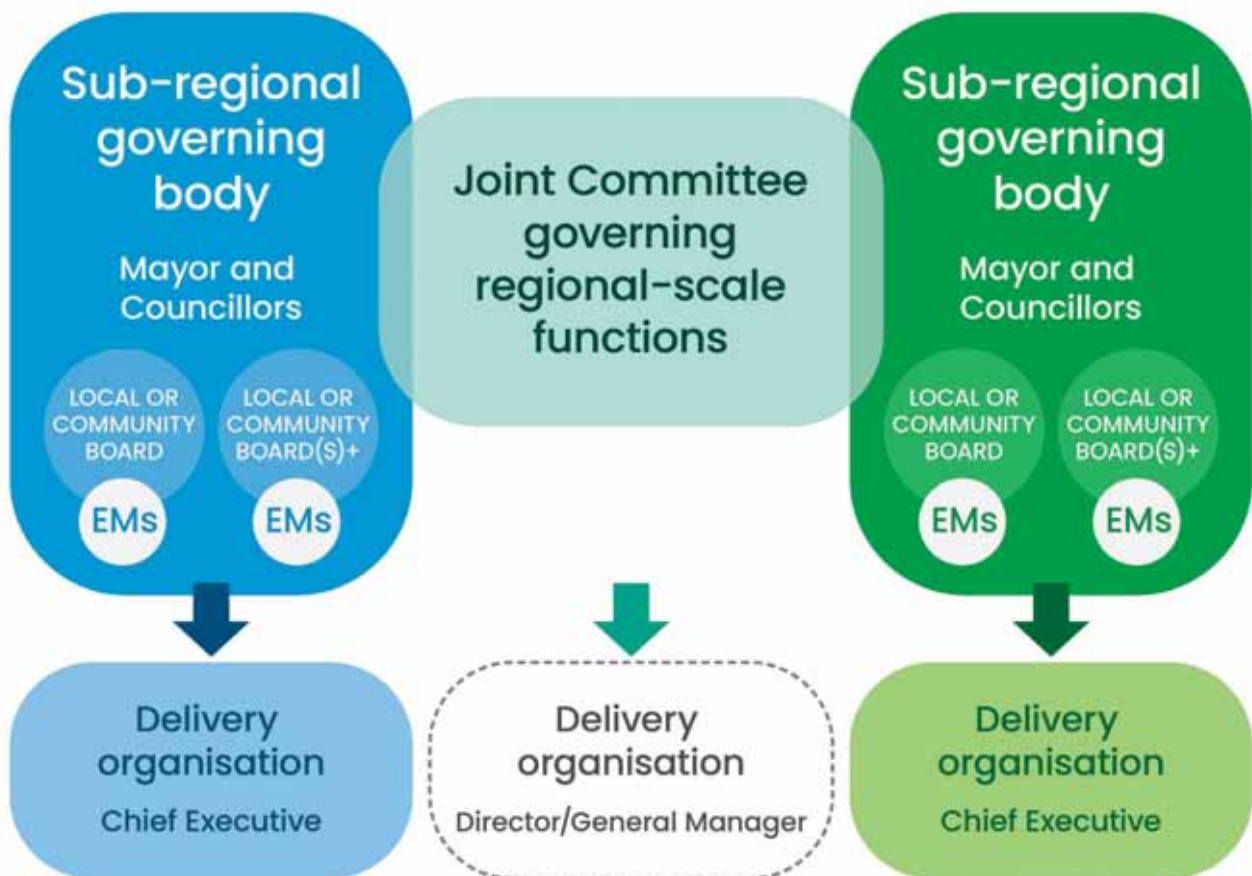
Debt position – **Favourable** for North / **Moderate** for South.

Asset position – **Strong** for North and South.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level assessment only. This analysis is based on available LTP, 2024/25 Annual Report and other publicly accessible data. Detailed financial modelling is scheduled for the next phase of the programme and will utilise 2025/26 Annual Report data when it is available.

MODEL 3:

Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee



- Region divided into two sub-regions.
- Each sub-regional governing body governs all local government functions in its territory.
- Two Long-Term Plans.
- Joint Committee governs regional-scale functions.
- Joint Committee members appointed from sub-regional governing bodies.
- Regional scale functions may be delivered by a third delivery organisation, or by one or both of the other delivery organisations, or via a CCO.

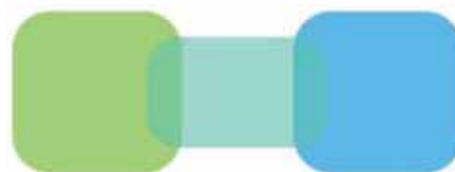


Preliminary Functional Assessment

Model 3 – Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee

Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee
(two or three delivery organisations)

Indicative assessment – Moderate opportunity



Functional benefits

- Retains some key regional functions through a shared regional entity.
- Reduces the number of district organisations from three to two.
- Allows regional responsibilities to expand over time if councils choose.
- Maintains regional planning, environmental management and specialist capability at a regional scale.

Functional limitations

- Continues duplication of many district services.
- Savings and efficiencies are limited unless additional functions are transferred to the shared entity.
- Requires multiple governance arrangements and continued cooperation between organisations.
- Corporate services and support functions are likely to remain duplicated.
- Risks inconsistencies if participating councils choose different levels of regional service integration.
- The shared regional entity could eventually become larger than either sub-regional body, depending on how many functions are transferred to it. Alternatively, one sub-regional body may choose to deliver more services through the regional entity than the other, creating differences in roles, responsibilities and scale between the two councils. Initial analysis with NPDC and TRC functional managers indicated that 84% of current functions (54 of 64) could be successfully governed at a regional level, suggesting the shared entity could expand.

Overall assessment

Maintains most current arrangements while providing a platform for increased regional collaboration. Functional gains are modest initially but could increase if more responsibilities are transferred to the shared entity over time. The main risk with this model is the need to ensure robust governance and funding arrangements to ensure the shared entity can operate effectively.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level functional assessment only. This analysis assumes current council functions and assets are "lifted and shifted" into any new governance arrangement and does not speculate on future organisational design or service changes. Detailed functional analysis is scheduled for the next stage of the programme.

Preliminary Treaty Settlement Arrangement Assessment

Model 3 – Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee

Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee
(two or three delivery organisations)

Indicative complexity - Moderate complexity



Key considerations

This model remains potentially workable but introduces additional complexity because governance responsibilities would be shared between regional-level and sub-regional entities.

The key question is where existing regional council functions sit. If the Joint Committee performs functions broadly equivalent to those currently undertaken by Taranaki Regional Council, existing iwi governance arrangements may be easier to adapt. If responsibilities are transferred to individual sub-regional governing bodies, additional arrangements may be required to ensure Māori participation in those decision-making processes.

Key issues include:

- The responsibilities and powers of the Joint Committee.
- How existing iwi-appointed representatives currently associated with regional council functions are incorporated into the new structure.
- Whether sub-regional governing bodies would also require Māori participation arrangements.
- Potential impacts on existing catchment-based arrangements, particularly if Sub-Regional Governing Body boundaries split the Waitara catchment.
- Potential implications for the Waitara River Committee and associated Joint Management Agreements.

Overall assessment

The complexity of this model is highly dependent on functional allocation and boundary decisions. Existing arrangements could potentially transition relatively smoothly, but poor alignment between governance structures, functions and catchments could create significant challenges.

Preliminary assessment only. The indicators above reflect the likely complexity of maintaining or replacing existing Treaty settlement arrangements, iwi partnership mechanisms and Māori participation arrangements under each model. They do not represent a judgement on the quality of outcomes for Māori and would require detailed engagement with iwi, hapū and Treaty partners.

Preliminary Financial Assessment

Model 3 – Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee

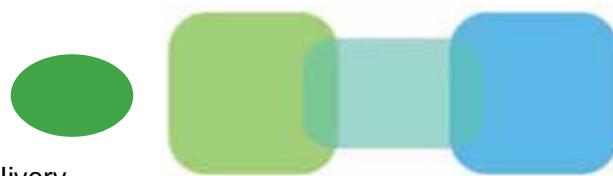
Two sub-regional governing bodies and a Joint Committee
(two or three delivery organisations)

Relative cost scale opportunity

Indicative assessment – High opportunity

Strong scale opportunity because there is one delivery organisation, but lower than a single unitary authority due to three governing bodies/LTPs and additional governance/accountability requirements.

Estimated savings as a % of total expenditure 3.24%.



Transitional complexity and cost

Indicative assessment – **Very high** transition costs

Requires creation of a regional governing body plus two local governing bodies. Main complexity is designing functions, funding flows, rating powers, baseline service levels, targeted rates and accountability across multiple governance layers. Less organisational merger than a single unitary authority, but governance and funding complexity remains high.

Estimated timeline 3-5 years.

Debt and assets

Debt position – **Very favourable** for Regional Governing Body and North Governing Body / **Favourable** for South Governing Body.

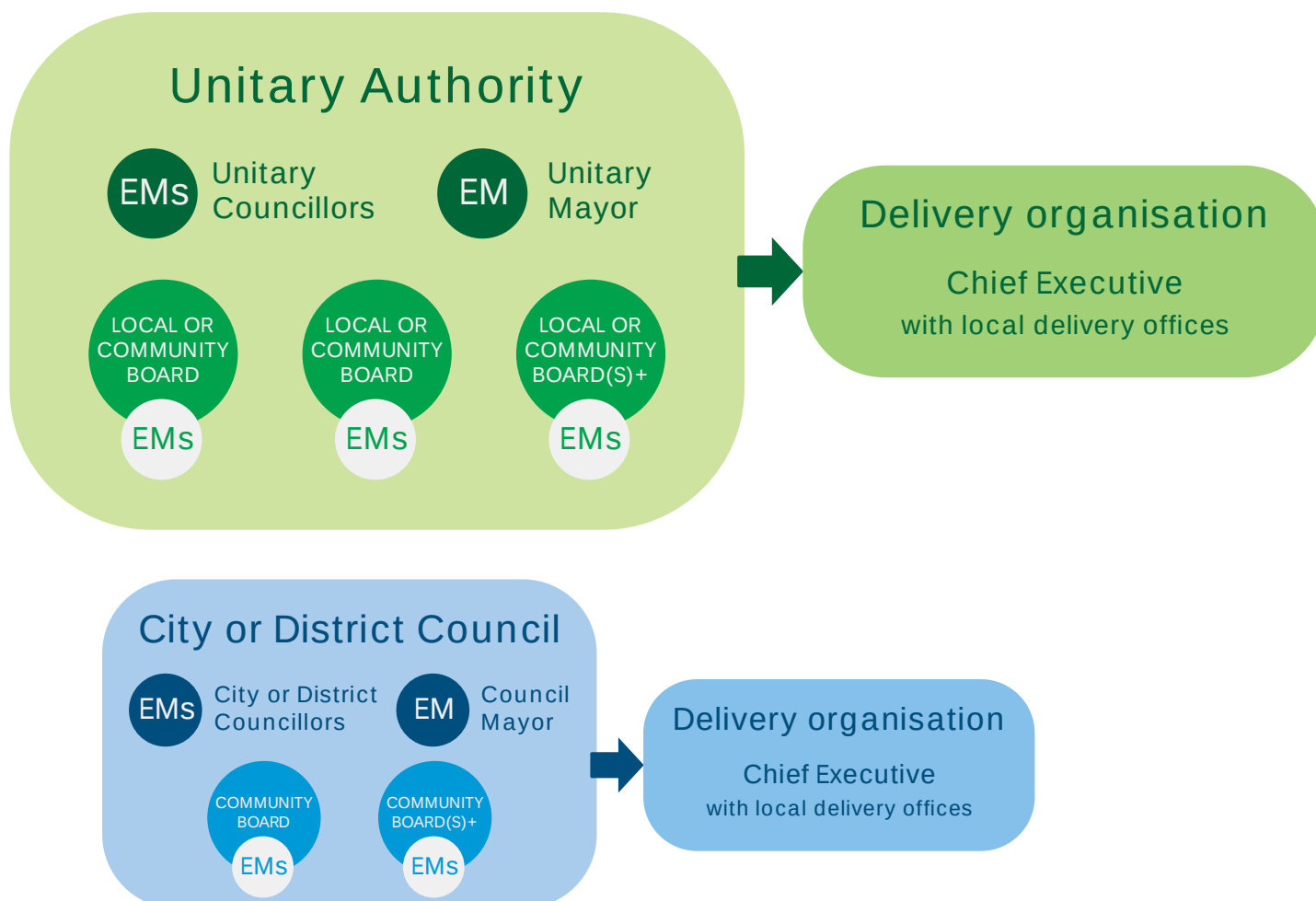
Asset position – **Moderate** for North Governing Body and South Governing Body / **Very low** for Regional Governing Body.

Retains existing balance sheet positions with limited change to debt or asset distribution.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level assessment only. This analysis is based on available LTP, 2024/25 Annual Report and other publicly accessible data. Detailed financial modelling is scheduled for the next phase of the programme and will utilise 2025/26 Annual Report data when it is available.

MODEL 4:

One Unitary Authority and a City or District Council



- Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for regional-scale functions.
- Unitary Authority also governs and charges rates for local-scale functions for its local territory.
- City/District Council governs and charges rates for local-scale functions for its territory.
- Two Long-Term Plans and two delivery organisations.



Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002. Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect. The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Preliminary Functional Assessment

Model 4 – One Unitary Authority and a City or District Council

Indicative assessment – Medium opportunity



Functional benefits

- Keeps regional functions together within a single regional structure.
- Provides opportunities to integrate regional and district functions within one of the authorities.
- Reduces the number of district organisations compared with the current structure.
- Maintains regional-scale planning, environmental management and specialist capability.

Functional limitations

- Duplicates district functions across two organisations.
- Creates different service delivery arrangements in different parts of the region.
- Introduces complex funding, accountability and governance arrangements between councils.
- Risks perceived bias where one council delivers regional functions affecting the other.
- May create inconsistent customer experiences and regulatory processes which could confuse customers, especially for consents, compliance and transport.
- Creates uneven integration: good for the council which delivers regional functions, weaker for the other.
- Corporate services remain duplicated across two organisations.

Overall assessment

Retains the advantages of keeping regional functions together but introduces significant complexity through having two different governance and service delivery models operating side by side. Functionally weaker than Models 1 and 2.

One Unitary Authority
and a City or District
Council
(two delivery organisations)



Disclaimer: Initial, high-level functional assessment only. This analysis assumes current council functions and assets are "lifted and shifted" into any new governance arrangement and does not speculate on future organisational design or service changes. Detailed functional analysis is scheduled for the next stage of the programme.

Preliminary Treaty Settlement Arrangement Assessment

Model 4 – One Unitary Authority and a City or District Council

Indicative complexity - Moderate complexity



One Unitary Authority
and a City or District
Council
(two delivery organisations)



Key considerations

This model appears broadly manageable from a Treaty settlement and Māori participation in decision-making perspective, although complexity will depend on the allocation of functions between the two entities and the final boundary configuration.

In some scenarios, existing arrangements could largely transfer to the unitary authority. In others, Māori participation in decision-making mechanisms may need to be replicated or redesigned across both entities.

Key issues include:

- Which functions sit with the unitary authority and which sit with the metropolitan council.
- The extent to which iwi representation arrangements need to operate across more than one governance body.
- Boundary decisions and their relationship to existing iwi and hapū interests.
- The need to maintain Māori participation in regional-scale matters while also recognising local interests.

Overall assessment

This model appears capable of supporting existing obligations and partnership arrangements but may require duplication or redesign of some governance mechanisms depending on final design choices.

Preliminary assessment only. The indicators above reflect the likely complexity of maintaining or replacing existing Treaty settlement arrangements, iwi partnership mechanisms and Māori participation arrangements under each model. They do not represent a judgement on the quality of outcomes for Māori and would require detailed engagement with iwi, hapū and Treaty partners.

Preliminary Financial Assessment

Model 4 – One Unitary Authority and a City or District Council

One Unitary Authority
and a City or District
Council
(two delivery organisations)

Relative cost scale opportunity

Indicative assessment – High opportunity



Strong but lower than a single unitary authority due to duplicated local accountability, organisation support and some systems/interfaces.

Estimated savings as a % of total expenditure 3.56%.

Transitional complexity and cost

Indicative assessment – **High** transition costs

Requires establishing a unitary authority while retaining a separate urban council. Significant work needed to allocate functions, assets, debt, staff, systems and revenue streams between the two entities. Complexity is particularly high where services are regional in nature but benefit the urban area.

Estimated timeline 5-6 years.

Debt and assets

Debt position – **Very favourable** for City / **Very unfavourable** for Unitary

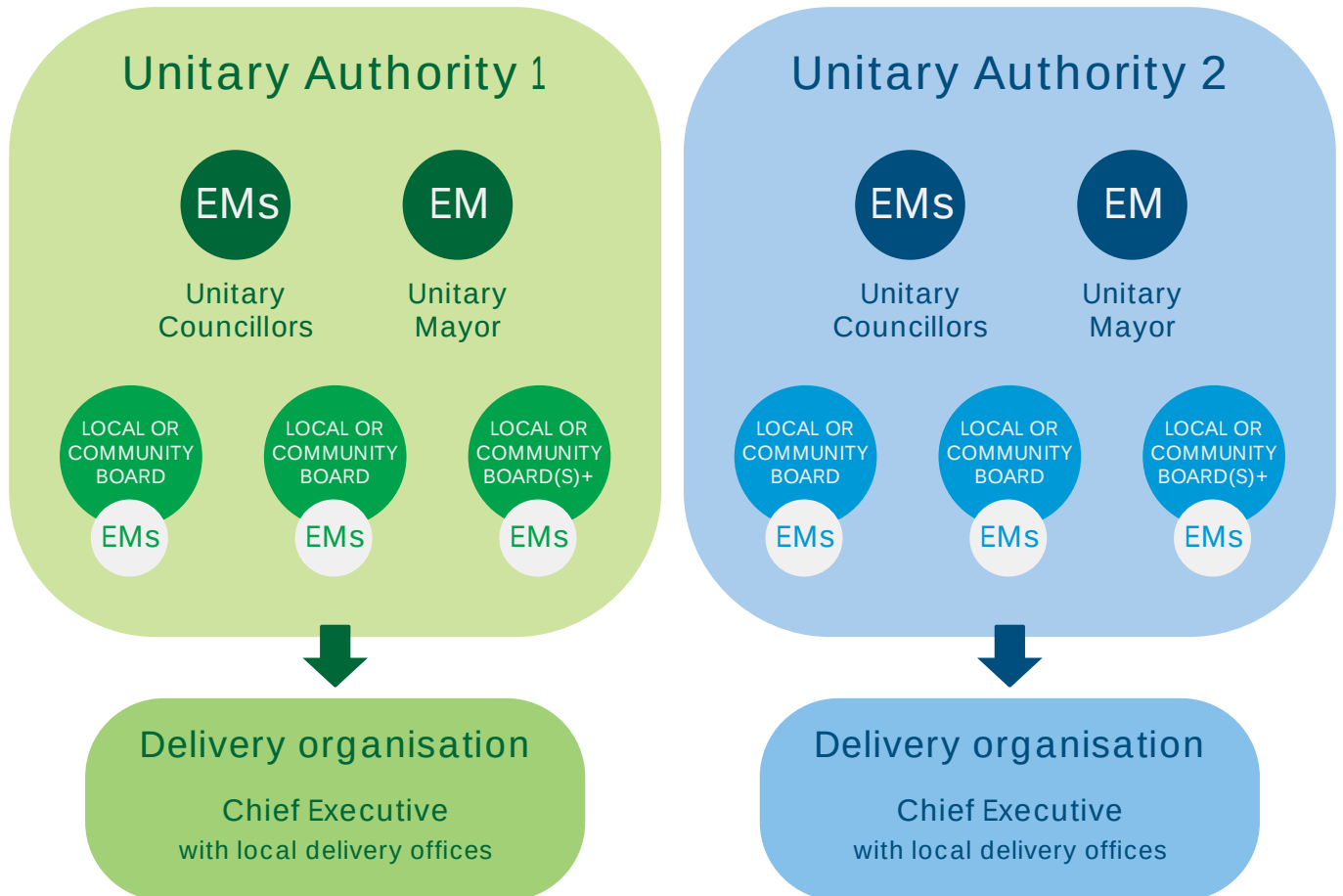
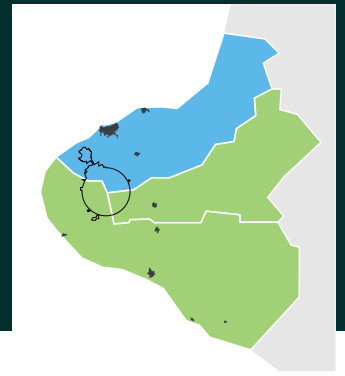
Asset position – **Moderate** for City / **Very strong** for Unitary

Highest asset backing per rating unit for the unitary authority entity, but also the highest debt burden per rating unit.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level assessment only. This analysis is based on available LTP, 2024/25 Annual Report and other publicly accessible data. Detailed financial modelling is scheduled for the next phase of the programme and will utilise 2025/26 Annual Report data when it is available.

MODEL 5:

Two Unitary Authorities (no shared governance or delivery)



- Region divided into two sub-regions.
- Each Unitary Authority governs and charges rates for all local government functions in its respective territory.
- Two Long-Term Plans and two delivery organisations.
- No shared governance or delivery arrangements.



Any local government configuration will need to facilitate participation by Māori in decision-making in accordance with the LGA 2002. Treaty settlement arrangements will also need to be transferred with equivalent effect. The implications for iwi, hapū and Māori will require detailed consideration as part of any future proposal.

Preliminary Functional Assessment

Model 5 – Two Unitary Authorities (no shared governance or delivery)

Two Unitary
Authorities
(no shared governance or delivery)
(two delivery organisations)

Indicative assessment - Low



Functional benefits

- Could provide alignment between regional and district functions within each authority.
- Appears to bring decision-making closer to local communities.
- Has a low level of organisational change and transition impact on district functions, given the minimal change from status quo.

Functional limitations

- Fragments functions that currently operate most effectively at a regional scale.
- Creates likely unworkable problems for
 - Managing aquifers*, ecological systems, biosecurity**, and the regional spatial plan.
 - Waitara and other catchments, including flood warning***, unless boundaries are reset to align with catchments.
- Complicates natural environment plans and regional land transport plans, contrary to design criteria.
- Duplicates specialist teams, monitoring networks, science systems and technical capability.
- Duplicates corporate services.
- Increases the likelihood of differing standards, advice, enforcement and customer experiences.
- Creates complexity around shared regional assets, infrastructure and investment interests, including funding of Port Taranaki, Stadium Taranaki, regional gardens and leasehold properties.
- Risk that regional activity areas are truncated over time.

* Ground water, flooding and biosecurity don't respect district boundaries.

** If possum control programmes ceased, the estimated cost of regaining current possum levels in Taranaki is \$82 to \$124 million. (Heuser Whittington report on 'Benefits of regional and unitary council biosecurity interventions', April 2026).

*** More complicated reporting and flood warning processes could pose a risk to life.

Overall assessment

This is the least effective option from a functional perspective. While it improves integration of regional and district functions within each authority, it duplicates regional functions across the region creating significant complexity, inefficiency and additional cost.

The model would significantly weaken the delivery of functions that rely on a regional approach, including public transport, spatial planning, natural resource management, environmental monitoring and biosecurity. It would also undermine effective catchment-based management, particularly in the Waitara catchment, unless boundaries were realigned. Overall, it is likely to reduce effectiveness and increase costs compared with the current arrangements.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level functional assessment only. This analysis assumes current council functions and assets are "lifted and shifted" into any new governance arrangement and does not speculate on future organisational design or service changes. Detailed functional analysis is scheduled for the next stage of the programme.

Preliminary Treaty Settlement Arrangement Assessment

Model 5 – Two Unitary Authorities (no shared governance or delivery)

Two Unitary
Authorities
(no shared governance or delivery)
(two delivery organisations)

Indicative complexity – Moderate/high complexity



Key considerations

This model is potentially manageable from a Treaty settlement and Māori participation in decision-making perspective, but complexity is highly dependent on unitary authority governance boundaries and the allocation of regional functions. Complexity will arise where regional functions are split across two unitary authorities, or where unitary authority boundaries do not align with catchments, rohe or existing Treaty settlement arrangements.

Key issues include:

- How equivalent Māori participation in decision-making arrangements are maintained or adapted across two separate unitary authority governing bodies.
- Recognition that equivalency is likely to relate to representation of rohe and interests rather than simply replicating representative numbers.
- Whether any region-wide or cross-boundary coordination mechanisms are required.
- Potential impacts on the Waitara catchment, Waitara River Committee and Joint Management Agreements if unitary authority governance boundaries divide existing catchment-based arrangements.

Overall assessment

While alternative arrangements could be developed under this model, the level of complexity is heavily influenced by boundary and functional design choices. Complexity increases where governance boundaries divide catchments, settlement arrangements or existing joint management mechanisms, potentially requiring more significant redesign of Treaty settlement, joint management and Māori participation in decision-making arrangements.

Preliminary assessment only. The indicators above reflect the likely complexity of maintaining or replacing existing Treaty settlement arrangements, iwi partnership mechanisms and Māori participation arrangements under each model. They do not represent a judgement on the quality of outcomes for Māori and would require detailed engagement with iwi, hapū and Treaty partners.

Preliminary Financial Assessment

Model 5 – Two Unitary Authorities (no shared governance or delivery)

Two Unitary
Authorities
(no shared governance or delivery)
(two delivery organisations)

Relative cost scale opportunity

Indicative assessment – Low opportunity



Lowest scale opportunity because two full organisations retain separate systems, management and duplicated regional capability.

Estimated savings as a % of total expenditure 2.38%.

Transitional complexity and cost

Indicative assessment – **Very high** transition costs

Current regional functions would need to be divided between two unitary authorities. This creates significant implementation complexity around splitting TRC functions, regulatory capability, regional planning, environmental monitoring, transport, catchment management, assets, liabilities, staff and systems.

Estimated timeline 5-7 years.

Debt and assets

Debt position – **Favourable** for North / **Moderate** for South

Asset position – **Strong** for North & South

Produces relatively balanced entities, although the south unitary authority carries a higher debt burden per rating unit.

Disclaimer: Initial, high-level assessment only. This analysis is based on available LTP, 2024/25 Annual Report and other publicly accessible data. Detailed financial modelling is scheduled for the next phase of the programme and will utilise 2025/26 Annual Report data when it is available.

