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Hauraki District Council

Independent assessment report | February 2019*

An independent assessment report issued by the Independent Assessment Board for the CouncilMARK[™] local government excellence programme. For more information, visit www.councilmark.co.nz



A measure
for better
community value.

*Assessment October 2018

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Assessment Summary

AT A GLANCE



Hauraki is a largely rural district with three distinct urban areas, in which conservative values, strong ties to the land, and a commitment to deliberate sustainable growth are prevalent.



LARGE METRO

SMALL METRO AND LARGE PROVINCIAL

SMALL PROVINCIAL AND RURAL



REGIONAL

The current situation

Hauraki District Council (HDC) serves the residents of Ngatea (Plains Ward), Paeroa (Paeroa Ward), Waihi (Waihi Ward), numerous smaller settlements, and a large, prosperous rural community. Relationships with residents, ratepayers, businesses, Māori and other stakeholders are especially strong. Council is highly responsive to each of the communities' needs and judiciously balances the demands of the three major communities. Council also has an adept manner of balancing compliance and performance and, in doing so, maintains high respect across the district.

The performance of the HDC is excellent, starting from the Mayor's commitment to making the Elected Members (EMs) a coherent and effective body through close engagement and a willingness to develop a constructive decision-making culture whereby all views are valued and consensus is willingly sought. A clear sense of vision is apparent, priorities are identified and strategies are enacted and managed appropriately on an annual basis.

Twenty-one per cent of the district's population identify as Māori. Hauraki iwi include Ngāti Hako, Ngāti Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Hei, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Porou ki Hauraki, Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Tara Tokanui, Ngāti Whanaunga and Te Patukirikiri.

Period of assessment

The assessment took place on 18 and 19 October 2018.



\$575m
GROSS DOMESTIC
PRODUCT

SERVES

17,808¹

PEOPLE, A MIX OF²
85.2% EUROPEAN/PĀKEHĀ
21.2% MĀORI
2.4% PASIFIKA
2.5% ASIAN



POPULATION TREND
STABLE

MAKES UP

0.5%³

OF NEW ZEALAND'S TOTAL LAND AREA REPRESENTING THE HAURAKI DISTRICT, THE AREA FROM THE FIRTH OF THAMES IN THE NORTH, ACROSS THE KAIMAI/ COROMANDEL AND KARANGAHAKE RANGES TO THE PACIFIC COAST IN THE WEST. A TOTAL AREA OF:

1,270 km²

RESPONSIBLE FOR

644km

ROADS⁴



Key learnings

The Hauraki District Council (HDC) is extremely effective. The process used to develop the Long Term Plan (LTP) is rational and constructive, and the HDC's management of the Annual Plan and emergent operations is excellent. The understanding of the use of policies, and the need to balance the policy environment with effective management, is impressive. Expectations from various communities across the district are high, and are being actively managed to that effect:

- > The Mayor is very competent in his role, and is highly respected throughout the district.
- > The equally long serving CEO adheres to a similarly humble style of leadership, and is extraordinarily well regarded within the organisation. Both are committed to a demonstrably sustainable growth programme for the district and region.
- > Community engagement and support for the Council and its staff is especially strong.
- > The HDC and Māori, through multiple forms of representation, are committed to working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

¹ StatsNZ, 2013

² StatsNZ, 2013

³ Dept of Internal Affairs

⁴ Ministry of Transport

Assessment Summary

continued...

OVERVIEW

Hauraki District Council is well led by a highly engaged Mayor, a cohesive group of elected members, a committed CEO, and a capable and trustworthy management team. Both individually and collectively, the Council demonstrates a deep understanding of the role of a territorial authority, the constraints to its operations and the pursuit of worthwhile investment.

RATING



Findings

1.

EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING WHICH MEETS THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

The Mayor and Councillors understand, and are committed to, effective and robust decision making. A very strong understanding of community needs is apparent and the needs are being delivered.

2.

STRONG EMPHASIS ON CONTINUED INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT.

Growth projections are ambitious, aided by proximity to Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. Judicious financial management is provided to meet potentially conflicting demands across the district.

3.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The enthusiasm with which the Mayor, elected members, Chief Executive, and Council staff listen to and engage with the broader community is outstanding.

Commonly used terms

Term	Definition
Asset Management Plan	A tactical plan for managing a council's infrastructure and other assets to deliver an agreed standard of service.
Infrastructure	Local and regional roads, pathways and cycleways, drinking water, wastewater and stormwater assets, sports and recreation facilities (parks, sportsgrounds, green spaces etc.), community and tourism facilities (playgrounds, public toilets, libraries, museums, galleries and public art etc.), town centres, and other facilities.
Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002)	The legislative Act that provides a framework and powers for councils to decide which activities they undertake and the manner in which they will undertake them.
Long Term Plan	The document required under the LGA 2002 that sets out a council's priorities in the medium to long term.



Governance, leadership and strategy	Financial decision-making and transparency	Service delivery and asset management	Communicating and engaging with the public and business
Stand out	Competent	Performing well	Stand out

STRENGTHS

The long standing Mayor and long serving CEO understand their respective roles and maintain a professional relationship that delivers results for the community.

A thorough induction process is conducted for all elected members (EMs) through which good governance process is understood and respect for one another is developed, resulting in a high standard of behavior and constructive collaboration.

Open, transparent and supportive relationships exist between EMs and Council staff, supported by portfolios and a strong quest for knowledge by both.

There is strong support between the community and the Council, resulting from a Council that listens and is receptive to community needs and aspirations.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The future capacity of some key infrastructure, especially wastewater due to both rising compliance standards and greater demands through population growth, requires adherence to long-term planning.

Greater achievement rate of LTP projects is needed.

Further development of the Council's digital communications strategy is required, as well as access to digital means by lower socio-economic groups.

Leading locally

Governance, leadership and strategy

Council, ably led by a long serving Mayor, understands the importance of effective collective decision making. Strong and inclusive leadership is in place amongst both elected members and Council staff. Relationships with ratepayers and other stakeholders are positive.

Priority grading

Stand out

< The HDC has a well-established and strong vision for the district that is embraced by the community whose interests it strives to serve. >

Setting the direction for the community

The Hauraki District Council (HDC) is deeply and genuinely engaged with its community. The public and stakeholder involvement in setting the HDC's community outcomes includes public meetings, a caravan-style roadshow focusing on each of the three major towns (Ngatea, Paeroa and Waihi) and continuing consultation through the subsequent Long Term Plan processes.

The elected members (EMs) are all well connected with their respective constituencies and have adopted a highly collegial oversight of the district beyond their representative responsibilities to the respective traditional ward structure. The Council formally reviews its vision, goals and other strategic documents every three years, and effectively allocates resources on the basis of urgency and importance, taking care to balance effective governance, management and administration/ compliance.

Well-established leadership

The fact that the HDC has only had two mayors and two chief executives since its creation in the early 1990s is unique in New Zealand. The current Mayor and CEO have maintained their professional responsibilities throughout their long terms, respecting one another's different roles and responsibilities, and have not succumbed to either complacency or the common trappings of proximity.

Building collective understanding

A three day retreat, coordinated by the Mayor, is held for EMs and the Executive Leadership Team immediately after local body elections. The retreat includes a discussion of the Council's vision and goals, organisational structure, roles and responsibilities of staff and elected members, portfolios, expected conduct, and other relevant matters. This process delivers constructive collaborative decision making, roles and responsibilities are identified and understood, and collegiality is developed and nurtured. The measurement of organisational performance by the achievement of district outcomes is emphasised. This process is deliberate, constructive, and appears to achieve very successful outcomes. The induction process is reviewed upon its completion, and improvements identified for future inductions. Ongoing training is subsequently provided for EMs on the basis of their portfolios and committee appointments.

Organisational structure

The HDC's organisational structure supports the district's vision, goals and strategies. The Council's culture is fit for the purpose of service delivery and achievement of outcome, consequently structural change is rare.

EMs are each responsible for a select and unique portfolio to ensure direct links to the respective activity/asset and to provide a connection point with the community. This mechanism is well understood and enacted, does not impede management, and

overcomes any information asymmetry – which doesn't appear to arise.

The Mayor and Chief Executive meet both formally and informally, in private and in public. Together, they provide a united and compelling face for an organisation committed to serving the local community and broader region.

Health and safety focus

There is an active health and safety framework in place at HDC. Council uses the online tool 'Vault' to collate incident reports and to report to EMs. Improvement projects/plans are then put in place. EMs are well informed, engaged and understand their obligations to the staff and broader community. The Audit and Risk Committee also receives quarterly health and safety reporting. Health and safety policy is both efficient and cost effective.

Strong relationships

HDC has a strong working relationship with the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) and other territorial authorities in the region. Engineering and planning staff regularly meet with representatives at WRC. HDC is a member of the Waikato Local Authority Shared Services, the Waikato Road Asset Technical Accord (RATA) and the Waikato Building Consent Group.

The Council's constructive relationships with neighbouring Thames-Coromandel and Matamata-Piako district councils (known collectively as the 'Eastern Waikato') are noteworthy for being productive and transparent.

Understanding risks and their management

The Council's Audit and Risk Committee has a defined Terms of Reference (ToR) and is chaired by an independent member. Under the ToR, one member is always to be external (independent) to the Council. The ToR outlines members' roles, responsibilities, and reporting. The Council receives treasury advice from PwC, who present to the Committee annually. KPMG has undertaken internal audits of Council processes and presented the results to the Audit and Risk Committee. Council understands the need to actively manage outcomes and constantly strives to achieve a balance between compliance needs and performance objectives. While some improvement could further be recommended, and is being pursued, the deliberateness of actions is noted.

Performance measurement

HDC's vision, goals and strategies are well reflected in the Chief Executive's performance agreement, which comprises both internally and externally generated performance measures. There is a focus on managing and maintaining rich stakeholder relationships (including those with iwi; five marae with whakapapa and two community marae), leading an organisational culture that delivers performance outcomes while maintaining positive external relationships, accountability for delivering projects, prioritising customer service, and ensuring that all statutory obligations are met.

Strengths

The Council and its EMs understand and practice effective collaborative decision making which, in turn, supports the delivery of a coherent vision.

Roles and responsibilities of all parties (the Mayor, EMs, CEO, ELT and staff) are well understood and respected by all.

HDC demonstrates a commitment to personal development of both EMs and staff.

Areas for improvement

Tensions between the three wards versus responsibility to the entire district could be better managed.

The process and benefits of the councillor induction need to be better communicated to the community.

Response rates to Audit New Zealand's recommendations could be improved.

An annual independent assessment of EM performance could be established.

Investing money well

Financial decision making and transparency

The Council has a long history of conservative financial management. Affordability is intensely monitored while apportioning investment and expenditure across the community, balancing the needs of the three wards. Important decisions are supported by robust financial analysis and justification, considering both compliance and performance.

Priority grading

Competent

< The Council manages its finances conservatively, with relatively low levels of debt. However, EMs and Council staff are acutely aware of rising compliance costs and the potential impact on service provision in the future. >

Financial strategy

Council has a well-developed understanding of its financial strategy. HDC takes responsibility for making and verifying its own assumptions on population growth and service capacity needs to meet community demands over time. Population modelling is outsourced every three years, and the results are then examined against local empirical data from which three scenarios are produced. HDC's confidence in the accuracy of their own growth rate projections is high.

The financial strategy is best described as being conservative. Council maintain a deliberate and cautious approach to financial management, aligning effort with the risks involved, and reviewing the effectiveness of the process against both needs and the outcomes being achieved. The current financial strategy reflects long-term thinking and emerging population trends within the district, including the number of people commuting to work in the

greater Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. One of the unintended consequences of the number of daily commuters to employment outside the district is the need to develop a sense of belonging for these ratepayers.

Underpinned by affordability

The financial strategy is underpinned by affordability. HDC understands that rates must be less than five per cent of household income lest they become unaffordable (see the Shand Report, 2017). Currently, 28 per cent of properties in the district have rates above that level. During the 2018-28 LTP process, it was decided to shift a further five per cent of general rate funding from uniform annual charges to capital value based rates to reduce the burden on those less able to pay. There was minimal subsequent change in user charges.

Deliberate information flows

Audiences within the Council, from EMs to budget managers, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), receive financial reports with an appropriate level of detail. EMs demonstrate a common and consistent interest in the Council's financial performance. The financial reporting template includes a carry forward request report for capital works from one year to the next, which are then prioritised by EMs to meet the district's needs. Attention is paid to maintaining a balance across the three wards to ensure both equitable and appropriate service delivery. Maintaining harmony between the needs of the three wards and the broader district is well understood across the Council, from the Mayor, EMs, CEO, and the ELT to budget managers.

Discretionary (non-budgeted) expenditures are managed by way of a flowchart for out-of-cycle requests. There is a record of cumulative Council resolutions to move away from the Annual Plan budget. The Council's Annual Reports are always compliant

with Part 3 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002, as determined by Audit New Zealand.

Risk and control function

HDC has a well-developed Risk Management Policy in place. Significant Council risks are reported to the ARC on a bi-monthly basis via the Risk Register. The Council's Policy and Risk Register is up to date, well maintained, accurate and accessible. Further reports are produced as needed and the ARC has initiated 'deep-dive' reviews into risk topics of interest, as and when they emerge.

Risk mitigation is included in the Risk Register. There is a register of interests that lists all declared conflicts of interest for EMs; these are actively managed by the Mayor, the EMs, and those conflicted members themselves. The transparency offered by ward chairs enhances this process. The EMs demonstrated a very good understanding of conflict and the need to manage it, recognising that its elimination was unlikely.

Balanced budgeting

HDC generally runs a balanced budget, however, where Council deems it prudent to do so, it will run an unbalanced budget. As set out in Section 5f of the LTP, HDC has a policy of smoothing both rates increases and also the funding of irregularly occurring expenditure over several years. This policy can cause surpluses or deficits in individual years; on the other hand it means that rates increases are gradual and predictable, producing less risk to funding streams. The net result is that HDC can forecast small deficits in 2017/18 through 2019/20, only to be offset by a small surplus in the third year of the LTP.

External assessments of performance

HDC assesses its performance against established Government benchmarks. While it seeks to comply with fiscal benchmarks, there will be occasions when the Council considers non-compliance is prudent. On other occasions, Council may not meet some benchmarks, for example, the water rates (water by volume component) creates variability of income which can lead to breaches of the rates cap because water consumption is levied.

The HDC's LTP has never been given an adverse opinion, disclaimer of opinion, or qualified opinion. HDC works toward clearing matters raised by both its external and internal auditors prudently. The HDC conducts its own risk assessment and actions items as they emerge against their own priorities, to avoid duplication of effort.

Fee setting processes and transparency

The last LTP update attracted over 200 submissions, with more than 70 people attending community engagement events. The funding mix is outlined for each activity group. Importantly, Council knows and understands the limitations of the LTP planning cycle, which appears to reflect an air of optimism, and is comfortable about managing outcomes across three annual plans within the LTP cycle. Its willingness to actively manage the process, as opposed to simply adhering to it, is notable.

The Council sets fees and charges annually to reflect increases in costs or changes to charging structures. The fees and charges schedule is available on the Council website, as are key financial reports and annual reports. The monthly financial report is included in the EM's agenda, which is also placed on the website.

Strengths

There is a shared understanding of financial management across EMs, CEO, ELT and budget managers, and there is no evidence of information asymmetry between EMs and council staff.

There is a robust understanding of the role of policy, what can be achieved by policy, and the limitations of policy that may necessitate interventions through effective deliberate management.

Council is shifting to a risk-based planning environment and is working to embed this approach across all long term planning.

Areas for improvement

There is a need for Council to identify gaps between community expectations and Council's anticipated deliverables.

The management of rates arrears needs to be formalised and published.

The procurement policy/purchase order process needs to be refined to achieve consistency across the organisation.

Emergency responses may require greater investment.

Delivering what's important

Service delivery and asset management

The Council's delivery of core infrastructure services to meet community expectations is well managed. Bringing roading services back in-house has begun the recovery of asset knowledge.

Priority grading

Performing well

< Hauraki District Council is managing the cost of rising compliance and increasing demands on immediate infrastructure proactively. >

Asset management planning

Council's Asset Management Policy (AMP) recognises, and is consistent with, the district's strategic direction, in particular, the district's vision. Community outcomes are closely linked to each Council asset and activity, as outlined in the LTP.

The Council's Infrastructure Strategy is closely aligned to the financial strategy. The strategy covers infrastructure services provided by the Council for water supply, wastewater, stormwater, land drainage and land transport (roading and footpath) activities in each of the three wards and across the broader district.

The HDC is facing a number of new infrastructure challenges due to rising compliance requirements. This is approaching the point of affecting the Council's ability to deliver services at a reasonable cost, placing the pricing model under considerable stress. There are high levels of awareness of the impacts of climate change and changing land use, and the consequential impact on infrastructure.

Service delivery and service levels

Versus Research was commissioned by HDC to conduct the 2016 Triennial Resident Satisfaction Survey, identifying the perceptions

that residents have on a wide range of services and facilities provided. The survey separates satisfaction by ward, rural/urban satisfaction, and across various demographics, including age groups and gender. The HDC also surveys the satisfaction of its residents and local businesses annually. The results of the last year, almost without exception, demonstrated a decline in service satisfaction across the district. HDC are working to understand the reasons for the decline and the appropriate responses.

The HDC has a Section 17A review programme in place and an internal project team to undertake this work. Council resolutions are passed not to undertake a review when it is determined that the cost of reviews outweighs the benefit. The current review programme was completed in late 2017. One important outcome was to bring the roading professional services activity back in-house. The end result appears to be cost neutral and knowledge positive. The link between planning and delivery is now shorter, more effective, and open to better outcomes.

Developing human resources

The HDC has a dedicated training budget for staff and has participated in the Australasian Management Challenge for four years. The Council invests in its people, and Council staff have a very open and supportive attitude towards the organisation in return. Staff core skills and training are documented in Vault. Staff productivity programmes are discussed as part of MeTime and progressed in accordance with the relevant manager, in an open and collegial manner.

The HDC is a participant in the PwC Australasian LG Performance Excellence Programme which provides a number of metrics with which their staffing levels and performance can be measured against similar councils.

Anticipating increased service demands

Recent asset studies conducted by HDC reveal that wastewater network capacity is approaching its limits, due to raising the quality of outgoing discharge and increasing population. All discharge consents expire in the next five years. The capacity of existing wastewater treatment plants (in Kerepehi and Paeroa) will be stretched due to a combination of population growth and the new discharge standard constraints. The HDC is now measuring

discharge to better understand where and when capacity constraints may exist. The HDC is also considering increasing capacity when required to increase discharge compliance requirements. The Council has just completed a 15 year strategy for its plants that has been embedded in the LTP.

Recovering roading

The land transport activity is one of the Council's biggest spend areas. The need to better understand roading was at the centre of the decision to bring service delivery back in-house. The actual state of all roads is now known to the Council. The Council has decided to increase operating costs to keep sealed and unsealed roads to a standard expected, and they are generally well maintained. The Council works closely with NZTA on road safety matters, including the Karangahake Corridor project, which may, or may not, result in substantial investment by central government. The Council does not provide public transport.

Serving communities

The Council assesses the implications for the rating base of expected service levels in libraries, community and sports facilities, and parks, all of which are replicated, at least in part, across the three wards in the district as part of the development of the LTP and Revenue and Financing Policy.

User fees and charges (and targeted rates) are utilised with discretion as cost becomes prohibitive and could potentially impact the community's use of the service. The use of user fees and charges and targeted rates is therefore balanced with other funding sources. The Council has integrated service delivery with other asset owners, i.e. the Ministry of Education and school pools.

Managing regulatory services

The Council has a dog control/noise contract in place which has KPIs. However, this contract and the monitoring of the KPI's could be better supported by a well-defined, as opposed to as needed enforcement strategy. Resource consent monitoring is included in the LTP and has non-performance monitoring.

The Council consistently meets the timeframes imposed under the RMA for making decisions on resource consents. This is reported to the Council on a monthly basis in the Group Manager – Planning and Environmental Services monthly report.

Planning for growth

The draft Growth Strategy provides a statement of future development for the district over the next 30 years and incorporates future demographics, natural hazard information and infrastructure considerations. It provides a clear direction for the Council on future potential growth areas around existing settlements, which tend to be aspirational.

The Council's Economic Development Strategy and Social Strategy have links with the Council's district planning and the Council has committed to facilitating housing and business growth when it reviews its rules, including ensuring the district plan provides for sufficient serviced land for residential and business growth. The Council has recently adopted, for notification, the rural plan change for affordable housing. HDC has a keen understanding of the triggers for growth, and is now benefitting from proximity to greater Auckland.

Strengths

The Council understands projected demands on services and is comfortable about managing LTP expectations via annual plans.

Recovery of service delivery for roading to recapture knowledge and, potentially, deliver service less expensively.

Active and individual management of Section 17A reviews to ensure that the process creates value.

Areas for improvement

Asset management plans could make better links to the District Plan and Economic Development Strategy.

HDC needs to follow through on the survey results, to understand the real cause and any changes in service delivery required to meet expectations.

Asset register updates required for waste treatment plants.

Project management disciplines by way of a dedicated Project Management Office need to be implemented.

HDC may be better focusing on GDP per capita, as opposed to population growth.

The Council needs to develop an enforcement and regulatory compliance policy and strategy.

Listening and responding

Communicating and engaging with the public and businesses

The Mayor, elected members', and Chief Executive's commitment to effective communications within Council and with the broader community is outstanding. They are renowned across the district for their willingness to listen.

Priority grading

Stand out

< The Council is recognised nationally for producing accessible consultation documents in plain English without over-simplifying issues. Their use of a 'road trip analogy' was commended by the Office of the Auditor General. >

The Hauraki District Council (HDC) has an effective and well-developed communications strategy and a series of actions designed to engage with, and listen to, each of the local communities. The strategy is the result of coordinated activity between the EMs and Council staff. The communications strategy reflects the district's vision, broad goals and objectives, and the LTP and annual work plan. Considerable effort is placed on communicating with local communities across each of the three wards, and with more defined communities and audiences within each ward as required, such as the Kaiaua 'beach' community of largely holiday homes.

The strategy is well understood by EMs and staff. While the strategy is one of being outbound, the primary function of the Council is to listen. An EM working party is deliberately focused on implementation of the communications strategy and, like the LTP and annual plan, it is understood to be a working document to be managed judiciously. The strategy provides a guide for all.

Enhanced by digital engagement

The Council's brand has recently been refreshed and is being rolled out in a phased process across the various digital platforms. The Council Facebook page has grown from 800 to approximately 4,000 followers in the past two years and the Council has just launched on Instagram. Council sees engagement via digital channels as a means of enhancing its communications strategy with various constituencies. It does not intend to replace the various other initiatives, including the real strength, which is the value placed by the community on the EMs, who are accessible and direct. Digital platforms could be further enhanced, but their role is viewed as being part of the suite of tools, not a substitute for any of them – and especially not a substitute for face-to-face contact.

Engagement with Māori

The Council does not have a separate strategy for engaging with local iwi and hapu, instead preferring iwi liaison activity to facilitate input from Māori and iwi into democratic and community decision-making processes. The Council, and Council staff, recognise Māori and iwi as an important group within the community. The Council has committed to working with the Hauraki Collective post-settlement governance entity to establish a forum within 18 months following the signing of the Hauraki Collective Treaty Settlement. In 2011, the Council and representatives of Hauraki iwi established Te Mana Whenua Forum mo Te Rohe o Te Kaunihera Hauraki to provide Hauraki iwi and the Council a body through which both parties can discuss matters of common interest. However, it remains inactive because Hauraki iwi have been engaged with their own treaty settlement negotiations.

Deliberate conversations with young people

The Council has sought to engage more with young people across the district via Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. During the development of the 2018 LTP, secondary school students were invited to the Council to learn about local government. The

Council is also involved with the Secondary Schools Employment Partnership Programme.

Council staff and elected members also attend Business After 5 (BA5) meetings and engage with various community groups on a regular basis.

Recognised as effective communicators

The HDC's documentation and response to engagement, starting with listening, are real strengths for the Council. Their documents are not only remarkably easy to follow, but are presented in a very fair and engaging manner.

Civil Defence in action

The HDC has Civil Defence community response plans that have been enacted twice in the last 12 months following adverse weather events (sustained heavy rainfall). The key result of these events, however, is the Council's attitude towards risk. Over the last two years, the Council has developed a more advanced understanding of its role and attitude towards key infrastructure.

Strengths

The Council is both accessible and direct in its communication with the communities it serves, and EMs and Council staff are willing listeners.

Significant numbers of people are attracted to various Council forums.

The Mayor, EMs, Chief Executive and ELT are all accessible to ratepayers and the broader constituency.

Areas for improvement

Continued development of the digital communications interface may assist in reducing the time commitment to other engagement processes.

The HDC could provide more detail as to how funding levels for local and regional economic development are determined.

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