Workshops

From time to time council will hold workshops. The purpose of a workshop or briefing is to prepare councillors with the appropriate background and knowledge to make robust decisions for their communities, and to allow discussion among and between elected members and council staff. Workshops are part of an educative phase of the council's decision making process. Workshops cannot be used to make final decisions, as final decisions and resolutions cannot lawfully be made outside the context of a properly constituted meeting.

It is intended that all workshops are open to the public in accordance with requirements of the LGA 2002, that '….a local authority should conduct its business in an open, transparent and democratically accountable manner….'

The reasons for excluding the public from a workshop are detailed in Section 7 of the Local Government Official Information Meetings Act 1987.

The table below provides information on whether a session is open or closed to the public and if closed, the reason for this decision.

Rotorua Lakes Council workshops

Date/Time /Venue	Duration	Title of workshop & workshop notes	Workshop outline	Open / closed workshop	Councillor attendance
11 December 2025 1.00pm-4.00pm Committee Room 1	3 hours	**Workshop 1: Annual Plan 2026/27** Questions from the Councillors included: • What is the distinction between affordability of costs to council and affordability to the ratepayer? • What is the timeframe within which a 'growing district' is considered? • What is the contractual obligation of council for the IIAG funding? • Does the proposed rates increase figure cover the known impact of Local Water Done Well decisions? • Is there an availability to save costs by switching Audit providers? • Does the upward pressure on rates, titled 'water supply' relate to regulatory change? • What is the current budgeted finance for the museum reopening and operationalisation? • Is there cost involved with breaking the contract for FOGO services? • When will the charges for water be split from rates invoices? • How does the work exploring a unitary authority impact the budgeting and potential water services upward pressure on rates? • Would there be appetite to request that the government provide regulatory relief, in order	The purpose of this workshop is to provide: • A recap on Year 3 of the LTP, and • An introduction to the 2026 Annual Planning process.	Open	Mayor Tapsell, Deputy Mayor Kai Fong, Cr Brown, Cr Wang, Cr Paterson, Cr Maxwell, Cr Sandford, Cr Temara-Benfell, Cr Barker, Cr Lee.

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		to focus on addressing direction setting from central government? • What decisions would lead to, or result in a qualified audit? • Would a 3% increase on the LTP year 3 rate, or the current likely rates increase, trigger an LTP amendment audit process? • Would breaking the FOGO contract result in a consultation process? • How are parking services budgeted into the LTP? • What would the rates increase be if the museum was included in this annual plan? • How long has council been aware of the potential rates increase figures? • What is covered by 'level of service' for roading expenditure? • What is covered in the renewal expenditure in community leadership? • Is there an opportunity to canvas ideas for city revitalisation to get ahead of any changes before the financial year in which the work is planned? • How would an in-depth fees and charges review effect the upward pressure on rates? • Would a 4% change in the proposed rate increase trigger an LTP amendment?			
9 June 2025 1:00pm-3:00pm Chamber	2 Hours	**Workshop – Solution for Recovered Water from Upgraded Wastewater Treatment Plant (Multi Criteria Analysis)** Questions from the Councillors included: • Does debt headroom include extra debt in the case of a natural disaster? • Whether the wording 'debt headroom' is appropriate for analysis criteria given the projected increase from the 2021-2031 LTP to the 2024-2034 LTP and potential further increases year on year? • Whether this is the first multi-criteria analysis by the current council? • Who will be the final decision maker when the working group is finished? • Is debt head room under this criteria analysis including the effect of Local Water Done Well decisions?	The purpose of this workshop is to continue discussion regarding the multi criteria analysis framework to guide the solution selection for the recovered water from the upgraded Wastewater Treatment Plant, noting that the current discharge site is on CNI's land in the Whakarewarewa Forest and a new solution will be required.	Open	Cr Barker, Mayor Tapsell, Cr Kai Fong, Cr Wang, Cr O'Brien, Cr Lee, Cr Brown (via Zoom), Cr Maxwell, Cr Waru (via Zoom) Apologies: Cr Paterson

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		• Could the economic feasibility separate the operational cost and the capital cost? • Where does engagement come into the criteria/project? • What are the risks with delaying engagement until after the analysis criteria is determined? • What will be the consequences for the analysis criteria and resultant outcomes when the options for the multi criteria analysis are selected? • How will the public interest be balanced or considered should discussions be initiated with landowners? • If an analysis criterion of 'landowner approval' was selected and a project option identified a lake – how would the 'landowners' of the lake be identified? • If full landowner acceptance was achieved, would this effect commercial viability? • What does 'relationship with Mana Whenua' mean in the context of stage 2 values? • Will Mana Whenua have a right of veto over the project options? • Is there a danger of being perceived to 'take sides' if 'Mana Whenua Relationships' and 'Community Acceptance' are separate stage 2 values? • Does economic impact as a value serve better in stage 2 or stage 1? • Should Mana Whenua relationships be included as an analysis criterion in stage 1? • Could stage 2 values be grouped around the four wellbeing's as set out in the Local Government Act 2002? • Is 'water health' as a stage two value relating to the scientific health of the water? And what is the relationship to 'Te Mauri o Te Wai?' • How can we include Te Tatau o Te Arawa to give emphasis to the engagement with Mana Whenua? • Would Council ask Te Tatau o Te Arawa for feedback on the options provided for in the criteria analysis? • Is Central Government planning to reduce the requirements for consultation under the RMA reforms? • Would the RMA reforms effect the stage 1 and/or 2 values assessments?			

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		• How would the stage 2 value 'Community Acceptance' be measured? • Will options such as discharge into the lakebed or Puarenga stream be included or considered? • How often have councillors provided a multi criteria analysis for council projects?			
5 June 2025 9.30am-12:00pm Chamber	2.5 Hours	**Confidential Workshop – Pensioner Housing**	The purpose of this workshop is to update elected members on progression of work developing options for pensioner housing.	Closed Confidential for the reasons of: • To enable council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities (s 7(2)(h)). • To carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) (s7(2)(i)).	Mayor Tapsell, Cr Kai Fong, Cr Waru, Cr O'Brien, Cr Lee, Cr Maxwell, Cr Barker, Cr Wang, Cr Brown.

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27 May 2025 9:30am-11:30am Committee Room 1	2 hours	**Confidential Workshop – CE Performance Review**	The purpose of this workshop is t o discuss the CE Performance Review.	Closed Confidential for the reasons of: • To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons (s 7(2)(a)).	
14 May 2025 1-3:30pm Chamber	2.5 hours	**Confidential Workshop – Contract Extension and Bylaw Reviews**	The purpose of this workshop is to discuss a contract extension and bylaws up for review.	Closed Confidential for the reasons of: • To enable council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities (s 7(2)(h)). • To maintain legal professional privilege (s 7(2)(g)).	
7 May 2025 1-3pm Committee Room 2	2 hours	**Workshop – Solution for Recovered water from Upgraded Waste Water Treatment Plant** Investigations into a suitable management and discharge site for the recovered water from Rotorua's upgraded Waste Water Treatment Plant have been going for some time. The purpose of this workshop is to provide and discuss with elected members a broad indication on the proposed decision-making framework approach to guide the Recovered Water Management options selection.	The purpose of this workshop is to discuss a decision-making framework to guide the solution selection for thew recovered water from the Waste Water Treatment Plant, noting that the current discharge site is on CNI's land in the Whakarewarewa Forest and a new solution will be required.	Open	Cr Barker, Cr Wang, Cr Waru, Cr Maxwell, Cr Lee. Cr Paterson, Cr O'Brien, Cr Kereopa.

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		Questions from RLC Councillors included: • Is the Government's fast track option available for projects such as this? • What is the difference between what we are doing now and what we will be doing with the upgraded plant? • Would continuing to discharge into the forest be an environmentally acceptable option. • If we come up with an acceptable frame-work could it be used for other projects. • Could a Māori-owned farm, that is planted out, be considered as an option. • A comment was that the Public Works Act should not be considered as an option. • Are the parameters around mana whenua input too prescriptive? • Is it better to go with concept approval for a framework before adding in the detail? • A comment was that there were concerns about the wording around Iwi involvement. • What Iwi expertise has been engaged and if Iwi determine that there is a better way to engage with Iwi than this framework would this be possible? • How are we going to engage effectively with Iwi going forward so that past mistakes are not repeated? • How would the significance and engagement policy effect the framework? • How will the RMA reforms effect this project? • Are we going to limit options in the future for using the grey water from the plant for household purposes if financial affordability at this time has too much influence as a weighting. • A comment was that there seemed to be a slight overlap in the weightings. • How is Iwi holistic and collective decision-making reflected in this framework? • Council has responsibilities under the LGA to Iwi, can this be reflected in future workshops? • General comment were that Councillors would like to give the weightings more			

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		thought before making any decisions on them. • There was a suggestion that there be a Councillor representative on Council project teams, as there was in the last triennium. • A suggestion of coming up with the weighting would be to identify, the issues that could negatively impact on the progression of the project. • There was general appreciation of the values shared, with Councillors to feed back via email.			
28 April 2025 1-3pm Chamber	2 hours	**Confidential Workshop - Relationship Agreement with Ngāti Kearoa Ngāti Tuarā**	The purpose of this workshop is to discuss the agreement with Ngāti Kearoa Ngāti Tuarā and the commercial terms of the agreement.	Closed Confidential for the reasons of: To carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) (s7(2)(i)). To protect information which if public would; i. Disclose a trade secret; or ii. Unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information (s7(2)(b)).	

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17 March 2025 Committee Room 1	1.5hrs	**Confidential Workshop – Draft Annual Plan Consultation document**	The purpose of this workshop is to allow for elected members a chance to run through the draft annual plan consultation document and ask key questions of staff.	Closed: Confidential for the reasons of: To protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence where the making available of the information would be likely to: i. Prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, where it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied; or ii. Would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest (s 7(2)(c))	
12 March 2025 1pm-2.30pm Chamber	1.5 hrs	**Workshop – BORPC Presentation: Rates Swap option for Lakes Restoration Project** At this workshop RLC Councillors were provided with a presentation from Councillors and staff from Bay of Plenty Regional Council on the Tarawera Sewerage Scheme, including the Rates Swap option for the Lakes Restoration Project. Questions from RLC Councillors included: • What information did Prime minister Helen Clarke base her decision regarding the original Deed and funding for the 4 lakes restoration funding? • Did the information you provided to the Crown include information on Tarawera? • At that time were the 4 lakes that were included in the Deed in worse condition than Tarawera? • Questions relating to the differing information and research circulating on the percentage of nutrients going into Lake Tarawera.	The purpose of this workshop is for Rotorua Constituency Councillors (BOPRC) to present on the Rates Swap option for the Lakes Restoration Project.	Open	Mayor Tania Tapsell, Cr Sandra Kai Fong, Cr Conan O'Brien, Cr Don Paterson, Cr Gregg Brown, Cr Barker, Cr Robert Lee, Cr Lani Kereopa (via Zoom), Cr Fisher Wang, Cr Waru, Cr Trevor Maxwell

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		• Can you expand on the difference between TLI and other measures? • Are we likely to meet the target of removing nitrogen from lake Tarawera by 2032? • Based on the importance of the scheme to enable properties to be compliant isa $750,000 a fair proportion for the Regional Council to be funding? • How was the estimation of the 169 properties that could not install onsite treatment and disposal systems due to site conditions arrived at? • Has the Privacy Commissioner been approached about the privacy in regard to the 169 properties? • Question relating to the original arrangements under the Deed and percentage of funding that residents were expected to fund. • When did rules change for the requirements on septic tanks? • When BOPRC says that reticulation is not the mandate of the Regional Council, is this an opinion or fact? • With that rule change did that not provide any flexibility in regard to funding policy in BOPRC to be more aligned to the need for increased funding? • When you say it is not the job of the Regional Council to support reticulation, is that a mandate or opinion? • Was the 2008 funding Deed the original Deed that identified the 4 lakes? • Is it correct that there have been at least 2 or 3 amendments to the agreement, and opportunities at those times to look at changes? • At any time was a major change to the Deed sought? • Was there an opportunity to advocate to change the Deed in regard to Tarawera previously? In regard to the BOPRC Rate Swap solution, Cr questions included:			

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		• Would it be an option for BOPRC to continue with it's rating and pass on the funding directly to RLC? • Would the level of service to Rotorua residents be unchanged if the rate swap option was progressed? • Are other districts in the region concerned that Rotorua's regional council rates are going down? • Questions about rate levels in both RLC and BOPRC. In regard to an offer of a $4m interest free loan from BOPRC to RLC, payable within 2 years: • Question on whether BOPRC was consulting with the community on their Annual Plan. Some information was shared with Councillors on the Ruapeka Bay, Utuhina and Upper Kaituna catchments.			
4 March 2025 9:30am-12pm Chamber	2.5 hours	**'Local Water Done Well' Workshop** At this workshop Councillors were updated on the Local Water Done Well service delivery options. There were 4 presentations from the DIA, Commerce Commission, Taumata Arowai and Rotorua Lakes Council. Councillors questions in response to the presentation from the DIA included: • Under the new arrangements how does democracy fit in, can the public vote for different people leading the CCO? • How would a CCO have more access to Debt funding under the new model? • Why is WaterCare provided as an exemplar given their performance? • Is there any requirement under the models for hapu and Iwi representation? • Do Council's have a commitment that there will be no change? Councillors questions in response to the presentation from the Commerce Commission included:	The purpose of the workshop is to update elected members on the modelling of the water services delivery options under the government's Local Waters Done Well reform programme. Feedback is being sought from elected members on a preferred option for community consultation.	Open	Mayor Tania Tapsell, Cr Sandra Kai Fong, Cr Conan O'Brien, Cr Don Paterson, Cr Gregg Brown, Cr Barker, Cr Robert Lee, Cr Lani Kereopa, Cr Fisher Wang, Cr Waru Apologies: Cr Trevor Maxwell

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		• Is this legislative change driven by Government's lack of confidence in local councils ability to manage water services? • If Council went for a CCO option, would the Commission have a view on installing water meters? • If there was an extreme climate change event and water couldn't be supplied, does Council have indemnity if the water can't be supplied by the CCO? • If an inhouse service is provided what level of scrutiny would the Commission have over other Council levels of service in terms of overall Council spend? • Are there likely to be any changes when the Bill is enacted. Councillors questions in response to the presentation from the Taumata Arowai included: • Where do plastics and micro-plastics fit into the standards? • Have you given any consideration into what fluoride does too water pipes? • Who would be responsible for maintenance contracts, the network operator/CCO or Council? • Where there is a strong difference of opinion between Council and the CCO, who makes the decision? • How much is the eventual discharge into the ocean from lakes and steams being taken into account? • Are our fisheries being considered in the rules and regulations being developed? • Are you looking at the cumulative effects on catchments? • Are your standards based on international research? • How are the standards applied to Regional Councils? • Why are hot water cylinders failing in the Hawkes Bay? • Is there any research being done on failing water infrastructure due to fluoride? • Is there provision to apply for reduced treatment of water supplies when there is a reduced risk of contamination?			

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		• How would Council's future planning to increase housing supply and associated infrastructure in Rotorua be effected by the new arrangements? Councillors questions in response to the presentation from the Rotorua Lakes Council included: • What specificity do we need to provide to the public during consultation to decide on the appropriate method of delivery in the future? • When consulting with community on the multi-agency option, how do we advise on possible options when other Councils are also consulting on various options and it is not clear who ERLC might partner with? • Does the Mayoral Forum 12 December have relevance to the consultation? • There were questions relating to larger councils having greater influence on multi-agency CCO's decision-making. • There were questions on the benefits of scale in multi-agency CCO's. • Can a decision of a CCO be vetoed by Council? • How confident is the CE that local knowledge would contribute to decision-making on a multi-agency CCO. • Who makes the decision (CCO or Council) on expanding reticulation in the Rotorua District? • Has the effect of major climatic events been included in discussions and planning on Local Water Done Well proposals? The workshop continued on 5th March 2025 at 3.10pm. At this final session, Councillors provided feedback on the CCO options (Council CCO or multi-agency CCO). •			

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17 February 2025 2:30-4:30pm	2 hours	**Annual Plan Workshop #5**		Closed Confidential for the reasons of: The withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	
11 February 2025 9:30am-11:30am	2 hours	**Local Alcohol Policy Workshop** At this workshop Councillors were updated on the progress of the Local Alcohol Policy review. Councillors questions included: • Questions about alcohol trends and the methods for collection of data. • What was the main topic/focus in the objections? • Were youth engaged as part of the community survey? • In regard to the crime rate, does Rotorua have the highest rate of alcohol related crime? • Can the policy include 'treating the why' there is alcohol harm? • Were taxi companies included in the survey? Councillors questions relating to off-licence premises density: • Would licenses be transferable within a freeze? • Why would there be special consideration for supermarkets and grocery stores? • What size constitutes a supermarket or grocery store?	The purpose of this workshop is to discuss proposed policy changes to the Local Alcohol Policy.	Open	Mayor Tania Tapsell, Cr Sandra Kai Fong, Cr O'Brien, Cr Don Paterson, Cr Gregg Brown, Cr Barker, Cr Robert Lee, Cr Trevor Maxwell, Cr Lani Kereopa, Cr Trevor Maxwell. Apologies: Cr Fisher Wang, Cr Waru,

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		• Is there partnership with the Police in monitoring home brew being sold in the community? • Is it likely that the review process will encourage new applications for off-licence premises that wouldn't have come in otherwise? • How much weighting goes on community feedback when granting licenses? • What is the definition of a sensitive site? Councillors questions relating to off-licence trading hours: • What is the justification for having liquor available between 7am-9am? • Would 9am to 9pm be preferred trading hours? • Has consideration been given to closing when children are going or coming home from school? Councillors questions related to off-licence discretionary conditions: • How can Council ensure guidelines are followed? • Can Council bring in rules around advertising on social media? Councillors questions related to off-licence sensitive sites: Councillors questions related to on-licence trading hours: • What are the current trading hours? • How many night clubs are there in Rotorua? • Are there a specific criterion for night clubs? • How many licensed establishments are open after midnight in Rotorua? • Are there opportunities to apply for special licences if there is an event and and how soon before the event do operators need to apply? • Request for further information on noise complaints and do noise bylaws cover this?			

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		Councillors questions related to on-licence discretionary conditions: • Will discretionary conditions be compulsory? • If DLC already has the powers to set discretionary conditions, why is the policy change required? • Request for further information on conditions around outdoor seating. Councillors questions related to on-licence sensitive sites: • Clarification was sought on the definition of sensitive sites. Further questions: • Should the price of liquor licenses be increased?			
10 February 2025 1-3pm	2 hours	**Fluoridation Workshop** At this workshop Councillors received presentations on fluoridation from representatives from the Ministry of Health and BOPRC. Questions to representatives from the MoH included: • Can we be certain of the total fluoride dose that each person is exposed to given that there are other sources of fluoride? • Further questions were asked about the potential risks of over exposure to fluoride by specific groups in the community. • Questions were asked about fluoride and reduced IQ in children. • A question was asked about the quality of overseas studies on fluoride. • Where does the fluoride in New Zealand water come from? • What is the major cause of tooth decay? • Should the sugar industry and sugar in the diet be addressed rather than adding fluoride to water supplies? • How is the rangatiratanga the ability of your treaty partners to make their own decisions about what is put into the water	The Ministry of Health will be presenting a workshop to elected members to discuss community water fluoridation.	Open	Mayor Tania Tapsell, Cr Sandra Kai Fong, Cr O'Brien, Cr Don Paterson, Cr Gregg Brown, Cr Barker, Cr Robert Lee, Cr Trevor Maxwell, Cr Waru, Cr Lani Kereopa, Cr Fisher Wang (via zoom) Apologies: Cr Trevor Maxwell

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		they drink, or the medications our whanau and hapu consume being upheld and protected within the decision to enforce fluoridation? • If Hapu and Iwi make it clear that they are opposed to the fluoridation of the drinking water of our communities, how will the government support the Treaty partner to develop the water infrastructure needed to provide non-fluoridated water to our people? • How will the Government support Te Arawa to monitor any potential impacts of fluoride on taonga in lakes and waterways? • Are the directions from the Director General still valid? • Are there any other benefits from fluoride? • Is fluoride most effective when applied directly to teeth, not consumed? • There were questions about the recent Supreme Court decision in the USA. • What was the cost of the infrastructure required to fluoridate water supplies? • What would be the consequences for international trade if trading partners overseas say NZ putting fluoride in our water? • Questions were asked about the ramifications of RLC not meeting the deadline to introduce fluoride. • Confirmation was sought, that councils do not have the ability to decide on whether to fluoridate the water of their districts? • Questions were asked about the ability of the Director General's decision to be challenged in the Courts. • If topical application is the best way to treat tooth decay, has the Moh investigated other tooth brushing programmes instead of fluoridating the water? • Has the 'precautionary principal' be given consideration by the Ministry of Health/Director General?			

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		Questions to the representative from BOPRC included: • A series of questions on the testing of contaminant levels in Rotorua water supplies. • As it is difficult to remove fluoride from water supplies, how can it be concluded that it can be removed from treated wastewater? • How has the cumulative risk of various sources of fluoride been assessed? • Ahead of any local testing, how can the BOPRC representative conclude that there are no risks to taonga species in the waterways from fluoridating potable water? • Could additional fluoride accelerate any algal blooms?			
5 February 2025 2-4pm	2 hours	**Annual Plan Workshop #4** At this workshop Councillors were provided with an overview on the timeline and Council priorities since adoption of the LTP in 2024 and the work that has been done to-date to prepare a draft 2025 Annual Plan for consultation. Councillors were advised on a proposed draft rates increase of 8.1% and some of the components, risks and opportunities of the increase. Councillors questions included: • Regarding service delivery, are there things that could be done to automate processes to provide savings? • Was Infracore meeting its service levels and was Council paying for any services that were not provided? • What is Council budgeting for staffing? • Are there innovative ways to maintain janitorial levels of service given the proposed decrease in funding? • Why is Community Hall repair funding not included in the Annual Plan? • In regard to the Sala St Chapel, is there an opportunity to do immediate works but pause structural upgrades.	The purpose of this workshop is to discuss the programme of work for LTP year 2 as well as potential changes to LTP Year 2. This includes possible consultation topics.	Open	Mayor Tania Tapsell, Cr Sandra Kai Fong, Cr O'Brien, Cr Don Paterson, Cr Gregg Brown, Cr Barker, Cr Robert Lee, Cr Trevor Maxwell, Cr Waru Apologies Cr Fisher Wang, Cr Lani Kereopa

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		• Will the parking contract fall into this Annual Plan time-period? • Is Council looking at pensioner housing rent increases or opportunities for attracting subsidies? • Is the level of funding proposed for Aquatic Centre renewals required given that the facility has just been upgraded? • Are the proposed Museum offsite renewals required? • Are proposed Library renewals essential? • Were IT renewals budgeted for in the original OneCouncil plan? Councillors were asked for their feedback on the Tarawera Sewerage Scheme and particularly should Council consult on the capital funding plan? Councillors questions included: • Has Central Government or Bay of Plenty Regional Council agreed to any further funding for the scheme? • Are there likely to be any challenges to wider community funding support for the Tarawera Scheme from communities who have already paid for their schemes? • Request that any increase in funding be part of a combined effort between RLC/Central Government/BOPRC. • Request for clarification on the amount of Better Off Funding that could be contributed to the scheme. • Further questions were asked about properties connecting to the scheme and costs for property owners and the Locality Plan. Councillors were also updated on Local Waters Done Well decisions required in the near future and the 3 options available to Councils (1. internal business unit, 2. Council owned water org, 3. multi council owned water organisation) Councillors questions included: • Questions on the timing of responding to Government on the preferred option for RLC.			

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		• Clarification on what a CCO means in the context of Local Waters Done Well. It was noted that the Airport Business Park proposal still being prepared by staff.			