

Deliberative Democracy Case Study: Ahu Ake



<p>Council name: Waipā District Council</p>
<p>Contact person:</p> <p>Name: Kirsty Downey</p> <p>Position: Acting Deputy Chief Executive / Group Manager – Strategy</p> <p>Email: kirsty.downey@waipadc.govt.nz</p>
<p>Overview of the project:</p> <p>With an overarching ethos of being a strategy-led organisation, Waipā District Council identified the need for an overall strategy that would meet the aspirations and priorities of our growing Waipā communities whilst protecting those elements of the district that make Waipā such a special place to call ‘home’.</p> <p>Our council was already familiar with the concept of spatial planning and we had undertaken spatial planning at a sub-regional level through our membership in the Future Proof Growth Partnership, and at a town and village level, through the development of Town Concept Plans and Village Concept Plans. However, we recognised that a district-wide strategy that directed all specific activity-level strategies was needed to link our organisational vision to implementation.</p> <p>In 2020 we commenced the development of the Ahu Ake, Waipā Community Spatial Plan (Ahu Ake), in partnership with mana whenua and iwi. We have worked alongside key stakeholders and undertook a comprehensive engagement programme with our communities to create a district-wide spatial plan.</p> <p>Ahu Ake is a blueprint for the next 30+ years. It will become our key strategic planning document, setting out the foundational strategy for future planning, prioritisation and investment, service delivery and the delivery of projects and initiatives.</p> <p>We initiated a Special Consultative Procedure at the beginning of October 2024. This marked the final phase of engagement on this first iteration of the plan before the Council formally adopted Ahu Ake, Waipā Community Spatial Plan, along with the accompanying implementation plan, in March 2025.</p> <p>In early 2023, Council decided to engage with our Waipā community at a district level by initiating an Ahu Ake Roadshow. This involved Council staff from all departments, elected members, and mana whenua/iwi partners, visiting 11 towns and villages (with more than 40 community events/workshops/meetings) over a six-week period.</p> <p>In order to respond to the roadshow feedback (with approximately 2000 pieces of feedback received), we explored options to further engage with the community. This was driven by a desire to ensure that we fully considered and responded appropriately to the quality feedback provided by our communities. Options considered included an enhanced community participatory process.</p> <p>Council’s Strategic Planning and Policy Committee (SPPC) determined to proceed with a World Café process involving a diverse group of community participants representative of our future 2050 Waipā communities. We invited community members to participate</p>

(receiving 143 expressions of interest), which involved a series of in-depth workshops to develop solutions for complex matters about the future of Waipā. We partnered with the University of Waikato to ensure that the process was robust.

Four workshops were held in September to November 2023 with 42 participants and concluded with the community group presenting recommendations to elected members of Council and Community Boards. The University of Waikato provided a report (attached) that endorsed the effectiveness and success of this process, which we have focused this case study on.

All documents in relation to Ahu Ake are available at <https://haveyoursay.waipadc.govt.nz/ahu-ake-waipā-community-spatial-plan>

Project goals/objectives:

To establish a live spatial planning strategy that will be able to guide the Council over the next 30 years and beyond, serving as a foundational framework for future planning, directing Council's prioritisation, investment, and implementation of various projects and initiatives.

Its purpose is to ensure that the pathway for enhancing our community's wellbeing and development is transparent; collaboratively delivered with mana whenua and iwi; and community organisations throughout the district, and ultimately continues to align with long-term goals.

Public participation:

One of the core principles of public participation is the promise/commitment that the public's contribution will influence the decision or outcome.

For example:

- Grant funding will be awarded to the groups that get the greatest support through a participatory funding process.
- Council will implement the recommendations of the citizens assembly, unless there is a legal/regulatory reason that prevents this.

Did your project make a specific promise/commitment to the community?

☐ No ☒ Yes

If yes, please tell us about the promise/commitment that was made:

Following the Ahu Ake Roadshow, several questions remained relating to planning for placemaking and housing, heritage and culture, parks and public facilities, and economic development. A second phase of engagement was carried out in late 2023 to seek further input from the community about how to best address these questions.

The SPPC considered several options for an enhanced community participatory process including citizens' assemblies and focus groups. Citizens' assemblies are a form of collaborative decision-making aimed at bringing a representative group together to

deliberate and make recommendations on complex issues. After considering a range of participatory approaches, the SPPC recommended a modified citizens' assembly approach, a World Café method of community engagement.

Elected members were not comfortable with delegating full decision-making authority to a group of community representatives, in this very first application of an enhanced community participatory process. They endorsed a World Café approach in which community members were invited to make recommendations to elected members.

The World Café community engagement method brings a group of people together to collaborate and generate ideas on topics in a relaxed, café-like environment. The setting is orientated to a hospitable café and is designed to provide a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere focused on small group tables, the opportunity for engaged discussion, and an open space for all participants.

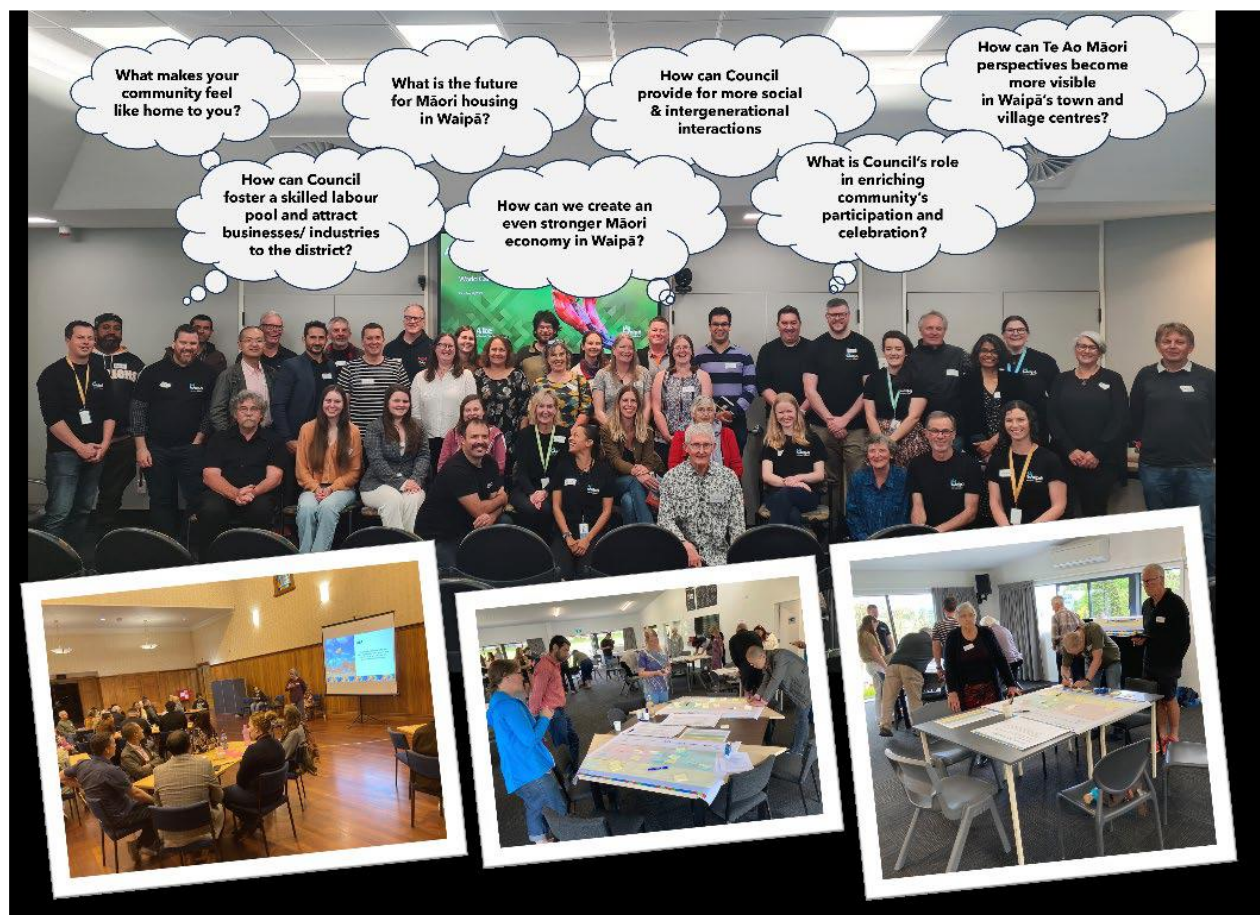


Figure 1: World Café community engagement

Was that promise/commitment:

- ☒ One-off – specifically related to this project.
- ☐ Ongoing – part of an ongoing promise/commitment to undertake more participative/deliberative processes.

☐ Both, of the above.

*It is important to note that while our Council initially planned the World Café process as a one-off event, the value of this approach exceeded expectations. As a result, elected members supported further exploration of enhanced community participation methods. An Anchor Institution Framework and Work Programme have subsequently been approved by Council (in April and June 2024 respectively) and these include the exploration and utilisation of enhanced community participatory processes. Elected Members are particularly keen to explore the utilisation of an enhanced community participatory process in the development of the 2027-37 Long Term Plan.

Was this a:

☐ Deliberative process

☒ Participative process

☐ Other – please describe:

*As noted above, community members were invited to make recommendations to elected members. Full decision-making authority remained with elected members of Council.

Process/methodology (in relation to public participation):

The Ahu Ake World Café, brought together a broadly representative sample of the Waipā District, to gather diverse perspectives and generate recommendations for the future planning framework.

Individuals were invited to register an interest to participate in the process.

Utilising available demographic data on current and future populations, Waipā District Council determined key selection criteria, to inform an application to participate in the World Café. University of Waikato staff provided an independent review of these criteria.

- Criteria One included age, ethnicity, disability, geographic location and gender.
- Criteria Two focused on household situation, education/training, homeownership, employment status, and profession.

The participant group was selected anonymously (using identification numbers rather than names) by a team of staff from Council and the University of Waikato. This was an iterative process, with Criteria One accorded the first priority for selection, followed by a second process to achieve broad representation of Criteria Two.

Four workshops were held at various locations across the district (one at the Cambridge Town Hall, one at the Council Chamber in Te Awamutu, one online and one at a Community, Sport and Recreation Centre in the village of Ōhaupō). This was to ensure that the locations were accessible to all. Staff also offered to provide assistance with transportation if required.

The first World Café workshop explained how the café would work, the purpose of the process, and the specific questions relating to placemaking, heritage and culture, parks

and public facilities, and economic development. It also included an overview of the purpose and process of developing Ahu Ake. The process provided an opportunity for Council specialists to brief participants on the details and remaining questions in each issue area.

Participants worked together in small group rounds facilitated by table hosts and topic specialists. Table discussions allowed for the exchange of different perspectives, and all responses were recorded. Each World Café workshop built on the insights of prior meetings, and were designed to refine these insights in a way that formed the basis of a series of recommendations.

At the beginning of each workshop, an official welcome from the project group and karakia was held, followed by a presentation on the previous work, an outline for the upcoming workshop, and an ice breaker. Every workshop was structured and guided by the World Café guidelines, with careful attention to the activities and room set-up to host large group dialogue (see Figure 3 below for an example).

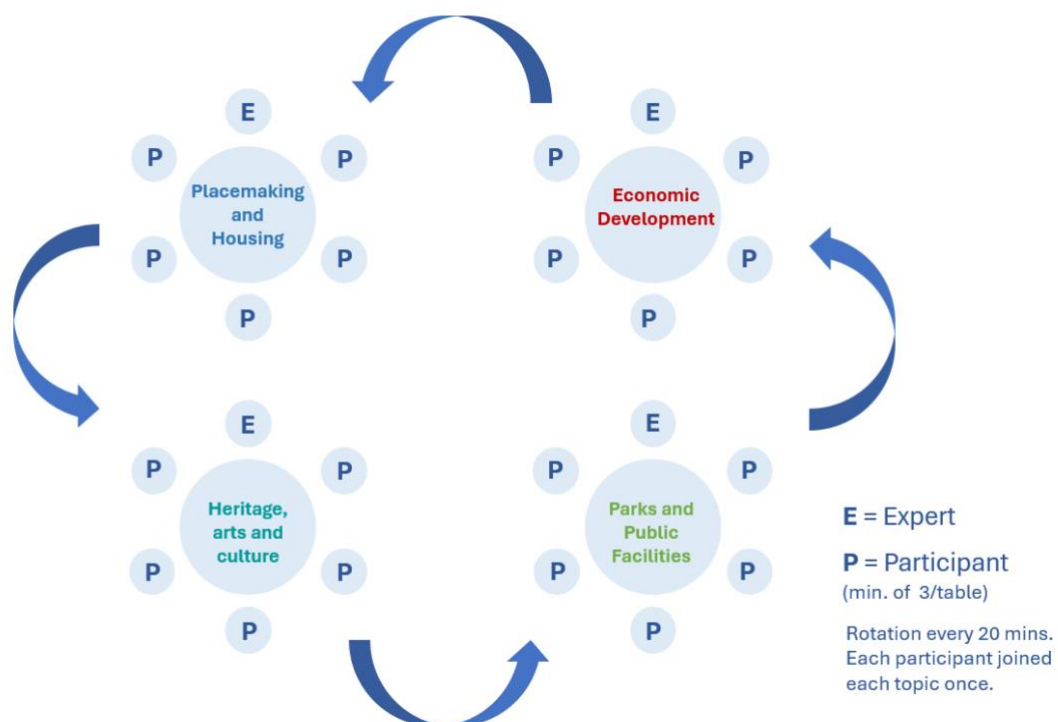


Figure 2: World Café Environment

An independent moderator, Helen Ritchie, facilitated each workshop, supported by Waipā District Council staff. Participation guidelines set the context for respectful, focused and productive dialogue:

- Listen carefully – Āta whakarongo
- Speak respectfully – Āta kōrero
- Open hearts and minds – Kia ngākau māhaki

- Share the time, hear all voices – Kia rangona ia reo
- Minimise distractions, be present – Me aro pu
- Focus on the future – Anga whakamua

See Appendix One for an overview of each workshop, its purpose and the key tasks and outcomes.

Project promotion:

Was your project promoted?

☐ No ☒ Yes

If yes, how did you promote it/encourage people to take part?

Participation in the World Café workshops was promoted through the Ahu Ake website, the Council's social media platforms, strategically placed information boards within our towns and villages, e-newsletters to key stakeholders and community members, and advertising and information shared through internal and external channels, including marae communication channels.

Roles:

Describe the roles that the following people played in the project or process:

Role title and description	Time commitment (throughout the life of the project)
<p><u>Elected members:</u></p> <p>All Elected Members are members of Council's SPPC.</p> <p>Five Elected Members were members of the Project Control Group (PCG) that made recommendations to the SPPC for decision-making.</p> <p>All Elected Members of Council and Community Boards were invited to attend the second part of Workshop Four (where the community group presented recommendations to Elected Members).</p>	<p>Representation at Council's SPPC and PCG.</p> <p>Attendance at Roadshow events and the last workshop of the World Café process to hear participants' recommendations firsthand.</p>
<p><u>Governance staff:</u></p> <p>Governance staff were involved only in support of the SPPC meeting, at which the decision to proceed with the World Café process was made.</p>	<p>Administrative support for the SPPC.</p>

<p><u>Communications team/staff:</u></p> <p>Due to resourcing constraints within the Council's Communications and Engagement team (C&E) at the time, the C&E lead for the project was an external consultant who worked as a member of the core project team and provided significant input into every step of the process. This included for example: scoping the brief for the University of Waikato, preparing external communications inviting the community to participate in the process, briefing the facilitator and subject matter experts, inputting into the preparation of workshop material and the run-sheet for each of the workshops, overseeing the collation of feedback from each of the workshops.</p>	<p>C&E lead was engaged 16-20 hrs a week on average for the period of the Roadshow and World Café process.</p>
<p><u>Engagement staff:</u></p> <p>Please refer to the response provided above and below for the relevant staff involved in the engagement phase.</p>	
<p><u>Policy staff:</u></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>	
<p>Who else was involved?</p> <p>The Project Control Group (PCG) made recommendations to Council's SPPC as referred to above. The PCG comprises five Elected Members, three Executive team members (Chief Executive as Project Sponsor, GM Strategy as Project Owner and the Group Manager Customer and Community Services) and four Mana Whenua representatives.</p> <p>The core project team, consisting of the Project Manager and Co-technical Lead, GM Strategy as Project Owner, and the C&E Lead (external consultant), contributed most significantly to this process. Lesser input was provided by other members of the core team, including the Co-technical Lead and the Project Director (external consultant).</p> <p>The University of Waikato was engaged to partner with us in this process. This team included three academic staff from the Environmental Planning and Political Science faculties, as well as a research assistant.</p>	

<p>An independent facilitator was also engaged to assist with the four workshops. They were involved in developing the approach and content for each workshop.</p> <p>Council's subject matter experts from each of our activity groups attended the workshops. They helped to facilitate group table activities, discussions and recommendations.</p>	
<p>Process approval and internal stakeholders</p> <p>The Ahu Ake document serves as a strategic framework designed to inform and enhance decision-making processes at Council. It was developed and promoted internally as a collaborative initiative that spans multiple teams and disciplines.</p> <p>One of the key objectives of the Roadshow and World Café workshops was to facilitate early engagement with stakeholders and the community ahead of the Long-term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034. A particularly important step, as it aimed to thoroughly evaluate the business cases put forward for this LTP, ensuring they were well-founded and would effectively address the needs of the community.</p> <p>At a time when the community's trust in the Council was tenuous, elevated members recognised the Roadshow and World Café as a unique opportunity. These events were designed to provide the community with a chance to engage more deeply with Council staff, allowing them to "experience and see behind the scenes" the workings of local government.</p> <p>Participants had the opportunity to interact with Council staff and elected members, learn about decision-making processes, and understand the various initiatives being considered. By facilitating open dialogue and transparency, the team hoped to foster a stronger bond between Council and the community, helping to rebuild trust and collaboration in a time of uncertainty.</p> <p>Please refer to the Challenges section to see the options provided to the SPPC.</p> <p>External consultants/advisors</p> <p>Did you use external consultants or advisors for any part/s of the process?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If yes, who did you use, and for what? (e.g. facilitators, experts, research companies, academic advisors, community groups/panels etc.)</p> <p>Would you recommend them for a similar process?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If yes, please provide their contact details in case other councils would like to engage them for similar work:</p> <p>C&E lead</p>	

Regan Powell of Beca, Hamilton – Email: Regan.Powell@beca.com

Project director

Ben Petch of In Place Consulting Ltd – Email: ben@inplace.nz

University of Waikato academic staff – Environmental Planning and Political Science faculties

Dr Christina Hanna – Email: christina.hanna@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Patrick Barrett – Email: patrick.barrett@waikato.ac.nz

Professor Priya Kurian – Email: priya.kurian@waikato.ac.nz

Facilitator

Helen Ritchie – Email: helen@facilitate.co.nz

Note: If you are unsure whether the external consultants or advisors would be interested in working with other councils on similar projects/processes, please check with them first.

Challenges

How did you get your elected members on board with the approach?

This was not a challenge. The elected members (PCG and the SPPC) saw significant value in the comprehensive community engagement process undertaken in February-March 2024.

The results far exceeded their expectations in terms of the volume and quality of feedback provided through the engagement process. They accepted the feedback from both the project owner and the project manager, that it did not sit comfortably with us to simply prepare a report summarising the feedback and to make that available on the project website. Elected members fully supported us in our recommendation that we

wanted to further engage with the community in a meaningful way. They were supportive of the recommendation to add an enhanced community participatory process – World Café approach, into the work programme. We were also able to advocate that this would strengthen the pre-engagement already undertaken in respect of the development of the LTP.

Were there any barriers/challenges to this approach? If yes, how did you overcome them?

This was a first for our organisation, the project was high profile and there was significant pressure on the project team to ensure that the process was successful. The timeframes were very tight and significant input was required from the Project Owner, the project manager and the C&E lead. We wanted to ensure that the community group selected was representative of our Waipā communities in 2050 and we wanted to connect with community members who do not ordinarily participate in Council processes. A further challenge was managing the expectations of elected members as to their level of involvement in the process.

This required clear communications and transparency as to the process – scope, input, outcomes, risks, role of elected members etc. Significant additional hours were worked by the project team, this included the C& E lead.

Partnering with the University of Waikato and having them provide their expertise on process issues raised by elected members and others, ensured that the process was robust. The methodology they developed also ensured a robust selection process was followed and the community group that was selected was representative and closely aligned to our future Waipā communities. Providing an opportunity for elected members of Council and community boards to be involved in the presentation of recommendations at the conclusion of Workshop Four was also effective.

Costs

What was the total cost of the project (please share a breakdown where possible)?

The overall costs of the World Café process were approximately \$160,000.

This included:

- Event venue and catering
- External C&E lead
- Design and printing of collateral
- Facilitator
- University of Waikato review role
- Acknowledgment for each of the community participants

What were the largest costs involved?

From the above, the external consultant and event catering costs.

Did you pay participants in any way?

☐ No ☒ Yes

If yes, please share how they were paid (where possible):

Participants were provided with a prezzy card at the conclusion of the process.

Evaluation

Project results:

*For all parts of this section, please refer to the report prepared by the University of Waikato. This is attached.

How were recommendations/results from the project reported to elected members?

Recommendations and resultant changes to Ahu Ake, have been reported to the PCG and SPPC.

Is there an ongoing role for participants?

☐ No ☒ Yes

If yes, what is it?

We reconnected with the community participants to seek input for the Special Consultative Procedure undertaken in October and November 2024.

Did you measure satisfaction with the process?

☐ No ☒ Yes

If yes, please share the results for the following:

- **Participants:** Yes, participants completed a questionnaire prepared by the University of Waikato. Please refer to the report prepared by the University of Waikato attached.
- **Elected members:** Not specifically.
- **Staff:** Not specifically. Selected staff were interviewed by the University of Waikato to help inform the report they prepared (attached).

What do you consider the successes of your project?

Please refer to the University of Waikato report attached.

- The community group was representative of our future Waipā communities.
- We engaged with participants who do not ordinarily participate in Council processes.

- The level of engagement between community participants was positive, with participants gaining insights into the experiences and perspectives of others.
- Engagement as between elected members, staff and community participants, was meaningful.
- Community participants have a better understanding of Council processes and are able to champion the work of Council in the community.
- The quality of input and recommendations presented by the community group far exceeded our expectations. It has further strengthened a robust process of plan development.
- Elected members and staff are excited by the opportunity to further explore the utilisation of enhanced community participatory processes in our future work. By way of example, participatory budgeting will be explored as part of the implementation of the Anchor Institution Framework and Work Programme which was approved by Council in 2024.

What other learnings were there/what would you do differently next time?

- We would look to schedule longer workshops and would also likely look to have a greater timeframe between each of the workshop sessions.
- We would identify the different options available to lift attendance of elected members and mana whenua PCG members. Final workshop attendance of elected members was low and none of our mana whenua PCG members were able to attend.

APPENDIX ONE


The following tables provide an overview of each workshop, their purpose, and key tasks/outcomes.

Workshop One – 19 September 2023; 05:30 pm – 07:30 pm	
Purpose	The purpose of the first workshop was to share more information about the project, explain the upcoming workshops, meet each other, share feedback received from the community earlier in the year, and explain the process to address this feedback and finalise Ahu Ake.
Description	Workshop One prepared the participants for the upcoming workshops and their role in the World Café process. Council members and experts shared information about the earlier events and the feedback from the community. In addition, the participants were informed by an overview of the methodology “The World Café”, the process structure, the partnership with mana whenua and the importance of Ahu Ake. Participants were welcomed by the project team and an ice breaker activity helped people get to know each other. A detailed overview of the purpose and impact of Ahu Ake was provided by Council staff to contextualise the workshop. A clear structure of negotiables and non-negotiables were presented, along with the Council’s role and highlights of the interim draft plan. A game of cards was used to familiarise participants with Council’s roles and responsibilities in the district to support the workshop discussions. Later, each theme with an ‘issue’, ‘key question’ and discussion prompts were introduced.
Key task	<p>Participants were grouped for discussions, which were supported by Council staff. The participants were given the opportunity to make comments on the respective poster using sticky notes for each key theme:</p> <p><u>Placemaking and housing:</u></p> <p>Issue: Rising concerns about losing character and place identity as our communities intensify and change.</p> <p>Key question: What makes your community feel like home to you / what are you proud of, what’s the first thing you show your visitors?</p> <p><u>Heritage, arts and culture:</u></p>

	<p>Issue: Concern exists about keeping strong social connections and better showcasing of our district's multicultural narratives.</p> <p>Key question: What is the role of Council in enriching our community's cultural landscape (participation and celebration)?</p> <p><u>Parks and public facilities:</u></p> <p>Issue: As our district grows, our parks and public facilities have become critical social focus points for our communities, providing for social inclusivity and a place for connection with others and nature.</p> <p>Key question: How can Council support and build on the well-being of our communities and provide for more social and inter-generational interactions?</p> <p><u>Economic Development:</u></p> <p>Issue: Our district is at risk of lacking the necessary workforce (ability to build and retain), for our economy to thrive.</p> <p>Key question: How can Council provide for training and skill-building opportunities that foster a skilled labour pool and attract businesses/industries to the district?</p>																		
Key outcome	<p>A range of feedback was received and collated to inform the remaining workshops, this included the following:</p> <table><tr><th>Growth and Housing, Papakainga</th><th>Environment</th><th>Transport</th></tr><tr><td>How to maintain each places/towns identities as growth + intensification impacts</td><td>Ecological Corridor. Getting native birds populations increased and more evidence in our communities. Greater community involvement with native flora and fauna.</td><td>Cycling - complete systems.</td></tr><tr><td>Slow it down. We don't need to accommodate every out of town resident wanting to move to Waipa.</td><td>More sheltered areas to connect destinations.</td><td>Safe cycle parking in town centres.</td></tr><tr><td>True affordable housing. Communities need to include all ages, stages, and incomes.</td><td>Less lawns, more diversity. Happy Bees.</td><td>Keep promoting cycling and walking through beautifying roads, cycleways and walkways.</td></tr><tr><td>Stop towns encroaching on class 1 and 2 land.</td><td>Council to support farmers who want transit organic</td><td>Circulator buses. Every retirement town currently has to reinvent the wheel.</td></tr><tr><td>Vigilant and private security firms and their impact.</td><td>Map pine forest in Waipa.</td><td>15 minutes cities. Fight traffic and congestion by reducing auto-infrastructure rather than increasing it.</td></tr></table>	Growth and Housing, Papakainga	Environment	Transport	How to maintain each places/towns identities as growth + intensification impacts	Ecological Corridor. Getting native birds populations increased and more evidence in our communities. Greater community involvement with native flora and fauna.	Cycling - complete systems.	Slow it down. We don't need to accommodate every out of town resident wanting to move to Waipa.	More sheltered areas to connect destinations.	Safe cycle parking in town centres.	True affordable housing. Communities need to include all ages, stages, and incomes.	Less lawns, more diversity. Happy Bees.	Keep promoting cycling and walking through beautifying roads, cycleways and walkways.	Stop towns encroaching on class 1 and 2 land.	Council to support farmers who want transit organic	Circulator buses. Every retirement town currently has to reinvent the wheel.	Vigilant and private security firms and their impact.	Map pine forest in Waipa.	15 minutes cities. Fight traffic and congestion by reducing auto-infrastructure rather than increasing it.
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Workshop Two – 14 October 2023; 10:00 am-02:00 pm.	
Purpose	Four key topics of Ahu Ake were the focus of this workshop, enabling the project team to receive further feedback and solutions to some of the primary issues the Waipā district and its communities are facing.
Description	The workshop informed the participants about the selection process and introduced the four themes – placemaking and housing; economic development; arts, heritage and culture; parks and public facilities. 30-minute participant discussion rounds were used for each theme, supported by Council experts providing support, advocacy and/or leading any solutions identified.
Key task	<p>Responding to and discussing solutions to the following key issues and questions:</p> <p>Placemaking and Housing</p> <p>What you told us: Rising concerns about losing character and place identity as our communities intensify and change.</p> <p>Our question to you: What makes your community feel like home to you/what are you proud of, what's the first thing you show your visitors?</p> <p>Economic Development</p> <p>What you told us: Our district is at risk of not having the necessary skilled workforce we need for our economy to thrive.</p> <p>Our question to you: How can Council provide for training and skill-building opportunities that foster a skilled labour pool and attract businesses/ industries to the district?</p> <p>Heritage, Arts and Culture</p> <p>What you told us: Concern exists about keeping strong social connections and better showcasing of our district's multicultural narratives.</p> <p>Our question to you: What is the role of Council in enriching our community's cultural landscape (participation and celebration)?</p> <p>Parks and Public Facilities</p> <p>What you told us: As our district grows, our parks and public facilities have become critical social focus points for our</p>

	<p>communities, providing for social inclusivity and a place for connection with others and nature.</p> <p>Our question to you: How can Council support and build on the well-being of our communities and provide for more social and inter-generational interactions?</p>
Key outcome	<p>A wide array of feedback was collected for each theme, as a result of group discussion, supported by expert input. This was later tabulated by Council, such as:</p> <div> <p>Improve cultural visibility in Waipa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History should recognise the good and the bad Support Iwi to tell their stories Face to face story telling Council could have a role to connect our sites / offerings Council partner Chorus/Energy to paint utility boxes Ensuring inclusion for everyone - Physical - intellectual <p>Cultural & Community events & Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festival of cultures - Council encourage and partner Create links between communities Universal accessibility to events / activities Tours - Council partnering Access to sites of significance Fostering in community support and connection Promoting support that is available, assisting with connections Providing information in an accessible way so the community can explore whats out there <p>Role of Council in enriching our Community's Cultural Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of visibility of Maori culture Importance of welcoming cultural events Need for more cultural activities - Matariki </div>
Workshop Three – This date is incorrect. It was 24 October 2023	
Purpose	<p>The third workshop was optional and allowed participants to ask questions and get in touch with the project team. It also provided a catch-up opportunity for Workshops 1-2 if participants were not able to attend these events for accessibility or other reasons.</p>
Description	<p>This workshop was held online and was facilitated to provide participants with detailed answers to their questions and provide new or further ideas to support the key issues and questions regarding the Ahu Ake themes. Council staff provided online support to participants in using the technology.</p>

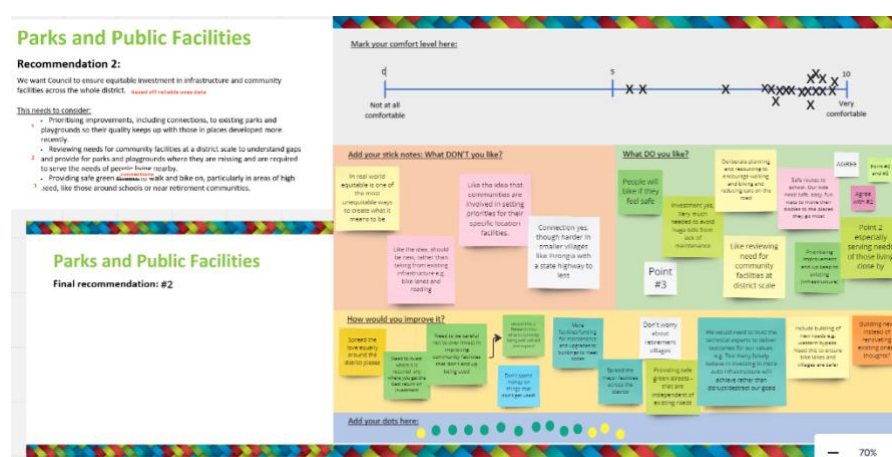
Key outcome	<p>A number of points were raised by participants in this online workshop, for example, the below feedback for Parks and Public Facilities.</p>  <p>Parks and Public Facilities</p> <p>Parks and Public Facilities: What We Heard</p> <p>Key issue: As our district grows, our park and public facilities have become critical social focus points for our communities, providing for social inclusivity a place for connection with others and nature.</p> <p>Key question: How can Council support and build on the well-being of our communities and provide for more social & inter-generational interactions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public facilities and parks need to be accessible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designed for universal accessibility. - For the elderly and young - Good walking and cycling access - Convenient opening hours Accessibility for car parking Need secure cycle parking too Our playground and park design must provide for a broader range of multi-generational & and inclusive entertainment and amenities. Public facilities can become multi-purpose for a range of uses. For example, community halls are underused. Support what is already there Council could offer contestable funding community not listened to - Memorial Park experience Create more ways for the youth and the elderly to interact: community gardens, green gym/playground places, walking buses, community programmes... Council could support events and facilities existing already Many events taking place, could be supported with more contestable funding - eg Pirongia Get back to basics first - these are a lot of nice to haves and a lot are happening anyway Balance facilities and amenities across the district. Make sure to revitalise older areas and provide for similar features and attractions when compared to new areas. Keep the atmosphere characteristics of the place.
Workshop Four – 04 November 2023; 10:00 am-02:00 pm	
Purpose	<p>The purpose of the fourth workshop was to finalise a set of recommendations on the four key topics, to discuss any amendments as a group, and present the recommendations to invited councillors, community board members and mana whenua representatives.</p> <p>Participants were made aware that Ahu Ake is a long term 30-year plan, and that recommendations should be aspirational and lead to impactful change, but it may take a while for them to be implemented. While three recommendations were drafted for each topic, all workshop feedback will be shared with Council.</p>

Key methods	<p>The participants provided over 550 pieces of feedback across the first three workshops. To develop this into draft recommendations for the final workshop, the following preparatory steps were taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feedback data was synthesised using iterative, thematic coding. The project team organised data into sub-themes per topic, based on the content groupings. Each topic was reviewed in detail and key codes were identified. 2) The data was then used to develop a list of priority statements for each theme. Participants were sent an online questionnaire to rank these statements in terms of their relative importance. The top three statements would be used to develop recommendations. <p>3. Please rank this feedback in order of most important to least important (1 being most important and 10 being least important). You can do this by hovering over the options and using the up and down arrows on the right hand side to adjust the order.</p> <div data-bbox="486 902 1308 1574"> <p>Being able to walk and bike is important to the character of our towns and villages. It helps people to feel at home in these places. This could look like wide green streets with safe spaces for walking and cycling to home, work, schools, shops and amenities.</p> <p>Smaller homes are needed to enable social, elderly, and rental housing needs to be met. This could look like apartment housing, duplexes, or other more affordable housing options, including multi-generational living near shopping and healthcare facilities.</p> <p>Protect highly productive soils and do not impact farming with residential uses. This could look like less greenfield growth (e.g., changing bare land to houses) and more development in existing neighbourhoods (like backyard subdivisions or replacing a home with several smaller ones).</p> <p>Protect and enhance greenspaces like town belts and golf courses. This could look like plantings and walkways through town belts to improve accessibility and appearance and review sustainable land management practices.</p> <p>Retirement communities need to be intermingled with regular homes and neighbourhoods so they don't become over-catered and empty in the long term. This could look like more small retirement communities scattered throughout the towns.</p> <p>Infrastructure for businesses needs to be in place so that traffic does not detract from what we love about our towns and villages. This could look like trucks being bypassed around main streets instead of driving through them.</p> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) In order to provide unique feedback, where the draft plan already proposed the same recommendation/priority statement, the next highest ranked statement was used to develop a recommendation for workshopping. For example, statements ranked 1, 2 and 4 were selected for Parks and Public Facilities, see image below:
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	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Parks and public facilities</h2> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Community hubs, including libr... 2 Balance facilities and amenities ... ✓ Ensure community halls are use... 4 Promote inter-generational initi... 5 Public facilities and events need... 6 Work more closely with partner ... </div> <div style="flex: 2;"> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p>✓ Already in the draft plan</p> <p>○ For workshopping today</p> </div> <p>4) Preliminary recommendations were written by synthesising the questionnaire statements and the codes of each topic theme. Additional information was added to the draft recommendations by reviewing sub-themes to ensure key details were captured that may have been generalised by summarisation, such as specific action points/ things to consider.</p>
Key task	<p>The key task involved the individual and group consideration and review of the draft recommendations to make sure that they were representative of the feedback provided, captured what was most important, and were actionable. Community members were able to indicate their level of comfort with recommendations that were iteratively amended, and to add any further comments to this final version before the end of the workshop.</p> <p>A draft recommendation activity structured the recommendation process made by participants. For this, the recommendations were provided on each table. The participants informed themselves by walking around and taking a look at the draft recommendations. Afterwards, the participants marked how comfortable they were with how it was worded with an 'x' on the scale. In addition, sticky notes were used to tell the Council what they liked and didn't like about the recommendation and how they would improve it.</p> <p>Afterwards, one recommendation from each topic was chosen which they thought was most important, and they added a dot to it. Following this, the participants took a seat at one of the topic tables that most interested them. In 20 minutes the participants workshopped and refined the recommendation at</p>

the table. It was optional to move to another topic table afterwards. Participants were invited to walk around and view all re-worded statements. Before the participants' presentation of recommendations to elected members, the workshop moderator checked in one last time with the group, topic by topic, to discuss the level of comfort with amended recommendations. Afterwards, the elected members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the participants.

Validating the synthesis of the community feedback undertaken by Council staff, all drafted recommendations predominantly received support from the participants, with some minor changes made or further detail added. A couple of recommendations were significantly changed, such as Recommendation 2 for the 'Heritage Arts and Culture' topic.



Recommendations to Council

The following (and Appendix 1 in the report prepared by the University of Waikato attached) provides the recommendations to Council from the World Café process. The recommendation overviews provide the amendments made to the draft recommendations in Workshop Four (right column) to demonstrate how they were refined and the specific detail that was added and considered of importance to the group. The recommendations are ordered via ranking of importance (determined via the 'dot activity'). Additional notes for Council to consider were made for some of the amendments, to ensure that the changes were made in the context of the discussion and process that occurred. These are captured below each overview.

Also highlighted are the following statements that were of highest priority to the participants (in their questionnaire responses), but were already included in the draft spatial plan, and therefore were not workshoped as specific recommendations to avoid duplication. The purpose of highlighting these is to reaffirm their importance and alignment with Ahu Ake.

Placemaking and Housing

Priority 1: Being able to walk and bike is important to the character of our towns and villages. It helps people to feel at home in these places. This could look like wide green streets with safe spaces for walking and cycling to home, work, schools, shops and amenities.

Priority 3: Protect and enhance greenspaces like town belts and golf courses. This could look like plantings and walkways through town belts to improve accessibility and appearance and review sustainable land management practices.

Parks and Public Facilities

Priority 3: Ensure community halls are used to their capacity by the community they are built to serve. This could look like supporting how they are run and updating the systems used to manage them.

Heritage, Arts and Culture

Priority 3: Improve access between Cambridge, Te Awamutu, and larger villages. This could include expanded bus services and cycle networks.

Priority 3: Improve access between Cambridge, Te Awamutu, and larger villages. This could include expanded bus services and cycle networks.

Placemaking and Housing	
Priority	<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>We want Council to make it a priority that business growth is serviced by infrastructure so that it does not detract from the character of towns and villages.</p> <p>This needs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main streets and school zones are people places and large vehicles should not rely on streets where there are lots of people and local businesses.• New industry should grow in places where there is good transport access in place, so heavy vehicles and commercial traffic use the right roads.• The location of new business growth is important to how the character is maintained in our towns and villages (this can include rural outlooks, walkable places, and busy main streets).
	<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>We want Council to provide for housing that meets all residents' needs, especially those of youth and older adults, in a way that is affordable, accessible, and multi-generational. We do not want people to move away because they cannot access the right type of housing in their community.</p> <p>This needs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritising development that promotes meaningful interaction and cooperation between individuals of different generations. This includes ensuring Council rules do not restrict multi-generational housing including smaller homes or multiple units on the same property.• Partnering with housing and retirement home providers who have the delivery of intergenerational communities in their bottom lines.• Requiring developers to provide a mix of housing types, including rental options and smaller houses, in town and villages.
	<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>We want Council to prioritise retaining trees, rural outlooks, important views, and the green feel of our towns and villages because these are important to what we love about Waipā.</p> <p>This needs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planting a lot more trees in public spaces throughout the district in urban places, and in rural places or for ecological purposes, with preference for native trees.• Avoiding blocking or eroding important views from towns, villages, and marae to Mt Pirongia, Kakepuku, and/or Maungatautari with new development.• Ensuring new development has a good mix of green community spaces and park trees.
Amended Recommendation 2:	
<p>We want Council to make it a priority that business growth is serviced by <u>fit for purpose</u> infrastructure <u>delivered early</u> so that it does not detract from the character of towns and villages (<u>allowing ease of movement</u>).</p> <p>This needs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main streets and school zones are people places <u>including residential zones</u> and large vehicles should not rely on streets where there are lots of people and local businesses. (<u>E.g. a tram from Hautapu to Leamington/ excluding cars from the town centre.</u>)• New industry should grow in <u>appropriate</u> places where there is good transport access in place, so heavy vehicles and commercial traffic use the right roads.• The location of new business growth is important to how the character is maintained in our towns and villages (this can include rural outlooks, walkable places, and busy main streets). (<u>E.g. we want growth and business but the traffic can detract from the experience.</u>)• <u>Balance – we still value our rural industry and want successful business development.</u>	
Amended Recommendation 1:	
<p>We want Council to <u>encourage and facilitate all types of</u> housing that meets all residents' needs, especially those of youth and older adults, in a way that is <u>integrated</u>, affordable, accessible, and multi-generational. We do not want people to move away because they cannot access the right type of housing in their community.</p> <p>This needs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritising development that promotes meaningful interaction and cooperation between individuals of different generations. This includes ensuring Council rules do not restrict multi-generational housing including smaller homes or multiple units on the same property.• Partnering with housing and retirement home providers who have the delivery of intergenerational communities in their <u>vision</u>.• <u>Request</u> developers to provide a mix of housing types, including rental options and smaller houses, in town and villages.	
Amended Recommendation 3:	
<p>We want Council to prioritise retaining trees, rural outlooks, important views, <u>community planting and gardens</u> and the green feel of our towns and villages because these are important to what we love about Waipā.</p> <p>This needs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planting a lot more trees in public spaces throughout the district in urban places, and in rural places or for ecological purposes, with preference for <u>native trees and planting (including food bearing trees)</u>.• Avoiding blocking or eroding important views from towns, villages, <u>houses</u>, and marae to Mt Pirongia, Kakepuku, and/or Maungatautari with new development.• Ensuring new development has a good mix of green community spaces and park trees <u>and community gardens</u>.	

Further notes for Council to consider as a result of Workshop Four discussions:

Recommendation 1: “Infrastructure needs to be in place”

Economic Development

Priority A (even)

Recommendation 1:

We want Council to promote economic development in a way that delivers career opportunities, internships and work readiness programmes focused on growing industries that are a priority for the district and youth employment.

This needs to consider:

- Partnering with Ministry of Education / tertiary education providers / Te Wānanga / schools, particularly for vocational training / skills in shortage
- Advocating for funding of schools in the Waipā district, including opportunities like shared facilities that spread costs.
- Finding opportunities for tuakana-teina (older-younger relationship¹) to link industry/adults/kaumatua to share experiences and skills with rangatahi
- Providing a Council cadetship programme

Priority A (even)

Recommendation 2:

We want Council to prioritise the promotion of what the district has to offer, and make sure public facilities are good enough to attract and retain people to live and work in the district.

This needs to consider:

- Marketing Waipā as a place with great work/life balance and as part of a larger regional tourism network.
- That the district needs to provide a high quality of infrastructure and social infrastructure to support thriving families.
- Promoting and improving natural and recreational assets like the peat lakes, natural areas, sports venues, Te Awa River Ride, links to nearby places like Raglan and Hamilton.

Priority

Recommendation 3:

We want Council to take a lead in promoting economic development that provides a return to the community, including business innovation hubs and places for businesses to grow.

This needs to consider:

- Being clear on the types of employment / industry we are trying to attract and provide incentives for the right types of industry that will invest back into our communities.
- Supporting working labs / micro business start-up facilities, and places for people to connect and work.
- Diversifying the rural economy, focusing on local initiatives already underway, on ecotourism and innovative agri-businesses
- Council has a role to build capability and provide network opportunities.

Amended Recommendation 1:

We want Council to promote economic development in a way that delivers career opportunities, internships and work readiness programmes focused on growing industries that are a priority for the district and [create employment opportunities](#).

This needs to consider:

- Partnering with Ministry of Education / tertiary education providers / Te Wānanga / schools [and businesses](#), particularly for vocational training / skills in shortage
- Finding opportunities for tuakana-teina (older-younger relationship¹) to link industry/adults/kaumatua to share experiences and skills with rangatahi.
- Providing a Council cadetship programme

Amended Recommendation 2:

We want Council to prioritise the promotion of what the district has to offer, and make sure public facilities are good enough to attract and retain people to live and work in the district.

This needs to consider:

- Marketing Waipā as a place with great work/life balance and as part of a larger regional tourism network.
- That the district needs to provide a high quality of infrastructure and social infrastructure to support thriving families.
- Promoting and improving natural and recreational assets like the peat lakes, natural areas, sports venues, Te Awa River Ride, links to nearby places like Raglan and Hamilton. [Consider the role of i-sites.](#)
- [Looking at ways to link attractions as packages of activities / places, like drive routes/cycle routes](#)
- [Use Council's role as regulator to protect the good things and keep out the things that detract from these—ensure regulations support the vision.](#)

Amended Recommendation 3:

We want Council to take a lead in promoting economic development that provides a return to the community, including business innovation hubs and places for businesses to grow.

This needs to consider:

- Being clear on the types of employment / industry we are trying to attract and provide incentives for the right types of industry that will invest back into our communities.
- Supporting working labs / micro business start-up facilities, and places for people to connect and work.
- Diversifying the rural economy, focusing on local initiatives already underway, on ecotourism and innovative agri-businesses/[research, consider a circular economy and moving the rural economy to be more sustainable](#)
- Council has a role to build capability [and cultural tourism](#) and provide network opportunities.
- [Support the businesses we have](#)

Further notes for Council to consider as a result of Workshop Four discussions:

Recommendation 2: Keep out ‘dirty’ industries that might harm human health and environment; Manage industry expansion impacts; Careful consideration of noise, dust, traffic and road safety effects.

All economic development recommendations: Ensure the underlying value of the environment is present – get that right and the economy will go in the right way; Liveability

should not be sacrificed to attract business (environment, noise, traffic); Liveability will draw in business.

Heritage, Arts and Culture

Priority

Recommendation 3:

We want Council to prioritise making all parks, playgrounds, and other public facilities more accessible, inviting, and culturally inclusive.

This needs to consider:

- Designing buildings and planning events so they are accessible to wide range of capabilities, including new and existing buildings and events.
- Making these places more inviting by including Mana Whenua input to event planning and building design processes so they are culturally welcoming.

Recommendation 2:

We want Council to take a lead in developing and promoting new public art within the district.

This needs to consider:

- Create and communicate a catalogue of locations available for public art installations. This could focus on identifying blank spaces like public facing walls and utility boxes, which can be made more vibrant through art.
- Work with local artists, schools and tertiary providers including Te Wānanga, and marae to develop public art installations. This could include linking interested rangatahi with graphic artists / cultural leads to develop capability and fill our communities with local art.
- Public art needs to tell the multiple stories of an area, including empowering iwi and hapū to share theirs.

Priority

Recommendation 1:

We want Council to prioritise making important cultural narratives and heritage sites more physically accessible and to make it easier to understand information about what makes these things and places important.

This needs to consider:

- Expanding and publicising Te Ara Wai journeys and improving the signage and access for related sites.
- That diverse stories of people in Waipā are told and that Māori cultural sites and heritage are visible / celebrated.
- Access for everyone, catering for a range of ages and abilities.
- Providing information in an accessible way so the community can explore what is out there. This could include an online public map of sites / items and their meanings.
- Improving access to sites of cultural significance, where appropriate, including Rangiaowhia.

Priority

Amended Recommendation 3:

We want Council to prioritise making all parks, playgrounds, and other public facilities more [physically](#) accessible, inviting, and culturally inclusive.

This needs to consider:

- Designing/[redesigning](#) buildings [and spaces](#) and planning events so they are accessible to wide range of capabilities, including new and existing buildings, [spaces](#), and events.
- Making these places more inviting by including Mana Whenua input to event planning and building design processes so they are culturally welcoming [to all](#).
- [Ensuring our spaces provide safe and functional toilets pathways and parking](#)

Amended Recommendation 2:

[We want Council to lead in developing and promoting the Arts in a way that reflects the District](#)

This needs to consider:

- 1 [Art should represent the community, history, and cultural narratives](#)
- 2 [Art is not just a static object but encompasses expressions of culture, and is inclusive of languages, music, dance festivals etc.](#)
- 3 [Efficiency and inclusiveness of local artists and institutions i.e., Te Wānanga, marae, schools](#)
- 4 [Include those who have no voice in society like rangatahi, children, to be proud of their contribution to community](#)
- 5 [Having the right people at the table, i.e. tangata whenua, to ensure multi-cultural perspectives](#)

Amended Recommendation 1:

We want Council to prioritise making important cultural narratives and heritage sites more physically accessible and to make it easier to understand information about what makes these things and places important.

This needs to consider:

- Expanding and publicising [heritage offerings \(like Te Ara Wai journeys\)](#) and improving the signage and access for related sites.
- That diverse stories of people in Waipā are told and that Māori cultural sites and heritage are visible / celebrated.
- Access for everyone, catering for a range of ages and abilities.
- Providing information in an accessible way so the community can explore what is out there. This could include an online public map of sites / items and their meanings.
- [In partnership with Mana Whenua](#) improving access to sites of cultural significance, where appropriate, including Rangiaowhia.

Further notes for Council to consider as a result of Workshop Four discussions:

Recommendation 2:

- Comments: The spirit of this new recommendation is great, but it is now less tangible - original wording was clearer.
- Who are the 'right people' to make decisions about arts?

Parks and Public Facilities

Priority

Recommendation 2:

We want Council to ensure equitable investment in infrastructure and community facilities across the whole district.

This needs to consider:

- Prioritising improvements, including connections, to existing parks and playgrounds so their quality keeps up with those in places developed more recently.
- Reviewing needs for community facilities at a district scale to understand gaps and provide for parks and playgrounds where they are missing and are required to serve the needs of people living nearby.
- Providing safe green streets to walk and bike on, particularly in areas of high need, like those around schools or near retirement communities.

Priority

Recommendation 1:

We want Council to prioritise managing and improving community hubs, including community halls, libraries, and museums so they are used to their capacity by the community they are built to serve.

This needs to consider:

- Consistent quality management systems and knowledge transfer between halls and community hubs with Council taking a lead role, including improving how they are run, governed, and updating the systems used to manage and book them.
- Enabling community halls and grounds to be better used. There are opportunities for co-working facilities, medical services, library resources, and to host community organisations and clubs. This is particularly needed in rural locations where halls play a larger role in the community and access to these things is harder.
- Broadening the role of Council libraries and museums to become learning outlets and shared spaces where diverse members of the community cross paths, share lifelong learning skills and co-work.

Priority

Recommendation 3:

We want Council to promote inter-generational initiatives and programmes across the district to help people connect with each other through shared experiences and activities.

This needs to consider:

- Mixing different types of housing together and avoiding making enclaves that concentrate certain demographics or income categories.
- Council's role to build capacity for community-based organisations and other service providers to deliver social services that contribute to achieving locally determined outcomes.
- Identify ways to encourage and make it easier for the elderly community to interact with children and youth. This could include community gardens, walking buses for schools, food forests, native planting volunteer

Amended Recommendation 2:

We want Council to ensure equitable investment in infrastructure and community facilities across the whole district [based on reliable user data](#).

This needs to consider:

- Prioritising improvements, including connections, to existing parks and playgrounds so their quality keeps up with those in places developed more recently.
- Reviewing needs for community facilities at a district scale to understand gaps and provide for parks and playgrounds where they are missing and are required to serve the needs of people living nearby.
- Providing safe green [connections](#) to walk and bike on, particularly in areas of high need, like those around schools or near retirement communities.

Amended Recommendation 1:

We want Council to prioritise managing and improving community hubs, including community halls, libraries, and museums so they are used to their capacity by the community they are built to serve.

This needs to consider:

- [Consistent management systems between halls and community hubs with council taking a supporting role, including improving how they are run, governed and booked.](#)
- Enabling community halls and grounds to be better used. There are opportunities for co-working facilities, medical services, library resources, and to host community organisations and clubs. This is particularly needed in rural locations where halls play a larger role in the community and access to these things is harder.
- Broadening the role of Council libraries and museums to become learning outlets and shared spaces where diverse members of the community cross paths, share lifelong learning skills and co-work.
- [Advocating for funding \(eg. of schools\) in the district, including opportunities to share costs for facilities to spread costs](#)

Amended Recommendation 3:

We want Council to promote [proven evidence-based](#) inter-generational initiatives and [local](#) programmes across the district to help people connect with each other through shared experiences and activities.

This needs to consider:

- Mixing different types of housing together and avoiding making enclaves that concentrate certain demographics or income categories.
- Council's role to [enable](#) capacity for community-based organisations and other service providers to deliver social services that contribute to achieving locally determined outcomes.
- Identify ways [and provide appropriate infrastructure](#) to encourage and make it easier for the elderly community to interact with children and youth: Council [may](#) provide support and facilitation.

Further notes for Council to consider as a result of Workshop Four discussions:

Recommendation 1:

- Comments: Should Council be involved in booking halls etc? Local volunteers can do that and save money on rates e.g. Te Pahu, Pokuru.
- Decommission old halls that are not used.
- Partner with schools to avoid duplicating facilities.

Recommendation 3:

- Group discussion changed 'proven' to 'evidence based' as 'proven' is historical/what we've done in the past but not necessarily the best approach.



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