4. Reports of the Chief Executive and Staff for WORKSHOPPING

Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti
GISBORNE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

25-13

Title:	**25-13 Resilient Land Use**
Section:	Sustainable Futures
Prepared by:	Ariel Yann le Chew - Policy Planner
Meeting Date:	Thursday 30 January 2025

Legal: No	Financial: No	Significance: **Medium**

Report for Workshopping

PURPOSE - TE TAKE

The purpose of this report is to provide background for a workshop with Council on workstreams related to forestry prior to a Council site visit on 14 February 2025.

SUMMARY - HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

This report provides supplementary reading material to accompany a PowerPoint presentation (**Attachment 1**) for the update and discussion. The content includes updates to the last progress report brought to Sustainable Tairāwhiti Committee meeting on 28 February 2024 (**Report 24-31**).

The information in this report is set out as follows:

- **Scene-setting**: providing an overview of the roles and responsibilities, regional context and the current regulatory framework for forestry activities (national and regional).
- **Current Council workstreams**: providing an update on business-as-usual work (Resource Consenting and Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement) and processes established following the weather events of 2023 (Woody Debris team under the Recovery programme and catchment-based pilots in Te Arai, Waimatā and Waingake).
- **Planning for the future**: information on the review of the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (in particular the forestry-related plan changes), work towards transition of vulnerable land to permanent vegetation cover, including the Transition Advisory Group, funding and financing considerations, and potential to expand the current environmental monitoring network.

The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **Medium** significance in accordance with the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Authorised by:

Joanna Noble - Director Sustainable Futures

BACKGROUND - HE WHAKAMĀRAMA

Overarching context

1. The effects of woody debris mobilisation and mass erosion on the receiving environment, infrastructure and our communities has reached a critical point, and our communities are increasingly vocal about the need for change. This call to change crystallised in January 2023, when local advocacy group Mana Taiao Tairāwhiti organised a petition to Council and central government calling for an independent inquiry into the unsustainable land use in Tairāwhiti (**Report 23-24**). The petition was signed by 10,000 people and after Cyclone Gabrielle, the Government initiated the Ministerial Inquiry into Land Use (MILU) in Tairāwhiti and Wairoa.
2. The Ministerial Inquiry was launched on 23 February 2023 to investigate the impacts of severe weather events, including Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle in Tairāwhiti and Wairoa. The final report '**Outrage to Optimism'**, published 12 May 2023, outlined 49 recommendations – many of which referred to the work of Council but largely ignored the significant body of work already underway. The MILU report reinforced the need for implementing change, uncompromising in its position on forestry practices and the generation of woody debris and sediment.
3. Council and other stakeholders have since taken on a variety of roles in meeting the recommendations set out in the Outrage to Optimism report (see **Figure 1**). Tangata whenua and communities have been involved, either through representation on advisory/working groups or public consultation sessions.

***Figure 1**: Overview of the stakeholders involved in forestry-related work programmes following the Ministerial Inquiry into Land Use. The outer circle represents the key area of impact. The second outer circle represents the stakeholders[1] slices represent the type of work programme for each area of impact.*

[1] (Council teams – purple, blue, teal and green slices; Government agencies – dark grey, light grey, yellow, orange and red slices)

What we know: current information

Regional context

4. Tairāwhiti contains a substantial portion of steep land (often described as averaging slopes greater than 25 degrees) and a mix of geology that makes most of the region very prone to erosion. Twenty-five per cent of the North Island's most severely eroding land is found in Te Tairāwhiti. It was a deliberate government strategy to encourage afforestation of steep land. More than half the current forest estate is located on the riskiest land classes. Early soil conservation efforts included:

    - A nationally led soil conservation programme[2]
    - The planting of protection forest[3]
    - Eventually, the East Coast Project[4] where New Zealand Forest Service (NZFS, now known as Te Uru Rakau) acquired land and planted dual-purpose forests (that is forests for soil conservation and commercial forestry).

5. Post Cyclone Bola in 1988, the East Coast Forestry Project offered subsidies to "…promote large-scale commercial forestry as a means of controlling soil erosion, providing employment and regional development and to recognise the environmental needs on individual properties"[5].

6. By 1994, 15,400 ha of planting had been undertaken, increasing to 35,552ha by 2011.

7. By 2020, the Gisborne District supported about 160,000 ha of commercial forestry. In 2021, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) projected that the wood availability from our region will continue to increase over the next couple of years to a maximum of 4.5 million m^3 per year[6]. This increase is based on harvesting the areas planted post Cyclone Bola at an average rotation age of around 31 years. As of 1 April 2023, more than 45,000 ha (28 per cent) of forestry was in the 26-30-year-old age class, suggesting that they will be harvested in the short term. At the time of preparing this report, staff are aware that foresters are now harvesting second rotation forests.

8. Most of the sediment movement occurs in storm events and from severe to extreme erosion features, highlighting the vulnerability of our region. Some historic event-based sediment data is available for retrospective analyses. While state-of-environment monitoring captures the average state of waterways, Council often investigates the extent of damage after each major storm.

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[2] Through the gazettal of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act in 1941.

[3] in Mangatu Forest, led by the New Zealand Forest Service (NZFS), now Te Uru Rakau.

[4] The East Coast Project was intended to be implemented over a 50-year period, resulting in the afforestation of 100,000-140,000 ha. https://pce.parliament.nz/media/tkjefuy5/sustainable-management-and-the-east-coast-forestry-project-dec-1994-small.pdf

[5] Ministry of Forestry (1994) *A Guide to the East Coast Forestry Project 1994*

[6] Ministry for Primary Industries. (2021). Wood availability forecast: East Coast 2021. Retrieved from https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/47662-Wood-Availability-Forecast-East-Coast-2021

Current regulatory framework – National and Regional

9. The National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry[7] (NES-CF) are the key national regulations relevant to forestry. The NES-CF provides a set of nationally consistent regulations to manage the environmental effects of large-scale forestry on the environment and people. The NES-CF regulations apply to both plantation forestry and exotic continuous-cover forests (carbon forests) deliberately established for commercial purposes. Most forestry activities are permitted – subject to specific conditions intended to prevent significant adverse environmental effects.

10. Regulation 6(1)(a) of the NES-CF allows councils to include more stringent rules in resource management plans if it's to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM). The current Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP) is limited in its ability to impose significant changes to forestry practices. Rules are in place regarding cable hauling over rivers and streams, and vegetation clearance in riparian management areas, but in practice these consents are routinely granted, and the existence of the rules has not resulted in significant changes in forestry practice.

11. The TRMP does not include any specific policy direction regarding forestry practices to support the processing of consents triggered under the NES-CF or the TRMP. The relevant objectives (both Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plan) are broad in nature and while still relevant for assessing forestry-related consents, they provide limited specific direction on outcomes to be achieved. Similarly, the policies that relate to cable hauling in or over the beds of rivers and streams and harvesting within riparian management areas do not set out clear expectations on how these activities will be managed.

12. The Coalition Government has signalled many impending changes to resource management legislation and associated national direction. Changes signalled include the potential removal of Regulation 6(1)(a) of the NES-CF and the hierarchy of obligations under Te Mana o Te Wai in the NPS-FM 2020. This indicates a possible restriction on how Council can regulate forestry activities within our unique region and still protect the environment and our people. We are in close communication with central government agencies to advocate for the recognition and appropriate management of the inherent risks posed by our geology, to avoid a repeat of the damage seen post-Gabrielle and Hale.

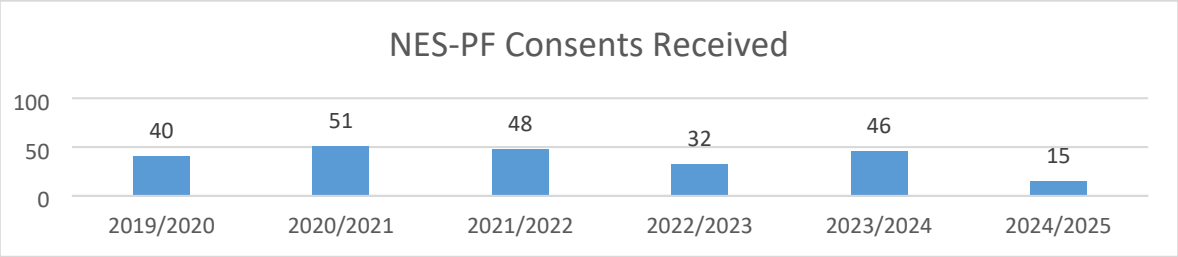
How we currently operate: Business-As-Usual and post-Gabrielle Recovery

13. This section outlines the work we undertake across Council functions in relation to forestry. It summarises both business-as-usual work, and work specifically responding to post-Hale and Gabrielle recovery.

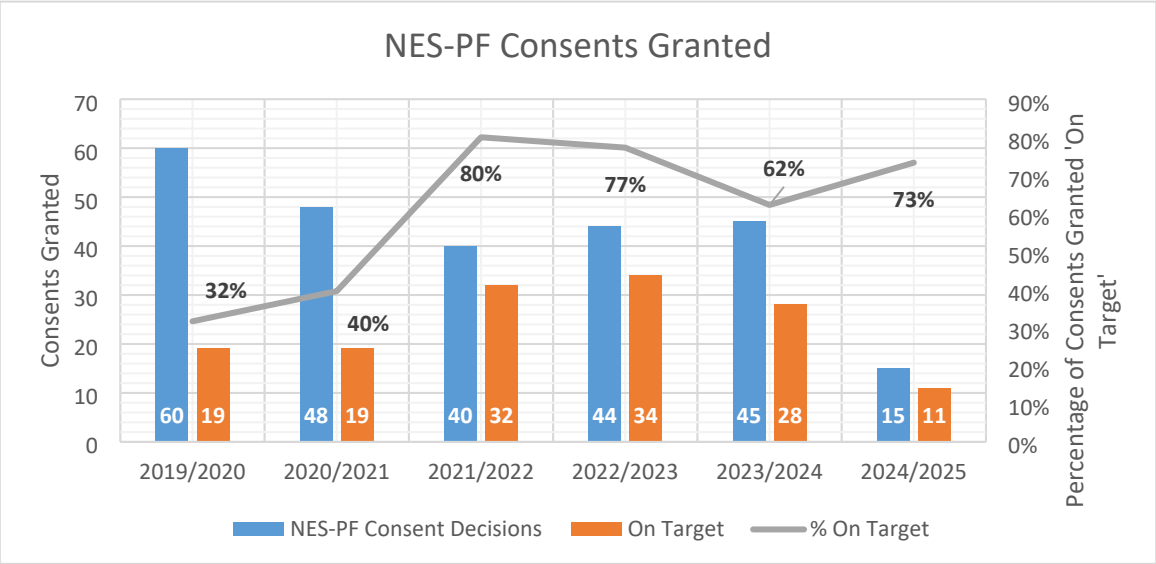
[7] The full title is the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry) Regulations 2017. The regulations consolidate 2018 and 2023 amendments. The NES-CF was previously known as the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry.

Resource consents

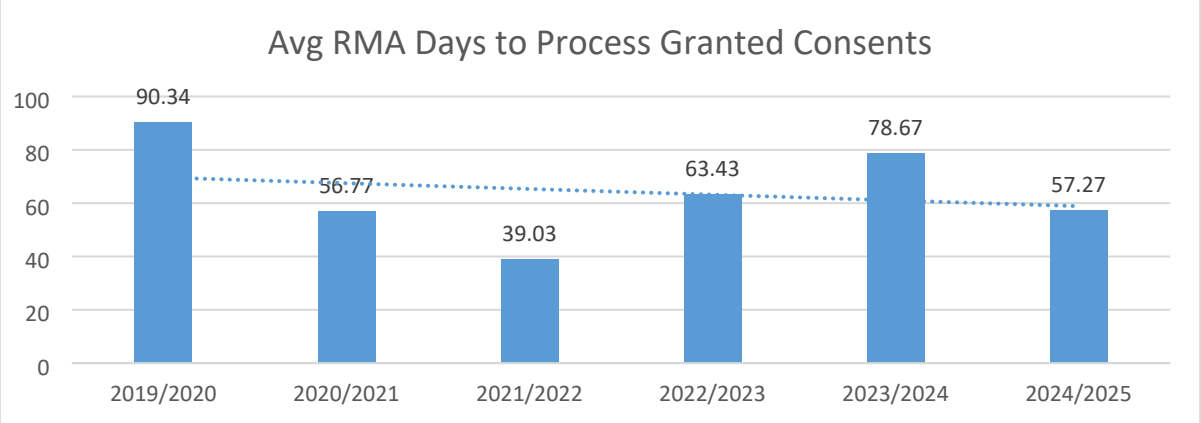
14. As at the end of 2024, Council has received 232 resource consent applications under the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) over the past 5 financial years. The below chart shows the number of NES-PF resource consents received in this period, broken down by financial year. Note, that this data only accounts for half of the 2024/2025 financial year as at end of December 2024.



15. Since then, 219 forestry consents have been granted, with an average processing time of 58 working days. On average, 60 percent of those NES-PF consents granted were processed on target (that is, within the statutory time limits). The below graphs show the number of NES-PF consents granted each year, and then compare that to how many were processed on target and how that relates in percentage terms.



16. In general, Council is trending in a positive direction for percentage of consents granted on target, and it is taking less time (working days) to process these consents, as shown in the below graph:



17. Forestry consent processing utilises the landslide susceptibility and morphometric connectivity layer[8] tool. While the tool is useful in informing decision-making, sites still require validation, and it is not the sole determinant in assessing risk.

18. At present, all forestry consents being processed under both the National Environmental Standard for Commercial Forestry and the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan can only be assessed at the highest level as a **Restricted Discretionary** activity. In practice this means that dependant on the activities being applied for by an applicant, certain rules apply and for each of the rules there is a predetermined set of matters that a planner is limited to when completing their assessment. Examples of matters include but are not limited to:

    - Erosion and sedimentation
    - Timing, planting & location
    - Effects on downstream communities and infrastructure
    - Effects on freshwater, ecosystems and coastal environment.

19. Since the last progress update report (**Report 24-31**), the internal review of the draft forestry conditions has been completed and is now pending legal review before finalising.

Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement

20. The Forestry team, along with sections of the wider Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement (CME) team, continues to monitor and respond to complaints relating to forestry activities in the Gisborne region.

21. A large portion of the team's monitoring focuses on Enforcement Orders made following the cyclones in early 2023. Council successfully applied for three Enforcement Orders and issued 35 Abatement Notices related to forestry activities. Monitoring of these is ongoing and requires significant resourcing. The Forestry team also continues to monitor other forests, with a view to applying to the Environment Court for further Enforcement Orders when considered necessary.

[8] Developed by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research and made public since June 2024. This model maps the spatial probability of landslides into the streams and rivers in our region, using a LiDAR-derived Digital Elevation Model (DEM).

22. The primary purpose of these Enforcement Orders is to:
    - mitigate the ongoing damage caused by woody debris
    - address sediment migration
    - ensure the respondents take immediate action, including ceasing debris discharges
    - remove and stabilize existing debris
    - implement suitable water controls.

Woody Debris: Removal and Restoration

23. Council's Large Woody Debris (LWD) programme extracted 420,893 tonnes over the period from April 2023 to December 2024. Extraction and treatment have largely focused on rivers, waterways and beaches to remove the risk of LWD impacts on infrastructure, life and the environment. The programme has worked in the high-risk catchments of Te Arai, Waimatā, Waiapu, Ūawa/Hikuwai, Waipaoa, Pakarae, Hangaroa and Mangapoike. As of September 2024, the programme had spent $27 million paid through the Department of Internal Affair's (DIA) Sediment and Debris funding.

24. Important lessons have been learned, about extraction methods from waterbodies, project management, safety, environmental best practice and costing. Council also now has access to considerable forestry management experience; with operational delivery managers Logic Forest Solutions contracted to supervise and deliver Woody Debris projects.

25. In August 2024 the Minister for Forestry appointed a Ministerial Advisory Group who will oversee this work going forwards. The Tairāwhiti Forestry Action Group's purpose is to:
    - develop a clear plan to accelerate woody debris clean-up.
    - identify remaining risk and make recommendations about how this risk should be managed now and in the future.

26. The programme is currently working to unlock funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries for a second phase of the programme called the Woody Debris Treatment Plan. The plan will look to treat high risk woody debris, potentially at its source (which may include in forestry blocks) by working collaboratively with the sector and communities.

Catchment-based pilots

27. Catchment-based ways of working are being developed and implemented in association with Council's freshwater plan work. Current work focuses on the Te Arai, Waimatā and Waingake.

28. **Te Arai** – Council is taking an integrated management approach in the Te Arai catchment. Partnerships with mana whenua are in progress and will be key to the delivery of this work. The outcome of this approach will be a catchment implementation plan that will support sustainable land management, and protect infrastructure, property, social, cultural and environmental values. Collaboration with the Te Arai catchment group will see the delivery of a spatial catchment tool (funded by MPI) to inform priorities for action. It is anticipated that, by using the spatial catchment tool, high priority farms and forests will be selected in 2025 as transition pilots in line with RMA and land transition work being progressed.

29. **The Waimatā Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) Project** is underway, exploring NbS that work with the natural characteristics of the Waimatā River and its floodplain to support flood resilience. Council is working with Tonkin and Taylor to create a spatial model or tool to test the feasibility of NbS at a sub-catchment level. The model will support land change decisions to reduce sediment, woody debris and run off into the Waimatā river system. We anticipate using this model across other catchments in our region to assist in planning going forward.

30. **The Waingake Transformation Programme** continues to deliver natural infrastructure to protect, filter and supply clean water to Tairāwhiti, helping to provide water security, resilience and adaptation to climate change for the region. The establishment of permanent indigenous vegetation will aid in long-term slope stability and a reduction in erosion and sedimentation in the headwaters of three important river systems: the Te Arai, Mangapoike and Nūhaka. The programme also provides protection and enhancement of significant regional biodiversity values, including several rare and threatened flora and fauna species.

31. We have produced a case study of the approach used to transition from commercial forestry to indigenous forest at Waingake, which can be used to inform other organisations, community groups and landowners looking to create their own transition management strategy. The case study will be available to the public in early 2025.

Land management

32. The Land Management Team is currently focusing on:

- **Providing education and advocacy to promote sustainable land use practices.**
- **Providing support to groups through our Catchment/Community Group Facilitation Support Package.** We provide support to groups through the establishment phase, providing catchment scale maps, assisting groups to identify key challenges, strengths, priorities and goals, we share and develop useful resources and tools, assist in building relationships and connections within their area and share publicly available information that Council holds in a useable manner.
- **Providing Land Use Capability (LUC) mapping** – LUC Mapping is a process used to assess and categorise the suitability of land for various types of uses. The goal is to provide valuable information to the landowner to ensure better land use practices around our region.
- **Providing Erosion Control Plans (ECP)** - The purpose of this service to provide landowners with a road map for improving on-farm soil conservation.
- **'Nursery Objective'** – we are currently working with communities in Tokomaru Bay and Whareponga to provide them with a native nursery each. We are also working with Pourau Inc to plant and manage a pole nursery. These nurseries will provide us with native tree species to assist us in recloaking the whenua where erosion features are present in these coastal catchments.

DISCUSSION and OPTIONS - WHAKAWHITINGA KŌRERO me ngā KŌWHIRINGA

Planning for the future

Forestry (Harvest) Plan Change

33. The Forestry (Harvest) Plan Change is one of two forestry plan changes in development. The Forestry (Harvest) Plan Change will focus on harvesting planning and practices including clear felling on land recognised as high or very high susceptibility to erosion in the NES-CF. The plan change will affect some of the freshwater provisions of the operative TRMP, aiming to reduce erosion and sedimentation on water quality, riparian and wetland margins and the beds of rivers. Recent amendments to the RMA[9] have implications for the plan change programme. Council is scheduled to consider the proposed forestry (harvest) plan change for notification, along with an application for a Ministerial exemption to enable notification (in advance of the Government's NPS-FM review), in March 2025.

34. Council commissioned Habilis consultancy to develop a 'four wellbeings' model to help evaluate the impacts of potential regulatory and systemic changes to land use. The model will provide a valuation process based on economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing. A recent community survey on forestry impacts in the Ūawa and Tokomaru Bay has provided initial inputs to the valuation process.

Sustainable Land Use Plan Change

35. The second plan change in the current policy work programme will review the TRMP provisions broadly and will likely introduce provisions to support long term transition of the most vulnerable land in the region into permanent vegetation cover. The plan change will involve a review of the current land overlay framework and is likely to introduce a new land overlay (currently referred to as Land Overlay 3B (LO3B), as an extension to the existing land overlay framework). This plan change will be informed by the Transition Advisory Group (TAG) work and will be developed in 2025 with intent to notify mid-2026.

36. The Council's transition work (including work on LO3B and the work of the TAG) is discussed in the next section.

37. Anticipated changes to the NES-CF have implications for the plan change content. The changes have not been confirmed yet and will dictate how Council is able to regulate commercial forestry activities in our region. Staff are in contact with government officials on the development of the changes, advocating for reasonable recognition and provision for the region's unique situation.

[9] Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Act (October 2024)

How we might need to adapt: transitioning LO3B land to permanent vegetation cover

38. The MILU report confirmed that some land in Tairawhiti is too susceptible to erosion to be used for forestry or farming, and that such land needs to be returned to permanent forest. The Government response in August 2023 agreed that the way land is managed needs to change, and that they are committed to supporting Tairāwhiti to transition to more sustainable land-use practices.

39. Council previously resolved to investigate a review of land use rules related to activities on the steep, erosion-prone land as part of the TRMP. Council has accepted that the worst eroding land across the region should be identified, and conversations had with the forestry sector around more permanent and stable sustainable vegetation. **Report 24-31** proposed that the first thing to look at is transition out of forestry (and potentially farming), into permanent vegetation.

40. Transition of LO3B land to permanent vegetation cover poses significant questions:

    - Where is the LO3B land?
    - What physically needs to happen to transition the land into permanent vegetation cover?
    - Who pays the costs of transition?
    - How can the TRMP and other regulatory and policy settings support transition?

Identification of LO3B land

41. Council is progressing development of a land overlay (currently referred to as LO3B) to identify land with extreme erosion susceptibility, where erosion has the potential to impact waterways, and downstream land uses and activities. This land will be marked for transitioning out of plantation forestry and/or pastoral farming and into permanent vegetation cover. LO3B will describe Tairāwhiti's most vulnerable land at 1:10,000 or better.

42. Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research were commissioned to develop a landslide susceptibility and morphometric connectivity layer completed in March 2024. The layer maps the spatial probability of landslides into the streams and rivers in our region, using a LiDAR-derived Digital Elevation Model (DEM). LO3B will be based on this work along with gully information recently updated by MPI and Dr Mike Marden (see **Report 24-179**).

43. The layer is currently being verified to confirm the data is reliable and fit for purpose for our region. It is being both internally peer reviewed (including desktop assessment and site visits to determine how the data lines up with our understanding of the region) and independently reviewed by Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC). Once verified the information can be used to develop LO3B.

Transition Advisory Group

44. The purpose of the Transition Advisory Group (TAG) is to enable local expertise and knowledge to inform Council in identifying options to transition LO3B land (along with any other land to be voluntarily retired) from existing land uses to a permanent vegetative cover.

45. Members will provide their perspectives and expertise on a range of topics relating to management of LO3B under various land uses. The value of the TAG comes from the members being able to discuss and share their expertise and experience. Following this discussion there will be engagement with tangata whenua, community and sector groups (forestry and farming).

46. The TAG is tasked to develop:

    - a series of options based on existing examples and case studies across Tairawhiti and Aotearoa that align with our vulnerable land
    - a transition guide to outline what steps can be applied in specific sites and to complement adjoining land use.

47. Transition guidance is being drafted based on a ten-year timeframe, assuming that this is reasonable and realistic for the practical transition work but recognising there are other considerations (such as funding and financing) that will influence implementation.

Funding and financing: business case

48. With the guidelines for a pathway towards sustainable land use in Tairāwhiti now taking shape, a business case is required to kickstart delivery. Stakeholders are seeking clarity on what the roadmap to sustainable land use will look like – how it will be delivered, and how the transition will be funded.

49. At the heart of a business case is the need to establish clarity about the steps to be taken and the costs that may be incurred. These costs should be equitably shared between landowners, the Crown, and ratepayers. The approach to cost recovery for the transition programme should:

    - consider potential actions
    - prioritise the most important actions
    - size those actions
    - make those actions milestone-focused
    - be contextually aware
    - be reflective of certainty, uncertainty, and realisable benefits
    - most importantly, consider distributive justice and the Crown's associated post-Bola remedial responsibilities.

50. The programme is likely to include pest management, land use transition advice, information systems, monitoring, plant supply and other services or elements.

51. In terms of financing and funding, it is too early at this stage to:

    - accurately determine the full costs of the transition programme, noting the objective of achieving a much higher level of sustainability and reliance within one decade.
    - define who will supply the different components of the transition services, and if there is external funding such as Council, Crown agencies or third-party philanthropic sources.
    - accurately define the effects of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), the effects of the NES-CF and the balance to be defined between regulation and the provision of services by the Council (carrot or stick).

52. All the above matters will be addressed within the proposed business plan.

Science and monitoring

53. Monitoring is a useful tool to understand the current state of the environment, the impact of different land uses and activities, and the effectiveness of plan changes or other policy or regulatory changes. The current monitoring programme is intended to provide a regional understanding of the 'state of the environment' and long term trends.

54. Staff are investigating ways to provide a more nuanced understanding of the impact of land use and changing land use. Any expansion of the current monitoring network and approach will require a business case and consideration of funding options (such as targeted rates).

55. The following areas are being explored:

    - **Rivers**: Capture of flood event-based river flow and suspended sediment monitoring; this is challenging as it requires on-call staffing, is expensive, uses high maintenance sensors and autosamplers, and there are health and safety risks associated with working in and around floodwaters. Remote sensing technologies (such as satellite, LIDAR) can support monitoring.
    - **Rivers**: Use of automatic water samplers (triggered by flow), and ways to count large woody debris using AI/machine learning technology. Council has three or four live video feeds to support this.
    - **Estuaries**: Annual sediment sampling and measurement of annual sediment accumulation rates.
    - **Coastal**: Dedicated annual and event-based large woody debris assessment programme.

ASSESSMENT of SIGNIFICANCE - AROTAKENGA o NGĀ HIRANGA

Consideration of consistency with and impact on the Regional Land Transport Plan and its implementation
Overall Process: **Low** Significance
This Report: **Low** Significance

Impacts on Council's delivery of its Financial Strategy and Long Term Plan
Overall Process: **Low** Significance
This Report: **Low** Significance

Inconsistency with Council's current strategy and policy
Overall Process: **Medium** Significance
This Report: **Medium** Significance

The effects on all or a large part of the Gisborne district
Overall Process: **High** Significance
This Report: **High** Significance

The effects on individuals or specific communities
Overall Process: **High** Significance
This Report: **Low** Significance

The level or history of public interest in the matter or issue
Overall Process: **High** Significance
This Report: **High** Significance

56. The decisions or matters in this report are considered to be of **Medium** significance in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

TREATY COMPASS ANALYSIS

Kāwanatanga

57. The development of relationships through partnership arrangements between Council and iwi and hapū allows Council to empower and value te ao Māori within the regulatory context. It allows Council and tangata whenua to work together to address land use issue and move us towards shared decision making about the future of land use in the region.

Rangatiratanga

58. The development of an improved regulatory response to forestry activities and actively implementing on-the-ground improvements will ultimately support tangata whenua aspirations for achieving better environmental outcomes. Te ao Māori recognises the interconnection of each domain, where kaitiakitanga becomes key in safeguarding the mauri and mana of each domain.

Oritetanga

59. Engaging at a catchment level allows us to address historical land use decisions that have directly affected tangata whenua. Māori comprise more than half the population of our region. There are 228,000 ha of whenua Māori in Tairāwhiti, which are predominantly in LUC 6, 7 and 8. The significant legal barriers that Māori faced in developing their land, compounded with the vulnerable and unsuitable land classes of their land, mean that equity remains a key issue that needs to be addressed.

60. Catchment-based korero will enable Council (and Crown agencies) to capture and support the aspirations and values of tangata whenua, including finding ways to remove barriers.

Whakapono

61. An important part of forestry-related work across Council is to enable the application of tangata whenua customs and practices to how we deliver changes to land use management. At the catchment level, we aspire to draw local expertise and mātauranga to inform a locally specific response to land use issues.

TANGATA WHENUA/MĀORI ENGAGEMENT - TŪTAKITANGA TANGATA WHENUA

62. Tangata whenua have been included in key conversations to date in all the above work programmes. In the Ūawa Catchment, the staff involved in the freshwater and forestry planning have been collaborating with representatives of Te Aitanga a Hauiti and Te Ākau o Tokomaru in the Working Group hui. Additionally, Council staff have met with representatives of Tairāwhiti Whenua Collective (a group representing Māori landowners of Tairāwhiti) for wider land-use discussions and LO3B.

63. Staff will engage with iwi on the first plan change prior to notification.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - TŪTAKITANGA HAPORI

64. Community engagement will continue to be an important component for Council, be it as part of the forestry or TRMP plan change programme, the Woody Debris programme team, or the Transition Advisory Group.

65. Staff will continue to liaise closely with MPI representatives to ensure they have oversight of Council's forestry-related work programme and are able to contribute to the processes.

66. The farming sector has a high level of interest in LO3B and the forestry plan change – we will look to test the proposed LO3B with farming sector representatives prior to finalisation (for LO3B) and notification (for the plan change).

CLIMATE CHANGE – Impacts / Implications - NGĀ REREKĒTANGA ĀHUARANGI – ngā whakaaweawe / ngā ritenga

67. Our region is very susceptible to erosion due to the region's geology, slope, heavy rainfall and previous removal of forest cover. Erosion is being exacerbated by some land use practices, natural hazards and climate change.

68. Diverse natural forest ecosystems absorb and store more carbon over time than monoculture, short-rotation plantations. Species diversity also improves resilience to storms, droughts, pests and disease. To ensure our landscapes and forests can adapt to climate change and play a role in mitigating the impacts of a changing climates,

69. Council has a role in future planning by developing regulatory and policy frameworks that support appropriate land-use activities given the underlying land type and can advocate for careful consideration of species selection for any land being transitioned to permanent vegetation cover.

CONSIDERATIONS - HEI WHAKAARO

Financial/Budget

70. There are no specific financial considerations in this report. Funding for each work programme has been accounted for and allocated through the **2024 – 2027 Three Year Plan**.

71. Councill will need to consider how it supports implementation associated with plan changes and the transition guidelines developed by the TAG in the 2027 Long Term Plan.

Legal

72. No legal advice has been sought in the preparation of this report. Legal advice is sought as necessary in Resource Management planning, resource consenting and CME processes. Any plan changes must be prepared and approved in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991.

POLICY and PLANNING IMPLICATIONS - KAUPAPA HERE me ngā RITENGA WHAKAMAHERE

73. The land use planning review, transition work and the Woody Debris Programme align with the longer-term community outcomes identified in the **Tairāwhiti 2050**, in particular:

- **Outcome 2: Resilient communities**.
- **Outcome 5: We take sustainability seriously**.
- **Outcome 6: We celebrate our heritage**.
- **Outcome 7: A diverse economy**.
- **Outcome 8: Delivering for and with Māori**.

RISKS - NGĀ TŪRARU

74. **National policy direction** - The Coalition Government (National, ACT, and NZ First) has made several recent statements affirming its intentions to shift national policy direction towards enjoyment of private property rights, further enabling development and primary industry, and 'rebalancing' existing national policy on freshwater management, however the full intention of the Coalition Government remains to be seen. This is currently marked as a **Low risk** as Council is expected to progress this work as part of Council's response to the MILU report; however, this risk will change depending on future direction taken by the new Government.

75. **The unpredictability of climate change** - The volatility and intensity of how a changing climate affects our region has been proven through past severe weather events. Council is advised to take a proactive approach. This requires us to make the necessary preparations to safeguard our communities and the environment. While computer generated models may assist with the forecast under different scenarios, models are unable to provide a true prediction of the next major weather event for our region, so this remains a Medium risk in all aspects of Council's functions.