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Tēnā Koutou,

### **Rangitikei District Council submission to the Horizons 2024-34 Long Term Plan**

Rangitikei District Council (Council) thanks Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) for the opportunity to submit on the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. Council's submission focuses on the following key areas:

- Issue 1 – Level of service for highly productive land
- Issue 3a – Improved regional services for public transport
- Issue 4 – Fee structure for water metering
- Natural hazard data

#### **Issue 1 – Level of service for highly productive land**

*Preferred option: Option 2*

Council notes the significant role for Horizons in the mapping of highly productive land under the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL). Council supports the proactive approach Horizons is undertaking in progressing the mapping process and acknowledges the collaborative approach implemented to date in working with the territorial authorities across the region.

The implications of the final mapping exercise will be significant for the Rangitikei. The District has a substantial amount of LUC 1, 2, and 3 land around our key urban areas and it is essential that final mapping is accurate due to the lack of ability for site-specific assessments to occur following the mapping exercise and the strong policy direction outlined in the NPS-HPL. Council has particular interest in the LUC classification around Marton and Bulls due to the known uncertainty in classification and the fact that the vast majority of urban growth in this District is occurring in these two towns.

Council agrees that targeted mapping is the optimal approach, as the cost of mapping all land throughout the region is cost-prohibitive and would have limited or no benefit for areas of low, or

*Making this place home.*

no, growth. While Council supports a targeted mapping approach, we stress the importance of using broader criteria to determine where targeted mapping should occur, rather than simply focusing on larger urban centres or using 'growth' as the main driver e.g. in areas where there is high uncertainty around soil classifications. Council notes that these criteria are being refined by Officers through a regionally collaborative approach which Council supports.

Council also notes the clear intention by Central Government to remove LUC 3 land from the NPS-HPL (by January 2025) and recommends that Horizons proceeds with the mapping exercise on this basis.

### **Issue 3a – Improved regional services for public transport**

*Preferred option: Option 1*

Residents in the Rangitīkei District face several transport challenges as a result of the need to be reliant on private vehicles due to a lack of passenger transport services for the district. These challenges, and community aspirations for improved services have been highlighted and are documented in Council's Community Spatial Plan, Pae Tawhiti Rangitīkei Beyond (which can be viewed online here: [Pae-Tawhiti-Rangitikei-Beyond-Spatial-Plan-Web.pdf](#)).

Council supports Option 1, and the additional regional services for the Rangitīkei District. We encourage Horizons to investigate and trial a range of passenger services that might better meet the needs of our communities (compared with traditional methods), including the use of shuttle services. We note the strong need for our communities to be connected by these services regionally, which includes Whanganui, Palmerston North, but also north with Waiouru (for our Taihape residents).

### **Issue 4 – Fee structure for water metering**

*Preferred option: other move to a user pays system via a staged approach*

The Rangitīkei District comprises a largely rural population, with this sector playing a vital role in the GDP and wellbeing of our District. While Council supports the move to a user pays system, we recommend this is implemented via a staged approach over 3 – 5 years. We are concerned about the potential impact on the primary sector of implementing the proposed change in one year when this sector is already experiencing significant challenges due to the current economic climate. A staged approach will allow the costs to be gradually absorbed by those most impacted.

### **Natural hazard data**

Horizons leads the provision of natural hazard data across the region. It is a role and function that is essential for the effective management of natural hazards for our communities. In the Rangitīkei District, inland flooding is a significant natural hazard.

The data and information held by Horizons is used as an important part of District Council planning and infrastructure requirements for ensuring that risks associated with flood hazards are considered and appropriately provided for in Council's decisions. This information also aids our emergency management activities and is used by property owners to understand risk and to make their own informed decisions about investing in, purchasing, or developing a property.

In some areas, such as for the Tūtaenui Stream, parts of the Turakina River and parts of the Whangaehu River, and a breach scenario for Scott's Ferry, Horizons have undertaken detailed modelling of the flood hazard.

However, there are several other key catchments in the Rangitīkei that do not yet have modelled flood data, but which would be very useful to have this information for as these have existing urban settlements in close proximity which are experiencing growth pressure. These catchments include the Pourewa Stream, parts of the Rangitīkei River and Hautapu River. Council requests that Horizons includes additional funding in the Long Term Plan so that flood modelling can be undertaken for these catchments.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit on the Horizons 2024-34 Long Term Plan.

**I would like to speak to this submission at the oral hearing.**

Naku noa



Andy Watson  
**Mayor of the Rangitīkei**