Attachment D: Climate Action

Context

Auckland is already experiencing the effects of a changing climate, including heavy rain events, storm surges and coastal inundation, extreme heat events, and droughts. These climate impacts are expected to increase in frequency and severity. The need to reduce emissions is urgent.

In response, Auckland Council declared a climate emergency and adopted Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan. The plan identifies two goals for the Auckland region to:

- reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050
- prepare for climate change impacts by ensuring we consider the implications of our current emissions pathway in our planning.

Auckland Council has also committed to reducing the council parent's own organisational emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions from our organisational activities by 2050.

The council is taking many actions to support Auckland to achieve regional climate goals. For example, we have committed over $10 billion of investment into improving public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure through our Regional Land Transport Plan 2018-2028. Watercare has recently invested over $300 million into making our water supply system more resilient to droughts. The council also considers the likely impacts of climate change on our assets in our Infrastructure Strategy and Asset Management Plans, to ensure the assets we build are resilient.

Despite this significant investment, we know that a "business as usual" approach will not enable the Auckland region to achieve the regional climate goals set out in Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri. To respond to this, the council considered various options for accelerating climate action.

Consultation Options

Our preferred option: The draft Recovery Budget proposed to invest $152 million over ten years into a climate action investment proposal. This included various additional actions, to reduce emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change. The proposal would be funded within the rates and debt settings proposed as part of our overall investment package and equated to approximately 0.8 per cent of the average general rates increase in 2021/2022.

Some key additional actions included in the climate action proposal were that the council would work with the government to achieve 50 per cent of the total bus fleet being electric or hydrogen powered by 2030, that we would expand our resource recovery network to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill, plant 11,000 more street trees and an additional 200 hectares of native forest in our regional parks and accelerate our planning for coastal change.

Other options: The other alternatives that we considered were:

- Maintaining the status quo, which would see us continue the climate actions we have already planned, and not making any additional investment in climate action.
- More significantly accelerating the council's climate action by investing $320 million over ten years into various initiatives. Key differences in this option included that the council would make 100% of the bus fleet electric or hydrogen powered by 2030, plant around 18,000 more street trees and protect four closed coastal landfills from climate impacts. Funding this option would have required either, adding a one-off additional 0.9 per cent to the average general rates

increase for 2021/2022 or, reprioritising $170 million of other planned expenditure and accepting any impact that might have on other council services.

Outcomes from the proposal and alternatives are set out in more detail in Attachment D1 below.

Public and Mana Whenua Feedback

Public feedback generally supported the climate action investment proposal. There were 14,640 pieces of feedback on the proposal with 61 per cent of submissions (8,871 people or organisations) in support. Fewer people did not support the proposal - 27 per cent or 3944 people. A relatively small percentage of submitters selected 'don't know' (five per cent) or 'other' (eight per cent).

- Most respondents supported the climate action investment proposal for reasons such as wanting to protect future generations or the scale and urgency of the challenge. Key themes from those in support included comments in support of reducing transport emissions.
- Most submitters who responded to this question did not mention their views on specific projects in the package. For those who did, approximately 900 comments were made indicating support for transitioning from diesel to electric or hydrogen buses, around 480 comments were made in support of protecting or planting more trees and 219 comments were made supporting reducing waste. Around 440 comments were made indicating concerns about transitioning from diesel to electric buses, mainly in relation to the environmental impact of batteries.
- Around nine per cent of submitters asked for more climate action than the proposal, with three percent specifically asking for more investment than the proposed package.
- Among submitters who did not support the proposal (27 per cent), some supported climate action but felt that it was not the council's role and should be delivered by others, such as central government. Others supported the package but felt it should only be progressed if it could be funded through savings rather than additional budget. Some submitters did not support climate action at all, as they did not see it as a priority for investment.
- Of the 712 individual pieces of feedback to this question from submitters who identified as Māori, 60 per cent supported the proposed increased investment, 26 per cent did not support the increased investment, eight per cent selected 'Other' whilst four per cent selected 'Don't Know'.

Regional stakeholders and organisations - Of the 13 regional stakeholders who commented on this proposal, 10 supported the climate investment package and three supported it but suggested some changes to it. Some suggested more climate action was needed in specific areas such as protecting the natural environment or reducing transport emissions.

There were 253 submissions from organisations on the climate investment proposal. Of these 55 per cent supported the proposal with the main reason cited being support for taking more action on climate change. Other significant reasons for support were the features (electric buses) or perceived benefits (particularly more trees but also health/air quality) of the proposal. Another 20 per cent did not support the proposal with the main reasons being cited that this is not essential investment, not our role, or that the sum is too much. Nine per cent of organisations submitted 'Don't know' and 16 per cent 'Other' on this proposal.

Mana whenua feedback – Overall, **11 iwi stated their support** for the climate investment package. These were: Ngā Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara Development Trust; Te Runanga o Ngāti Whātua (Regional Body); Te Uri o Hau Settlement Trust – Environs; Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust; Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust; Ngaati Whanaunga Incorporated Society; Te Whakakitenga o Waikato

Incorporated; Te Kawerau Iwi Settlement Trust; Ngāti Tamaoho Trust; Te Ākitai Waiohua Iwi Authority; Mana Whenua Forum[1].

7 iwi did not provide a preference on the climate investment package –Te Uri o Hau Settlement Trust; Ngātiwai Trust Board; Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust; Makaurau Marae Māori Trust; Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Tribal Trust; Te Motu a Hiaroa Charitable Trust[1]; Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei Trust Board.

Iwi provided extensive feedback which will be a valuable guide to the council in implementing the climate package. Some key issues and needs raised included the threat to coastal settlements which could be detrimentally affected from sea level rise, as these sites are often highly significant to Māori (Te Akitai Waiohua; Ngati Paoa) and the importance of ensuring that planting projects make provision for fruit trees and rongoa (medicinal plant species) in urban streets and cater for needs of native species (Ngati Paoa; Ngaati Whanaunga).

New Information

When the climate investment package was developed for consultation, it included a project focused on planting 200 hectares of native forest in our regional parks on marginal farmland to generate carbon credits. This planting would offset any of the council's remaining organisational emissions that we cannot reduce through other means by 2050.

The project was initially developed to standards required for native planting to achieve carbon credits. However, Council has experienced challenges with existing planting for carbon credits in our regional parks. These plantings use a lower density and quality of seedlings than best practice standards. Because of this these plantings don't achieve the biodiversity outcomes we expect in terms of creating healthy, thriving native forest. Such plantings also take longer to achieve canopy cover, increasing ongoing maintenance costs for weed control.

To deliver 200 hectares of native forest planting to best practice standards will cost approximately $8 million more than our initial proposal. Staff identified three options to resolve this issue against criteria such as cost, impact on emissions and biodiversity outcomes:

- **Option A: Increase the cost of the climate package to $160m.** Plant 200 hectares of native forest to best practice standards and maintain the original scope of the other initiatives in the investment package.
- **Option B: Retain budget of $152m and plant only 30 hectares of native forest.** The budget we have allocated will allow us to plant 30 hectares of native forest to best practice standards if we maintain the original scope of other programmes in the package.
- **Option C: Retain $152m budget and plant 200 hectares of native forest to best practice standards – slightly reduce scope of some other programmes in the package.** Under this option we would seek support from the private sector to deliver some planting in our regional parks. The scope of some other projects in the climate package also changes to allow the council to deliver tree planting to best practice standards without increasing spend. Changes include removing a project focused on reducing Panuku's organisational emissions, redesigning the regional partnerships programme to become self-funding after three years through fees from our partners and piloting our communications and awareness raising project (potentially with reduced scope) for 3 years after which we assess the role of central government in delivery because there is rapid change in this space and the role of central government may increase in the future.

[1] Organisations representing various iwi.

The results of our analysis are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Analysis of options for climate action investment, including best practice tree planting

	Financial	Reducing emissions	Biodiversity
Option A: Increase the cost of the climate package to $160m.	Cost of package increases by $8 million. This would require budget reprioritisation as part of overall budget decision-making.	No change from original package	Improved biodiversity outcomes due to best practice tree planting over 200 hectares.
Option B: Retain budget of $152m and plant only 30 hectares of native forest.	No change	This will not prevent us achieving the goal of reducing our organisational emissions by 50 per cent by 2030. However, it will make it difficult to achieve our goal of net zero emissions by 2050.	Reduced biodiversity outcomes as less native forest planted on regional parks (reduction of 170 ha of planting of native forest than initially proposed)
Option C: Retain budget of $152m, plant 200 hectares of native forest to best practice standards and slightly reduce scope of some other projects in the package. **Key changes we would make include:** - Removing a project to reduce Panuku's organisational emissions - Regional leadership and partnerships programme designed to be self-funding, after three years, through fees from our partners. - Run our information and awareness raising project as a pilot for 3 years only with reduced scope.	$7m increased investment for planting and an assumption of an additional $1m private sector investment in planting. $7m reduced scope of investment for other parts of the package	Panuku is making a significant impact to climate outcomes through their work to develop low carbon, resilient communities. In contrast, their organisational emissions are relatively small so the impact of removing this programme is limited. The redesign of the regional partnerships programme to be self-funding after three years may make it more difficult to establish regional partnerships to implement the climate plan. We will also invest slightly less in informational tools and awareness raising of climate change. This project would be run as a pilot for three years only, so we can evaluate effectiveness.	Improved biodiversity outcomes due to best practice tree planting over 200 hectares.

Summary

Climate change presents a significant threat to Auckland's natural environment, infrastructure and communities. The council has declared a climate emergency and is taking action in many ways to support Auckland to reduce regional emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

The council consulted on introducing a new climate action investment package worth $152 million which would moderately accelerate climate action in various key areas. We also included alternatives of either the status quo or a higher investment package of $320 million.

Overall, public feedback supported more climate action investment, with 61 per cent of submitters in support. However, only nine per cent of submitters asked for more action than our proposal. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 the council's ability to fund additional projects is also highly constrained.

Feedback from the public and mana whenua also showed support for the tree planting initiatives proposed in the climate package. There is a need to deliver tree planting to best practice standards, which can be accommodated within the existing budget of $152 m (Option C). However, to do this, some projects will have to be either removed or reduced in scope. This will reduce the climate outcomes from the package slightly, although the impact is difficult to quantify at this time.

Going forward, the council also recognises that our ability to directly reduce Auckland's regional emissions remains limited under current central government policy settings for local councils. More work is urgently needed, both by central government and Auckland Council, to identify mechanisms to reduce transport and energy emissions and support a more compact urban form that supports low carbon lifestyles.

Significant investment will also be required to support our natural environment, communities and infrastructure across Auckland to adapt and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The council must work with central government to identify suitable funding mechanisms to support this work.

Attachment D1: Options considered for investment in climate action

Outcome Areas – Climate Plan	Moderately accelerate climate action, including best practise tree planting	More significantly accelerate climate action	Status quo: No further investment
Investment ($ million)	Current + additional $15m/annum	Current + additional $32m/annum	Current only
Effective cost per average residential property	$21 per year	$44 per year	No additional cost
Impact on rates	Approximately 0.8 per cent of general rates – included in the proposed overall 5 per cent increase in general rates in 2021/2022.	Approximately 1.7 per cent of general rates – would require either an additional increase in general rates to 5.9 per cent in 2021/2022 or reprioritisation of $170 million of budget from other services.	Does not require any change in general rates.
Impact on debt	No significant impact on Council debt profile	No significant impact on Council debt profile	No impact on Council debt
Climate impact – Outcomes and risks	• Accelerate more significant reductions in emissions in the long-term through regional partnerships and innovation. • Directly reduce **540,000 to 870,000 tonnes** of CO2e emissions over 10 years from the six programmes where we can quantify reductions in emissions. • Increase ability to proactively plan for change and support communities in need • Risk – Although our increased investment puts us on a better pathway, the council group will not be able to come close to achieving regional climate goals through our efforts alone. These will require urgent climate action from central government, mana whenua, businesses, households,	• Accelerate more significant reductions in emissions in the long-term through regional partnerships and innovation. • Directly reduce **920,000 to 1,350,000 tonnes** of CO2e emissions over 10 years from the six programmes where we can quantify emissions reductions. • Demonstrate leadership by **halving all corporate emissions by 2030.** • Increase our ability to proactively plan for change, invest in protecting key coastal assets and increase support for Māori resilience. • Risk - Even with these additional actions, the council group will not be able to come close to achieving regional climate goals through	• Auckland's climate goals become less achievable. • Opportunities to reduce emissions through innovation and regional partnerships are not realised. • Direct emissions reductions within Council's control do not occur or occur at a much smaller scale. • Risk - While we are making a significant investment in some areas, such as improving public transport infrastructure, these actions will not be enough to put us on the right pathway to achieving our regional climate goals. Our region will be less resilient to the impacts of climate change with increased exposure to risks such as more frequent

Outcome Areas – Climate Plan	Moderately accelerate climate action, including best practise tree planting	More significantly accelerate climate action	Status quo: No further investment
	communities and others. In particular, investment in reducing emissions and protecting coastal assets is lower than option two.	our efforts alone. These will require urgent climate action from central government, mana whenua, businesses, households, communities and others.	extreme weather events, change in rainfall patterns, biodiversity loss and infrastructure failure.
Key outcomes of options and impacts on levels of service			
 **Transport**	• Invest $35 million to ensure only zero-emissions buses are procured from 2021. Work with central government to provide **750 clean electric or hydrogen buses** and **make 50 per cent of the bus fleet zero-emissions by 2030**, saving an estimated **170,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years** and improving air quality.	• Invest $110 million to provide **1,500 clean electric or hydrogen buses** and achieve a **100 per cent zero-emissions bus fleet by 2030**, saving an estimated **400,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years** and delivering more air quality improvements.	• There is a risk that diesel buses will need to be purchased up until 2025. Only 26 per cent of our fleet will be zero emissions by 2030 and we will not achieve a zero-emissions bus fleet until 2040.
	• Demonstrate low-emissions, integrated and people-centric transport solutions through **trials and tactical interventions for a Zero Emissions Queen Street valley** and support other tactical interventions for encouraging **streets for people** across the region.		• No funding to advance Zero Emissions Area in Queen Street Valley until 2024/2025. • Limited funding available for tactical interventions for streets for people elsewhere.
 Economy	• Invest over $10 million to support resource efficiency and re-use through an expanded network of **24 resource recovery facilities** (21 community recycling centres, 2 resource recovery parks and a deconstruction hub) diverting **145,000 tonnes of waste** a year and saving an estimated **225,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years.** • Invest $19 million to carry out research, establish a cross-sectoral leadership group and form regional partnerships to tackle our biggest emissions challenges involving businesses, academia and government.		• Limited network of **12 community recycling centres** diverts around **5,400 tonnes of waste** from landfill per year. • Insufficient resources to accelerate regional climate action or form effective partnerships.
 Built environment	• Require assessment of climate impacts for all major new Council developments and infrastructure.	• Option One plus, build model best practice through constructing new Community Facilities to a Sustainable Asset Standard.	• Limited integration of climate impacts and emissions reduction in development activities.

Outcome Areas – Climate Plan	Moderately accelerate climate action, including best practise tree planting	More significantly accelerate climate action	Status quo: No further investment
	• Invest $12 million to ensure more Aucklanders (**75,000 people a year on average**) are actively engaged in reducing emissions, through community action and lifestyles changes, saving an estimated **100,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years.**	• Invest $20 million to ensure significantly more Aucklanders (**104,000 people per year on average**) are actively engaged in reducing emissions, through more extensive community action and lifestyle changes, saving an estimated **300,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years.**	• Few Aucklanders (**30,000 people per year**) engaged by Council in reducing emissions.
Community and coast	• Invest $4 million to accelerate planning for coastal change for the whole region. • Invest $11 million to create increased ability to plan for and respond to natural hazards.	Option One plus: • Invest $19 million into coastal erosion, including physical works to protect key coastal hot spots from 2026. • Invest $26 million to protect four critical coastal landfills from failure due to sea level rise and extreme weather events.	• Funding available to renew existing coastal assets but; • Limited resources to respond to coastal change and natural hazards made worse by climate change.
	Invest $5 million to increase resilience by supporting communities that will be most impacted, including: • targeted engagement with Pasifika to identify priorities and reduce inequitable outcomes research and support for disabled communities to respond to climate impacts as appropriate • opening **four more community food hubs** in South and West Auckland • reduced energy hardship for **500 low-income households/year.**		• No targeted support for communities in need to respond to climate change.
Energy	• Invest $16 million to ensure Council emissions from **our office buildings and stadiums are halved by 2030, saving an estimated 26,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years.** Footprint continues to grow from new community facilities.	• Invest $29 million and demonstrate leadership by **halving Council parent emissions by 2030, saving an estimated 36,000 tonnes of CO2e over ten years.** • Introduce a Sustainable Asset Standard to ensure large new community facilities	• **30 per cent reduction** in Council emissions by 2030 through funded activities such as replacing gas boilers in our aquatic centres with clean heat pumps.

Outcome Areas – Climate Plan		Moderately accelerate climate action, including best practise tree planting	More significantly accelerate climate action	Status quo: No further investment
			achieve a sustainability certification and do not increase our carbon footprint.	
	Te Puawaitanga o te Tātai	• Invest $8 million to increase Māori resilience and leadership by engaging **20 marae and their associated kura** and providing **seed funding for Māori-led climate initiatives.**	• Invest $14 million to strongly increase Māori resilience and leadership by engaging **24 marae and 80 kura and kohanga reo** and provide **seed funding for Māori-led initiatives.**	• Māori poorly supported to engage in climate action with no Māori-led climate projects.
		• Invest $6 million in establishing a **Rangatahi Māori leadership group** to drive action and work with Māori to deliver practical projects to restore te mauri o te wai, promote indigenous food sovereignty and restore our whenua.		
	Natural environment	• Invest $14 million to plant **11,000 street trees**, focusing on areas with lowest canopy cover. • Work with community and iwi to increase seedling production by **200,000 seedlings per year.**	• Invest $27 million to plant **29,000 street trees**, focusing on areas with lowest canopy cover. • Further increase capacity of iwi and community nurseries to produce seedlings.	• Our urban and rural (ngahere) forest is as low as **eight or nine per cent** in some local boards and is shrinking in some places.
		• Plant **200 hectares of native forest** in regional parks to offset emissions.		• No additional planting beyond current initiatives such as 1.5 million trees.