

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at 156 Brymer Road on the Saturday the 14th February
2026 commencing at 11.30am

PRESENT:

Chairman: N. Juby
Councillor's present in person: S. Smith, M. Barker, E. Williamson, O. Kent, P. Dell, G. Dickey, D. Cocks, G. Annan.
Staff: D. Klee, D. Lelievre, B. Jarvis-Child, A. Daniel
Members of the Public:

APOLOGIES: T. Clarke, A. Brown, A. Sapich, C. Sherrard.
It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Smith/Annan– CARRIED

1. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE 29th November 2025:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of the 29th November 2025 be accepted as true and correct record.

Smith/Barker – CARRIED

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Council discussed the register of interest that had been circulated post the November meeting as requested by Council, most councillors were happy with the register as drafted however some questioned the necessity for other councillors to know details around their investments. The CE outlined that the explanatory notes accompanying the register outlines the purpose and nature of the register and reiterated that the purpose of the is to supports sound governance by ensuring councillors disclose any interests that could reasonably be seen to affect their judgement. These include financial interests, business and governance roles, organisational memberships, or family interests that intersect with Fish and Game activities. Therefore there was no need to disclose all personal or financial interests and only disclose those where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest with F&G activities.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

4.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

Drift Diving: The Chair suggested that staff reports would benefit from being consolidated for example rather than just producing a drift diving report to using all the information available. The CE explained that the reports are structured in a manner to achieved the planned results in the OWP which we can get audited against. Staff remain open to ideas o how we can provide the information int eh best possible way to inform council management decisions. Mr Daniel outlined the rationale for updating the drift dive protocols to align with potential minimum standards that may be required moving forwarded.

Trend Counts: Council discussed the goose and swan trend count data and queried whether there was any correlation between increasing goose numbers and decreasing swan numbers. Mr Jarvis Child clarified that the trend count is not a total population count and that recent swan distribution patterns have been influenced by redistribution following the central Waikato lake collapse event. As such, changes in site specific counts may reflect movement rather than overall population decline. Council also noted the increase in total goose numbers recorded following their removal from the First Schedule of the Wildlife Act and requested that the timing of the schedule amendment be clearly marked on future trend graphs to provide appropriate management context.

Access and Trout Tagging Signage: The Chair raised the matter of access and trout tagging signage. The CE advised Council that signage has been installed at key access points on the Whakapapa River to encourage trout tag returns. Mr Daniel further advised that additional contact has been established with a landowner in the upper Awakino area, who has requested further access signage. Additional signs will be delivered to enable placement at appropriate locations identified by the landowner.

Te Awa Lakes; Council discussed the potential to stock trout at Te Awa, including potential summer mortality risks and associated animal welfare considerations. Mr Daniel noted that it is a completely closed system but the ponds are relatively deep and are supplemented by groundwater inflows, which should provide sufficient thermal refuge for trout during warmer months. On that basis, he considered that trout survival rates should be acceptable if fish are released. It was noted that, if appropriately managed, the site could provide an excellent put and take fishery opportunity.

Upper Waipa River Access Mr Daniel advised that he has held further meetings with landowners in relation to access to the Upper Waipa River. Landowners indicated that they did not wish to provide access, raising concerns regarding dangerous stock. Mr Daniel explained the existing legal position and noted that where public access rights exist, they cannot be unilaterally closed. He advised that further work may be required to assess the practicality of safe access to the river, including whether track maintenance or other mitigation measures may be necessary. Council was also advised that the property upstream of Toa Bridge is currently on the market. Mr Daniel has contacted the real estate agent to confirm that legal public access exists through the property and that any prospective purchasers should be made aware of this.

Mapping Project: Councillors congratulated Mr Jarvis-Child on the strong uptake and usage of the new mapping system. It was noted that regions actively promoting the platform are achieving excellent traction and engagement from licence holders. Council acknowledged the value of the tool in improving access information and user experience.

Whangamarino Action Plan: Ms Lelievre and the CE have undertaken significant work in attending meetings and providing feedback into the development of the Whangamarino Action Plan. It was noted that it is important to ensure that key actions and significant work programmes remain within the final document so that it delivers meaningful outcomes, rather than becoming aspirational only. Councillor Barker asked about the next steps. The CE advised that a further meeting is scheduled for the following week, after which a draft plan is expected to be released. Once available, councillors and hunters will be encouraged to review the draft and provide submissions on the proposed actions and priorities.

Licence Sales: Council discussed the current fish licence sales position. The CE explained that regional sales are tracking well despite periods of inclement weather and are currently 2 percent ahead of the same time last year. By contrast, national licence sales remain down. The CE noted that family licence sales nationally have declined by approximately 2300 licences and that this reduction has only been partially offset by an increase of fewer than 1000 adult whole season licences. Council noted that this trend is consistent with concerns previously raised during the licence category review, particularly that changes to the family licence structure were based on incomplete data regarding participation of women and secondary licence holders, and that any decline in family licence uptake was unlikely to be fully offset by growth in other categories.

MPI Discussion, HPAI Screening Funding: Council was advised that MPI has entered into contractual arrangements with certain South Island regions of up to \$200,000 to secure ducks for HPAI screening. These arrangements are understood to sit within a different branch of MPI and to be funded through a one off allocation. To the Chief Executive's knowledge, similar arrangements do not apply to this region or other North Island regions. Historically, when this region has sought additional funding support from MPI for HPAI screening, advice has consistently been that no budget was available. MPI has indicated that contract funding is provided to Fish and Game nationally and cannot be directed to specific regions, and that no additional funding is available this financial year beyond prior year levels with a modest inflation adjustment. Council discussed the equity implications of this approach, noting that this region has supplied ducks for HPAI screening for more than 20 years without a formal contractual arrangement. The Chief Executive has advised MPI

that the region will continue to support the programme in the short term in good faith, but ongoing support beyond this summer will be contingent on the development of a clear and equitable contractual and cost sharing model.

It was moved;

That council reinforces the Chief Executives position and future support for MPI screening programme will be contingent on receiving equitable funding support to other F&G regions.

Williamson/Smith – CARRIED

It was moved;

That the bimonthly Chief Executive and financial reports be accepted.

Smith/Dickey – CARRIED

5. OUTGOING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter to Chair of NZC circulated to council via email after special meeting and approved for release, tabled for the public record

6. INCOMING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Council discussed the email received from Bruce Inwards. The Chair advised that he had spoken with Bruce following the meeting and that he was comfortable with the discussion and outcome.

There was a general consensus that Council should welcome a diverse range of views and actively encourage licence holders to attend meetings, engage in discussion, and have meaningful involvement and buy in to Council decision making.

The Chair noted that Councillors should be mindful, where views differ, to respond respectfully and avoid dismissing or invalidating the opinions of others, even where they may strongly disagree.

7. LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE:

The CE updated the legislative compliance schedule.

It was moved;

That the 2025-2026 legislative compliance schedule be received by Council.

Annan/Barker – CARRIED

8. CROP DEPREDATION POLICY

Council discussed the draft Crop Depredation Policy and thanked staff for the prompt

turnaround in obtaining feedback from permit holders. Council noted concerns that the draft policy conflates governance and operational matters, does not adequately reflect regional scale and species differences, and proposes mandatory site visits and follow up requirements that may be disproportionate in high volume regions. Council also observed that the policy is narrowly framed around crop depredation and does not sufficiently recognise other permitting contexts.

Council acknowledged that relationships with the agricultural sector have been strained in some regions and emphasised the importance of maintaining constructive engagement locally. Council was reassured that feedback from permit holders in this region was positive regarding the current approach.

It was moved;

That the CE draft feedback in line with the staff report and recommendations and circulate to Chair for approval before sending to NZC.

Annan/Barker – CARRIED

9. STATISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR GAME BIRD MONITORING AT A NATIONAL SCALE

Council discussed the Statistical Monitoring Report prepared by Proteus. Council reiterated its view that it is not appropriate to work through highly technical monitoring reports at a governance level. Councillors noted that such material requires detailed scientific and operational expertise, and that attempting to resolve technical matters within a governance forum risks conflating governance oversight with operational and specialist functions. Council again encouraged NZC to ensure that any future standard operating procedures or national policy frameworks arising from this work are developed in close collaboration with appropriately qualified regional and national experts. It was emphasised that engaging subject matter specialists at the outset will help ensure that any resulting framework is scientifically robust, operationally practical, and fit for purpose across the diverse regional contexts within which Fish and Game operates.

It was moved;

That the Council receives the report and CE draft feedback in line with the staff report and recommendations and circulate to Chair for approval before sending to NZC.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

10. STAFF REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Prior to the meeting Mr Daniel requested the opportunity to address Council before he had to leave prior to lunch. The Chair agreed to this request. Mr Daniel advised Council that he had been offered a position with NZC and indicated his intention to resign from his current role in order to accept that position. He further advised that he had spoken with an individual who had expressed interest in his current role.

11. R3 REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Council affirmed its reservations regarding the current R3 programme being run by Fish and Game. Councillors expressed concern that the programme, in its present form, does not clearly articulate measurable objectives or provide tangible outcomes by which its effectiveness can be evaluated. In particular, there was no clear reporting framework demonstrating whether participation is translating into increased licence sales, improved hunter retention, or other defined success indicators.

By contrast, Council noted that its Take a Mate hunting initiative has clear and measurable objectives. The programme is structured in a way that enables direct evaluation of whether it is successfully recruiting new hunters, including tracking participation and subsequent licence uptake. Councillors emphasised the importance of ensuring that any national R3 initiatives adopt similarly robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms so that investment of licence holder funds can be transparently assessed against defined outcomes.

Council noted that many of the projects outlined in the document are worthwhile and already being undertaken at a regional level and that Council intends to continue delivering these initiatives as part of its existing work programme. Council is happy for staff to participate in national initiatives where they align with current regional workstreams.

Councillor Dell had some further specific questions regarding CRM mentioned in the document.

It was moved;

That as a subject matter expert Councillor Dell has councils' authority to seek further clarification from NZC directly regarding the proposal

Juby/Cocks – CARRIED

12. NATIONAL H&S AUDIT

Council received the national Health and Safety audit report. The Chief Executive advised that a number of the findings were useful and that he and Danielle Lelievre were updating the Auckland Waikato Health and Safety Plan to incorporate relevant recommendations. Council noted that the audit had been undertaken against ISO standards, which it understood to represent a higher benchmark than the minimum legal requirements. Councillors further noted that some of the suggested improvements could have significant cost implications. Council considered that additional guidance was required from NZC regarding how any implementation changes would be funded, and whether there was an expectation that all recommendations be adopted in full.

13. REFORM WILL SAY TABLE

Council discussed the Will Say table, provided by NZC, noting that the Chair and the Chief Executive had drafted Council's position based on the feedback previously provided. Councillors worked through each item in turn, reviewing the proposed wording and discussing Council's position on each point before confirming the final approach.

It was moved;

That the CE updates the Will say table reflecting proposed changes discussed at the council meeting and recirculates to Councillors via email.

Dickey/Dell- CARRIED

14. DRIFT DIVE REPORT

It was moved;

That council receive the 2025 drift dive report

Annan/Dell- CARRIED

Councillor Cocks sought to ask the Chair to formally extend the time of the council meeting to 3.30 to which the chair agreed.

15. OWP

The Chair briefed council on potential changes to OWP and what he thought could be added to clarify outcomes sought by council, noting it was up for formal consideration at the March meeting alongside the draft budget.

16. OSH Report

Councillor Barker suggested adding actual dates for activities to be completed in staff H&S meetings

It was moved;

that the H&S&W report for February 2026 is accepted.

Annan/Dell - CARRIED

Resolution to Exclude the Public

It was moved;

That the public be excluded from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting pursuant to section 48 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 on the grounds that the matters to be considered are confidential in nature and that public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists. The grounds for withholding that information are section 7 2 a, to protect the privacy of natural persons, and section 7 2 i, to enable the Council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations. AND THAT the Chief Executive be permitted to remain present during this part of the meeting to provide information and advice.

Annan/Dell – CARRIED

It was moved;

That the following resolution from the publicly excluded part of the meeting be brought into open meeting: The Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council has provided feedback on the NZC proposal for change in staffing role, and authorises the Chair and the Chief Executive to continue negotiations and to take the matter through to conclusion, taking into account the feedback provided by Council.

Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED

It was further moved;

Resolution to Resume in Open Meeting

That the Auckland Waikato Fish and Game Council moves out of publicly excluded.

Smith/Dell – CARRIED

17. GENERAL BUISNESS

Councillor Dell asked whether there were any further updates regarding the timeframes associated with the reforms and the Select Committee process. The Chair advised that no further updates had been provided. The Chair thanked Councillor Dell for his excellent work in formulating the previous EDM informing Auckland Waikato licence holders about the reform process.

It was moved

That Councillor Dell, the Chair and the Chief Executive prepare a further communication to licence holders once the Bill becomes publicly available and there has been an opportunity to review and assess its contents. Cocks/Dickey – CARRIED

The meeting closed at 3.58 pm