

Audit, Finance & Risk Committee

14 March 2023

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take 5

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara : Climate and Biodiversity Plan Update

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of priorities and progress of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025 (CBP) and associated budget.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka


2. That Audit, Finance & Risk Committee:
 1. **Note** the contents of this report.

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17 February 2023

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Context | Horopaki

1. On 27 June 2019 Council declared a climate and ecological emergency as well as approving the release of the Council's first [Climate Action Plan 2019-2022](#) for public feedback. This plan provided a foundation for Queenstown Lakes District Council's (QLDC) response to the climate and ecological emergency by laying out a broad programme of actions that spanned across five outcome areas.
2. A keystone action of the plan was to establish an independent, multidisciplinary Climate Reference Group (CRG) who could support Council to identify key challenges, evaluate best practices, and agree priority action areas at each review of the Climate Action Plan. This group was successfully established in August 2020 and has been instrumental in supporting the delivery of key actions as well as co-designing the new 2022-2025 Climate and Biodiversity Plan.
3. The development of this plan occurred over a 15-month programme of engagement with iwi, community stakeholders, partner agencies, climate and biodiversity experts and Council staff. Kāi Tahu input has been provided through CRG representation and through a quarterly Council hui. The CRG provided direction to the plan development and shared their expert guidance on which areas should be prioritised. Their input resulted in the rescoping of the plan to include a greater emphasis on biodiversity restoration, which is a fitting response to Council's declaration of both a climate *and an ecological* emergency in 2019.
4. On 30th June 2022 the [Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025](#) was adopted by Council, along with an annual plan funding increase to support its year 1 delivery. This plan sets out how QLDC plans to respond to biodiversity loss and climate change in Queenstown Lakes District, with three goals and six outcomes (see Figure 1).

5. The plan contains 70 actions (see Figure 2) that range from embedding climate and biodiversity into Council decision-making, to building food resilience in our District, to working with our local and regional partners to create an integrated climate and biodiversity work programme.
6. While Council led the development of the plan, it belongs to the whole district, and it wouldn't be possible without input from mana whenua, climate and biodiversity experts, local businesses, sustainability advocacy groups, conservation groups, and the passion of the community.



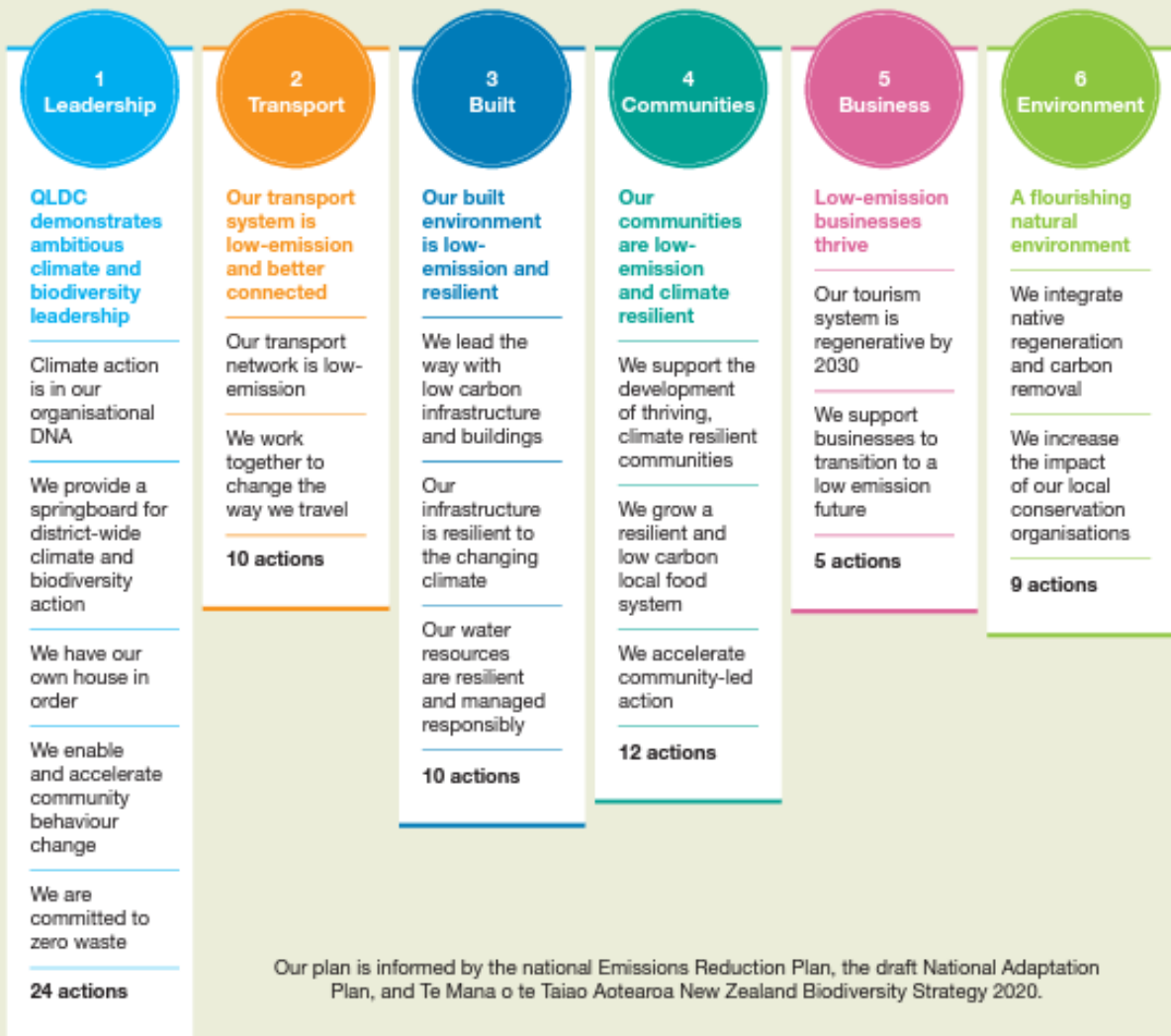
Figure 1: Climate & Biodiversity Plan Outcomes

Our Climate and Biodiversity Plan has 3 goals

THESE GOALS ALIGN WITH OUR COUNCIL'S VISION BEYOND 2050 OUTCOMES



TO REACH OUR GOALS WE HAVE SIX OUTCOMES



Our plan is informed by the national Emissions Reduction Plan, the draft National Adaptation Plan, and Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

Figure 2: Climate & Biodiversity Plan structure

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

7. This report is structured into the following three sections:

- A. Organisational Greenhouse Gas Emission Reporting
- B. Climate & Biodiversity Plan- Progress update
- C. Climate Reference Group update

A. ORGANISATIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REPORTING

8. QLDC has invested in the CarbonESS e-Bench software to track and report upon its operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Data is entered monthly into this system and then aggregated into annual GHG emissions inventory reports. The software allows monthly reports of emissions trending, year on year comparisons and information on changes to key site usage to be generated and circulated.

9. Data reporting is now available within the CarbonESS e-Bench software to allow us to track our monthly emissions reduction trending. This is critical to supporting the pursuit of the organisational KPI's and long term targets for direct energy emissions reduction . The below graphs provide information of the year on year trending of Council's Scope 1- LPG and transport fuels emissions, Scope 2- purchased electricity emissions and combined organisational emissions performance:

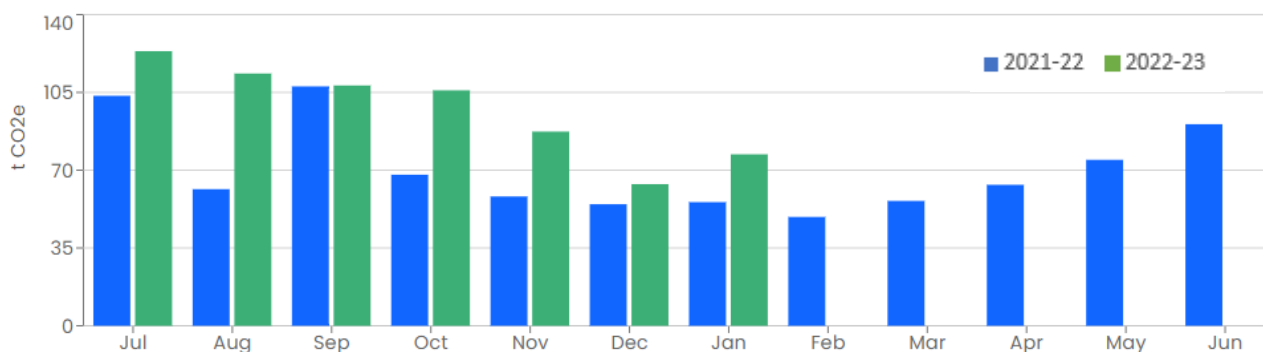


Figure 3: Scope 1 Emissions- Liquefied petroleum gas stationary sources (e.g. space heating, pool heating)

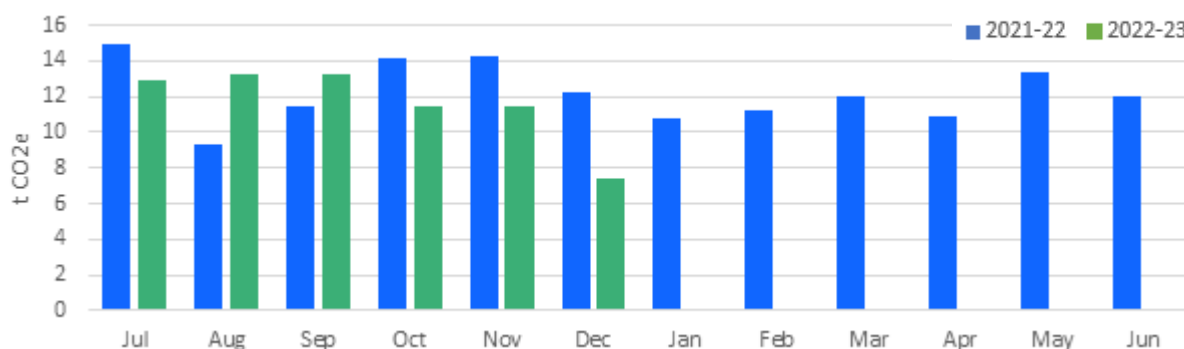


Figure 4: Scope 1 Emissions- Transport fuels (petrol + diesel)

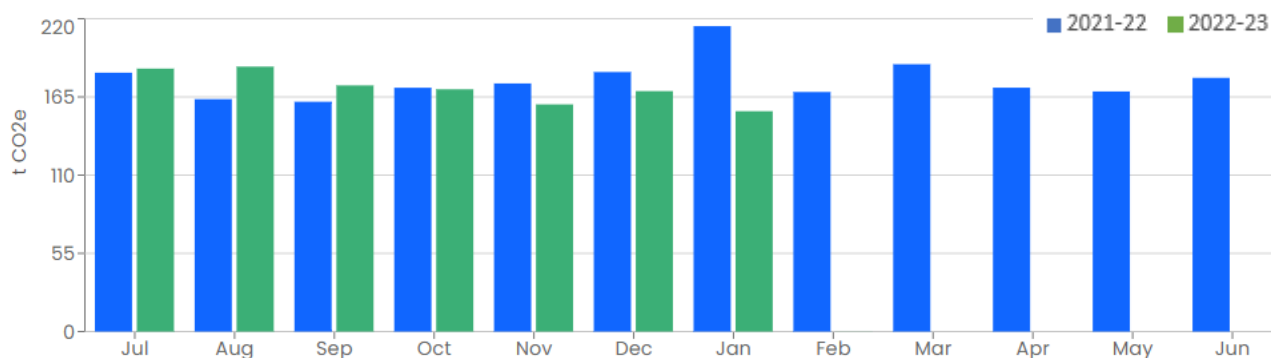


Figure 5: Scope 2- Electricity

10. These graphs provide the following insights:

- LPG emissions are trending higher in 2022-23 compared to the previous year. This trending is driven by the decreases in LPG demand during the Covid-19 restrictions in Aug- Dec 2021 and the shutdown of the hydro-slide for repairs from Sept 2021 to Jun 2022.
- Emissions from transport fuels are trending downwards in 2022-23. This decrease is attributed to the ongoing investment in Council's electric vehicle fleet
- Emissions from electricity demand remain relatively consistent between years, however the recent results for December-22 and January-23 show a significant reduction.

11. Data verification work is being carried out to ensure that this information is an accurate representation of Council's full direct energy emission profile.

12. To help accelerate the reduction of Council emissions a working group consisting of senior managers from across all directorates has been established to support the verification of data, review of trending performance and development of an organisational emissions reduction plan to identify key investment priorities to drive reductions in emissions (action 1.14 in CBP).

13. In addition to the work on the CarbonESS e-Bench system and organisation emissions reduction plan, a project is underway to ensure that the reporting of our emissions results is verified and certified by an independent third-party agency. This is a critical step to ensure that the emissions performance of Council can be reported with credibility and a high degree of assurance. Further details on this project (CBP action 1.1b) are provided in the next section.

B. CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

14. Of the 70 actions within the Climate & Biodiversity Plan there are a total of 62 projects that have been scheduled to start in the 2022/23 financial year. This represents a high level of commitment across a wide range of internal and external project stakeholders.

15. For the 62 actions that have been committed to start in 2022/23 we have achieved the following progress:

- 54 actions/projects have been started and are in progress
- 1 action is complete (5.1 Partner with the Regional Tourism Operators to create a Destination Management Plan)
- 7 actions are yet to be started (these are highlighted in yellow in the Appendix A report)

16. It should be noted that given this programme is traversing a number of new initiatives and new ways of working for the organisation, the level of collaboration and positive response has been high. However, there have been a number of projects that have needed greater time investment in the start-up phase than originally anticipated. This has been an important learning to reflect upon for future initiatives, but there has been a significant acceleration in progress in the second half of 22/23.

17. To support the programme management and progress monitoring of this activity, a portfolio tracker has been developed that brings together budget tracking, project structure, stage gate tracking and quarterly progress update information. A report from this portfolio tracker is provided in Appendix A, which contains the following information for each action:

- Year of planned delivery (2022/23, 2023/24 or 2024/25)
- Quarterly budget reforecast, DIA Better off funding contribution (\$)
- Responsible department and Project Status (not started, in-progress, completed)
- Quarterly update on the progress of each action.

18. In addition to the detail provided in Appendix A, the following key updates are noted.

Outcome 1: QLDC demonstrates ambitious climate and biodiversity leadership		
Action Number(s)	Progress Update	Budget
1.1b	<p>Council will join a certified carbon reduction programme</p> <p>Procurement for this service contract has been completed with Toitū Enviromark being selected as the successful applicant. This service contract has been signed for QLDC to join their “Carbon Reduce” certification programme. Preparations for the verification audit are underway with audit scheduled for Q4 of 2022/23.</p>	\$65,000

1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.11 and 1.15c	<p>Embedding Climate Action into Council Decision Making</p> <p>Several key CBP actions relating to embedding climate and biodiversity considerations into decision-making have been pulled together for delivery under a consolidated programme. Procurement through GETS is currently underway to deliver:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a review of how climate adaptation, mitigation and biodiversity are currently considered in QLDC’s decision-making processes, 2) the identification of a set of tools for assessing the adaptation, mitigation and biodiversity impact of initiatives in our 2024-34 Ten Year Plan, 3) development of guidance for officers and solutions for integrating solutions into other Council processes e.g. Council reports, procurement, business cases and policy development, and 4) and implementation plan and training. A cross-organisational working group is in place to co-design outputs with the consultant and ensure the tools meet the needs of QLDC. 	\$145,000
1.5	<p>2021-2031 LTP Carbon Baseline project</p> <p>The project to create a “carbon baseline” of the last Ten Year Plan investment programme is underway. An internal review of the information requirements for the identified projects has been completed and the consultant is now progressing the embedded carbon calculations to establish the 2021-2031 LTP baseline. Final carbon baseline report is expected in April 2023.</p>	\$160,000
1.22	<p>New Climate & Biodiversity Plan Website</p> <p>Procurement process for new website project is complete and the website project is now in progress. Sitemaps and wireframe designs have been developed and detailed design work is now underway. Estimated launch date is late April 2023.</p>	\$49,350
<p>Outcome 2: Our transport system is low-emission and better connected</p>		
<p>The New Zealand Upgrade Programme (NZUP) is dedicated to delivering additional public transport infrastructure, supporting the delivery of active travel routes and encouraging the use of public transport to local and visitors. This programme of works will greatly support QLDC’s Climate Action Plan 22-25 and be instrumental in reducing the district's transport emissions.</p> <p>The NZUP Queenstown package is facing significant cost escalations being driven by the current global inflation. Pricing for design and construction is underway on the entirety of the package, as well as RMA approvals. However, it is possible that less significant projects will be deprioritised to later years or cut from the programme completely. This is likely to have a significant impact on the ability to reduce transport emissions and may extend time frames of anticipated work from 2024, to 2027.</p>		
2.1	<p>Collaborate with Otago Regional Council and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency to plan and implement a local public transport system that is frequent, affordable, and meets the needs of local communities</p>	

	<p>The following updates are noted for this action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. ORC has increased bus driver salaries and targeted recruitment campaigns to ensure bus services meet current service level. QLDC continue to advocate for the importance of this and is driving for increased public transport in the district. b. Zero- emission public transport buses are now mandated by government from 2025 forward c. QLDC is a key partner in the ORC Public Transport Business Case. Wānaka Network Optimisation Business Case is going to market early 2023 which will explore public transport options. d. QLDC has installed 9 out of 12 planned shelters which provides a higher level of service including shelter, bike racks, lighting. In addition, a practice static bus bike rack for people to trial loading their bike. e. Funding support has been approved for an extended trial of the Link Upper Clutha Wānaka community shuttle trial. Planning for the funding structure and service design is currently in progress with support from QLDC Transport and ORC Transport teams. 	\$40,000
2.2	<p>Increase investment in active travel networks and infrastructure</p> <p>Various projects are in progress e.g. Anderson Road cycle path, Wānaka Pool to Schools project is progressing and implementation has commenced.</p> <p>Funding allocated from Transport Choices (CEFF) for Arthur's Point to Queenstown active travel and project investigations underway.</p> <p>Active travel counter installed in Frankton to encourage active travel in the district.</p>	Various project budgets (outside of the Resilience and Climate Action Team)
2.5a	<p>Expand electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in the district</p> <p>QLDC has worked with Meridian to support the installation of the following additional EV chargers across the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary Street Parking: 4 chargers • Queenstown Event Centre: 8 Chargers • Arrowtown: 4 chargers • Wānaka: 4 chargers 	Meridian funded

Outcome 3: Our built environment is low-emission and resilient

3.4	<p>Increase the promotion and availability of sustainable building design expertise and education products to the community</p> <p>QLDC has joined NZ Green Building Council (NZGBC) and made enquiries with the Superhome Movement. Members of the Building Services team have also attended a national NZGBC summit in which key updates from across the building and local government sector were shared.</p> <p>Procurement process is underway to engage a sustainable building design expert to review the 2007 Sustainable Building Guide. Investigations are also underway for Healthy Homes Toolkits.</p>	\$28,000
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Outcome 4: Our communities are low-emission and climate resilient

4.6a	<p>Support our communities to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change: Wildfire risk on Mt Iron, Ben Lomond and other “red zone” locations.</p> <p>A Wildfire Risk Assessment report for all Council reserves has been completed and a new Wildfire Working Group has been established. This group will help manage a broad programme of wildfire risk mitigation interventions including improved public information, recommended changes to red zone boundaries, vegetation management, and the pilot trial of wildfire detection sensor networks in critical risk locations.</p>	Parks Budget funded
4.7	<p>Launch Queenstown Lakes Food Resilience Network:</p> <p>Procurement approvals for project completed. Meetings with food system stakeholders across the district are being undertaken to assess the strengths and vulnerabilities of the local food system and evaluate the best options for launching a network/advocacy group model. Planning is also underway to organise a Food System Hui in April to co-design the network model and celebrate out local strengths through the launch of the QLDC Community Kai cookbook.</p>	\$27,190

Outcome 5: Low-emission businesses thrive

5.2	<p>Implement the actions outlined in the Destination Management Plan:</p> <p>Staff resourcing and funding to support the scoping of Project 9 - Carbon zero by 2030 has been agreed. This scoping activity will involve collaborative investigation with stakeholders across the tourism sector to assess what the priorities and opportunities are for emissions reduction investment.</p>	\$50,000
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5.5	<p>Develop sustainability toolkit for event organisers:</p> <p>Event organiser survey released in December. Waste and emission reduction guide for event managers is in development which will bring together best practice guidance from the sector. Scheduled launch of new toolkit is late April.</p>	\$24,600
Outcome 6: A flourishing natural environment		
6.1	<p>Collaborate with regional partners to undertake a review of the impact of climate change on indigenous ecosystems in the district.</p> <p>Options for conducting an assessment of biodiversity attributes across the district is in progress. If this progresses the study will support with evaluation of both climate change vulnerabilities and identification of opportunities to help optimise flora and fauna restoration.</p>	\$45,347
6.2	<p>Integrated work programme to deliver climate, biodiversity and wider environmental outcomes throughout our district</p> <p>A review of QLDC's biodiversity commitments in reserve management plans, policies and work programmes is complete. Ongoing engagement with community groups, ORC and other conservation organisations in the District to better understand the scope of biodiversity initiatives across the District. Signed contract for DIA Better Off Funding (BoF) returned to DIA and awaiting initial instalment to be released.</p>	\$100,000 (BoF)
6.5	<p>Integrate the protection, restoration and enhancement of blue-green networks and indigenous biodiversity corridors</p> <p>Procurement for Open Space Network Plans to deliver Blue-Green Networks underway as part of Spatial Plan Work Programme. Signed contract for DIA Better Off Funding (BoF) returned to DIA and awaiting initial instalment to be released.</p>	\$300,000 (BoF)

C. CLIMATE REFERENCE GROUP UPDATE

19. Vacancies have arisen as a result of former Chairperson Bridget Legnavsky moving overseas, and a decision to make the group fully independent by stepping down three QLDC elected members and one Otago Regional Councillor. These vacancies provide an opportunity to refresh the membership of the group and open up the nomination process to the general public. It also allows us to investigate the establishment of a specific rakatahi (youth) seat.
20. The campaign for nominations has been promoted through a number of channels including media release and social media. Information on the nomination process can be found here: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/2023/january/22-01-23-informed-and-driven-individuals-sought-for-climate-reference-group>.

21. The nomination process closed on Sunday 12th February and 25 expressions of interest have been received. An evaluation process is in progress to assess the expertise and credentials of all nominees so that a recommendation on appointments can be made. It is intended that the new members be appointed at the March Full Council meeting and following that a new Chairperson and Deputy Chair will be appointed.
22. The current Climate Reference Group membership is as follows:
- Alec Tang: Climate Action in Government Expert
 - Amanda Robinson: Whakatipu Community Leader
 - Barrie Wills: Biodiversity Expert
 - Dr Jim Salinger: Climate Change Expert
 - Dr Lyn Carter: nominated by Aukaha on behalf of runaka
 - Eleanor Trueman: Carbon Accounting Expert
 - Tony Pfeiffer: Upper Clutha Community Leader
 - Gail Thompson: nominated by Te Ao Marama on behalf of runaka

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

23. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the [Council's Significance and Engagement Policy](#) because it is consistent with existing strategy, and does not impact on the objectives set out in the Financial Strategy, Ten Year Plan or Annual Plan. Although the Climate and Biodiversity plan is of high importance to the district and community, the matter is of low significance due to the fact that current progress is aligned with the goals and outcomes of the plan.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

24. The Council has partnered with rūnaka representatives in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022/25 and undertakes regular engagement on its progress through the Climate Reference Group. Opportunities for alignment and integration with Kāi Tahu's Climate Change Strategy Te tāhū o te whāriki are regularly being discussed and explored.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

25. This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK00019- Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency and RISK00059-

Ineffective planning to support Climate Change Adaptation within the [QLDC Risk Register](#). This risk has been assessed as having a very high inherent risk rating.

26. The Climate and Biodiversity Plan supports Council to implement additional controls for this risk. The 70 actions with the plan represent a broad mitigation response to the challenges associated with emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and biodiversity restoration. The effectiveness of the implementation of these mitigations is supported through the advisory oversight of the Climate Reference Group and the governance of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

27. There are no variances to operational budgets or resource implications to consider at this time.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

28. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- The Climate and Biodiversity Plan is aligned to the principles of the Vision Beyond 2050, particularly Zero Carbon Communities, Disaster-Defying Resilience and Deafening Dawn Chorus <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
- Related policies, strategies and bylaws (including Management plans) include:
 - 2018-48 Infrastructure Strategy
 - 2018 Three Waters Asset Management Plan
 - 2018 Transportation Activity Management Plan
 - 2018 Waste Minimisation and Management Plan
- The QLDC Disability Policy was considered in the development of the Climate and Biodiversity Plan.
<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/FINAL-Disability-Policy-May-2018.pdf>
- Further reference to Council policies can be found here: <http://www.qldc.govt.nz/policies>

29. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the above named.

30. This matter is included in the [Ten Year Plan](#)

- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive - pg 5
- What's Changed?- pg 19
- Taking Climate Action pg 45
- Disaster Defying Resilience pg 54
- Climate Action – pg166
- Risk, Resilience and Climate Action- pg 167

31. This matter is also included in the [Annual Plan](#)

- Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive- pg 4
- What's Different?- pg 27

Legal Considerations and Statutory Responsibilities | Ka Ture Whaiwhakaaro me kā Takohaka Waeture

32. There are no legal considerations to take into account at this time.
33. The Council has statutory responsibilities under the [Climate Change Response \(Zero Carbon\) Amendment Act 2019](#) as a reporting organisation.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kīaka

34. The recommended option:
- Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The Climate and Biodiversity Plan plays a central role in delivering upon this purpose through its focus on environmental stewardship, community resilience and intergenerational equity;
 - Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
 - Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
 - Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Climate & Biodiversity Plan Portfolio Tracker
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