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Local Government Excellence Programme

Performance assessment framework

1

Council documentation



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Councils are required to provide all pre-reading and supporting documentation to assessors **at least two weeks** prior to their on-site assessment visit.

Please list all documents and date of publication below.

Documents/information provided	Date of publication
Recommended pre-reading	
1. Pre-election Brief	
2. Annual Plan	
3. Long-term Plan	
4. 30-year Infrastructure Strategy	
5. Financial Strategy	
6. Property Strategy	
7. Asset Management Plans	
8. Communications and Engagement Strategy/Plan and Communications and stakeholder audits	
9. Any key strategies/policies that are guiding documents for the council	
10. Annual resident/ratepayer and business satisfaction survey(s)	
11. Completed section17A service reviews or plans for undertaking service reviews	
12. Audit report with corrective actions	
13. Risk analysis/assessment for management (and how it works down to operations) and audit and risk committee	
14. Example(s) of a good business case/good investment decision	
Supplementary documentation	
1.	
2.	
3.	

2

Council and stakeholder interviews



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Councils are required to:

- List all elected members, staff and stakeholders who will be interviewed during the assessment process; **OR**
- Attach a copy of the completed standardised agenda for the assessment visit.

Interviewees (name and position)	
Council elected members and staff	Role
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
External stakeholders	Role
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

3

Council context



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Each council is requested to populate the following table to provide context for the assessors. Reference the latest available data from the noted websites.

Population (most recent figure, noting the source)	(reference Statistics New Zealand)
Council type (select one)	(reference LGEP Programme Prospectus) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large metro council (populations 100,000 plus);• Small metro or large provincial council (populations between 30,000 and 99,999);• Small provincial or rural council (populations less than 30,000); and• Regional council (excludes unitary authorities).
Land area (square km)	(reference Department of Internal Affairs)
Transport network (km)	(Reference Ministry of Transport) Describe road, public transport and any other transport infrastructure the council provides
Significant water bodies	List significant waterbodies; lakes, estuaries, rivers
Gross domestic product	(reference Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment) For region/territorial authority area
Growth/decline/stable population	(Reference Statistics New Zealand)
Population characteristics	(Reference Statistics New Zealand)



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Performance indicators

These performance indicators have been developed for all local authorities: territorial, regional and unitary.

Most of the indicators apply to all territorial (and unitary) authorities but a small number of indicators only apply to regional (and unitary) authorities, reflecting the functions of these councils.

You will need to complete the self-assessment (and you will only be assessed against) those indicators that are relevant for your type of council and the services you deliver.



Priority one: Governance, leadership and strategy

Performance indicators	
Vision, goals and strategy	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the council have its vision and goals (for its community as a whole) clearly articulated and is this easily accessible by the public? 2. What is the level of public and stakeholder involvement in setting the council's vision and goals (opportunities provided and actual involvement); and subsequently, how well aligned are the council's vision and goals with the community? 3. Does the council review its vision and goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least every three years? • Following major events? 4. Does the council's vision, goals and strategies drive its priorities (including plans, projects and expenditure)? 5. Does the council's organisational structure (committee structure and internal organisational structure) support the council's vision, goals and strategies? 6. Are there formal governance and operational structures in place with territorial authorities in the region to support the vision, goals and strategies for the region? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is proactive in the development of its vision, strategy, strategic goals and the Long Term Plan (LTP), and understands that it is the steward of the community's goals whilst in office. • Council's vision, strategy and goals are clearly articulated and published. • Council is united in its commitment to the pursuit of the vision, strategy, goals and Long Term Plan. • Strategic priorities are regularly discussed at council committees and full council meetings. • The vision, strategy and LTP are used as "core documents" to set the council's annual priorities and guide decision-making. • Executive reports to council and council meeting agendas are demonstrably aligned with strategy and strategic priorities, as documented in LTP. • Regular, full council consultation with the community on strategic matters. • Management proposals are actively challenged, especially for alignment with the vision, strategy and LTP. • Council strategic documents, policies and operating documents reviewed annually. • Council's decision-making is coherent and based on an assessment of available information and data.

Vision, goals and strategy (continued)	
7. Are the council's vision, goals and strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflected in the Chief Executive's performance agreement? • Aligned with the council's reporting and decision-making processes? 	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's organisational structure reflects the priorities established in the LTP (and other strategic documents), makes effective use of common capabilities and capacities within the organisation, and clearly delineates roles and responsibilities. • Good and effective connections, formal and informal, between the regional council and the territorial authorities in the region.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Professional development for elected members (including Mayors/Chairs)	
8. Does the council have a process for informing candidates of their roles, responsibilities and expectations prior to elections?	What to look for?
9. Prior to being elected, did elected and appointed members have sufficient information made available to them on their roles and responsibilities?	
10. Does the council have a meaningful induction programme for elected and appointed members that explains their roles (including the legalities of their roles) and responsibilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured, proactive, strategic and intentional professional development programme is in place for the Mayor/Chair and all elected members, with a baseline understanding of the individual strengths of each elected member. • Induction is comprehensive but staged so as to avoid "information overload" for elected members. • The elected members "governance" role is both explained and distinguished from management, and committed to from the outset. • Development opportunities are broader than simply attending courses, but include mentoring (where appropriate), practical training and shared learning with others. • A separate training budget is established for elected members.



Professional development for elected members (including Mayors/Chairs) (continued)	
<p>11. What is the quality of the induction process for elected members, with regards to the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roles and responsibilities of elected members• Working environment and culture• Aspirations of elected members• Council's vision, goals and strategies <p>12. Does the council have a process for reviewing (and if necessary, adapting) its induction process for elected and appointed members to ensure that it meets the needs of the audience and conveys the necessary information?</p> <p>13. Does the council provide ongoing training for elected members and provide the required support and funding for this?</p> <p>14. In the past year, what proportion of elected members have undertaken a course in line with their training plan (as per above)?</p>	
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Performance of elected members	
<p>15. In the last year, has the council undertaken a form of self-assessment (for example a survey amongst the elected members) on how well they believe they are individually and collectively functioning?</p> <p>16. Has the council Mayor/Chair sought feedback on their performance in the last three years and if yes, what was the feedback?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular independent performance reviews of elected members and/or elected members conduct an annual self-review and evaluation that includes some form of confidential 360 degree feedback.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Relationship/culture between elected members and the Chief Executive	
<p>17. What is the quality of the relationship (confidence, trust and transparency) between elected members and the Chief Executive?</p> <p>18. Do the elected members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the Chief Executive's performance (e.g. through a 360 degree feedback assessment)? Have a process for providing feedback and taking action when required? Provide ongoing training for the Chief Executive and the required support and funding for this? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor/Chair and Chief Executive publicly united on all strategic matters. Elected members understand and adhere to the tenet of collective responsibility. Elected members support management to deliver success for the community. The Chief Executive adopts a "no surprises" approach to keeping elected members informed of anything that is in the public interest or that may impact on the council's ability to deliver its Annual Plan. Elected members are provided with appropriate external/independent assistance to set and review the Chief Executive's performance.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive’s performance agreement is aligned with the council’s vision, strategy and goals. • Regular performance evaluation of the Chief Executive, at least once a year. • Structured and intentional professional development programme in place for Chief Executive and senior leadership team with baseline understanding of individual strengths of each member.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Health and safety framework	
<p>19. Is there a health and safety framework in place that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understood by elected members and management? • Implemented effectively and regularly monitored and tested (eg through self-assessment)? • Aligned with current legislation? <p>20. How frequently and at what council/management level is the council reporting its health and safety results?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety framework is in place and understood by both elected members and management. • Evidence of regular reporting and consideration of health and safety data to council. • Active pursuit and monitoring of the council’s health and safety programme. • Health and safety is embedded in the culture of the organisation.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Management	
21. In the last year, has the council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned an independent party to undertake a staff engagement/satisfaction survey? • Communicated the results back to staff? • Chief Executive taken action to address any issues identified? 	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive has a strong commitment to continuous improvement to the organisational culture. • Council uses a recognised and independent process or tool for diagnosing organisational culture. • The council uses feedback mechanisms (such as workshops) that lead to a visible organisation-wide commitment to a plan of action for improvement. • A strong “team” culture apparent.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Audit and risk committee	
22. Does the council have an audit and risk committee (or equivalent)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, how many members are independent or external to the council? 23. Does the audit and risk committee have a charter or terms of reference that outlines members’ roles, responsibilities and the reporting processes back to council?	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council maintains an active audit and risk committee that includes independent members with relevant qualifications, and receives appropriate independent advice in key areas (e.g. treasury).
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



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Information and advice	
24. Do elected members receive clear, accurate and sufficient policy advice on a timely basis to make good decisions? 25. Does the council make decisions in a timely, balanced and informed manner?	What to look for? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council produces timely, targeted and accurate management reporting and information that is provided to elected members in a user-friendly and comprehensive manner.• All positions, included status quo, are considered in the council's analysis.• Council's decision-making is coherent and based on an assessment of available information and data.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



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Assessors' recommended grading for priority one
Assessors' initial comments on performance in priority one
Areas where the council excels and why
Areas where the council could improve and why



Priority two: Financial decision-making and transparency

Performance indicators	
Financial strategy	
1. Does the council have an overall financial strategy?	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content of the council’s financial strategy complies with section 101A of the Local Government Act 2002. • The council’s financial strategy visibly demonstrates long-term thinking about the council’s cost structure, including different operating models for all operational and back-office activities. • The financial strategy is not only future-focused, but also identifies and quantifies the current state, and gaps between current and future states. • Detailed and quantifiable steps are outlined for achieving the long-term financial goals, and publicly reported on a recurring annual basis.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Financial data	
2. Is the council generating timely and accurate financial data (e.g. financial reports)? 3. Are elected members provided with a level of detail that is comprehensible and sufficient for them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities?	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation has an internal finance team that demonstrates an in-depth of understanding of what drives the council’s revenue and expenditure, through sophisticated financial modelling and analysis. • The council produces annual financial reports that are compliant with Part 3 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002. • The council produces timely and accurate (including accrual accounting) monthly financial reports for both operational expenditure and capital expenditure, and these reports are publicly available.



<p>4. Are councils using data to continually monitor, evaluate, forecast and refine their spending decisions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly outturns are produced that accurately reflect changes in financial position from the previous quarter. • End of year financial results are largely free of significant (and regular) operating surpluses or capital expenditure carry-forwards. • Capital and operating budgets have demonstrably clear links to strategic goals in the LTP. • The financial reports are presented in a succinct manner that enables analysis by reference to both operating activities (i.e. community services, infrastructure) and cost codes (i.e. personnel, IT, rent). The financial reports also contain thorough explanations of material variances in expenditure and revenue. • The council can produce accurate financial reports for both operational expenditure and capital expenditure in real-time. The council consistently matches actual revenue and expenditure to forecasts. The council can quickly adjust to unexpected changes in financial circumstances to produce accurate outturns/amendments to the financial statements. • Financial decisions are based on a business case which has the best possible, risk adjusted, NPV or NPC.
<p>Council self-assessment</p>	
<p>Assessor comments</p>	
<p>Risk and control function</p>	
<p>5. Does the council have an approved risk policy in place and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it monitored regularly? • Is the content (risks and risks mitigation) reviewed and updated by council at least annually? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council will have and regularly updates a risk register. The council will have an accompanying policy that outlines the council’s risk appetite in key risk areas. • Material risks will be effectively measured/scored, prioritised, mitigated and reported quarterly. • The council will be able to accurately quantify risk and demonstrate economic trade-offs between mitigation and non-mitigation of risks. • The council will have risk management and reporting standards comparable to the Institute of Director’s best practice.



<p>6. Do elected members receive sufficient/fit for purpose advice from management on the key risks and potential impacts (particularly as it relates to infrastructure)?</p> <p>7. Over the last three years, has the council updated its risk register on an annual basis?</p> <p>8. Does the council have a process for responding to significant risks (including risk mitigation) identified by the risk register?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council will be able to demonstrate and track the progressive mitigation of significant risk, and demonstrate ongoing identification of emerging risks with appropriate mitigation strategies. • The council will manage risk as more than a compliance exercise; rather as a means to strengthen its performance and resilience. • The council maintains a risk committee that includes independent members with relevant qualifications, and receives appropriate independent advice in key areas (e.g. treasury). • Elected members will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the key risks and their focus on them. • The council will be able to demonstrate substantive compliance with relevant Office of the Auditor-General standards and guidelines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purchasing/contracting; ○ Sensitive expenditure; and ○ Conflicts of interest. • Issues of financial probity will be dealt with to the highest standards including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintenance of a register of interests by the Chief Executive or legal counsel, and a list of all declared conflicts; and ○ All elected members will regularly update their interests and conflicts.
<p>Council self-assessment</p>	
<p>Assessor comments</p>	
<p>Budgeting</p>	
<p>9. On an annual basis, does the council review their budget against their strategies and priorities (rather than developing budgets from the previous year's expenditures)?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council will comply with the relevant sections of the Local Government Act 2012, particularly section 101A and Part Two of Schedule 10. • Council budgets for each activity area are zero-based. • Budgets will be presented in a form that is both succinct and transparent to non-accounting readers.



<p>10. Does the council's budget meet one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget is balanced?• Budget is unbalanced due to specific circumstances (i.e. it is deemed prudent to be unbalanced) and these circumstances are clearly set out and explained? <p>11. Does the council's budgets in their Long Term Plan (LTP) meet one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgets are balanced for all 10 years of the LTP?• Budgets are unbalanced for all or some of the 10 years of the LTP due to specific circumstances (i.e. it is deemed prudent for budgets in some of the 10 years to be unbalanced) but that the LTP takes the council to a financially sustainable position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgets will demonstrably have regard for past financial performance, such as areas of consistent under-spending or over-spending in activities.• Carry-forwards from year to year will be at a minimum, and will be confined to areas of expenditure where there is a compelling reason for not concluding capital projects.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Financial position of councils	
<p>12. Has the council reviewed its borrowing arrangements over the last three years and is satisfied it is receiving best value for money?</p> <p>13. Does the council either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a Standard & Poor's/Moody's/Fitch Group credit rating, and if so, what is their rating?• Not assigned a credit rating by Standard & Poor's/Moody's/ Fitch Group because it has deemed it is prudent not to do so (e.g. the council does not have sufficient debt to justify the costs)? <p>14. Does the council adhere to the following Government fiscal benchmarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Rates benchmark</i> - rates income complies with the limits set in the council's financial strategy?• <i>Debt benchmark</i> - debt complies with the limits set in the council's financial strategy?• <i>Balanced budget benchmark</i> - Revenue, excluding income from development and financial contributions, revaluations and vested assets, exceeds operating expenditure?• <i>Debt control benchmark</i> - net debt is less than or equal to forecast net debt in the council's LTP?	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council will comply with section 104 of the Local Government Act 2002.• The council meets its fiscal benchmarks.• The council has not had any adverse or disclaimed opinions from its audit.• Any qualifications to its audit report have been addressed within 12 months.• The council has addressed all issues identified in audit management letters (or otherwise provided a compelling reason otherwise).• The council's weighted average interest rates are below the national average.• The council's aged debt (90 plus days) is less than 10 per cent of revenue owing.• The council has a process for regularly reviewing, and where appropriate disposing of non-strategic assets.

Financial position of councils (continued)

15. Has either the council's LTP, annual plan or annual report been given one of the following:

- *An adverse opinion* (the most serious type of nonstandard) - expressed when the auditor concludes that misstatements are material and pervasive to the financial and/or non-financial information)?
- *A disclaimer of opinion* - expressed when the appointed auditor is unable to get enough appropriate audit evidence on which to base the opinion and the auditor concludes that the possible effects on the financial and/or nonfinancial information of undetected misstatements could be material and pervasive?
- *A qualified opinion* - expressed when the auditor, having got enough appropriate audit evidence, concludes that misstatements are material, but not pervasive, to the financial and non-financial information?



<p>16. In the last three years, has the council addressed and resolved any issues raised in the audit management letters in a timely basis?</p> <p>17. Does the council have an effective strategy and processes in place to manage debtors and rates arrears?</p>	
<p>Council self-assessment</p>	
<p>Assessor comments</p>	
<p>Transparency</p>	
<p>18. Does the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly set out how rates are set for its community? • Ensure information on rates is easily accessible and understandable by all ratepayers? <p>19. Is key financial information (e.g. annual reports) easily accessible online and provided in a manner that is easily understood by the general public?</p> <p>20. Does the council have a best practice procurement strategy and is it complying with it?</p> <p>21. Does the council place information on its major contracts online?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council complies with the Local Government Act 2002, in particular, sections 98, 100, 101, 102 and Schedule 10. • There is empirical data to justify all rates, particularly targeted rates. • The council explains in concise and simple language how it accounts for public versus private good in their user charges. • The council is able to clearly demonstrate that current and future generations are equitably sharing costs through debt versus rates allocation (particularly in relation to the renewal and replacement of infrastructure assets). • Capital expenditure is reported not only by reference to activities, but also as discrete capital projects so that the actual cost, scope and timing of capital expenditure are reported relative to budget. • The council has a procurement strategy that balances price and non-price attributes to achieve value for money and transparency. • The council maintains a procurement policy and documents all material procurement exercises. • All information is available online.



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22. Is the public engagement on major financial decisions consistent with the council's Significance and Engagement policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council's Significance and Engagement Policy identifies strategic assets, and is complied with.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Assessors' recommended grading for priority two	
Assessors' initial comments on performance in priority two	
Areas where the council excels and why	
Areas where the council could improve and why	



Priority three: Service delivery and asset management

Performance indicators	
Aligning services with strategy	
<p>1. How does the council’s asset management plan and service delivery strategy/plan align with the council’s vision/goals and strategies and demonstrate the achievement of community outcomes?</p> <p>2. Does the council’s asset management strategy/plan align with the council’s financial strategy?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has strategies (as distinct from plans) for the following (where relevant): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transport ○ 3 Waters ○ Fresh water management ○ Property, land (including parks, reserves etc.) and buildings ○ Infrastructure (eg flood protection) ○ Pest management ○ Enforcement and regulatory compliance. • Council asset strategies will reference the LTP. • Council asset strategies will include reference to neighbouring councils and/or strategic partners (i.e. NZTA) • Council asset strategies will be explicitly and coherently linked to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LTP outcomes; ○ Financial strategy (section 101A of the Local Government Act 2002); ○ District Plan strategic chapter; ○ Land Use Strategy; and Economic Development Strategy. • Council asset strategies will integrate with each other (and ideally electronically linked for ease of reference).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council asset strategies will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clearly identify the current state (including areas of sub-optimal performance); ○ Identify and prioritise desired future states.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Environmental monitoring and reporting	
3. How does the council deliver its obligations for environmental reporting under the relevant statutes and national direction?	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has quality assurance systems in place to fulfil its statutory obligations and meet the National Environmental Monitoring Standards eg ISO accreditation for environmental monitoring ; ○ Clearly identifies the current state (including areas of sub-optimal performance); ○ Has a strategy for investment in is environmental monitoring and reporting obligations and to respond to new obligations • Environmental data is available online and presented in an accessible format to the public,
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Determining, monitoring and assessing service levels	
<p>4. Does the council have an effective process for determining levels of service (including who pays and how) and is this clearly communicated with its community?</p> <p>5. Does the council regularly survey the degree of satisfaction of its residents and local businesses with its council services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, has the council communicated the results of this survey to its residents and businesses? • If yes, has management taken action to address any issues identified and provided the community with updates on these issues? <p>6. Does the survey allow the council to separately measure satisfaction within different segments (such as small/medium/large businesses, wards/constituency etc.) or satisfaction with specific projects or services?</p> <p>7. Does the council review the robustness of its surveying method/approach to ensure that it provides verifiable information on customer satisfaction?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has identified the key drivers and beneficiaries of services, and has appropriate charging programmes. • The council examines service experience. • The council appropriately surveys satisfaction using a recognised and robust tool, that enables and segmentation of the results by different groups, services or projects.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Service delivery models	
8. As part of its obligations under section 17A of the Local Government Act 2002, has the council put a plan in place to review its service delivery model at least every six years? If yes, does this include:	What to look for?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying options to partner with other councils, or other organisations to realise efficiencies? • Processes for addressing or implementing any recommendations that come out of the service delivery reviews? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council will have a timetable and format for conducting section 17A reviews in a manner that technically complies with section 17A of the Local Government Act 2002. • The council progressively reports on its section 17A timetable and review outcomes in its Annual Reports. • The council has established an appropriate institutional arrangement with other councils to progress the sharing of services and activities. • The council has ongoing reviews of all activities and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviews will balance “low-hanging fruit” opportunities with substantial reviews; and ○ Recommendations for change will identify and realise efficiency, effectiveness and/or qualitative benefits from new service delivery models. • Section 17A reviews will be substantively compliant, evidenced by substantial analysis and/or independent (or peer) reviews and/or recommendations for changing service delivery in some areas.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Service delivery capability and capacity	
9. Does the council have the human resources (internal and/or external) needed to deliver its service now and into the future?	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is adequate staffing within the council, and core skills and processes are identified and documented. • IT resourcing is sufficient. • The council’s operational model and business model work together. • Staff productivity programmes are in place.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff risks and succession planning is managed. • Council services are on-line. • The council understands its brand to the community and ensure consistency of that messaging through employees and contractors.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Service delivery quality – asset management	
<p>10. Does the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have effective processes and policies to measure, assess and report on service delivery? • Have an asset management system that facilitates the council to effectively monitor and maintain its assets, in order to provide the best possible service to its customers? • Subscribe to internationally recognised standards regarding the maintenance of assets (where relevant) relating to the five network infrastructure assets (roads, potable water supply, sewage treatment and disposal, storm water drainage, and flood protection works)? • Have actual benchmarks and measures of asset condition (not estimated quality)? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has service level agreements in place. • The council can record areas of complaint and service failure. • The council is able to measure dimensions of network efficiency (such as percentage water loss, flow pressure etc.) and can demonstrate network resilience. • The council is internationally accredited. • Council undertakes condition assessment and reconciles asset condition with its asset management and finance strategies



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconcile asset condition with the council's strategy? • Have the ability to effectively meet its mandatory regulatory obligations? 	
<p>Council self-assessment</p>	
<p>Assessor comments</p>	
<p>Service delivery quality – breakdown of individual services and infrastructure</p>	
<p>11. Infrastructure and other assets</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a database for each asset type and adequate knowledge of asset conditions. • Asset condition confidence will be high and tested/audited regularly. • The economic value of the assets is understood. • Asset databases will be integrated, allowing more informed investment decisions. • Levels of service have been developed with an informed audience and tested relative to cost of service. • Internal operations and maintenance will be benchmarked against an external standard. • The essential elements of section 101B of the Local Government Act 2002 will be met, namely the 30 year infrastructure strategy. • Asset planning will include more than basic options analysis (ie not just renew/replace). Changes to demand and alternative supply options will be considered. The 30 year infrastructure plan explains why it is being done. • Asset planning will include scenario modelling based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Variance analysis of key assumptions; and ○ "Sanity-check" of past five to ten years of modelling. • Outsourced operations and maintenance has been soundly procured and has ongoing KPIs against which contractor performance will be assessed.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourced contracts will explicitly link to key strategies and outcomes. • Contractor performance will be rigorously enforced (and the council will be able to give examples of corrective action for non-performance).
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
12. Drinking water	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All drinking water plants are certified and well maintained. • Drinking water supply is monitored for water-borne disease and all plants supplying over 500 people are fully treated. • Chlorine treatment is considered and clear decision-making processes regarding its use (or not) are in place. • All decisions around water treatments are risk-based. • Drinking water is priced on the basis of use.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
13. Stormwater	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater is managed separately from natural catchments. • Flood management plans are in place. • Stormwater management demonstrably matches environmental expectations. (e.g. silt, toxins off roads, etc are managed)
Council self-assessment	



Assessor comments	
14. Waste water	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state of the network is understood, including where over-flows are and where they are going. • Capacity and demand of the system is understood. • All water discharges are consented for a large number of years. • All sewerage plants are environmentally sound and have capacity for the next decade, or an incremental investment plan meeting any additional needs. • Any septic tank networks are managed proactively. • Grey water solutions are in place. • Iwi understands and agrees with discharge trade-offs.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
15. Transport	<p>What to look for?</p> <p>Roading network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All roads are known and are well maintained. • Roothing contractors are in place and are cost effective. • The council is able to measure network availability and address network closure issues. • The council is able to demonstrate cost effectiveness. • There is a common sense of purpose and a common direction addressing roading issues. • Modes of transport are well integrated including bus transport (where applicable). • Transport issues are managed as a network with smart roading thinking. • There is close integration with police and NZTA on road safety issues. • The economic value of a road is considered in renewals and replacement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a multi-tiered investment plan setting out future response to future transport demands. • Key route journeys are documented and monitored to ensure quality of journey <p>Public transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The network is well understood and has been reviewed at least 3 yearly to ensure that it is meeting customer needs • Effective contract management is in place where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ council works with operators to continually improve the services they provide to customers ○ all services comply with vehicle/vessel quality standards ○ appropriate mechanisms are in place to vary contracts • Trend data on reliability and punctuality, fare box revenue, cost, patronage and passenger kilometres is used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of services • Robust assets management processes are in place • Customer feedback on satisfaction is collected on an annual basis
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
16. Community services/facilities	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected service levels in libraries, community, sports facilities and parks are discussed with implications for the rating base (the council knows what it is spending, why it is spending it, for whom it is spending). • There are metrics expressed in terms of cost for patronage. • The user groups for those facilities are fully identified in consultation documents. • The council has a full understanding of desired demand patterns and organises facilities to meet those patterns. • There is appropriate user charging. • Meets Public Transport Operating Model contract requirements.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council actively monitors consumer engagement with services and responds with appropriate adjustments to service levels. • There is active consideration of public/private provision of community facilities.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
17. Regulatory services	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All regulatory intentions are met and there is an enforcement strategy that has regard to compliance cycles from education to regulatory actions, and is quantified. • Compliance is cost-effective and contracting out has been investigated • All regulations have been evaluated from a behavioural and compliance perspective, including the option of no regulation (where applicable).
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Policy planning/spatial planning	
18. Does the council's land use and infrastructure, RMA and LTMA planning take into account the communities' projected demographic changes, future infrastructure requirements, natural hazards and environmental factors?	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear, articulated statement of future development for the district/region over 30 to 40 years. • Land use intentions are linked to infrastructure plans. • The community backs land use intentions. • Future demographics are well understood and linked to plans. • Spatial planning includes air space and water rights. • Future land use intentions are clear.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a clear view of amenity value.• There is good co-ordination with district planning processes, especially land-use planning.• Civic assets are future-proofed (in case of use change).• The council understands micro-communities and their spatial needs.• There is a clear governance process over land use.• The council recognises the full spectrum of rights and enacts spatial policy with sound economic analysis.• There is regular economic review of spatial rules.• There is a high-quality and well-evidenced land banking strategy which is developed with the territorial authorities.• There is an operative Regional Policy Statement• Plans are reviewed within statutory timeframes• The requirements of National Policy Statements are given effect to or there is a process in place to do so• There are examples of combined approaches with Territorial Authorities for joint plan processes (eg hearings and consenting)• Any land purchases are clear and transparent and follow Government procurement rules.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Compliance with regulatory requirements	
<p>19. Has the council achieved the minimum standards that building consent authorities (BCAs) must consistently meet to implement and perform their building control functions, as audited by IANZ?</p> <p>20. Has the council met the timeframes imposed under the RMA for making decisions on resource consents (see reporting to National Monitoring System)?</p> <p>21. Over the last three years, has the council adhered to the following Government essential services fiscal benchmark (and if not, has this been due to it being prudent not to and it is comprehensively explained?):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Essential services benchmark</i> - capital expenditure on the five network infrastructure services (roads, potable water supply, sewage treatment and disposal, storm water drainage, where relevant) and flood protection works) is equal to or exceeds depreciation on those services? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council addresses the approval pathway from initial time of assessment to approval. • All deadlines are met and there are no corrective actions. Consent times are met and/or exceeded. • Filing is electronic. There is a formalised continuous improvement plan for consent processing. • Consent seekers are clear on what is needed of them. • Major local building firms have pre-approved planning in place. • Amenity values are correctly priced
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Accountability reporting	
22. Does the council provide the public with information on delivery against its stated strategy and work programme (i.e. are we doing what we said we would do) in an accessible and transparent manner?	What to look for?
23. Does the council report on and provide the public with annual information the completion of its asset renewals programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report contains more than a snapshot of council activities (ie performance of past year relative to last three to five years). • Annual Report acknowledges things that have not gone well (rather than being hidden/ignored), and sets out corrective action or lessons learned. • The performance of the council is clear in the last financial year and is clearly articulated for future years. • Reports contain effective use of tables, graphs and other visuals. • Asset Management Plans and other technical reports are produced in a summary, plain-English form for the lay-person. • Capital projects are reported across financial years, and over-runs/under-runs on cost and time are clear, and within scope. • There is minimal use of works in progress accounts. • Council achieves a clean audit review on its Annual Report regarding operational services. • The council has metrics of wellness and the manner that council activity contributes to it.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Capital investment decisions and delivery	
24. Is the council applying robust analysis processes when making investment/ownership decisions and capital projects (i.e. cost of capital analysis, or taking a better business case focus)?	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major capital expenditure or recurring operational expenditure over a documented threshold based on council policy will have a documented business case, prior to an investment decision. • Capital projects are seen as a programme of capital investment.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All but minor capital expenditure (over a documented threshold based on council policy) will have the essential elements of a better business case (strategic, economic, financial, commercial, management). • Council business cases will have genuinely assessed all reasonable options, including doing nothing. • Business cases are facilitated by accredited better business case practitioners (or equivalent), and with appropriate technical expertise (internal or external) within the five case model. • Council business cases will be qualitatively robust and recognised by agencies such as Officer of the Auditor-General and NZTA.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
<p>25. Is the Council using robust project management disciplines to deliver services and projects within budget and stated timeframes, and do they address project governance, scope, reporting, change control and independence?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital projects over a documented threshold (based on council policy and organisational scale) will have a project plan, project manager and project reporting process. • Capital projects over a documented threshold (based on council policy and organisational scale) will have comprehensive project management including a documented governance structure, a detailed project plan using recognised project managements tools, independent quality assurance and/or project managers, a reporting framework that documents timelines/milestones, risk, change control, and budget-actual expenditure. • Capital projects will have accredited/recognised project managers who are independent to the business users (internal or external). • The project documentation will include a benefits register. • There will be post-project implementation and benefits realisation assessments. • Completed projects will be individually reported in the Annual Report against original scope, budget etc.



Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Operational Risk Management	
26. Is the council investing in risk mitigation across their asset portfolio?	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council knows and understands its investment assets including all land assets. • The council is able to express its balance sheet in the context of its investment demands, and free cash flow, over the next decade. • There are no hidden reserves such as unvalued land assets. • The council has a treasury management plan including appropriate levels of diversification. • The council has a capitalised understanding of its rating base and future assets needs.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



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Assessors' recommended grading for priority three
Assessors' initial comments on performance in priority three
Areas where the council excels and why
Areas where the council could improve and why



Priority four: Communicating and engaging with the public and business

Performance indicators	
Communication and engagement strategy	
<p>1. Does the council have a communications and engagement strategy (or equivalent documents and policies) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with the council's vision, goals and strategies? • Includes a broad (and community appropriate) range of touch points? <p>2. Is the council's communications and engagement strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well understood and implemented by elected members and council staff? • Regularly reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the communities needs? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has and operates an integrated communications strategy that promotes the vision, strategy and values of the council internally and externally. • The council can demonstrate its communications strategy is understood, applicable and operates across elected members, the Chief Executive and all council staff. • The council has a strategy that reaches community and other target segments via channels that are most used by those target segments. • Communication reflects a clear and well understood strategic direction that is appropriately integrated in council operations, structures and finances. • The council can demonstrate that the strategy has been well communicated to the community and other target segments via appropriate channels and that the messaging is being heard and understood. • The council operates a pro-active, two-way and open system for communication, with appropriate mechanisms for taking into account community and staff feedback. • The council demonstrates consistency in all council content and expressions, including accessible published reports and material that incorporates brand values and identity (and can prove so). • The council has clear, unambiguous and well-aligned internal and external messaging in marketing and communications across social, online and other channels (and can prove so).
Council self-assessment	



Assessor comments	
Digital engagement	
<p>3. What is the quality of the council's overall digital engagement (including websites, social media, rates-based calculators, online forums etc.) and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it fit with its community's needs? • Are the community's' needs reviewed regularly? 	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has clear, unambiguous and well-aligned internal and external messaging in marketing and communications across social, online and other digital channels (and can prove so).
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Reputation	
<p>4. Does the council measure or assess the council's reputation with its' customers and key stakeholders and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, does this survey or approach enable the council to segment the results by different groups? 	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council uses professional quantitative survey methods, in addition to public submissions, to understand local needs and to determine its own performance. • The council can demonstrate that the council's vision, stakeholder plan and engagement is generally effective, preferably by reference to stakeholder surveys or at least a satisfaction survey with stakeholder segmentation.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Media	
<p>5. Does the council have a media and social media policy/strategy and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this well understood and implemented by elected member and staff? • Does this policy/strategy align with council's overall vision and strategies? <p>6. How well are designated staff and elected members trained in the use of a range of media (i.e. PR and social media)?</p> <p>7. In terms of the council's process in engaging and utilising news media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Mayor/Chair available to the media for key matters? • Are all media queries responded to openly and in a timely manner? • Are there briefings with the media on important announcements? <p>8. Is the media well briefed and kept up-to-date on council activities?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council operates a media strategy that is a mix of pro-active and responsive, is timely and uses language and style appropriate to the channel as appropriate. • A communications approach that invites media into the organisation to understand direction and leadership personnel. • The council regularly monitors traditional media and digital coverage, and evaluates marketing and communications through internal and external surveys (at least a "satisfaction survey") to understand effective reception of council messaging and brand positioning with key targets.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Engagement with iwi/Maori	
<p>9. Does the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a strategy for engaging with local iwi and hapu, which may include formal mechanisms such as MoUs or charters? • Have effective relationships with hapu and iwi? 	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has an active stakeholder engagement plan that operates for elected members and officers with identified local iwi and hapu. • The council regularly meets at an elected and officer level with local iwi and hapu to understand current and future local needs and issues, and generally operates a transparent stakeholder approach. • The council successfully communicates the council vision and major strategies and plans to local iwi and hapu.
<p>Council self-assessment</p>	
<p>Assessor comments</p>	
Engagement with diverse communities	
<p>10. Has the council proactively sought to engage with diverse sectors of their community (eg young people, refugees) over the last three years?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has an active stakeholder engagement plan that operates for elected members and officers with identified community stakeholder groups (priority stakeholders identified by topic, impact and alignment).
<p>Council self-assessment</p>	
<p>Assessor comments</p>	



Engagement with the general public	
<p>11. Does the council clearly articulate to its community the value that its ratepayers receive from their rates?</p> <p>12. How well are consultation documents presented (i.e. are they clear, concise and easy to respond to) and are they easily accessed by all sectors of the community?</p> <p>13. Does the council have a process for recording information received from community engagement, passing this information through to the relevant council units to assist in future policy and decision-making, and providing feedback to the community on what resulted from their engagement?</p> <p>14. Has the council proactively sought to engage with community (non-business) organisations over the last three years?</p> <p>15. Does the council have clear and accessible processes for customer complaints, compliments and disputes?</p> <p>16. How quickly does the public get a response from the council for a general enquiry?</p>	<p>What to look for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council consultation documents are readily “digestible” by the public. This means that they:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Are succinct, accessible (including online) and highlight key information (positive and negative);○ Are balanced, rather than self-promoting;○ Do not “hide” adverse information in long sections of text;○ Provide simple summaries of information, placing voluminous mandatory, statutory or other information in appendices;○ Use charts, graphs etc. to display or explain detailed or complex information;○ Have a consistent look and feel across all documents, and from year to year;○ Financial information is presented in a form that is both succinct and transparent to non-accounting readers.• The council has an active stakeholder engagement plan that operates for elected members and council staff with identified stakeholders (priority stakeholders identified by topic, impact and alignment).• The council ensures priority stakeholders include community representatives, neighbouring councils and regional councils, and national bodies such as NZTA and relevant government departments.• The council regularly meets at an elected member and council staff level with priority community stakeholders to understand current and future local needs and issues, and generally operate a transparent stakeholder approach.• Successfully communication of the council vision and major strategies and plans to priority stakeholders.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council can demonstrate that the council’s vision, stakeholder plan and engagement is generally effective, preferably by reference to stakeholder surveys or at least a satisfaction survey with stakeholder segmentation.• The council demonstrate a commitment to understanding and reflecting local/ regional priority community needs and aspirations.• The council has an open and transparent culture fostering community input and involvement.• The council operates an active engagement programme with local, regional and national stakeholders who have impacts.• The council practices consultation that is substantive and not merely validating committed decisions.• Council decisions and engagement is not captured by “squeaky wheels”.• Council uses professional quantitative survey methods in addition to public submissions to understand local needs and to determine its own performance.• Operate a pro-active, two-way and open system for communication with the council with appropriate mechanisms for taking into account community and staff feedback.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



Civil defence and crisis communications	
17. Does the council have a clear communications strategy for civil defence and other crises that is easily accessible and understood by the general public?	What to look for?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has in place and practices a civil defence/crisis preparedness plan that has defined roles for communications staff, is clear, widely known and regularly tested for effectiveness.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	
Engagement with business and key stakeholders	
18. Does the council have a strategy for engaging with businesses and other key stakeholders (primary sector, industry, residents and environmental organisations)?	What to look for?
19. Over the last three years, how effective has the council's relationship with business organisations and other key stakeholders been?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has an active stakeholder engagement plan that operates for elected members and council staff with identified business and other key stakeholders (priority stakeholders identified by topic, impact and alignment). The council regularly meets at an elected and council staff level with priority business and other key stakeholders to understand current and future local needs and issues, and generally operate a transparent stakeholder approach. The council successfully communicates the council's vision and major strategies and plans to priority business and other key stakeholders. The council can demonstrate that the council's vision, stakeholder plan and engagement are generally effective, preferably by reference to stakeholder surveys. The council demonstrates a commitment to understanding and reflecting local business needs and aspirations. The council has an open and transparent culture fostering business input and involvement by other key stakeholders.
20. What is the level of partnering between businesses and other key stakeholders and the council?	
21. Is the council providing businesses and other key stakeholders with clear, accessible information on its economic development, relevant strategies, plans or activities, and the opportunity to comments on these strategies, plans and activities?	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council operates an active engagement programme with local, regional and national business and other key stakeholders who have local/ regional impacts• Consultation with business and other key stakeholders is substantive and not merely validating committed decisions.• Council decisions and engagement is not captured by “squeaky wheels”.
Council self-assessment	
Assessor comments	



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Assessors' recommended grading for priority four
Assessors' initial comments on performance in priority four
Areas where the council excels and why
Areas where the council could improve and why

5

Overall comments



A measure for better community value.

Assessors' recommended CouncilMARK™ rating
Assessors' overall comments