

17 April 2024

Waikato District Council

Via email: [consult@waidc.govt.nz](mailto:consult@waidc.govt.nz)

## **Re. Enhanced Annual Plan and 2025 Long Term Plan**

Dear Waikato District Council,

We are writing to provide comment on your Draft 2024/25 Annual Plan and next year's Long Term Plan 2025-35. It is vital that Waikato District Council implements an Enhanced Annual Plan that is financially responsible whilst continuing to invest in the critical services that the Waikato needs.

As you may know, Property Council is the leading not-for-profit advocate for New Zealand's most significant industry, property. Property is the second largest industry in the Waikato, with property providing a direct contribution to GDP of \$2.8 billion (12 per cent) and employment for 18,030 Waikato residents. We connect property professionals and represent the interests of 94 Waikato based member companies across the private, public, and charitable sectors.

Property Council sympathises with the financial situation facing Waikato District Council and acknowledges that there is upward pressure on rates or debt. We appreciate that there is regulatory uncertainty around initiatives such as 'Local Water Done Well' and transport funding. As such, Property Council is comfortable with the decision to pursue an Enhanced Annual Plan for 2024/25.

We are also pleased to see that Waikato District Council has proposed a responsible approach to development contributions for 2024/25, that helps ensure stability for the property sector and supports continued development of new housing supply across the Waikato.

When it comes to the development of next year's Long Term Plan 2025-35, Property Council strongly supports Waikato District Council making use of alternative funding and financing tools. Example of these include such as targeted rates, public-private-partnerships, or Special Purpose Vehicles ("SPVs") as enabled under the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act.

For example, SPVs are an important tool for funding and financing infrastructure in a fair and equitable manner. SPVs are advantageous as they sit off a Council's balance sheet and do not impact debt levels. Property Council has previously supported Tauranga City Council's use of SPVs for the Transport System Plan and Civic Precinct project, as well Wellington City Council's use of SPVs for the Moa Point sludge minimisation project.

There is a critical and ongoing role for central government in helping fund new infrastructure. With the recent change in Government, there is increasing growing discussion regarding City and Regional Deals between central and local government that could unlock funding and create certainty for future infrastructure investment. We recommend exploring a City and Regional Deal for the Waikato region, to help unlock new funding for infrastructure (such as for water or transportation).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Enhanced Annual Plan and 2025 Long Term Plan. For any further enquiries, please contact Sarah Rundstrom, Central Regional Manger via email: [Sarah@propertynz.co.nz](mailto:Sarah@propertynz.co.nz).

Yours sincerely,



**Morgan Jones**  
Central Region Committee Chair  
Property Council New Zealand