



# Hamilton City Council – Staff Feedback

## Controller and Auditor-General's Draft Annual Plan 2025/26

### Controller and Auditor-General

16 May 2025



# Improving the Wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Hamilton City Council is focused on improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians through delivering to our five priorities of shaping:

- **A city that's easy to live in**
- **A city where our people thrive**
- **A central city where our people love to be**
- **A fun city with lots to do**
- **A green city**

The topic of this staff feedback is aligned with all of Hamilton City Council's five priorities.

## Council Approval and Reference

This staff feedback was approved by Hamilton City Council's Chief Executive on 16 May 2025.

Feedback # 801

It should be noted that the following feedback is from staff at Hamilton City Council and does not, therefore, necessarily represent the views of the Council itself.

## Introduction

1. Hamilton City Council staff welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the **Controller and Auditor-General's Draft Annual Plan 2025/26**.
2. Our feedback focuses on the following four sections of the Draft Annual Plan 2025/26.

## Effective delivery of initiatives in the Government's growth strategy (page 21)

3. Staff support the initiatives and planned work outlined regarding carrying out (in 2025/26) a performance audit to assess how well public organisations are working together and with Tourism New Zealand and the tourism sector to promote New Zealand as a tourist destination and plan for sustainable growth.

## Better use of data, insights, and community feedback (page 25)

4. Staff support using data, insights and feedback to drive decision-making and to provide an understanding of how public sectors gather, synthesise and use these data to feature in their decision-making.
5. Hamilton City Council has been part of a communication and engagement community of practice and has heard from several other councils about their processes to gather and use community feedback. Based on this, we seem to have very clear, established processes, a bigger team (e.g. dedicated researchers) and many councils have asked us for our engagement timeline and templates to assist them in their work.
6. In the climate change area, it will be interesting to understand what climate change data, scenarios, and modelling are accessible and being utilised and if there is a need for a consistent framework for councils to use for climate change data.

## Planning for and responding to extreme weather and emergencies (Page 23)

7. Staff support the work on both flooding and drought, as both are risks that we are aware may affect Hamilton and the Waikato Region. The OAG assessment of the Council's climate work has helped to shape our current priorities, and we envisage these two assessments helping to review and inform our approaches going forward.

## Examining what public organisations are doing about threats to trust (page 35)

8. The rise in mis/disinformation on social media has become one of the biggest challenges for public sector communication teams. It is fast-moving, often wildly inaccurate, and sometimes downright dangerous. Mis/disinformation is not new, but the scale, speed and channels available today are very different to the issues faced by local government in previous generations.
9. In 2023, Hamilton City Council introduced a Mis/Disinformation Policy to help us manage this space. It gives staff the authority to respond on behalf of the Council when misinformation risks public safety, trust, or the smooth running of Council activities. This is supported by clear guidelines on warnings, breaches and bans. Because social media moves at the speed of outrage, Hamilton City Council repurposed a role to have a specific community management focus - keeping pace with the comments, clarifying confusion, and making sure facts don't get buried beneath the noise.
10. One of the tactics we're using is a myths and misunderstandings webpage <https://lnkd.in/gr9V4iR7>. This single source of truth allows us to link directly in replies, calmly correct inaccuracies, and keep key information in one place.
11. We would like to see the OAG's work in this area go beyond an examination and provide sector-wide support, advice, and recommendations. We would also like the scope to include the impact of misinformation on local government's civil defence role and responses.

## Further Information and Opportunity to Discuss our Feedback

12. Should the Controller and Auditor-General require clarification of the feedback from Hamilton City Council staff, or additional information, please contact **James Clarke** (Corporate Planning and Advocacy Manager) on **027 808 9580**, or email [James.Clarke@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:James.Clarke@hcc.govt.nz) in the first instance.
13. Hamilton City Council representatives would welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of this feedback in more detail with the Controller and Auditor-General.

Yours faithfully



**Lance Vervoort**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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