



OPEN Briefing: Events Strategy

2 July 2026 – 11.30am

Attendees

Elected Members: Mayor Fauono Laban, Cr Barratt, Deputy Mayor Brown, Cr Dyer, Cr Edwards, Cr Lewis, Cr Mitchell, Cr Parkin, Cr Puketapu, Cr Ravi, Cr Shaw, Cr Stallinger, Cr Tonga-Grant, Cr Yung.

Staff: J Miller, Chief Executive; A Blackshaw, Director Neighbourhoods and Communities; J Kingsbury, Director Economy and Development; R Hardie, Acting Director, Strategy and Engagement; B Cato, Chief Legal Officer; J Randall, Democratic Services Administrator; J Young, Democracy Advisor

Presenters

H Ellison, Events Lead.

Introduction

The briefing provided an update on implementation of Council's Events Strategy, one year into its three-year programme. It outlined the shift from Council directly organising events to enabling and facilitating community, cultural, arts and sporting events. It also highlighted growth in supported events, improved organiser satisfaction, new multi-year partnerships and the challenges arising from increasing demand.

Key Objectives of the Briefing

The objective of the briefing was to update elected members on the implementation of the Events Strategy, one year after its adoption in July 2025. The briefing provided an overview of progress against the strategy's five focus areas – simplify, partner, grow, enable, and promote – and outlined the key achievements and measurable outcomes delivered during the first year of implementation. It also identified emerging challenges associated with the programme's growth and highlighted priorities for the next phase of implementation.

Presentation by H Ellison, Events Lead

Slide 1 – Header

Slide 2 – Events Strategy

Slide 3 – Strategy: Focus Areas

Slide 4 – Implementation

Slide 5 – Key Outcomes

Slide 6 – Outcomes

Slide 7 – Managing Success and Growth

Slide 8 – What's Next

Slide 9 – Maintaining Momentum

Slide 10 – Closing

Questions and discussion points

- In response to questions, the Events Lead advised that reinstating Highlight: Carnival of Lights was not feasible due to its high cost and the absence of funding. She noted that Council's role is to enable and facilitate events rather than deliver them directly, and that officers were working with partners to attract similar large-scale events, although discussions remained commercially sensitive.
- The Events Lead advised that planning for major sporting events at Fraser Park had been improved following lessons learned from the National Junior Girls Rugby Tournament. Future tournaments would be scheduled earlier to minimise conflicts with summer sports, with ongoing coordination between Events and Parks and Reserves to balance major events, community access, and field maintenance.
- The Events Lead advised that officers worked with WellingtonNZ to support major regional events and continued to pursue central government partnership opportunities where available. She noted that while the programme was delivering strong economic returns, continued growth would require additional investment.
- The Events Lead advised that comparable historical event data was unavailable, as comprehensive performance reporting had only commenced under the current Event Strategy. She noted that the current approach was delivering better value for money than previous Council-run events and that Council remained committed to supporting and attracting cultural and ethnic community events.
- Regarding opportunities to partner with the New Zealand Festival of the Arts, the Events Lead advised that they would investigate the opportunity further. She noted that Council already worked closely with the organisers of the Hutt Arts Trail and Heritage Week.
- The Events Lead advised that officers would engage with local schools to explore opportunities to support youth music events, while maintaining Council's role as a facilitator of community-led initiatives rather than an event organiser.

Next steps

The Events Lead undertook to engage with schools to explore opportunities for youth music events.

Briefing materials

Attachment 1 – Presentation: [OPEN EM Briefing – Events Strategy Implementation – July 2026 FINAL.pdf](#)

The briefing closed at 12.00pm