

Full Council

5 February 2026

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [5]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028 six-monthly progress update

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the implementation progress of the Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028 (CBP) from July – December 2025 in order to meet the Council resolution of 31 July 2025 requesting six monthly progress reporting to Full Council.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report.

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Context | Horopaki

1. On 31 July 2025 Council adopted the Queenstown Lakes Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028 and resolved to “direct staff to report to the Full Council with updates on the Climate and Biodiversity Plan every six months.” This resolution strengthens oversight of Queenstown Lakes District Council’s (QLDC) Resilience & Climate Action programme by ensuring regular progress reporting to Full Council while also enabling more targeted, risk-focused reporting to the Risk & Assurance Committee. This six-monthly progress update is the first since adoption of the CBP.
2. This CBP is the third successive action plan delivered in response to the Council’s declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in June 2019. It sets the overarching priorities for Council’s commitment to climate and biodiversity action and gives direction to other strategies and plans that deliver core activities and services of Council.
3. The CBP is structured around seven outcome areas, each underpinned by a programme of actions for 2025 to 2028. It places Te Taiao (the natural environment) at the core of action planning and also includes a new outcome area for the local energy system.
4. The Plan has a theme of “Accelerating Transformation through Partnerships”, and the attached progress report includes updates from partner organisations that are supported by QLDC through the CBP.



Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

CBP 2025-2028 PROGRAMME STATUS

5. The Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028 includes 50 committed actions. At the six-month reporting point, 48 actions are underway and two are yet to commence. All actions remain within the implementation timeframes originally committed to in the Plan.

ACTION STATUS	Count	%
Complete	0	0%
In progress	48	96%
Not started	2	4%
On hold	0	0%
	50	100%

6. To support effective governance oversight of programme delivery, a **Red, Amber, Green (RAG)** status framework has been adopted. This framework provides a consistent view of action progress against agreed scope, timeframe, and resourcing availability, similar to Council's Monthly Highlight Reports and Annual Reports project criteria metrics and tolerances.

- **Green (On track):** The action is progressing as planned and is expected to be delivered within scope, timeframe, and approved budget. Any risks are minor, well understood, and managed through normal business processes.
- **Amber (At risk):** The action has emerging risks, delays, or dependencies that could affect delivery if not addressed. Mitigations are in place, and the action is considered recoverable without material impact to the overall programme.
- **Red (Off track):** The action is not currently expected to be delivered within agreed scope, timeframe, or CBP resourcing. Significant issues have been identified, and the action requires re-scoping, additional resourcing, or a formal decision to pause or amend delivery.

7. Of the 48 actions currently in progress, 42 are assessed as green and 6 are assessed as amber, reflecting actions with identified risks or dependencies that are being actively managed. No actions are currently assessed as red.
8. The following section provides a summary of several green actions that have been deemed as key wins from the last 6 months, along with details of those amber actions that have been deemed at-risk. The full details of the progress of all CBP actions can be found in the Attachment A - Queenstown Lakes Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028 Progress Report.

GREEN ACTIONS- KEY WINS

9. ● Action 2.5 Organisational GHG emissions reporting:

- Progress on organisational greenhouse gas emissions reporting represents a critical foundation for effective climate governance across Council. The completion of QLDC's FY2024–25 emissions inventory, supported by independent verification by Toitū Envirocare in November, provides a robust, auditable baseline for tracking performance over time.
- This action underpins multiple CBP outcomes by enabling evidence-based investment decisions, prioritisation of emissions reduction projects, and transparent reporting to elected members and the community. In particular, it provides the data and assurance needed to justify major capital investments such as LPG-to-clean-energy conversions, solar and battery systems, and fleet transition, while strengthening Council's preparedness for future climate-related disclosure expectations.

10. ● Action 2.7 Climate scenario analysis:

- The development of climate scenarios for the local government sector is a significant enabler for long-term, risk-informed decision-making. QLDC's active participation in the national Local Government Climate Scenarios initiative has helped establish a shared framework for understanding how different climate and socio-economic futures could affect Council services, infrastructure, and financial resilience.
- These scenarios provide a common reference point that supports subsequent work on climate risk assessment, infrastructure planning, and investment sequencing. Importantly, this action will enable Council to test whether current strategies, asset plans, and growth assumptions remain robust under different future conditions, strengthening the integration of climate risk into the Long Term Plan, 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy, and major capital programmes.

11. ● Action 4.2 Empowering community-led electrification:

- The recent establishment of the Queenstown Electrification Accelerator (QEA) partnership has the potential to support GHG emissions reduction, energy resilience, and equity outcomes at scale, across the district. By providing trusted, independent advice and coordinated delivery support for households and businesses, this action helps translate Council strategy into practical, on-the-ground change.
- The QEA partnership underpins delivery of multiple CBP and Destination Management Plan (DMP) actions by accelerating uptake of clean energy technologies, reducing exposure to volatile energy costs, and supporting a just transition through targeted programmes such as Solar for Renters. The partnership also creates a platform for future initiatives, including alignment with the Ratepayer Assistance Scheme, community energy

projects, and demand-side flexibility, positioning the district to respond proactively to both climate and energy system challenges.

AMBER ACTIONS- KEY RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

12. ● Action 2.1 Emission reduction investments:

- This action is assessed as Amber due to the timing of planned LPG-to-clean-energy conversion projects relative to the emissions reduction milestones required under QLDC's Toitū carbonreduce certification. While these projects are expected to deliver significant step-change reductions in organisational emissions, the installation and commissioning timeframes mean that benefits realisation will occur later than originally profiled.
- To mitigate this risk, Council staff are actively engaging with Toitū to review and formally adjust the emissions reduction timeframe. Preliminary feedback from Toitū indicates that a change request to the delivery schedule is acceptable and will not jeopardise QLDC's carbonreduce certification, provided the projects remain fully committed and progress is demonstrable.

13. ● Action 2.2 Embedding climate and biodiversity into Council decision-making:

- This action is assessed as Amber due to current organisational capacity constraints and the challenge of embedding new tools, frameworks, and behaviours during a period of very high operational and project delivery pressure. Staff across the organisation are managing substantial caseloads, alongside planning for the transition to a Water Services Council-Controlled Organisation (WSCCO), which adds complexity to change implementation and sequencing.
- To mitigate these risks, the change programme is being deliberately staged, with a focus on prioritising high-impact process improvements, aligning training with existing professional development and induction programmes, and integrating climate and biodiversity considerations into core templates and systems to minimise additional workload.

14. ● Action 2.4 Sustainable procurement:

- This action is assessed as Amber due to the limited organisational capacity available to lead development of new sustainable procurement guidance and template updates at the same time as other significant changes are underway within Council's procurement processes. Introducing sustainability requirements alongside broader system and process upgrades increases the risk of inconsistent application, reduced clarity for users, and slower uptake of new requirements.

- To mitigate this risk, Council is adopting a staged transition approach, allowing core procurement improvements to be embedded first, followed by the integration of sustainability requirements once the updated processes are stable. This sequencing will support higher quality implementation and reduce the risk of disruption to procurement delivery.

15. ● Action 5.2 Best practice carbon management:

- This action is assessed as Amber due to resourcing constraints to drive adoption of best practice carbon management across Council processes. While tools and methodologies are available, consistent application requires an internal champion and training programme to coordinate capability building, embed assessment requirements into project and investment frameworks, and support staff to apply whole-of-life carbon considerations effectively.
- To mitigate this risk, Council is scoping an options paper that explores how “whole of life” assessments can be best integrated into existing capital projects along with resourcing plan to support the development of an internal carbon management programme. This will align with work that is underway to integrate Sustainable Project Management principles into existing project delivery so that Council can progressively build staff capability in best practice sustainable project management.

16. ● Action 5.5 Sustainable Council buildings:

- This action is assessed as Amber due to the challenge of driving consistent sustainability improvements across Council’s property portfolio without creating pressure on approved budgets or extending project delivery timeframes. Retrofitting sustainability measures into live projects can introduce cost and programme risk if not carefully sequenced.
- To mitigate this risk Council is focusing on capturing “quick win” opportunities where sustainability upgrades align naturally with planned refurbishment and renewal activity, such as installing solar when roofs are being replaced. In parallel, sustainability objectives are being prioritised earlier in the project lifecycle for major capital projects, including the Queenstown Events Centre upgrades, to ensure environmental performance is embedded through design and procurement rather than added later.

17. ● Action 7.2 Support growth of the environmental services sector:

- This action is assessed as Amber due to resourcing constraints to support the growth of an environmental enterprise network (in alignment with Economic Diversification Plan Project 3.3). Council has an important enabling role to help reduce barriers, improve coordination, and create the conditions that allow capable local organisations and practitioners to scale up their impact and investment. Progress to date has focused on clarifying the specific market and capability gaps where Council intervention can add the

most value, and identifying targeted opportunities for support through opportunity identification, facilitated learning and knowledge sharing, and improved access to data.

- As a next step, Council is exploring the feasibility of a biodiversity credits workshop with national and local experts to test readiness, support market understanding, and identify practical next steps for landowners and practitioners. This staged approach will help ensure Council support is well targeted, proportionate, and aligned with local sector maturity.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

18. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2024. Whilst the programme of work is of significant interest and importance to the community, it is consistent with existing policy and strategy, has been undertaken within approved budgets, and will not adversely affect Council's ability to deliver core functions, or affect levels of service.
19. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are elected members, and the wider Queenstown Lakes district community.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

20. The CBP was developed with guidance from the Climate Reference Group, which includes Kāi Tahu representation. Kāi Tahu mana whenua rūnaka state their support for the CBP on page 5 of the Plan.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

21. This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK10012 Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

22. There are no operational or capital expenditure requirements in addition to approved budgets or Annual/Long Term Planning.

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

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

- Our Strategic Framework | Queenstown Lakes District Council specifically delivering on community outcomes ‘Deafening dawn chorus’, ‘Zero carbon communities’ and ‘Disaster-defying resilience’ in Vision Beyond 2050
- 2024-2034 Long Term Plan: climate and biodiversity action as a priority in the district
- 2024-2054 30-year Infrastructure Strategy: infrastructure resilience
- Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan
- Queenstown Lakes District Plan
- Waste Management and Minimisation Plan
- Regenerative Tourism Plan: Travel to a Thriving Future
- Economic Diversification Plan: New Pathways to a Thriving Future
- Queenstown Lakes District Welcoming Plan 2024-2027
- QLDC Disability Policy

24. This matter is included in the Long Term Plan/Annual Plan and in the 30 year Infrastructure Strategy.

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

25. 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-Kiaka

26. 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 CBP 2025-28 plays a central role in delivering upon this purpose through its focus on environmental stewardship, community resilience, and intergenerational equity. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Queenstown Lakes Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025-2028 Progress Report
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