Service Level Agreement

25 August 2025



Clown nudibranch mating with egg ribbons 📷 Shaun Lee.

Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tīkapa Moana
Te Moananui-ā-Toi

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Between

Auckland Council (the Administering Authority)

And

Hauraki Gulf Forum (the Forum)

A. BACKGROUND

Section 28 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 (the Act) establishes that one of the constituent parties must be appointed as the administering authority for the Hauraki Gulf Forum (the Forum).

The administering authority must administer and service the Forum and ensure, as far as practicable, that the functions, powers, and duties set out in Part 2 of the Act are carried out.

For administrative purposes, the Forum is to then be treated as a committee of the administering authority (s.28(5)).

Since May 2000, this role has been fulfilled by the Auckland Regional Council and subsequently Auckland Council from November 2010. Over that time, support has been provided through a dedicated Executive Officer role, with additional support provided by other council specialists.

This agreement formalises the accountability arrangements between the Hauraki Gulf Forum and the Administering Authority (as per section 28 of the Act). It sets out the services required to support the Forum, including democracy and meeting services, executive support, financial management, and communications. The scope and funding of these services will be agreed annually between the Forum and the Administering Authority, through the approval of the Forum's annual work programme and budget.

Section 27 of the Act requires that the Auckland Council must store the Forum's records and make them available when the Forum requires.

B. SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY

The Forum acknowledges that the Administering Authority is employing staff and dedicating staff resources to fulfil the Administering Authority functions, including appointing a full-time Executive Officer, and dedicated support from democracy services and finance staff.

The Administering Authority will:

1. Provide **Lead Officer** functions to hold the relationship between the Forum and the Administering Authority, including:

a. Overseeing the Administering Authority's functions, including employment of the Executive Officer and the delivery of other support functions
b. Ensuring that commitments made in this service level agreement are upheld
c. Ensuring host impartiality in providing the support functions
d. Supporting the smooth running of Forum meetings
e. Supporting effective Executive Officer and governance relationships
f. Supporting governance functions including the formal process approval of agenda and report documents, once the content has been approved by the Co-Chairs.

2. Provide **Executive Officer** functions through a dedicated Executive Officer role, including:
a. Being the first point of contact for Forum inquiries and working closely with the democracy services provider, the financial services provider, and any communications service providers to ensure the Forum operations are efficient, effective and any risks are managed
b. Supporting the Co-Chairs and the Forum to develop an annual work programme and an annual budget, for approval at Forum meetings
c. Leading, coordinating and project managing the successful delivery of agreed Forum projects
d. Managing contracts/contractors to support the delivery of the Forum's agreed work programme
e. Supporting the Forum to deliver its statutory reporting obligations, including the Annual Report and State of the Environment report
f. Coordinating constituent party reporting in a manner that supports the Forum to co-ordinate activity and budget across jurisdictional boundaries
g. Meeting with constituent party bodies at least once annually to inform them of the work of the Forum
h. Coordinating the Technical Officers Group meetings, including scheduling, hosting, preparing agendas and minutes as required
i. Providing technical and governance advice and input to the Co-Chairs, Forum, Forum members, consistent party representatives, stakeholders and the general public
j. Development of press releases for Co-Chair approval to support effective Forum advocacy work
k. Management and use of any logo or proprietary material developed by the forum.
l. Co-ordination with other agencies (including individual Forum constituent parties) on the public release of documents or media announcements including the use of their logos.

3. Provide **democracy services** for Hauraki Gulf Forum meetings and workshops, including:
a. Preparation of a schedule of Forum meeting dates, and agenda deadlines, prior to the commencement of each calendar year
b. Providing for meetings with the Co-Chairs and relevant support staff/providers ahead of Forum meetings to ensure meetings are effective and productive
c. Preparation and distribution of the agenda as directed by the Co-Chairs
d. Provision of secretarial and democracy support to the Chair and the Forum meetings to ensure that meetings are run effectively, and decisions are recorded correctly
e. Advertising Forum meetings as required under the Local Government Act 2002 and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

f. Providing governance advice regarding conduct of Forum meetings and develop or review any policy or standard of the Forum that supports effective interaction. between the members of the Forum and also any interaction with the public at a meeting.
g. After consultation with the Executive Officer and Co-Chairs, arranging an effective and safe meeting venue for Hauraki Gulf Forum meetings and workshops.
h. Arranging any catering services required by the Co-Chairs.
i. Provide adequate records to the Auckland Council to enable the Auckland Council to meet its records requirements as set out in Section 27 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.

4. Provide **financial management** support, including:
    a. Administering the member contributions
    b. Producing financial reports as required, but not less than biannually
    c. When directed, seeking funding contributions from other funding agencies and administering these funds in a transparent manner
    d. When directed, distribute Forum funding to approved entities in a transparent manner
    e. In conjunction with the Co-Chairs, set internal policies for the oversight and management of the Hauraki Gulf Forum revenue and expenditure.

C. WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER - CO-CHAIRS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A high-trust, professional working relationship between the Co-Chairs and the Executive Officer is essential to the Forum's success.

The following working expectations are agreed between the Co-Chairs and the Administering Authority (as host of the Executive Officer) to support this relationship:

1. **Frequency of communications:**
    a. Regular formal check-ins will be scheduled between the Executive Officer and the Co-Chairs at least monthly to discuss priorities, progress, risks, and issues.
    b. Informal communication will occur as required by email, phone or online messaging to enable responsiveness to emerging matters or time-sensitive matters.
    c. Either party may request additional meetings if required.

2. **Direction and decision making:**
    a. Outside of the formal Forum meetings, strategic direction to the Executive Officer will be provided jointly by both Co-Chairs. Where practical, this will be provided in writing to ensure clarity.
    b. The Executive Officer may initiate lines of inquiry or provide advice on matters relevant to the Forum's purpose, priorities and work programme.
    c. Where immediate decisions are required between formal check-ins, direction may be provided by one Co-Chair provided it is within Forum-approved work, and promptly communicated to the other Co-Chair.

3. **Delegations:**

a. The Executive Office operates under formal delegations from the Administering Authority including delegated financial authority in accordance with the authority's delegations register.
b. The Co-Chairs will not give direction contrary to those delegations.
c. The Co-Chairs will act in accordance with the Governance Statement and the specified Co-Chairing arrangements, performing a governance role and providing strategic direction and oversight. The Executive Officer role is focused on operational management. From time to time, the Co-Chairs may engage in operational matters by exception, for example in relation to significant risks or reputational issues.

4. **Support to Co-Chairs:**
    a. The Executive Officer will provide support to the Co-Chairs to enable their engagement with Forum members, including preparing communication material, drafting correspondence or organising meetings where necessary.

5. **Professional conduct**
    a. All interactions between the Co-Chairs and the Executive Officer will be conducted respectfully, professionally in good faith.
    b. If a matter arises that cannot be resolved between the Executive Officer and Co-Chairs, the issue may be escalated for resolution via the Auckland Council Lead Officer.

D. ENGAGEMENT WITH FORUM MEMBERS

a. The Co-Chairs play a key leadership role in engaging with Forum members on matters of governance, strategy and collective direction. The Executive Officer and Co-Chairs will work together to ensure that members are well-supported in their roles and that any significant issues or risks are communicated promptly and appropriately.
b. The Executive Officer will provide at least one written update between quarterly meetings to keep members informed of progress, emerging issues, and upcoming opportunities.
c. Where appropriate, the Executive Officer may work with individual Forum members, or groups of members, on specific topics, initiatives or follow-up actions.
d. Communications with Forum members will respect the governance role of members, and ensure that any significant issues or risks are communicated promptly through the Co-Chairs.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FORUM:

1. On an annual basis at a Hauraki Gulf Forum meeting, the Forum will formally agree the work programme and associated budget for the following financial year including:
    a. The quantum of membership contribution payable for the following financial year.
    b. The costs of administrative and servicing functions of the Forum, to be supplied by the Administrative Authority in accordance with this agreement.
2. On an annual basis, when formally agreeing the budget for the following financial year, the Forum will consider appropriate allocation of any accumulated funds.

3. A review of the effectiveness of the Administering Authority support and Service Level Agreement will be undertaken at least every three years, as directed by the Co-Chairs.

F. AGREEMENT TERM

1. The term of this agreement is from date of resolution and will expire on date of resolution plus three years (as per section 28(1) of the Act, a minimum of three years), with an option to renew for a further three years.
2. The Forum acknowledges the employment arrangements (and related commitments) in place by the Administering Authority. Should there be an intention not to renew this agreement or to change the agreement by either party, these commitments will be taken into account.

Date adopted

25 August 2025