



TE KOROWAI

**Whiria te korowai, kia
taurikura te tāngata.**

Weave the cloak, and
people will thrive.



**A culture of
continuous
improvement
at the core of
every council
across the
country >**

Councils are the backbone of our communities, working tirelessly to stretch limited resources and deliver value.

That's why it's essential for councils to receive the support they need to succeed. Te Korowai has been created to do just that. As a trusted partner, Te Korowai helps councils understand their performance by identifying their most pressing challenges and opportunities, guiding them towards growth and continuous improvement. It goes beyond assessments and benchmarking to provide insights and analysis that can be turned into real action and meaningful change.

Through three strategic stages, you'll be supported by independent experts who ensure a tailored approach that aligns with your unique challenges and aspirations.

From CouncilMARK to Te Korowai

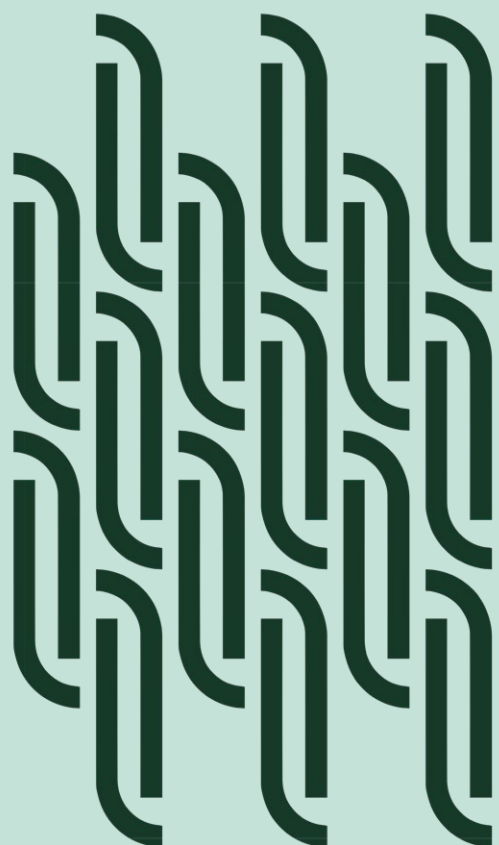
Te Korowai (formerly known as CouncilMARK) has been rebranded and refined to better reflect its evolving purpose and long-term vision. While it was once centred on a final grade, often seen as a one-off evaluation, now, Te Korowai is about driving continuous improvement. It marks a shift from assessment to collaboration, from gradings to progress, and from static reviews to a future-focused approach — helping councils adapt, innovate, and lead with confidence.

About Te Korowai

Whiria te korowai, kia taurikura te tāngata "Weave the cloak, and people will thrive."

The name Te Korowai is inspired by the traditional Māori cloak, woven from many strands to symbolise leadership, protection, and unity. Like the korowai, this programme is about strength and support, giving councils the tools and guidance they need to face challenges and achieve excellence. It emphasises collaboration and partnership, strengthening connections between councils, communities, and Māori. It also fosters growth and transformation, encouraging continuous improvement and adaptability.

Te Korowai reflects the values of inclusivity, respect for Māori knowledge, and a commitment to making local government stronger for the future.



PROGRAMME PATHWAYS >

Te Korowai has three levels of involvement, so councils can join in based on their development needs and resources. While we encourage councils to commit to the full programme, including the Integrity Survey, on-site assessment, and development workshop, we understand that flexibility is important.

For the best results, we recommend completing a full cycle every three years, which includes performance evaluations and action planning. This process usually takes about four to six months and follows three main steps: discover, deep dive, and deliver.

If you're looking to start small, the Integrity Survey is the perfect entry point. The Integrity Survey is an early intervention tool that helps councils identify their strengths and areas for improvement, boosting organisational integrity. It's the first level of involvement and is recommended annually. It can also be done on its own, separate from the full programme.



STAGE ONE/ DISCOVER HĀRO

(8-12 WEEKS):

- > Onboarding and briefing
- > Integrity Survey for all staff and elected members
- > Discovery and evidence gathering for the Performance Assessment Framework



STAGE TWO/ DEEP DIVE MIRI

(4-6 WEEKS):

- > On-site visit and evaluation
- > Scheduled interviews with elected members, council staff, Māori and iwi, external stakeholders and community representatives
 - + Draft evaluation report preparation
 - + Council feedback on the draft report
- > Evaluation panel submission
- > Independent Evaluation Panel Assessment of council's performance
- > Awarding of development benchmarks



STAGE THREE/ DELIVER WHATU

(4-6 WEEKS):

- > Final outcome reports for the Integrity Survey and priority assessments
- > Debrief with council and on-site development workshop



HÄRO DISCOVER



Self-assessment

Integrity Survey

The first step in our programme is the Integrity Survey. Integrity is vital for public trust. Councils need to demonstrate they are trustworthy and act in the best interests of all New Zealanders to maintain public confidence. This is built through competence, reliability, honesty, and genuine relationships between the council, local communities, Māori and iwi, businesses, and other key stakeholders.

Based on the Integrity Framework developed by the Office of the Auditor-General, the Integrity Survey is designed to help your council reflect on how to build a culture of integrity within your organisation. It helps your council understand your organisation's current integrity levels and how elected members and staff perceive them.

Within te ao Māori, the concepts of tika, pono and aroha are present in conversations about integrity. When considered together, the principles tika, pono and aroha convey doing the right thing with integrity and love.

HOW IT WORKS >

The Integrity Survey is an early intervention tool designed to help you identify strengths and areas for improvement. It's most effective when shared with all elected members and staff.

The survey is anonymous, and the results are compiled and analysed by an independent consultant. A detailed report is produced, allowing you to track your organisational integrity each year. Councils have the flexibility to decide how the survey is distributed, who takes part, and how the results are shared.

The survey is divided into two main sections, focusing on key working practices and essential elements for maintaining high standards of integrity.

WAYS OF WORKING/

- > **DISPLAYING AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY:** Ensuring consistent and dedicated efforts to uphold integrity in all council activities.
- > **BUILDING ALIGNMENT ACROSS COUNCIL:** Ensuring that all members and departments are unified in their commitment to integrity.
- > **PRIORITISING POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS:** Encouraging a work environment where positive relationships and effective collaboration are paramount.
- > **BEING TRANSPARENT ABOUT ACTIONS AND PERFORMANCE:** Promoting openness and accountability in all council operations and decision-making processes.
- > **MAKING IT EASY:** Streamlining processes and removing barriers to ethical behaviour, making it straightforward for everyone to act with integrity.
- > **BEING INCLUSIVE:** Fostering an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and everyone feels empowered to contribute to the culture of integrity.

BUILDING BLOCKS/

- > **VISION AND VALUES:** Establishing a clear and compelling vision for integrity and ethical behaviour, aligned with the council's core values.
- > **ETHICAL LEADERSHIP:** Developing leaders who exemplify and promote ethical behaviour and integrity.
- > **CODE OF CONDUCT:** Implementing and upholding a comprehensive code of conduct that guides the behaviour of all council members and employees.
- > **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** Creating robust policies and procedures that support ethical practices and integrity.
- > **PEOPLE PROCESSES:** Ensuring that recruitment, training, and performance management processes emphasise and reinforce integrity.
- > **LISTEN UP/SPEAK UP:** Encouraging a culture where individuals feel safe and supported to voice concerns and report unethical behaviour.
- > **INTEGRITY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Defining clear roles and responsibilities related to maintaining and promoting integrity within the council.
- > **ENABLERS AND BARRIERS TO INTEGRITY:** Identifying and addressing factors that either facilitate or hinder the practice of integrity in the council's operations.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK/

We offer specific Performance Assessment Frameworks for different types of councils covering the six priority areas below:

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- 1/** Governance, leadership and strategy;

 - 2/** Financial decision-making and transparency;

 - 3/** Service delivery and asset management;

 - 4/** Communicating and engaging with the public and business;

 - 5/** Te Tiriti o Waitangi; and

 - 6/** Climate Change.

The Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) is used to draw out the information needed for the assessors to evaluate your council's performance and prepare them for the onsite visit.

The assessment offers your council a platform to openly share your challenges and successes. Each priority area is structured into high level themes containing a set of discovery questions and the opportunity to attach any necessary evidence such as plans, strategies and policies.

Once the Performance Assessment Framework is complete, the senior leadership team and the Mayor/Chair or a wider group of elected members will do an internal review of all provided evidence before the PAF is submitted.

PRIORITY 1:

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND STRATEGY

Te Korowai provides a framework to enhance councils' governance, strategy, and leadership capabilities. This assessment empowers councils to foster inclusive decision-making, uphold integrity, and achieve sustainable community outcomes by strengthening vision alignment, stakeholder engagement, operational efficiency, and accountability.

Priority one covers:

- > VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGY: A review of council goals and their alignment with community needs along with the involvement of the public and stakeholders in decision-making.
- > COUNCIL BUSINESS: A review of the structures, processes and responsibilities to promote integrity and the efficient running of council.
- > ADVICE, REPORTING AND DECISION-MAKING: A review of the use of advice and reports to enable timely and transparent decision-making.
- > CHIEF EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE: An evaluation of the role of elected members to ensure the Chief Executive is effective.
- > ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE: An appraisal of professional development training and support for elected members and an assessment of how well elected members evaluate their own performance.
- > PARTNERSHIP WITH IWI AND MANA WHENUA: A review of the councils work to partner with local iwi and mana whenua.

PRIORITY 2:

FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING AND TRANSPARENCY

Effective financial management and performance reporting are essential for councils to responsibly steward public funds and govern effectively. This assessment aims to empower councils to optimise resource allocation, maintain financial sustainability, and uphold high standards of governance. By evaluating financial strategies, the use of financial data in decision-making, risk management, and reporting practices, councils demonstrate accountability to their communities.

Priority two covers:

- > FINANCIAL PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING: A review of the councils' financial strategy in relation to its vision, goals and delivery.
- > BUDGETING AND COST ALLOCATION: An analysis of the alignment of council budget with strategy.
- > AUDIT, RISK AND CONTROL: A review of how the council manages risk.
- > FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: An appraisal of how the council demonstrates good performance to the community and maintains the appropriate level of debt.
- > TRANSPARENCY: An evaluation of accessibility and transparency of financial information and procurement practices.
- > INVESTMENT ASSETS: A review of how the council manages its investment assets.

PRIORITY 3:

SERVICE DELIVERY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Assessing service delivery and asset management is vital for councils to ensure their operations meet community needs. This helps align services and asset management with the council's vision and goals, enabling them to deliver sustainable, cost-effective, high-quality services that meet regulations and public expectations, while ensuring long-term community well-being and satisfaction.

Since different councils have different responsibilities, which affect how they manage services and assets, priority three takes these differences into account.

Priority three covers:

- > **ALIGNING SERVICES WITH OUTCOMES:** A review to ensure that council services meet the desired community outcomes.
- > **DETERMINING, MONITORING, AND ASSESSING SERVICE LEVELS:** An examination of how well service levels align with community outcomes, how they are communicated and costed, and how accountable the council is for its performance.
- > **ASSET MANAGEMENT:** A review of how effectively the council manages its assets in a cost-efficient way.
- > **PEOPLE, CAPABILITY AND CULTURE:** An evaluation of the council's ability to deliver services, attract and retain diverse talent, foster an inclusive and engaged workplace culture, and use technology to improve service quality, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness now and into the future.
- > **COMMUNITY SERVICES:** A review of how the council prioritises and delivers community services and facilities, ensuring they meet financial goals, community needs, and quality standards to maximise engagement and use.
- > **TRANSPORT:** An assessment of the council's efforts to improve the transport network's quality, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability, while boosting efficiency, reducing environmental impact, and promoting accessibility and inclusivity for everyone.
- > **CAPITAL PROJECTS:** A review of major capital investment decisions, project delivery, and how the council holds itself accountable to the community for project outcomes.
- > **REGIONAL, DISTRICT AND SPATIAL PLANNING:** A review of how the council integrates spatial planning with its Infrastructure Strategy and Long-Term Plan, accounts for climate change in its District Plan, and balances competing interests to meet community goals.
- > **REGULATORY SERVICES:** An assessment of how the council ensures its regulatory activities meet legal requirements, public expectations, and community outcomes across different areas.
- > **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:** A review of how the council addresses community resilience in the face of climate change and manages the increasing frequency of emergencies.

PRIORITY 4:

COMMUNICATING AND ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC AND BUSINESS

Effective communication and engagement are vital for councils to build trust, transparency, and community satisfaction. This assessment involves creating a strategy to connect with the community, partner with Māori and iwi, and engage with businesses and key stakeholders. It empowers councils to strengthen relationships, enhance accountability, and achieve community-focused outcomes.

Priority four covers:

- > **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY:** A review of council's engagement activities and reputational integrity.
- > **CRISIS MANAGEMENT:** An appraisal of council's communications strategy for civil defence and emergency management response.
- > **MEDIA:** A review of the council's media strategy, relationships and provision of media training.
- > **ENGAGEMENT WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT:** A review of how the council is engaging with government agencies on issues affecting their community.
- > **ENGAGEMENT WITH MĀORI AND IWI:** An assessment of how the council is working with local Māori and iwi.
- > **ENGAGEMENT WITH BUSINESSES:** A review of how the council engages with the business community and key stakeholders.

Priority areas 5 and 6 are purposely kept outside the assessment framework to allow for the different needs and approaches of councils across the country, depending on where they are in their development. Since there's no common benchmark for these areas, the priorities give councils a way to evaluate themselves, engage with Māori and iwi, community and stakeholders, and plan future actions. While there won't be an independent assessment, the framework helps councils track their progress over time by using self-evaluation and feedback. This provides a practical tool for councils to focus on development and resource investment, without having to create a new system.



PRIORITY 5:

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is crucial for local government. This assessment supports councils in ensuring that 'kāwanatanga' duties are not overstepped, respecting the 'tino rangatiratanga' guaranteed to Māori. It aims to enhance Māori representation and participation in council activities, foster effective engagement with Māori communities, and prioritise ongoing professional development in Te Tiriti, te reo, and tikanga.

Priority five covers:

- > **UNDERSTANDING OBLIGATIONS:** Fulfilling legal, moral, and ethical obligations under Te Tiriti and promoting and valuing strong Māori representation and participation at all council levels, including elections, activities, and decision-making processes.
- > **ENGAGEMENT WITH MĀORI:** Engaging effectively with Māori, iwi and hapū.
- > **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Committing to ongoing professional development in Te Tiriti-related areas such as te reo, tikanga, cultural competence, and local history.

PRIORITY 6: CLIMATE CHANGE

Local government directly experiences the effects of climate change on people's lives, infrastructure and businesses. This assessment offers a framework for councils to evaluate and improve their readiness and response to climate change. It guides councils in conducting thorough risk assessments, covering exposure to hazards and vulnerabilities. This priority area aims to help councils build resilience and response capabilities for effective climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Priority six covers:

- > **RISK ASSESSMENT AND ADAPTATION PLANNING:** An evaluation of councils' exposure to climate change risks and vulnerabilities across natural, built, socio-economic, and cultural environments.
- > **MITIGATION READINESS:** An assessment of council preparedness and ability to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- > **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** An examination of council engagement with communities impacted by climate change, including Māori and other affected groups.
- > **INCORPORATION OF CULTURAL VALUES, INCLUDING TIKANGA MĀORI, INTO CLIMATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIES:** A review of the integration of cultural values and practices related to the environment and sustainability in developing climate change adaptation strategies.
- > **CAPACITY BUILDING:** A review of the training and development opportunities for staff and elected representatives to enhance capacity and understanding across the council.

MIRI DIVE DEEP



Independent assessment

Our Te Korowai Programme Manager will work with you to schedule the onsite visit and assign assessors to your council.

Before the visit, you'll need to complete the Integrity Survey and Performance Assessment Framework.

We suggest having an early meeting with elected members, staff, and external stakeholders to explain the programme's purpose and benefits. It's important everyone sees this as a continuous improvement process, not an audit, as honest and open participation is key to meaningful results.

The Programme Manager can also hold briefings for your team, and you'll have the chance to learn from other councils that have already completed the process.

The onsite visit usually lasts two to three days, depending on the size of your council. During this time, the assessors will meet with your elected members, leadership team, staff, Māori and iwi, and stakeholders to get a full understanding of your operations. This visit is a great chance for a thorough, 360-degree review of your organisation, where you can share both your successes and challenges. All discussions are held in a safe, non-judgmental setting, which is essential for getting an accurate picture of your council's performance and development needs.

After the visit, assessors will evaluate your council's performance in priority areas 1-4, using data gathered during the visit. Your performance evaluation and development benchmarks will be based on both the evidence you provided in the Performance Assessment Framework and what was observed during the onsite visit.

WHATU DELIVER



Outcome report, debrief and support

The assessors will draft a report for the council to review and provide feedback on, making sure everything is accurate and clear. Once the report and the completed Performance Assessment Framework are finalised, they're sent to the Independent Evaluation Panel. The panel will do an overall impact analysis and set development benchmarks for priorities 1-4, as well as an overall performance benchmark.

The final report will give a summary of the Independent Evaluation Panel's findings, including an overall statement on the council's performance and feedback on each priority area.

After the report is completed, the Programme Manager will organise a debrief session. Our independent development consultant will help you create an action plan, which your council will then own and put into action.

DEVELOPMENT BENCHMARKS >

Our performance range outlines a roadmap for your council's journey. While our reporting and insight framework provides a robust snapshot of your council's performance, continuous improvement is the goal.

Our development benchmarks incorporate a Te Ao Māori perspective, evaluating council performance through the phases of Mauri Moe, Mauri Oho, Mauri Tū, and Mauri Ora.

Mauri Moe (Inactive):

At this stage, councils may not yet recognise the opportunities for improvement, reflecting an initial level of performance where growth and development have yet to begin.

Mauri Oho (Aware):

Here, councils recognise the need for change and begin to engage actively. This phase marks a transition towards improvement and exploration of new opportunities, indicating a moderate level of performance.

Mauri Tū (Active):

Councils in this state are committed to change and actively implementing plans to achieve their goals. They demonstrate a high level of performance through proactive actions and effective governance.

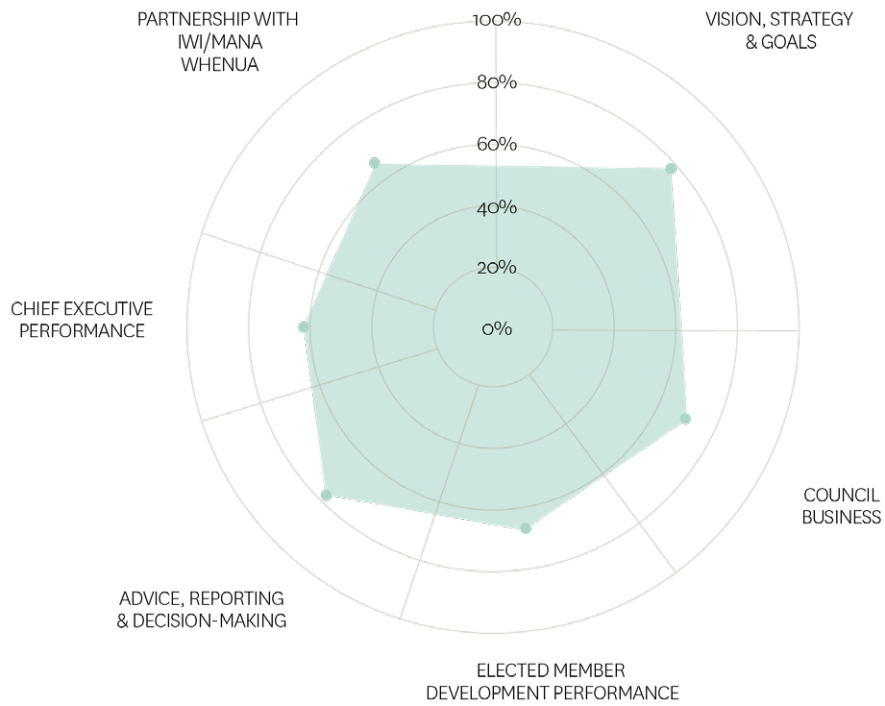
Mauri Ora (Thriving):

The pinnacle of performance, councils in this phase are not only aware and active but also thriving. They continuously evolve, adapt, and excel in their operations and relationships, embodying vitality and resilience.

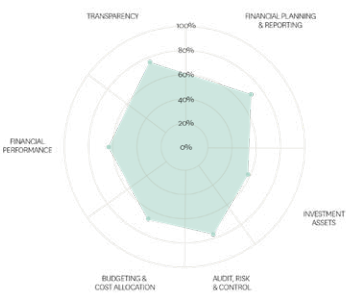
These phases provide a framework to assess councils' journey towards excellence, acknowledging that performance is dynamic and cyclical.

To support councils in understanding their performance, in-depth mapping of priority areas and overall performance is provided.

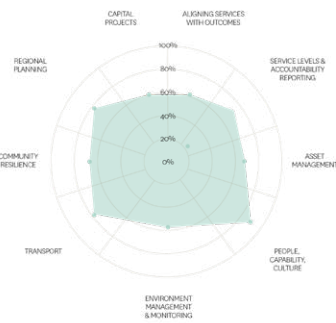
Governance, leadership & strategy



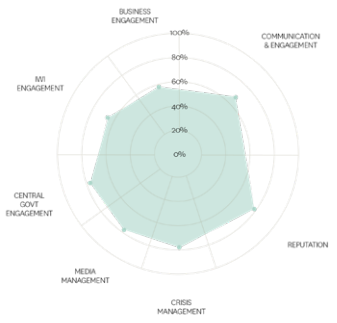
Financial management & performance reporting



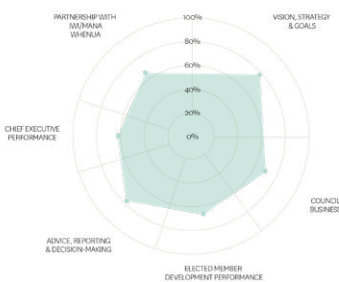
Service delivery & asset management



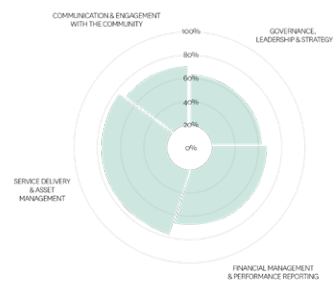
Communication & engagement with the community



Governance, leadership & strategy



Performance Assessment Framework priorities



CERTIFICATION >

Each step of the programme gives councils a chance to share their unique story, showcasing both their strengths and areas for improvement. We encourage councils to proudly share their development journey, both within the organisation and with the public, along with their Te Korowai certification. This certification shows a council's commitment to independent quality assurance and continuous improvement, represented by the Te Korowai icon, a symbol of ongoing progress and dedication to excellence.

Level One/



INTEGRITY SURVEY

Annual checkup on working practices and support systems.

Level Two/



INTEGRITY SURVEY PLUS SELECTED MODULES

A starter option that is ideal for councils with limited resources or time to demonstrate a commitment to improving organisational performance.

Level Three/



FULL PROGRAMME

Comprehensive evaluation of all key priority areas, perfect for thorough organisational review and alignment with community needs.

This level of review is recommended to be conducted every three years.

Contact >

For more information contact our
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