Environment Southland Regional Council
Te Taiao Tonga

Notice is hereby given of the

Ordinary meeting of Council
Te Huinga Tu

Monday 9 February 2026 at 2:00 pm

Environment Southland Council chamber, 220 North Road, Invercargill
26/C/4

Council Members

Chairman Jeremy McPhail	Cr Jon Pemberton	Cr David Rose
Cr Lyndal Ludlow	Cr Eric Roy	Cr Maurice Rodway
Cr Ewen Mathieson	Cr Paul Evans	Cr Geoffrey Young
Cr Phil Morrison	Cr Alastair Gibson	Cr Roger Hodson

For now & our future

Agenda

This meeting will be livestreamed through YouTube and will be available to view on our website. https://www.es.govt.nz/about-us/live-stream

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Chief Executive

RECOMMENDATIONS IN COUNCIL REPORTS ARE NOT TO BE CONSTRUED AS COUNCIL POLICY UNTIL ADOPTED BY COUNCIL

1 Welcome I Haere mai

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

At the time of the agenda closing, no apologies had been received for this meeting.

3 Declarations of interest

Please consider your interest in preparation for this meeting
At the time of the agenda closing. No declarations of interest had been received for this meeting.

4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

The purpose of this item is to provide an opportunity for members of the public to convey concerns, make suggestions to, and have input with, the Council. The Council or Committee will provide up to 20 minutes at the commencement of each meeting for members of the public to address the meeting but will allocate only five minutes for each speaker or group.

At the time of the agenda closing, no public forum, petitions or deputations were received for the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

5.1 Confirmation of minutes - Ordinary meeting of Council - 10 December 2025

Attached are the minutes from the meeting held on 10 December 2025, for confirmation.

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council - Te Huinga Tu

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill
Wednesday, 10 December 2025 at 10:30 am

Present:

Chair J A McPhail
Cr P C Evans
Cr A K Gibson
Cr RJW Hodson
Cr L Ludlow
Cr E A Mathieson
Cr P Morrison
Cr J Pemberton
Cr M A Rodway
Cr DPS Rose
Cr E W Roy
Cr G A Young

In Attendance:

Mr R A Phillips – Acting Chief Executive
Mrs J Carroll – Acting General Manager, Corporate Services
Ms H Fitchett – General Manager, Strategy & Regulation
Ms L Hicks – General Manager, Integrated Catchment Management
Ms A Kubrycht – General Manager, People & Governance
Mr S Rossiter-Stead – General Manager, Community & Engagement
Ms R Millar – Chief Advisor
Mrs J M Brown – Executive Officer (*Minutes)*

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Council meeting for Wednesday 10 December 2025.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

As all members were present, there were no apologies recorded by the meeting.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors.

4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

4.1 West Catlins Preservation

Carlyn Stewart and Natalie McRae of the West Catlins Preservation group had been granted an opportunity to address Council on their concerns relating to the Contact Energy Wind Farm application under the Fast-track legislation. Matters covered by Ms Stewart included:

- the original application was declined ("for very good reasons"), but this application under the new legislation does not provide an opportunity for local residents to provide comment to the panel;
- the Environment Southland feedback does not represent ratepayers (no survey of views has been undertaken by Council);
- a local anonymous survey undertaken last year resulted in support from 19 people, opposition from 115, and 15 who "didn't know";
- Southlanders should have a say in deciding what is best for their community and their environment;

Ms McRae's points, in summary, included:
- the West Catlins group includes members from across Southland, from all walks of life;
- this project, if built, will be the largest in the country – nothing comparable exists currently in New Zealand;
- the previous hearing Panel had sought feedback from several households – this time around feedback has been sought from one farm, and the West Catlins group;
- an independent landscape report has not been sought;
- the valley is not being considered – Council is asked to step in and advocate for that community – not to "rubber stamp" the proposal but to make comment;
- 20 turbines will be located in an area that has previously been identified as being an area of outstanding natural features – this needs to be protected;
- the reports prepared by Contact "are biased" – the impacts of a windfarm being put on top of such an iconic hill "no condition can reduce the adverse effects to an acceptable degree – the effects are not able to be mitigated". This point needs to be submitted on behalf of the group;
- outlined a number of deficiencies they have identified in the documentation provided by Contact and stressed the need for a precautionary approach to be taken;
- urged Council to promote the environmental wellbeing of this area and align its comments with the previous Panel's decision.

Councillors then asked questions of clarification of the speakers, before noting that the matter would be discussed when the item came up later in the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

Resolved:

Moved Cr Morrison, seconded Cr Rose that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Council held on 20 November 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaia hei totoia pakihi

6.1 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

7 Questions I Patai

The Chairman advised the meeting he was aware of questions posed by Cr Gibson, and that they would be dealt with later in the meeting, along with the relevant item, rather than in this section.

8 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a-tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

8.1 Chair Report

Chair McPhail spoke to his report and highlighted the following:

- it has been a busy time for new Chairs, with the induction sessions, the Zone meeting, the regional sector meeting, and catching up with local MPs
- the positive work that was happening in the community as evidenced by the Waimea – Sustainable Catchments field day.

8.2 Councillors' Reports

Cr Rodway spoke to his report, which set out the history of the Waiau Working Party, how it was set up and what its purpose was now. He also touched on the positive meeting that was held, and the work being undertaken by Meridian and the Working Party in relation to ongoing monitoring of tuna, flushing flows to address Didymo and blue/green algae issues, and the improved relationship with Meridian in recent times. He then responded to questions arising out of his report from Councillors.

Resolved:

Moved Chair McPhail, seconded Cr Ludlow, that Council receive the Chairman and Councillors reports.

Carried

9 Reports

9.1 Chief Executive's report

Mr Phillips spoke to this report, where the purpose was to provide Council with a governance overview of current matters within the organisation. Mr Phillips highlighted the following:

- the recent resource management reforms that were announced, which would lead to significant change for the sector; the focus would be on ensuring Southland's interests remain at the forefront of the ongoing discussions and feedback to Government, noting one size does not fit all.
- there are a range of meetings programmed before the holiday break – Mayoral Forum, Te Rōpū Taiao, DIA consultation and Local Government Commission;
- he would be attending the Milford Sound Programme board meeting tomorrow to help ensure region's interests are reflected in discussions and will report back on that meeting;
- a highlight of the recent announcements was the key role Freshwater Farm plans play in the system – which has long been part of Council's practical on-ground support for community groups;
- Investment in science and monitoring continues to support public health matters – recreational bathing monitoring at popular swimming and bathing spots;
- Update on infrastructure programmes, alongside the regular river/catchment works – noting the significant investment government is making in projects in Southland;

- wilding conifer field operations progressing well – noting a number of meetings with MPs and senior officials had been held re the particular challenge with Douglas Fir plantings, and how they are managed given the ongoing seed source;
- continuing to maintain the 100% timeframes for consent applications, despite the significant workload in this team; and
- the benefits of digital transformation – particularly with regard to SouthMaps and Paybles applications.

In response to questions from the meeting, staff confirmed that it was likely there would be movement on some of the timeframes around the Farm Plan implementation programme, as a result of the recent resource management reform announcements.

The meeting noted the need for a generator for the Stead Street Pump Station (as outlined in the Tranche 3 funding applications). There was brief discussion regarding these timeframes, in light of recent weather events, and the need for "back-up". Staff confirmed that if funding was not available through the Tranche 3 process, Council would need to consider this matter via the Annual Plan process. Staff also undertook to identify and advise Councillors of the impact of the recent storm along with contingency processes for impacts. The meeting asked that the issue of the risks associated with the Stead Street pump station be brought to the Risk and Assurance Committee for oversight.

Cr Rodway noted the recent publicity and comments from Minister Hoggard in relation to river works, which he felt were misinformed and destructive. It was noted that staff were currently drafting a response to this matter, to update the Minister and provide him with the correct information.

Other matters raised included:

- Issues relating to microplastics in the environment and the potential for research by this organisation and/or other groups, such as SIT;
- discussion in staff reports about "Kānoa" projects/funding is to be clarified in future with an explanation of what Kānoa is provided in brackets.
- the need for a workshop on the Titiroa tidegates with Council in the New year.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rodway, seconded Cr Gibson that Council receive the report.

Carried

9.2 Councillors' Remuneration

The purpose of this item was to outline how Councillors' remuneration was set and allocated, and for Council to provide direction as to the ratios to be allocated for this triennium. An updated Policy on Elected Members Remuneration and Expenses was included in the agenda for consideration and adoption.

Ms Burke spoke to her report, and tabled a corrected version of the Table of Figures shown on page 42 of the agenda. The meeting noted the discussion had been that with the increased responsibility provided to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee, the loading provided for the Chair of that Committee should be the same as that provided for the Strategy & Policy Committee Chair – 0.3. The impact of this suggestion on the base salary rates for all Councillors as a result was shown live in the remuneration spreadsheet. This change was supported by the meeting.

Discussion then moved to whether there was a need/desire to recognise the additional work undertaken by some Councillors compared to others, who were not committee Chairs. It was agreed it was up to individual Councillors as to how much they contributed to their roles – much like many in the community who undertake volunteer work, and are not remunerated. No further direction was provided on this matter.

Support was provided for the updated policy for Elected Members Remuneration and Expenses, particularly relating to Child Care Allowance and Home Security matters.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Morrison, seconded Cr Hodson, that Council:

1 receive the report - Councillors Remuneration; and

2 note the historical application of additional loadings during the previous triennium, specifically:

a. 0.2 loading for councillors undertaking additional roles.
b. 0.3 loading for the Chair of a Committee of all elected members.
c. 0.4 loading for the Deputy Chair and Chair of the Transport Committee.

3 confirm the application of the agreed ratio as worked through during the meeting, which reflects:

a. the retention of existing loadings for additional roles and committee leadership positions; and
b. the extension of the 0.3 loading to the Chair of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee, given its status as a Committee of all elected members.

4 request staff to:

a. update the Ratio Worksheet to reflect the agreed ratio;
b. calculate the resulting base councillor remuneration and confirm compliance with the total pool allocation; and
c. incorporate these figures into the final remuneration schedule for adoption.

5 note the payment levels and commencement dates contained in the Local Government Elected Members Determination 2025 and provide direction to the Remuneration Authority on the new remuneration rates for positions of responsibility and the new base councillor rate.

6 adopt the amended Elected Members' Remuneration and Expenses Policy as presented, including the two new allowances and associated assessment forms

Carried

9.3 Contact Southland Wind Farm - Fast-track Approvals Act - Substantive Comment

In speaking to this report, which sought approval from Council for proposed substantive comments under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 on Contact Energy's Southland Wind Farm application, Mr Halligan endorsed the comments of the speakers in public forum relating to the importance of appropriate scrutiny of this application, and emphasised that this matter was not a "rubber stamp" exercise by Council.

The meeting was reminded that Council had asked that the community be provided with input to this process – it was up to the Panel as to how widely they sought that input. It was further noted that there is no automatic hearing relating to this matter – this will be a further decision of the Panel to make. This emphasised the importance of Council's scrutiny of the application on behalf of the community and the environment. The following points arose in the discussion that ensued:

- what is Council's view re potential generation of national significance going directly out of this province – particularly in light of the recent weather event and the need for resilience (agreed to emphasise this point in the comments);
- agreed to flag the issue of whether this was the most appropriate site for the proposal;
- section 2.4 is to be strengthened in relation to the landscape value of the area, and to refer to the SDC landscape study.
- questioned whether two years of monitoring would prove that there would be biodiversity net gain as a result of the proposal – potentially need longer timeframes for monitoring

The meeting agreed that the proposed feedback should be updated and recirculated by email for final sign-off, in order to meet the required timeframe.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Pemberton, seconded Cr Gibson, that Council:

1. **receive the report;**

2. **has considered and sought amendments to the Environment Southland substantive comments on the Contact Energy Southland Wind Farm application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024;**

3. **requests that the revised documentation be circulated to Councillors for final approval via email, in order to meet the required timeframe of 17 December 2025.**

Carried

9.4 Navigation Safety Bylaw Review

The purpose of this item was to inform Council of its powers to make a bylaw under the Maritime Transport Act 1994 and the Local Government Act 2002; to seek a determination that the proposed Southland Navigation Safety Bylaw is the most appropriate way of ensuring maritime safety across the region; and to get endorsement of the draft Navigation Safety Bylaw 202X for formal consultation via the special consultative procedure.

Staff updated the meeting on small changes to the report, relating to clause 25, a missing note from the Statement of Proposal, and the fact that Invercargill City Council has now held its meeting, and Council's legal advisors are providing support around the wording required in relation to the administrative delegation that was proposed.

Staff responded to questions of clarification from the meeting, noting that the approach being taken did not involve significant changes to standards, speed, or matters covered compared to the previous Bylaw.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Roy, seconded Cr Evans, that Council:

1. **receive the report - Navigation Safety Bylaw Review.**

2. **determine that a bylaw is the most appropriate way of addressing the perceived problem (ensuring maritime and navigation safety across Murihiku Southland) under section 155 of the Local Government Act 2002;**

3. **approve the draft Southland Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 202X for consultation;**

4. **approve the Statement of Proposal for consultation in accordance with the special consultative procedure under Section 83 and 86 of the Local Government Act 2002;**

5. **approve the draft Infringement offences and fees under Southland Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 200X for application to the Ministry of Transport;**

6. **appoint four/five Councillors of whom three are required to form a hearing panel to hear and consider the submissions on the proposal and make recommendations to the Council on adoption of Southland Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 202X;**

7. **delegate to the Chief Executive the ability to make minor amendments to the drafting of the bylaw and/or the Statement of Proposal, where those amendments are within the scope of the recommended modifications set out in this report.**

Carried

9.5 Southland Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw Review

The purpose of this item was to inform Council of its powers to make a bylaw under the Local Government Act 2002, seek a determination that the proposed Southland Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw is the most appropriate way to manage the flood control infrastructure, and seek endorsement that the draft Southland Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw 202X be released for formal consultation via the special consultative procedure.

Matters covered in the discussion included:

- grazing of land, and the need for timely information to be provided for landowners. Mr Adamson advised that staff were already working on the information that was to be provided, with the intention that education commence before the winter period;
- the revised wording will assist in providing clarity around responsibility for damage to stopbanks whilst protecting the significant investment being made by central government in these assets, ensuring they remain in good condition;
- the consultation timeframe incorporates the Waimumu Field Days;
- the proposed hearing, and whether there were sufficient qualified Councillors to complete this process, if required.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Young that Council:

1. **receive the report - Southland Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw Review.**

2. **determine that a bylaw is the most appropriate way of addressing the perceived problem (how to control and avoid potential damage to or interference with Council flood control works and consequent cost to Council), under section 155 of the Local Government Act 2002;**

3. **approve the draft Southland Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw 202X for consultation;**

4. **approve the Statement of Proposal for consultation in accordance with the special consultative procedure under Section 83 and 86 of the Local Government Act 2002;**

5. **appoint four/five Councillors of whom three are required to form a hearing panel, if submission numbers warrant, to hear and consider the submissions on the proposal and make recommendations to the Council on adoption of a Southland Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw 202X;**

6. **delegate to the Chief Executive:**

    i. **the ability to make minor amendments to the drafting of the bylaw and/or the Statement of Proposal, where those amendments are within the scope of the recommended modifications set out in this report.**

    ii **based on the number of submissions determine if the submissions will be heard directly by Council or will be referred to a hearings panel.**

Carried

9.6 Appointment of the Southland Regional Transport Committee

The purpose of this item was to provide the Council with the information required to allow the appointment of the Southland Regional Transport Committee, as required by the Land Transport Management Act 2003 and subsequent amendments.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rodway, seconded Cr Pemberton that Council:

1. **confirm the following appointments to the Southland Regional Transport Committee:**

    Cr Phil Morrison (RTC Chair)
    Cr Alastair Gibson (Deputy Chair)
    Cr Christine Menzies to represent Southland District Council
    Cr Paul McPhail to represent Gore District Council
    Cr Ria Bond to represent Invercargill City Council
    Mr James Caygill to represent the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

2. **note the nominated alternates are to represent their organisations when the appointed members are unavailable but are not formally members of the Committee.**

Carried

9.7 Reporting of Contract Entered into above Delegated Authority for Ecological Surveys

The purpose of this item was to advise Council of a contract that has been entered into above the delegated authority provided to staff by Council's Delegations Manual.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Evans that Council:

1. **receive the report Contract Entered into above Delegated Authority.**

2. **note that Council has entered into an Ecological Services Contract with Wildland Consultants Ltd amounting to $375,000.00 plus GST for a thirty-three month term, commencing on 1 September 2025 and expiring on 30 June 2028 with two optional one-year extensions.**

Carried

9.8 2026 Meeting Calendar

The purpose of this item was to have Council consider and adopt the 2026 meeting calendar, a draft of which was appended to the agenda for feedback. In discussing this item, the meeting noted that it was now intended to have meetings of the Integrated Catchment Management and Strategy & Policy Committees occur in the last week of January, which would have consequential impacts on the balance of the calendar.

Councillors were also reminded that with the recent reforms being announced, it was anticipated there would be workshops scheduled in the last two weeks of January, to allow input into those processes. They would be advised as soon as timeframes were known.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Young, seconded Cr Ludlow, that Council receive the report - 2026 Meeting Calendar and adopt the 2026 meeting calendar.

Carried

9.9 Councillors Diary Update for December

The purpose of this item was for Council to consider and approve the meeting schedule as shown in the agenda. It also provided an opportunity for Councillors to seek formal leave of absence from Council activities, if required. To that end, the following requests were lodged:

Cr Evans – 28 January to 3 February 2026
Chair McPhail – 14-28 February 2026
Cr Pemberton – 9-13 February 2026

The meeting also noted Cr Morrison's previously approved leave of absence request for the period 9-13 February 2026

Resolved:

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Rose, that Council:

1. appoint members to represent Council at the meetings as marked on the schedule;

2. approve the leave of absence requests as sought at the meeting;

3. pay meeting fees and/or allowances in accordance with its policy, and as detailed on the schedule.

Carried

9.10 Common Seal

The purpose of this item is for Council to note the documents to which the Common Seal has been placed, under delegated authority, as required by Council's Governance policies.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Roy, seconded Cr Morrison, that Council note the documents to which the Common Seal has been affixed under approved delegation.

Carried

10 Extraordinary/urgent business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business considered by the meeting.

11 Public excluded business I He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

Resolved:

Moved Cr Morrison, seconded Cr Gibson, that, in accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- **Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Ordinary meeting of Council held on 20 November 2025 with the public excluded.**
- **11.1 – Recruitment of a New Chief Executive**
- **11.2 – Approve the Award of Contract 25/85 – Resilience Infrastructure Fund, Tranche 1 – Dipton West Stopbank Remediation**

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below:

General Subject Matter	Reason for Passing the Resolution	Grounds under Section 48(1)
Confirmation of public excluded minutes 20 November 2025	To allow Council to carry out commercial activities without prejudice or disadvantage. To prevent the disclosure of official information for improper gain or advantage.	S.7(2)(h) S.7(2)(h)
11.1 – Recruitment of a New Chief Executive	To allow Council to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage. To protect the privacy of natural persons.	S.7(2)(i) S.7(2)(a)
Approve the Award of Contract 25/85 – Resilience Infrastructure Fund, Tranche 1 – Dipton West Stopbank Remediation.	To allow Council to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage. To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(i) S.7(2)(h)

Carried

Resumed in Open Meeting

Termination

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.50 pm.

6 Adoption of committee resolutions

6.1 Adoption of committee resolutions - Chief Executive's Review Committee - 27 January 2026

The minutes of the Chief Executive’s Review Committee meeting, held on 27 January 2026, are appended for Council to adopt the resolutions thereof.

Minutes of the Chief Executive's Review Committee

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill
Tuesday, 27 January 2026 at 1:30 pm

Present:

Chair Jeremy McPhail
Cr Paul Evans
Cr Lyndal Ludlow
Cr Jon Pemberton
Cr Maurice Rodway

In Attendance:

Mr Rob Phillips (Acting Chief Executive)
Ms Amy Kubrycht (General Manager People & Governance) – for items 1-9.2 only
Mr Simon Boyes (Consultant) – for Item 9.2 only
Mrs Jan Brown (Executive Officer – Minutes)

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Chief Executive's Review Committee meeting.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rodway, seconded Cr Ludlow, that an apology for absence be recorded on behalf of Cr Phil Morrison, who was unable to attend due to commitments with other Council business.

Carried

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by councillors.

4 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

4.1 Confirmation of minutes – Chief Executive's Review Committee – 18 September 2025

Resolved:

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Rodway, that the minutes of the Chief Executive's Review Committee of 18 September 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

5 Notification of Extraordinary or Urgent Business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

There were no items of extraordinary or urgent business notified at this time for inclusion in the agenda.

6 Questions I Patai

There were no questions asked by the meeting.

7 Report

7.1 Terms of Reference – Chief Executive's Review Committee

Members of the Committee had received an email from Cr Morrison earlier today, proposing some suggested changes to the draft Terms of Reference for this committee. As members had not had an opportunity to consider these, and Cr Morrison was unable to attend the meeting, it was proposed that the draft Terms of Reference be adopted without change today, but that a further review be undertaken before the end of March 2026.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Pemberton, that the Chief Executive's Review Committee note the report and, having reviewed the draft Terms of Reference, adopt the Terms of Reference as presented, but request that a further review be scheduled for completion before the end of March 2026.

Carried

8. Extraordinary or Urgent Business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

There was no extraordinary or urgent business considered by the meeting.

9 Public Excluded Business

Resolved:

Moved Cr McPhail, seconded Cr Ludlow, in accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- 9.1 - confirmation of public excluded minutes of the Chief Executive's Review Committee meeting held on 18 September 2025
- 9.2 – Chief Executive Recruitment Update
- 9.3 Acting Chief Executive Performance Review
- 9.4 Acting Chief Executive Contract Extension

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below:

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER	REASON FOR PASSING THE RESOLUTION	GROUNDS UNDER S.48(1)
9.1 Confirmation of minutes – 18 September 2025	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	S.7(2)(a)
9.2 Chief Executive Recruitment Update	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	S.7(2)(a)
9.3 Acting Chief Executive Performance Review	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	S.7(2)(a)
9.4 Acting Chief Executive Contract Extension	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	S.7(2)(a)

Carried

Resumed in Open Meeting

Termination

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.22 pm.

6.2 Adoption of committee resolutions - Integrated Catchment Management Committee - 28 January 2026

The minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting, held on 28 January 2026, are appended for Council to adopt the resolutions thereof.

Minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill
Wednesday 28 January 2026 at 9:30 am

Present:

Cr Jon Pemberton (Chair)
Cr David Rose
Cr Lyndal Ludlow
Cr Eric Roy
Cr Maurice Rodway
Cr Ewen Mathieson
Cr Paul Evans
Cr Geoffry Young
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr Alastair Gibson
Cr Roger Hodson
Chair Jeremy McPhail *(ex officio)*

Ms Lucy Hicks (General Manager Integrated Catchment Management)
Mrs Mikayla Wass (Executive Assistant) - *Minutes*

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee meeting for Wednesday 28 January 2026.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

No apologies were received for the meeting.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by councillors.

4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

There were no public forum, petitions or deputations presented at the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

It was noted that actions that remained live from previous Regional Services Committee meetings would continue to be reported on through the Integrated Catchment Management Committee action sheet.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Roy, seconded Cr Evans that the minutes of the Regional Services Committee meeting held on 13 August 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

7 Questions I Patai

The following question was asked by Cr Rodway:

"Is the current way we interact with the River Liaison Committees the most cost effective and efficient way of dealing with river management issues and plans?

My experience over many years is that these committee meetings is combative rather than cooperative. The last Oreti Liaison Committee meeting was a case in point. There have been productive meetings in the past with this committee and others such as the Aparima LC for example. However, these meetings and the reporting and organising appears to take quite a lot of time. In the case of the advising of landowners about future works that might affect them it appears that a more cost effective and personal approach would be to contact the affected owners individually with general publicity accompanying this rather than having a public meeting.

In trying to take a governance level approach to this I realise that these suggestions might be more of a managerial nature. However, I am concerned about the risk to staff safety, financial efficiency, ability to undertake works in an efficient and effective manner and public relations overall. I am also concerned that the people who attend these meetings are not representative of the whole community that has an interest in river management. As a result, those values such as recreation, protection of natural character and biodiversity are not considered at all. This is particularly relevant as we now have a capital value-based rates system so rate payers other than those who live beside the rivers are paying a greater proportion of the overall rates but their voices are not being heard.

I recommend that the way we communicate with the community about river management is reviewed, taking into account the concerns expressed above."

Cr Rodway reiterated his question, emphasising the importance of the Catchment Liaison Committees while expressing concern that they may not represent the wider community. He noted the need for a clear mandate regarding the Committee's role, signalling the beginning of a broader discussion on how the Catchment Liaison Committees should be utilised going forward. It was noted there would be further consideration to occur under item 11.2 of the agenda. Cr Rose advised that he had responded to Cr Rodway's question via email, highlighting the value of community relationships and the ongoing importance of the Catchment Liaison Committees. This was further echoed by other Councillors including the Chair.

8 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a-tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

Cr Rose reported that he had attended the Winton A&P Show the previous weekend and expressed disappointment that no staff member had been present to speak on the Kānoa projects. It was clarified that a staff representative had been scheduled to attend, but they were unable to do so due to falling ill the night before.

9 Reports

9.1 Appointment of a Deputy Chairperson

The purpose of this item was to appoint a Deputy Chairperson to the Integrated Catchment Management Committee.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Morrison, seconded Cr Evans that Council receive the report - Appointment of a Deputy Chairperson.

Carried

Cr Pemberton called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee.

Nomination:

Moved Cr Gibson, seconded Cr Evans, that Cr Hodson be nominated to the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee.

No further nominations were received, and nominations were declared closed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously on a show of hands

9.2 Terms of Reference

The purpose of this item was for Councillors to consider and approve the Terms of Reference for the Integrated Catchment Management Committee. It was noted that the wider Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) approach, including how responsibilities would be allocated between this Committee and the Strategy & Policy Committee, would benefit from further exploration in a workshop setting.

A discussion took place, and Councillors acknowledged the need to clarify the proposal previously circulated by Cr Morrison, agreeing that this would be most effectively addressed through a workshop. There was support for holding a single session to work through terminology, potential amendments, and any additional considerations prior to finalising the Terms of Reference

Resolved:

Moved Cr Evans, seconded Cr Rose that Council:

1. **Receive the report - Terms of Reference.**
2. **Approve the current Terms of Reference for the Integrated Catchment Management Committee in the interim, subject to a workshop where further amendments could be included.**

Carried

9.3 Annual Activity Plan

The purpose of this item was to present Councillors with the draft Annual Activity Plan for the Integrated Catchment Management Committee for 2026. It was advised that the plan remained a draft and could be amended in line with the outcomes of the upcoming ICM workshop, where the Terms of Reference would also be further refined.

A discussion took place, and the following was noted:

- There was a need to address the pest management plan and identify overlaps with Strategy & Policy work. Clarification was also sought on floodbank defect tracking and how this would be covered through asset management discussions.
- Kānoa reporting requirements were discussed, including consolidating governance arrangements, aligning tranche reporting timeframes, and ensuring clear reporting on project delivery.
- The need for improved transparency and communication was highlighted. Councillors discussed long-term reporting for the "slow the flow" initiative, the development of a blueprint, and the importance of clear timeframes for community engagement.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Rodway, that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee receive the report – *Annual Activity Plan.*

Carried

9.4 Operations Delivery Report

The purpose of this report was to update the Committee on matters being delivered by the Operational Delivery Team within the Integrated Catchment Group.

A discussion took place and the following was clarified:

- Protocols for a potential arrival of HPAI bird flu were being led by MPI, with Environment Southland providing guidance to landowners where required.
- The haul-out facility project would return to the Committee once further progressed.
- Kānoa project work was nearing final signing, with reporting and governance arrangements being refined to be fit for purpose.
- The Titiroa project was progressing in accordance with consent conditions, with the monitoring programme being finalised.

- Waiau bathymetric LiDAR was discussed. Further information on this programme and how it would feed into operational delivery programmes e.g. gravel build-up at Tuatapere, will be brought back to the Committee.
- A presentation on the bathymetric LiDAR connection to Kānoa was requested for a future meeting.
- Concerns were raised regarding contractors posting images online of their machinery in rivers.
- Questions were raised regarding gravel build-up in the Waiau River and potential baseline monitoring.
- The pump station land-transfer process and associated operational matters were outlined, with standby generation being explored under Tranche 3.
- Gore gravel removal was progressing through consenting and tendering processes, with work expected to commence in February, subject to final approvals.
- Kānoa funded, Tranche 1 work on the Ōreti, highlights the need for clearer public communication on the works.

Resolved:

Moved Chair McPhail, seconded Cr Rose, that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee receive the report – *Operations Delivery Report.*

Carried

9.5 Whakamana te Waituna Partner Update

The purpose of this report was to provide a quarterly update on the actions and operations of the Whakamana te Waituna Charitable Trust, of which Environment Southland is a co-chair and key partner.

The following points were noted:

- Ella Lawton, Cain Duncan, Pat Hoffmann, Sue Corby and Sarah Yarrow had been confirmed as trustees.
- The Trust had farewelled its previous chairs, and it was noted that Cr Pemberton was now serving as co-chair alongside Rikki Nichols of Awarua Rūnaka.
- Concerns were raised regarding the elevation of the new Trust house; it was confirmed that the building was moveable and could be relocated in future if required.
- Questions were asked about budget implications for the Trust. It was noted that Environment Southland contributed staff time and an annual financial input as part of a long-standing ten-year programme, and that a budget update could be provided to the Committee.
- The land transfer for the Webster Block had been completed, enabling the Trust to undertake restoration work on the site.

Resolved:

Moved CrLudlow, seconded Cr Roy, that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee receive the report – *Whakamana te Waituna Partner Update.*

Carried

10 Extraordinary/urgent business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

11 Public excluded business I He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

Resolved:

Moved Chair McPhail, seconded Cr Morrison In accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

11.1 Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Regional Services Committee 13 August 2025
11.2 Catchment Liaison Committee AGM Preparation

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below:

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER	REASON FOR PASSING THE RESOLUTION	GROUNDS UNDER S.48(1)
11.1 - Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Regional Services Committee 13 August 2025	To protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	S.7(2)(a)
11.2 – Catchment Liaison Committee AGM Preparation	To maintain legal professional privilege.	S.7(2)(g)

Carried

12 Termination

There being no further business, the chairperson closed the meeting at 11.39 am.

6.3 Adoption of Committee Resolutions - Strategy & Policy Committee - 29 January 2026

The minutes of the Strategy & Policy Committee meeting, held on 29 January 2026, are appended for Council to adopt the resolutions thereof.

Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee - Rautaki me Mahere

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill
Thursday 29 January 2026 at 10:00 am

Present:

Cr Lyndal Ludlow (Chair)
Cr Alastair Gibson
Cr Jon Pemberton
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr Maurice Rodway
Cr Eric Roy
Cr David Rose
Cr Geoffrey Young
Cr Roger Hodson
Chair Jeremy McPhail (Ex officio)

In attendance:

Mr Rob Phillips (Chief Executive)
Ms Hayley Fitchett (General Manager Strategy and Regulation)
Mr Sam Rossiter-Stead (General Manager Communication and Engagement)
Ms Ali Flynn (Meeting Secretary)
Mr Stewart Bull (Mana whenua representative)
Ms Ann Wakefield (Mana whenua representative)

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting for 29 January 2026 and opened with a karakia.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Cr Evans and Cr Mathieson for the meeting.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rose, seconded Cr Roy that apologies be accepted on behalf of Cr Evans and Cr Mathieson.

Carried

3 Declarations of interest

At the time of the agenda closing, no declarations of interest were received for this meeting.

4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

At the time of the agenda closing, no public forum, petitions or deputations were received for the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

The following points were raised with regards to the minutes from the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 25 September 2025:

9.5 Spatial Planning

Ms Fitchett gave an update on this item and advised that this did not go to the Mayoral Forum at the end of 2025. The second tier of environmental managers in Murihiku (2TEG) met at the beginning of the year and agreed that the priority for the group is the Regional Spatial Plan.

This will be a collective project plan partnering with local government colleagues and Te Ao Mārama. A progress update will be provided in due course.

Spatial planning will form part of our 2026 activity plan and is an annual plan funded piece of work with resourcing also provisioned for.

9.8 Local Government Reorganisation

Chair McPhail attended a meeting on 16 December 2025 at the Te Rau Aroha marae in Bluff which included attendance from mayors, chief executives, legal advisors, Te Ao Mārama and the Local Government Commission, where everyone was given an opportunity to share their position on the topic of the reorganisation. The meeting included an initial discussion followed by a workshop facilitated by the Local Government Commission.

It was confirmed by Mr Rossiter-Stead and Ms Fitchett that the standardised language to be used to describe this subject was either the "Local Government Commission process" or "Simplifying Local Government proposal".

Mr Phillips confirmed that the Minister had endorsed the Local Government Commission process to carry on.

Resolved:

> **Moved Cr Rose, seconded Cr Pemberton that the minutes of the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting held on 25 September 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.**

Carried

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaia hei totoia pakihi

At the time of the agenda closing, no notifications of extraordinary or urgent business were received for this meeting.

7 Questions I Patai

At the time of the agenda closing, no questions were received for this meeting.

8 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a-tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

Neither the Chairman nor any Councillors presented reports to the meeting.

9 Reports

9.1 Appointment of a Deputy Chairperson

The purpose of this item was to appoint a Deputy Chair to the Committee.

Cr Ludlow called for nominations and Cr Mathieson's name was put forward, noting that he was an apology for this meeting. Cr Ludlow confirmed that she had received Cr Mathieson's prior agreement in writing that he would accept the nomination of Deputy Chairperson if his name was put forward. No other nominations were received.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Pemberton, seconded Cr Gibson that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Appointment of a Deputy Chairperson.**
2 **Appoint Cr Mathieson as Deputy Chair to the Strategy and Policy Committee.**

Carried

9.2 Terms of Reference

The purpose of this item was for councillors to approve the Terms of Reference for the Strategy and Policy Committee.

Ms Fitchett highlighted that this triennium would be a busy one and would include a range of different reforms to be implemented through policy, planning and strategy.

Also reflected in the Terms of Reference were the following:

- New business including the implementation of all the reforms;
- Integration between committees, (in particular Integrated Catchment Management and Regulatory Committees) to ensure that there were obvious lines of communication, feedback and reporting between these committees;
- How Environment Southland engages and communicates with communities;
- A strong connection with the science function to ensure the work of the Committee was informed by and grounded in evidence;
- Climate change;
- Natural hazards work;
- Connection with Finance and Performance and Risk and Assurance Committees with oversight around Environment Southland's efficiency and effectiveness.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Gibson, seconded Cr Young that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Terms of Reference.**
2 **Approve the Terms of Reference for the Strategy and Policy Committee.**

Carried

9.3 Annual Activity Plan

The purpose of this item was to provide Councillors with the draft Annual Activity Plan for the Strategy and Policy Committee for 2026.

It was noted that this committee will be required to be agile in the face of potential unexpected policy announcements and consulations. There are still core and committed programmes of work that have been reflected in the Activity Plan. Changes to the Activity Plan will be scheduled accordingly.

A question was raised regarding the work of the Climate Change Subcommittee which was largely internally facing. It was understood that there was space within this work programme for the climate change portfolio but that it would be mainly outward facing. It is important that we didn't overlook all the work that was done by the Climate Change Subcommittee and that the work would be continued.

Ms Fitchett agreed that she would investigate if there needed to be a connection back to the Finance and Performance and the Risk and Assurance Committees and that this would then be reflected in the Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Hodson, seconded Cr Pemberton that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Annual Activity Plan.**

Carried

9.4 Government Legislation and Policy Monitor

The purpose of this item was to provide an overview of the current and upcoming national policy changes, with a focus on those expected to have a significant impact on Environment Southland's operations and the Southland region.

A question was raised regarding farm plans to ascertain if Environment Southland is being clear with the farming community as to what is required.

Ms Fitchett agreed to have a conversation with Mr Rossiter-Stead, General Manager Community and Engagement, and to report back to the committee with a more in-depth response on this matter.

It was noted that a joint workshop with the Integrated Catchment Management Committee is required.

A request was made to provide the data on how many consent applications Environment Southland currently oversaw. Ms Fitchett agreed to provide this information.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rose, seconded Cr Hodson that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Government Policy and Legislation Monitor.**

Carried

9.5 Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Update

The purpose of this item was to provide an update on the work being carried out by the strategy and policy, and regional planning teams.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Pemberton, seconded Cr Young that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Strategy, Policy and Regional Planning Update.**

Carried

9.6 Decision Report on Draft Dangerous Dams, Earthquake-prone Dams and Flood-prone Dams Policy

The purpose of this item was to consider amendments made to the Draft Dangerous Dams, Earthquake-prone Dams and Flood-prone Dams Policy as requested by the hearing panel and recommend to Council that the draft policy be adopted by Council.

Gavin Gilder, Team Leader Regional Planning presented at the meeting to clarify the amendments to the draft policy.

Ms Fitchett tabled an amendment to the wording of the draft policy on page 55 to further clarify the meaning. After further discussion, new wording was agreed upon and would be reflected in the draft policy document.

11.31am Cr Gibson left the meeting.
11.33am Cr Gibson returned to the meeting.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Pemberton, seconded Cr Morrison that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Decision Report on Draft Dangerous Dam, Earthquake-prone Dams and Flood-prone Dams Policy.**
2 **Consider amendments to the Draft Dangerous Dams, Earthquake-prone Dams and Flood-prone Dams Policy as requested by the hearing panel as set out in Appendix 2.**
3 **Recommend to Council that the Draft Dangerous Dams, Earthquake-prone Dams and Flood-prone Dams Policy as set out in Appendix 2 be adopted by Council.**

Carried

9.7 Retrospective Approval of Submission on Draft Herd Management Plan for Wapiti

The purpose of this item was to seek formal endorsement of Environment Southland's submission on the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest (HOSI) Draft Herd Management Plan.

It was noted that Cr Roy would be an abstention to the following two recommendations:

Resolved:

Moved Cr Morrison, seconded Cr Young that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Retrospective Approval for Submission on the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest (HOSI) Draft Herd Management Plan.**

Resolved:

Moved Cr Pemberton and seconded Cr Morrison that Council:

2 **Formally endorse Environment Southland's submission on the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest (HOSI) Draft Herd Management Plan.**

Carried

9.8 Update on Councillor Requests and Actions

The purpose of this item was to provide an update on councillor requests and actions that had occurred during Strategy and Policy Committee meetings and how these are being responded to.

It was noted that there were no outstanding requests or actions from the previous triennium.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Gibson, seconded Cr Pemberton that Council:

1 **Receive the report - Update on Councillor Requests and Actions.**

Carried

10 Extraordinary/urgent business I Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

At the time of the agenda closing, no notifications of extraordinary or urgent business were received for this meeting.

11 Termination

There being no further business, the chair closed the meeting at 11.38am.

7 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaia hei totoia pakihi

8 Questions I Patai

9 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a-tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

9.0 Chair Report

Chair report

Activities undertaken by Chair McPhail on behalf of Council since the last meeting

December 2025

11 Te Rōpū Taiao hui @ Murihiku Marae
12 Southland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meeting
Southland Mayoral Forum
Department of Internal Affairs meeting with Mayors/Chairs and Deputies
15 South Island Regional Council Collaboration Governance Group
16 Local Government Reorganisation hui @ Bluff
17 Councillor Briefing – RMA process and Waituna
Ōreti Catchment Liaison Committee meeting @ Winton

January 2026

20 Meeting of Council and Management Executive teams via Teams
27 Chief Executive's Review Committee
28 Integrated Catchment Management Committee
Council Workshop – RMA Reforms
29 Strategy & Policy Committee
Councillor Briefing – Nitrate Update and Health & Safety Induction
30 Great South Joint Shareholders Committee

While many regular meetings stopped over the Christmas period, I continued to meet online with counterparts from the regional sector and Local Government New Zealand to discuss the Government's reform programme and work on collective responses.

Congratulations to Councillor Ludlow for successfully completing the chair recertification course in the Making Good Decisions programme. Lyndal has been been a fully accredited Hearing Comissioner with a Chair endorsement with a number of years now and we are fortunate to have this level of expertise within our council.

Te Rōpū Taiao hui
Te Rōpū Taiao met on 11 December 2025, confirming progress on the updated Charter of Understanding and approving the new Terms of Reference. Members agreed that councils will make individual submissions on upcoming legislative reforms, supported by shared common themes developed by the Pou (the senior management group supporting the governance group).

Mayoral Forum/Department of Internal Affairs meeting

On 12 December the Mayoral Forum confirmed the process for updating the Triennial Agreement. The Department of Internal Affairs gave a briefing on the review of regional council functions they are undertaking to inform the Simplifying Local Government proposal.

Local Government Commission Reorganisation hui

I presented the following to the Commission, on behalf of Council, in response to the questions posed by the Commission:

“Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you this morning.

When we talk about the challenges of our current local government structure - both for Environment Southland and for our wider community - we think it’s important to begin by looking at how we got to our current situation.

The foundations of regional collaboration

The structure we work within today was put in place in 1989, when local government was reformed across the country. That reform established the four councils we still have in Southland. By the early 2000s, those councils were well established, and there was a strong appetite to work together to get the best value for our communities.

A shared services joint committee was set up in 2000 to look across the region at what each council was delivering and whether any of those functions could be managed more effectively together.

A strong era of shared services

The results were significant. A shared services report from 2014 notes more than 50 collaborative projects completed between 2000 and 2014, highlighting just how committed Southland has always been to collective problem-solving.

Some of the projects highlighted in the 2014 report as most successful were:

- Establishment of WasteNet Southland, our regional landfill and consolidated solid waste services
- Emergency Management Southland
- Venture Southland, our regional development agency, which later evolved into Great South

Why collaboration has slowed

Over the last decade, collaboration has slowed. That’s not because people are less willing, but because many of the easy wins have already been done.

Southland was ahead of the rest of the country in the 2000s. By 2014, most of the logical, high-value shared services were already in place. Since then, our strategic priorities have diverged.

Different pressures across councils

For Environment Southland, this has meant dealing with repeated waves of national policy changes - from the NPS-FM in 2017 and its 2020 update, through to the introduction and then rapid repeal of the Spatial Planning Act and the Natural and Built Environment Act.

These changes required significant focus and resources. On top of that, during the Covid years we lost around $2.8 million a year in cruise ship income.

Meanwhile, our territorial authorities have been dealing with their own shifting pressures, particularly the challenges associated with three waters reforms.

In practice, this has meant councils have been pulled in different directions by forces largely outside our control. Each of us has been responding to our own legislative demands and financial constraints, making it harder to align timing, funding and priorities across the region.

Where challenges are emerging
While many shared services have continued to deliver well at an operational level, challenges have emerged at a governance level, particularly where there are geographical differences between areas of need and the areas generating the funding.

Capability constraints
We are also facing increasing difficulty attracting the specialised expertise needed to manage today's environmental and regulatory challenges, particularly in key fields such as corporate services and policy and planning.

What this means for the wider community
For ratepayers, the current structure can be confusing. People often struggle to understand who is responsible for what and can become frustrated by receiving multiple rates bills.

For iwi partners, industry and landowners, dealing with multiple councils can add unnecessary time, cost and complexity.

Engagement fatigue is also very real. The same people are often asked for input multiple times by different organisations, which can reduce participation and trust over time.
Communities can also feel the impact of limited specialist capacity, with some local government processes taking longer than they reasonably should as a result.

Behind the scenes, having multiple organisations means multiple senior management teams, back-office functions, systems, buildings and rating frameworks.

Taken together, it's clear the structure put in place in 1989 is now being asked to carry challenges it was never designed for. With a population of around 104,000 people, our current local government arrangements are more complex than they need to be.

Opportunities looking ahead
With this context in mind, there are also clear opportunities moving forward. For Environment Southland, a more integrated structure could deliver several benefits.

Stronger technical capacity
Pooling specialist expertise, particularly in areas such as corporate services and policy and planning, could reduce duplication, stabilise workloads and make better use of scarce skills across the region.

Clearer and faster decision-making
Fewer layers of governance and more consistent strategic direction could support more timely and coordinated decision-making, helping councils work more effectively towards the outcomes communities expect.

Improved natural hazard and climate response
Natural hazards and a changing climate are placing increasing pressure on councils and communities. While current arrangements, such as the Regional Climate Change Working Group, aim to coordinate efforts, a

more integrated local government structure would allow planning and investment to occur at the right scale and with greater alignment.

Better balance between growth and environmental stewardship
Looking ahead, one of the key opportunities, and challenges, will be balancing future economic growth with the need to protect and restore our environment.

Southland is an agricultural powerhouse, producing around 14% of New Zealand's agricultural exports with just 2% of the population. However, Environment Southland's work in recent years has highlighted a significant gap between the current state of our freshwater and estuaries and the aspirations communities hold for them.

Future growth will require careful navigation and an appropriate regulatory framework. It is critical that any future structure maintains a strong environmental focus alongside economic development, rather than prioritising one at the expense of the other.

So, what could this mean for our wider community?
A more coherent structure could offer significant benefits to Southlanders.

It could provide clearer, more consistent services.
People would know who to talk to, what processes to follow, and what to expect—reducing confusion and duplication.

This goes hand-in-hand with more efficient use of ratepayer funding.
Better alignment across councils could reduce duplicated work, lower overheads, and direct more funding to frontline services and infrastructure.

There is the opportunity for us to benefit from stronger regional advocacy.
A unified voice for Southland would carry more weight with central government and national agencies, ensuring our unique needs are heard early and often, especially on issues like freshwater, climate resilience and infrastructure investment.

And this means faster progress on big, cross-boundary issues.
Freshwater quality, coastal hazards, natural hazards, transport corridors and regional economic development all cross district lines. A structure that allows for joined-up planning and delivery would move these issues forward more efficiently.

Finally, better support for iwi and community partners.
Reducing the number of engagement processes and decision points would allow our partners to spend more time working on solutions, and less time navigating the system.

Southland has a proud history of working together and we look forward to progressing this investigation to find a structure that sets us up for the decades to come, just as the 1989 reforms served us so well in the past."

10 Reports

10.1 Chief Executive's report

Report by: Rob Phillips, Acting Chief Executive

Purpose

To provide Council with a governance overview of current matters within the organisation.

Summary

This is the Chief Executive's report for the period December through January 2026. It provides an update from direct reports to the Chief Executive on topical matters.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1 Receive the report - *Chief Executive's report.*

Office of the Chief Executive

Over the last two months, there has been an organisational focus on responding to Government proposals outlining significant national reforms while continuing to deliver our core work programmes. Key reforms out for consultation over the summer include the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill to replace the Resource Management Act (submissions close 13 February 2026), the Simplifying Local Government proposals covering council structures and responsibilities (consultation closes 20 February 2026), and the Emergency Management Bill (No. 2) to modernise New Zealand's emergency management system (submissions close 15 February 2026). Submissions closed on 4 February on a proposed rates-capping framework intended to constrain annual rates increases and reshape council funding flexibility. Collectively, these reforms signal a significant reset of how local government is organised, funded, regulated and expected to deliver services and infrastructure for communities.

Work has been undertaken across the organisation to assess the implications for Environment Southland, alongside engagement with sector partners, other agencies and stakeholders to identify areas of shared interest and alignment.

There has also been a focus by the Executive team on progressing work following Council's strategic session last month. This includes translating Council's direction into potential work programmes and considering where activity may need to be prioritised or paced differently.

Community and Engagement

Communications & Partnerships

The Communications & Partnerships team has successfully developed and delivered the *Southland's Sensational Summer* communications campaign. This campaign aimed at engaging and informing both residents and visitors to the region on key topics, including water quality, biodiversity and water safety.

The team has also supported farmer engagement through the delivery of farm plan sessions held across Gore, Winton, Tuatapere, Ōtautau, Wyndham and Invercargill. Farm planning guides and supporting resources are available on our website.

In addition, cross-organisational development of the Intensive Winter Grazing campaign has progressed well and remains on-track for launch at the end of the month.

The Summer edition of EnviroSouth was distributed across the region in December. This issue highlighted the 2025 Community Award winners and other community leaders. All stories are also available on Council's website and continue to be shared across social media channels.

The team is supporting consultation on two bylaws – the Navigation Safety Bylaw and the Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaw. Both consultations close on Monday 16 February 2026. Staff will be attending a range of summer events like A+P shows and the Southern Field Days to promote and engage our communities on these bylaws.

The team has noted a significant increase in media enquiries in the 2025 calendar year. There were 241 completed media enquiries recorded – an 81% increase on the 135 enquiries recorded 2024. In addition, the Communications Team issued 77 proactive media releases during the 2025 year, some as a result of strategic plans, others in response to weather or contamination events.

In December, the 'Environmental Incidents' webpage went live. This page provides public information on any pollution incidents our compliance team has responded to, along with the current status of any investigation process. You can view this page here – www.es.govt.nz/environment/compliance/environmental-incidents

Land Sustainability
For December, staff have been actively engaging with landowners to support improved grazing practices. This has included site visits and tailored advice provided to seven landowners, focusing on practical, on-the-ground improvements.

In addition, the team has been undertaking stream studies for landowners. These assessments help landowners better understand stream health and identify opportunities to improve water quality and riparian management.

Under the Catchment Improvement Fund (CIF), mitigation activity is beginning to accelerate. Applications are progressing for fencing-off gullies, construction of a sediment trap and a detention bund, along with some pole planting. Additional funding has been repurposed from other areas of land sustainability into CIF this year, which it is hoped will generate increased interest and is expected to support a higher volume of projects. Communications to raise awareness and encourage uptake have been undertaken.

Native planting continues to progress well, with the majority of the fund allocation to date committed to native planting projects. Most planting is focused on riparian margins, with additional restoration of planting occurring in gullies. Communications are also planned for January to promote these opportunities and support continued momentum.

On 3 December 2025, a Matuku Muster was held at Waikawa. The event involved local groups encouraging participants to learn how to listen for and record the booming calls of bitterns, contributing to increased community awareness and monitoring of this threatened species.

On 4 December 2025, staff attended the Gore Catchment Group wetland project open day. The event showcased the restoration of a 5-hectare wetland and highlighted practical outcomes, including improvements to water quality, nutrient management, and biodiversity. It also provided valuable opportunities to hear from experts and project partners and to engage with the local community.

Freshwater programme
The freshwater programme team has continued the roll out of the engagement plan by way of the "Drop-in Sessions" held in Invercargill and Wyndham in mid-December. This provides farmers with the opportunity to pre-book a session with a Farm Plan Advisor who can help them prepare their farm plans to be ready for certification. More sessions are planned for February where the team will look to reach out to farmers in Northern Southland catchments.

Preparations have begun on a webinar series focusing on assisting farm plan developers and using the newly created Environment Southland guidance material. The webinars will focus on how to produce a farm plan and provide information and instruction for farm plan developers. A series of instructional videos are also in the making, which will support the webinar delivery and be a resource for farm plan developers to use and will be available on the ES website. The Freshwater team is aiming to hold the webinars in March.

The freshwater team welcomed new staff member Jono Williams to the team on 19 January 2026, in the role of Freshwater Farm Plan Advisor.

Environment Southland has now had nine farm plans submitted that have received certification. This gives the opportunity to implement quality assurance systems that are in place, to ensure all requirements are met. Environment Southland is working with Assure Quality in applying this process to the certifications that have been submitted. In the meantime, finalised central government amendments to the Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations are awaited. The Ministry for the Environment has signalled further changes to certification and auditing and also new timeframes for roll-out across the regions. This information will be communicated and the changes implemented, as soon as they are known.

Biodiversity
The biodiversity team has had a productive month, with thirteen Community Group Grant applications recommended for funding, totalling $75,600. Engagement with local groups continues, alongside planning for upcoming skills-based workshops and preparations for World Wetland Day celebrations. Support for the Southland Ecological Restoration Network (SERN) also remains steady, including work on the Autumn field trip and ongoing updates to the SERN website.

Collaboration across the region is progressing, with the November Southland Biodiversity Forum minutes shared and the next meeting date to be confirmed. Communications strategies for key programmes are advancing, including the Community Group Grant, the Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) programme, and the new Biodiversity Map. Conversations with landowners are underway, supported by the newly signed operational MOU between QEII and Environment Southland, although no new management plans or site sign-ups have been completed yet.

On-the-ground restoration work at Lower Mataura is tracking well, and 22 new referrals from Silver Fern Farms will be reviewed in the New Year. Fish passage monitoring has been temporarily paused to allow the team to focus on developing the KNE programme. Overall, momentum remains strong as the team prepares for a busy year of biodiversity action across Southland.

Science

Science Investigations and Operations
Staff are continuing to service the long-term environmental monitoring programmes involving various data and sampling collection activities, monitoring station checks, maintenance and calibration to national standards and river gauging activity. The hydrological monitoring network, which supports the 24-hour flood duty service has been maintained and serviced. Summer monitoring has started, including recreational waters programme and various seasonally specific programmes. The results are available at South Maps and Land Air Water Aotearoa – Can I Swim Here?

The Lake Manapouri monitoring buoy has been damaged and is undergoing repair. It is expected to have the buoy operational again in the next few weeks.

Science Integration

There have been considerable delays on the delivery of the awaited Climate Change Impact Assessment report, and our review of the draft report has prompted further delays as there were several revisions required to ensure it is fit for purpose. Environment Southland staff are working with Earth Sciences New Zealand to get this work completed. The full and final four-volume report is now expected to be delivered at the end of January 2026.

Staff have been working on collating and assessing Southland's natural hazards information. This work involves liaising with other agencies, including the Southland District Council, to understand and meet their information requirements. A hui is being planned for February involving other statutory entities and stakeholders to participate in a comprehensive assessment of the state of knowledge of natural hazards across the region. Termed the *Murihiku/Southland Natural Hazards Knowledge Assessment*, this assessment will be conducted January-June 2026 period, and will:

1. **Inventory** the natural hazards information that currently exists for Southland;
2. **Assess** the state of knowledge of each significant natural hazard;
3. **Identify Gaps** in knowledge and prioritise research needs; and,
4. Make preliminary **natural hazards research recommendations.** These recommendations will inform Long Term Plan planning.

Integrated Catchment Management

Operations Delivery

Biosecurity - activity continues to focus on preparedness, surveillance and seasonal control programmes across animal, plant, freshwater and marine environments.

Pest animal operations across the region are expanding, with new possum control underway in Western Southland, adjoining existing control areas. There is also a focus on preparing for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). MPI and regional councils are coordinating planning, with a focus on public communication and landowner responsibilities. Environment Southland's role is primarily support and preparedness rather than direct response.

Plant biosecurity operations are at peak seasonal activity. Control programmes are underway for key pest species, including wilding conifers, Old Man's Beard, Purple loosestrife, and reed sweet grass. These are progressing well, with very positive results and clear reductions in known infestations. Work on Rakiura and eradication species continues. Staff are reinforcing farm biosecurity messaging due to increased contractor and feed movements. Aerial control of Buddleia in the Whare and Redcliff streams has been completed, with follow-up indicating fewer plants detected compared to previous seasons. Wilding conifer control at Mid Dome commenced, however unstable weather limited aerial spraying to 34 ha of the planned 100 ha. Council staff are seeking a further weather window to complete the remaining work, along with an additional 150 ha funded by LINZ. Current national funding limits the ability to contain wilding spread outside priority areas. A larch shelterbelt that had begun spreading wildings in the Mid Dome area has also been successfully removed.

Freshwater biosecurity efforts continue to focus on a potential detection of the invasive aquatic plant Egeria densa in the Kaiwera Stream, following eDNA sampling by a local landowner. Further eDNA samples have now been collected and sent for analysis. A similar detection has occurred in Otago, just across the regional boundary. While Egeria densa is present in isolated areas of Marlborough and Canterbury, it is not currently known to be established in Southland or Otago, and no physical plants have been found to date. Further targeted ground surveys are being planned. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with Otago Regional Council and Environment Southland's science team, with the additional benefit that the information may support work on a threatened species in the area.

Marine biosecurity activity has been high over summer, with delivery of the Protect Our Paradise campaign. An ambassador programme has engaged boat users across Southland and Fiordland. Surveillance and compliance activities have continued, including Undaria management. A strategic Haul-Out Concept Report is nearing completion, identifying future infrastructure needs to manage biofouling risks and support regional marine industries.

Catchment Management and Drainage Operations:
Catchment and drainage operations have been significantly influenced by spring storm and flood events, with a strong focus on recovery, resilience, and routine maintenance.

- Oreti and Makarewa catchments have seen extensive tree clearance, flood bank repairs, willow management and erosion protection following storm damage. Flood fairway spraying is progressing in partnership with LINZ.

- In Te Anau and Waiau catchments, emergency and ongoing works have addressed channel shifts, erosion and sediment build-up affecting flood protection and community assets. Coordination with NZTA and local communities is ongoing, supported by hydraulic modelling and planned bathymetric LiDAR surveys.

- Urban and rural drainage maintenance continues across Invercargill, Waimumu, Waikaka tributaries, and the Oteramika, Clear, Ives, Waituna, and Duck Creek systems. This includes weed control, tree removal, drain cleaning, and structural repairs.

- The Stead Street Pump Station transition remains on track, with decommissioning of the old station underway, land transfer progressing with Invercargill City Council, and final commissioning tasks being completed on the new pump.

- Targeted works at assets such as the Titiroa Gates and Aparima River continue, including engineering repairs, fish passage improvements, and routine river maintenance.

Kānoa-Funded Projects
Delivery of Kānoa-funded flood resilience projects continues across multiple tranches, with progress generally tracking well.

- Tranche 1 projects are advancing, with an approved variation extending the Ōreti Plains project completion date to March 2028 due to weather impacts and resourcing adjustments. Procurement has progressed, contracts are being finalised, and community engagement has continued. Te Anau works are ahead of programme and on budget.

- Tranche 2 funding agreements are nearing execution. Procurement for the Mataura River Channel Widening is underway, with tenders evaluated and consenting progressing. Contract award is anticipated shortly, subject to approvals.

- Tranche 3 activity is focused on pipeline development and national coordination. Environment Southland is working with other regional councils and central government to position future projects, prepare business cases, and maintain momentum for upcoming funding opportunities.

Regional Strategic Programmes

Whakamana te Waituna: On 12 December 2025 the Whakamana te Waituna Trust met and welcomed in the two new Chairs, Cr Jon Pemberton and Riki Nicholas as the new Trustee representing Awarua Rūnanga. The trust also farewelled long-standing Awarua representative and co-Chair Gail Thompson.

The Board signed the updated Trust Deed to include a 'protection clause' which then led to the signing of the Webster Block Sale Purchase Agreement by Environment Southland. As started in the covenant agreement, the income received from the lease over the past 12 months will also be transferred to the Trust to kick-start the Webster Block restoration plan. Phase one includes 5300 plants to be planted in February/March this year.

Learning from the Land (formerly Leading on our Land): We are working with Te Ao Mārama to build a practical, long-term way to make good decisions about Environment Southland's landholdings. The focus is on making land-use decisions that are clear, consistent and stand the test of time.

The approach looks at land in a whole-of-catchment way, so decisions support environmental outcomes now and into the future, while remaining flexible as policy, funding, political priorities and environmental conditions change. The work will also help strengthen how integrated catchment management is applied across Southland.

As part of the programme, we are developing an Investment Logic Map that clearly sets out the problems we are trying to solve, the outcomes we want to achieve and why investment is needed. This will provide a clear, evidence-based foundation for future funding and delivery decisions.

The programme will run through 2026, with regular workshops and progress updates provided to Council. This will be complementary to the work of the Investment Committee who have a focus on optimising returns.

Catchment Strategy

Operational Planning Team - progress of actions in the Asset Management Improvement Plan continues, with some being rolled over to this quarter, namely the continuation of the Environmental Code of Practice for River Works and Land Drainage review and the finalisation of the Environment Southland Flood Protection Asset Management Policy. This coming quarter will begin a review of the asset register and databases to ensure accuracy of data ahead of the asset management plan updates. Progress on these actions will be reported quarterly to the relevant Council committee and shared with stakeholder groups to ensure transparency and accountability.

Technical & Design Team - crest level surveys of the Upper Mataura flood banks to support the Upper Mataura Flood Model development have been completed. The focus now shifts to the Ōreti catchment to survey crest levels for where there are gaps in the existing data. This work will be completed over the coming months.

Emergency Management

The Chief Executives of each council completed interviews for the Manager/Group Controller position last week, and an appointment is expected in the near future. Within the Emergency Management Southland (EMS) team, a couple of internal changes have recently occurred, and recruitment is underway for a new Emergency Management Advisor. The EMS team has been operating with reduced staffing for some time and is looking forward to having a full complement.

Staff continue to progress outstanding recovery work from the October wind event, including generator invoicing and the assessment and processing of Mayoral Relief Fund applications. The Mayors have not yet confirmed a closing date for the fund, so applications remain open at this stage.

Community engagement activities and partner agency meetings have resumed following the Christmas/New Year period. Training for council staff who support operations in the Emergency Coordination Centre is also scheduled to recommence next week.

Strategy and Regulation

Consents

A steady stream of 19 new applications were lodged between 4 December 2025 to 25 January 2026.

A joint consent hearing at Gore District Council, was held on 3 and 4 December for the consent application by Waikaka Gold Mines Limited for the purpose of establishing and operating a gold mine at a site approximately 4 km south-west of Waikaka township and 22 km north of Gore. The hearing by a three-person panel was closed on 23 January 2026, and the parties were advised that a decision will be issued on or before 16 February 2026.

More information can be found at this link: https://www.es.govt.nz/environment/consents/notified-consents/2025/waikaka-gold-mines-limited-app-20242608

Consents staff are working to implement the amendments to the Resource Management Act enacted in December related to the automatic extension of consent durations. More information can be found at this link: https://www.es.govt.nz/environment/consents/consents-duration-extensions

Environment Court appeals: On 19 November 2025 an appeal was lodged by Federated Farmers on the panel decision to grant consent to Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Department of Conservation and Environment Southland for the periodic opening of the Waituna Lagoon. The Court as has directed a joint memorandum outlining the issues and anticipated path forward by parties, to be filed by Monday 2 February 2026.

Hearings: Independent Commissioner Louise Taylor closed the hearing of the hearing for consent application by Fiordland Discovery Limited on 27 November 2025. The decision to grant the application for a coastal permit authorising preferential occupation of three existing moorings was circulated on 4 December 205.

Applications in progress: There are 167 applications currently in progress.

Timeframe compliance: Compliance with statutory processing timeframes for resource consent applications for the period 4 December to 25 January 2026 was 100%. This includes instances where the applicant has agreed to a timeframe extension.

Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 applications:

Contact Energy Southland Wind Farm: Substantive comments on the application closed on 17 December2025, and ES's comments were lodged within this timeframe. All substantive comments can be viewed https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects/southland-wind-farm/comments-from-invited-parties

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) consenting panel appointed to make a decision on the application has issued a series of minutes post –Xmas , and has directed expert conferencing on landscape and earthworks management issues in late January and early February 2026.

Hananui Aquaculture: The Hananui application was accepted by the EPA as complete on 17 December 2025. ES has provided a series of procedural responses in relation to the application to date. It is anticipated that the next key step will be the panel convenor's session to discuss timetabling and panel makeup. No EPA panel has been appointed at the timing of writing.

Harbour Management

With the recreational boating season now underway, two summer students have been carrying out safer boating surveys at local boat ramps. They are also providing safe boating advice and rewarding boaties that display good habits with some free goodies.

The team has been working with ACC to have a life jacket library available to Southland boaters. First day of operation on 13 December 2025 resulted in one vessel passenger who did not have a personal flotation device being able to borrow one from the library and continue the day's fishing safely. This was a great outcome and fantastic partnership with ACC as part of the *Have a Hmm*! campaign.

Safer boating surveys are undertaken on weekends and fine weather weekdays. Extremely high rates of compliance have been identified, with many boaters having well above minimum standard of safety gear.

Regional Planning

Both the Navigation Safety and Flood Control and Drainage Management Bylaws are under review with consultation open until 16 February 2026. Staff have been attending summer community events to assist with any related questions.

Documentation to support the formal requests for the Minister of Resource Management Reform to modify the Southland Water and Land Plan has been submitted. A formal briefing of the Minister is anticipated by the end of January, with a decision on whether the requested changes meet the criteria to commence the Resource Management Act investigation process anticipated by mid-February. The requests relate to how the Southland Water and Land Plan addresses gravel management for the protection of infrastructure, wetlands and other positive actions, and farm plans.

Resource Management

A new year brings the opportunity to review several of Council's work programmes and so much of January and February will be used to ensure that staff maintain efficient and productive risk-based work programmes. One of these programmes is the organisation-wide approach to intensive winter grazing. A review of the communications plan for the winter grazing period was completed in December 2025 and it has been bolstered to include an increase in proactive messaging during the cultivation period.

Dairy and industry monitoring is continuing as well as water permit monitoring to ensure compliance with abstraction rates and volumes.

Strategy and Policy

Throughout December and January there has been a significant amount of analysis occurring on the recently released government legislative announcements. Submission timeframes are tight, and the scale of the changes proposed is extensive. Currently submissions are being prepared for the two Acts that will replace the Resource Management Act, the Emergency Management Bill, consultation on rates capping proposal and changes to local governance arrangements.

Work is beginning on the 2027-2037 Long-term Plan (LTP). Over this calendar year staff and councillors will review the strategic direction, understand the new incoming legislative requirements and governance arrangements in order to ensure our work programmes are appropriate and our budgets are prioritised. Public consultation on the LTP will occur in early 2027.

People and Governance

People and capability

Recruitment still remains a key area of focus for the team with 15 positions currently being recruited for.
The organisation had seven new starters in January, all of which were in technical/science areas.

Health and Safety
Recruitment for the vacant Health & Safety Manager role is almost completed, with a good response having been received to the advertisement. An update will be provided at the meeting.

The removal of internal walls within an office area, which created additional workspace, will require an update to the current Regional House Evacuation Plan for FENZ, and this work is underway.

Risk and Governance
General Managers have reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for all committees with the committee Chairs to ensure alignment and avoid duplication. Committee meetings began at the end of January and Committee Chairs have agreed to meet on a bimonthly basis to coordinate the work programmes for the committees.

A check-in with Elected Members has been scheduled for March to review the first 6 months of the triennium and get feedback on induction with a view to making any adjustments as necessary.

Corporate Services

Finance
Finance Operations – with rates falling due at the end of November, the team managed a high volume of receipting and customer enquiries. Overdue penalties were applied as scheduled and the team processed both debtor and creditor invoicing ahead of the holiday break.

Property & Fleet - the Property & Fleet team completed further lease renewals and inspections. Gate automation for the compound was successfully completed, improving site access and security. The team continues to maintain the café, stationery requirements and uniforms for all staff.

Corporate Reporting - the team finalised November processing and reporting and commenced the quarterly forecasting. Draft annual plan budgets were given to managers for review in line with expected work programmes. This work will continue with the Executive ahead of presentation for Council approval.

Customer Services
The conclusion of 2025 brought significant operational demand driven by rates season. Despite this busy period, the team remained focused on building a stronger, future-oriented service model through improvement and feedback. The intention is to spend time together over the coming months to workshop further improvements.

A key priority for early 2026 is the completion of a refreshed Customer Services Strategy. This work will provide clear direction for how staff continue to enhance service delivery for both internal and external customers, ensuring consistency, accessibility and high-quality support across the organisation.

The Customer Support Services Manager will be dedicating a substantial portion of her time to evolving the current strategy into a fit-for-purpose, actionable framework that aligns with organisational expectations and positions the team for long-term success.

Information and Technology Services
GIS Team update: Since the last update, the team has been working on upgrading the GIS servers. The substantial upgrade to the versioning of the GIS software has revealed challenges in the Test environment. The team is working with the vendors to resolve these issues before upgrading the production environment. When complete, the upgrades will provide a better user experience and enhanced functionality. The major

benefit is enabling the continued roll-out of improved web services, such as the replacement for internal Beacon.

ICT update: Since the last update, the team has been working on these key areas:
- the VxRail (an integrated IT infrastructure system) upgrade was finalised, ensuring system compliance with the latest version.
- as part of Cybersecurity Month, the organisation engaged in awareness activities to strengthen security practices and mitigate emerging threats.
- following the recent Council elections, all councillors received new laptops and a training session.
- new, high-performance servers were handed over for operational use, enabling advanced computing capabilities for data analytics and workloads.
- leased machines were returned and replaced with new devices, maintaining compliance with hardware lifecycle standards across the organisation.

*B**usiness systems update:*** Since the last update, the team has been working on these key areas:
- the successful launch of Paybles;
- completion of the IRIS upgrade, and the delivery of multiple live services that support operational efficiency.
- collaboration with the teams on RMA changes and are developing a new Freshwater Farm Plan process. This process has been presented to other Regional Councils as a possible solution until a national application becomes available.

Information Management: Since the last update, the team has been working on these key areas:
- Doc Assembler Integration Progress - this software is used for meeting agendas and minutes. Technical issues have delayed the integration of the software with Objective ECM (our document management system). This is now working in Test, and staff are waiting for Harbour to implement the required calls into DocAssembler.
- The Business Systems team is reviewing Doc Assembler's advanced features to enhance meeting and agenda functions.
- System Enhancements and Upgrades - the test environment for Objective ECM (document management system) has been upgraded, with User Acceptance Testing in progress. This upgrade will transition the organisation to the most recent version, allowing for the full leveraging of the application's capabilities while positioning it for future cloud implementation. Production will launch across the organisation in February 2026, with user change management and roll-out planning underway.
- Regular drop-in sessions for staff are held, providing end-users with opportunities to ask questions and address their training needs.

10.2 Local Government NZ Zone 5 and 6 Meeting Attendance

Report by: Jan Brown, Executive Officer
Approved by: Amy Kubrycht, General Manager People & Governance
Report Date: 27 January 2026

Purpose

This item seeks Council approval for the appointment of Council representatives at the Local Government New Zealand joint zone 5 and 6 meeting, scheduled to be held in Christchurch on 30 April and 1 May 2026.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1 receive the report - Local Government NZ Zone 5 and 6 Meeting Attendance.
2 Appoint two Councillors and the Chief Executive as its delegates to the Combined Zone 5/6 meeting to be held in Christchurch on Thursday, 30 April and Friday 1 May 2026.
3 Meet the associated costs of travel, accommodation and meals for those delegates attending the meeting.

Background

Local Government New Zealand holds quarterly combined zone meetings, which are open to attendance by each of the councils within the relevant zones. These combined meetings are shared between the zones, and on this occasion, the hosting region is zone 5, and Christchurch has been selected as the meeting venue. Based on budgets and past practice, it is proposed that up to two councillors and the Chief Executive attend the meeting. Council has been advised that the next combined LGNZ Zone 5 and 6 meeting will be held in Christchurch, on 30 April and 1 May 2026, commencing at 10.00 am on the Thursday, and finishing around 12 pm on the Friday.

The theme for the conference is "*Navigating Change in Local Government*". The two day programme will be exploring the current level of local government reform, and the opportunities this presents to reshape how Councils work, engage and delivery for their communities. A range of speakers and presentations are being developed from across local and central government, technology, engagement, tertiary education, economics and legal professionals, although the actual programme is yet to be finalized.

The reason for seeking early confirmation of attendees is to ensure best priced accommodation and air fares may be obtained.

Views of affected parties

There are no parties affected by the recommendations in this report.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources			X
Diverse opportunities to make a living			x
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity			x

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

There are no issues within this report which trigger matters in this policy.

Considerations

Financial implications

Attendance of up to two delegates and the Chief Executive at LGNZ Zone meetings is provided for within current budgets.

Legal implications

N/A

Attachments

Nil

10.3 Council Meeting Schedule - February 2026

Report by: Jan Brown, Executive Officer
Approved by: Amy Kubrycht, General Manager People & Governance
Report Date: 27 January 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this item is for Council to consider and approve the meeting schedule as shown on the following pages. It also provides an opportunity for Councillors to seek formal leave of absence from Council activities, if required.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1 receive the report - Council Meeting Schedule - February 2026.
2 appoint members to represent Council at the meetings as marked on the schedule;
3 approve the leave of absence requests as listed in this report and/or as made verbally at the meeting;
4 pay meeting fees and/or allowances in accordance with its policy, and as detailed on the schedule.

Report

Leave of absence requests may be lodged by Councillors either verbally at the meeting, or in advance, via this report. As this agenda was prepared, the following leave of absence requests have been lodged:

Cr L Ludlow – 10-16 March 2026
Cr R Hodson – 9-11 March 2026

This schedule has been prepared in accordance with current Council policy under the remuneration provisions contained in Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Attachments

1. Meeting Calendar - February 2026 [**10.3.1** - 6 pages]

Councillors Meeting Schedule - February 2026

Leave of Absence Requests (dates inclusive):
Cr Evans – 28 January to 3 February 2026
Cr Hodson – 9-11 March 2026
Cr Ludlow - 10-13 March 2026
Chair McPhail 14-26 February 2026
Cr Morrison - 9 to 13 February 2026
Cr Pemberton – 9-13 February 2026, 26-27 February 2026

Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Council Representation	Fees/ Allowances		
					Meeting Fee	Mileage Allowance	Other
Retrospective							
Ōreti Catchment Liaison Committee meeting	@ Winton	Wednesday 17 December 2025	7.00 pm	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Executive meeting with Committee Chairs	Via Teams	Tuesday 20 January 2026	5.00 pm	Committee Chairs	-	-	
Southland Regional Transport Committee workshop	@ ES	Thursday 22 January 2026	9.30 am	Crs Morrison & Gibson	-	✓	
Southland Heritage and Building Preservation Trust	@ ES	Thursday 22 January 2026	1.30 pm	Cr Ludlow	-	✓	
Burns Night Dinner	@ Scottish Hall	Thursday 22 January 2026	6.30 pm	Cr Rose	-	✓	
Meeting with Mayor Scott	@ SDC	Tuesday 27 January 2026	8.00 am	Cr Morrison	-	✓	
Meeting with Dunedin City Council & Great South	@ Great South	Tuesday 27 January 2026	11.00 am	Chair McPhail Cr Morrison	-	✓	

Please note, those items with shading or with ~~strikethrough text~~ **–** indicate changes that have occurred since the last meeting schedule was approved by Council *T = Transport (mileage/air fares/etc) *A = Accommodation costs *R = Course/Conference registration costs E = Expenses incurred in association with visit

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Cr Pemberton – 9-13 February 2026, 26-27 February 2026

Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Council Representation	Fees/ Allowances		
					Meeting Fee	Mileage Allowance	Other
Chief Executive's Review Committee	@ ES	Tuesday 27 January 2026	1.30 pm	Crs Evans, Ludlow, McPhail, Pemberton, Rodway	-	✓	
Integrated Catchment Management Committee Council Workshop – RMA Reforms	@ ES	Wednesday 28 January 2026	9.30 am 1.00 pm	All Councillors	-	✓	
Strategy & Policy Committee Council Briefing – Great South SOI & Space Ops SOI Council Briefing – Nitrate Update and H&S	@ ES	Thursday 29 January 2026	10.00 am 12.00 noon 1.00 pm	All Councillors	-	✓	
Muffin Talk Recycling Week Re-do	@ ES And Teams	Friday 30 January 2026	8.30 am	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Great South Joint Shareholders Committee	@ Great South	Friday 30 January 2026	9.00 am	Chair McPhail	-	✓	
Edendale Crank-up Day	@ Edendale	Saturday 31 January 2026	As advised	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Council Briefing – ICM continuation Council Workshop – Youth Engagement	@ ES	Wednesday 4 February 2026	1.00 pm 2.00 pm	All Councillors	-	✓	

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Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Council Representation	Fees/ Allowances		
					Meeting Fee	Mileage Allowance	Other
Gore A&P Show	@ Gore Showgrounds	Saturday 7 February 2026	As advised	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Council caucus opportunity Council meet with Executive team Ordinary meeting of Council	@ ES	Monday 9 February 2026	1.00 pm 1.30 pm 2.00 pm	All Councillors	-	✓	
February							
All Councillors of Southland meet with Great South	@ Ascot Park Hotel	Tuesday 10 February 2026	1.15 pm arrive for 1.30 pm start	All Councillors		✓	
Waimumu Field Days	@ Waimumu	Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 February 2026	As timetabled	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Southland Community Broadcasters Charitable Trust	@ Findex	Thursday 12 February 2026	3.15 pm	Cr Morrison	-	✓	
Breakfast meeting with Hon. N Willis	@ Langlands	Friday 13 February 2026	7.00 am	Chair McPhail	-	✓	Reg

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Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Council Representation	Fees/ Allowances		
					Meeting Fee	Mileage Allowance	Other
Meeting with Hon. N Willis & Great South	@ Venue TBC	Friday 13 February 2026	As advised	Chair McPhail Cr Morrison	-	✓	
Investment Committee Council workshop – Climate Change Report Briefing Chief Executive's Review Committee	@ ES	Wednesday 18 February 2026	10.00 am to 2.00 pm 2.00 pm to 2.30 pm 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm	Councillors	-	✓	
Emergency Management Southland Workshop	@ Drawing Room, ICC	Thursday 19 February 2026	8.30 am	Chair McPhail Cr Morrison	-	✓	
Waihopai Planting Project Celebration	@ Waihopai Planting site	Saturday 21 February 2026	10.00 am	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Mataura On the Fly Festival	@ Mataura	Sunday 22 February 2026	As advised	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Regional Transport Committee (O/S)	@ Dunedin	Monday 23 February 2026	10.00 am	Crs Morrison & Gibson	-	✓	
Regulatory Committee Council workshop – Annual Plan Briefing	@ ES	Wednesday 25 February 2026	10.00 am	All Councillors [Cr Hodson apology]	-	✓	
LGNZ All of Local Government meeting	@ Wellington	Thursday 26 February 2026	As advised	Chair McPhail And CE	-	✓	

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Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Council Representation	Fees/ Allowances		
					Meeting Fee	Mileage Allowance	Other
Regional Sector Group Meeting	@ Wellington	Friday 27 February 2026	9.00 am	Chair McPhail And CE	-	✓	
March						✓	
Risk & Assurance Committee Council Workshop or Briefing if required Chief Executive's Review Committee	@ ES	Wednesday 4 March 2026	10.00 am To follow 1.30 pm	All Councillors	-	✓	
Strategy & Policy Committee Council Workshop or Briefing if required	@ ES	Thursday 5 March 2026	10.00 am To follow	All Councillors	-	✓	
Bluff Maritime Museum Trust Board	@ ES	Friday 6 March 2026	9.00 am	Chair McPhail	-	✓	
Southland A&P Show	@ Invercargill	Saturday 7 March 2026	As advised	Interested Councillors	-	✓	
Council Workshop – Annual Plan #1	@ ES	Wednesday 11 March 2026	10.00 am	All Councillors [Cr Hodson apol]	-	✓	

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Cr Ludlow - 10-13 March 2026
Chair McPhail 14-26 February 2026
Cr Morrison - 9 to 13 February 2026
Cr Pemberton – 9-13 February 2026, 26-27 February 2026

Meeting	Venue	Date	Time	Council Representation	Fees/ Allowances		
					Meeting Fee	Mileage Allowance	Other
Whakamana te Waituna Charitable Trust	Via Teams	Friday 13 March 2026	9.30 am to 12.30 pm	Cr Pemberton	-	✓	
Council – Interviews	@ TBC	Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 March 2026	As arranged	All Councillors	-	✓	
Council caucus opportunity Council meet with Executive team *Morning tea break* Ordinary meeting of Council *Lunch break* Council briefing if required.	@ ES	Wednesday 18 March 2026	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.15 am 10.30 am 12.30 pm 1.00 pm	All Councillors	-	✓	

Please note, those items with shading or with ~~strikethrough text~~ – indicate changes that have occurred since the last meeting schedule was approved by Council *T = Transport (mileage/air fares/etc) *A = Accommodation costs *R = Course/Conference registration costs E = Expenses incurred in association with visit

10.4 Common Seal

Report by: Jan Brown, Executive Officer
Approved by: Amy Kubrycht, General Manager People & Governance
Report Date: 22 January 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this item is for Council to note the documents to which the Common Seal has been placed, under delegated authority, as required by Council's Governance policies.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1 note the report - Common Seal.

Background

The following documents have had the Common Seal applied as provided for under Council's Governance policies:

11 December 2025
Consent to register a right to convey a water easement
Southland Regional Council and William Peter Crosbie, Christine Buckingham Crosbie, Lionel Allan Wright and Mavis Victoria Wright.

12 December 2025
Lease of Farm Land
Southland Regional Council and C J Allan

12 December 2025
Lease of Farm Land
Southland Regional Council and J W Hazlett and M C Hazlett

19 January 2026
Warrant to Act as Enforcement Officer
Jennifer Ann Knight

28 January 2026
Warrant to Act as A Biosecurity Authorised Person
John Carter

Attachments

Nil

10.5 Correction to appointment of the Southland Regional Transport Committee Southland Regional Transport Committee – Gore District Council Representation Change

Report by: Liz Devery, Regional Planning Manager Russell Hawkes – Principal Transport Planner
Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation
Report Date: 9 February 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request a change of Regional Transport Committee representation for the Gore District Council.

Summary

Gore District Council have advised of a change to their previously advised Regional Transport Committee representation. Correspondence indicating Cr Paul McPhail was to be the Gore District Council representative on the Regional Transport Committee was incorrect. A change of representation must be confirmed by the Regional Council.

This report requests the Gore District Council representative to the Southland Regional Transport Committee be confirmed as Deputy Mayor Joe Stringer. There is no change to the previously advised alternate representative.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1. Receive the report - Correction to appointment of the Southland Regional Transport Committee. Southland Regional Transport Committee – Gore District Council Representation Change

2. Confirm the appointment of Deputy Mayor Joe Stringer as the Gore District Council representative on the Southland Regional Transport Committee.

Background

At the Council meeting held on the 10 December 2025 the nominations for representations on the Southland Regional Transport Committee were confirmed.

Correspondence received from Gore District Council nominated Cr Paul McPhail as their Regional Transport Committee representative, with Cr John Gardyne as their alternate. Gore District Council have now advised a correction to their representation on the Regional Transport Committee to ensure that it reflects their official appointment. At their Council meeting on the 11 November 2025, Deputy Mayor Jo Stringer was appointed to the represent the Gore District Council. Cr John Gardyne is the nominated alternate as per previous advice.

A change to representation on the Regional Transport Committee requires the approval of the Regional Council under the Land Transport Management Act.

This report requests the Council to confirm a change to the previously appointed Gore District Council representee to reflect the latest advice from Gore District.

Deputy Mayor Joe Stringer can now be appointed to the Southland Regional Transport Committee as requested by the Gore District Council. There is no change to the previous advice regarding alternates.

Risks/Opportunities
There are no risks associated with this report. Correcting the representative details for the Committee will ensure that appropriate personnel are present at the Regional Transport Committee and removes the risk of administrative interrogation.

Views of affected parties
The only affected parties have requested the change to representation.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources			X
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity	X		

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy
This report does not trigger these policies.

Considerations
Financial implications
There are no financial considerations.

Legal implications
There are no legal considerations.

Attachments
Nil

10.6 Key Points of Environment Southland Submission on Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill

Report by: Shana Lee, Team Leader Policy
Approved by: Hayley Fitchett, General Manager Strategy and Regulation
Report Date: 2 February 2026

Purpose

To seek Council's approval to progress the drafting of Environment Southland's submission on the Natural Environment Bill and the Planning Bill, based on the key points outlined in this report and subject to further refinements for the reasons described.

Summary

This report outlines the key points proposed for inclusion in Environment Southland's submission on the Natural Environment Bill and the Planning Bill. These points draw on recent Council workshop discussions, analysis undertaken by staff and feedback from Te Uru Kahika, mana whenua partners and regional stakeholders.

The report seeks approval to continue developing the submission on this basis, noting that further refinements may be required as alignment work with Te Uru Kahika progresses, as additional subject matter and governance input is received, and as the overall structure and clarity of the submission are strengthened.

A final draft of the submission will be circulated prior to the meeting as a supplementary item.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1. Receive the report - Key Points of Environment Southland Submission on Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill.
2. Approve the development of Environment Southland's submission on Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill based on the key points outlined in the report.
3. Adopt the Environment Southland recommendations in the report below and acknowledge that further improvements will be added to the final submission as more analysis is developed.
4. Delegate the Chief Executive of Environment Southland authority to make minor technical and editorial amendments to the final submission, following endorsement of a draft submission via a separate supplementary item.

Background

This report has been prepared to provide an outline of Environment Southland's submission on the Natural Environment Bill and the Planning Bill, which together replace the existing Resource Management Act. These reforms sit within a broader resource management and local government reform agenda that also includes the Fast Track Approvals Act, Regulatory Standards Act, local government reform, rates capping proposals, wastewater standards, and climate change adaptation.

The Environment Committee is receiving submissions until 13 February 2026. Legislation is expected to be in place by the middle of the year. Environment Southland is participating in this public consultation process to ensure that the final policy outputs reflect regional priorities, draw on local and iwi knowledge and remain accessible and transparent for Southland communities.

A Council workshop was held last week on 28 January 2026 to discuss the associated opportunities and risks and to help shape Council's positions on the key policy proposals. The feedback received during the workshop informs the refinement of the draft submission, which is currently progressing through the drafting and review stages.

Development of the draft submission has involved close collaboration with key partners and sector representatives. Environment Southland is working alongside Te Uru Kahika, which represents regional and unitary authorities across Aotearoa New Zealand, so that regional council feedback is aligned wherever possible and the Southland position supports a coherent national voice. Environment Southland's submission is intended to sit in tandem with the Te Uru Kahika submission, filling gaps where a stronger regional emphasis is needed, highlighting Murihiku examples to support key positions and clearly identifying any departures.

The Council has also continued its partnership approach with Te Ao Mārama Board as mana whenua partners in Murihiku. Ongoing kōrero and joint analysis are helping to ensure that the submissions reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi, local iwi aspirations and the long-standing partnership model in the Southland region.

In addition, efforts have been made to ensure Council's analysis informed by the perspectives of key regional stakeholders, including major industry groups and conservation organisations.

As noted earlier, the key points of the submission may be adjusted further this week to reflect three main influences:

- Alignment with the Te Uru Kahika submission, which is still progressing through its review and approval process.
- Further input from subject matter experts and governance.
- Refinement to improve the flow, structure and strength of the submission.

Legislative Framework

The proposed legislative framework separates planning functions into two linked statutes. While this can improve clarity on paper, it also creates a risk that environmental issues are treated in separate statutory streams, rather than as parts of a connected system. Environment Southland is concerned that dividing the environment and environmental effects into separate subsets may lead to inefficiencies, gaps and added complexity for users of the system.

Te Uru Kahika's submission is likely to recommend the following recommendations which this Council could support.

- Ensuring strong high-level connection between the two Acts.
- Ensuring new national direction that are intended to resolve conflicts between the two Acts is in place prior to the commencement of the regional spatial planning process.
- Including the goals of both Bills in both pieces of legislation, to enable improve integration of strategic planning and decision making.
- Strengthening goals relating to enhancing and protecting the natural environment and addressing climate change adaptation.

In addition, Environment Southland recommends:

- ***Caution against dividing environmental effects in ways that do not reflect real world interactions between land, water, biodiversity, air and people.***
- ***Emphasising the need for broad and integrated definitions that avoid regulatory gaps where important effects fall outside the scope of both Bills.***

Spatial Planning

Regional Spatial Plans sit at the heart of the new planning system. Every region must prepare a Regional Spatial Plan that provides strategic direction for at least thirty years, integrates with the Natural Environment Bill and guides infrastructure planning and investment. Local authorities must establish a Spatial Plan Committee to prepare the plan and an Independent Hearings Panel will hear submissions and make recommendations. The Minister for the Environment has several powers to influence these processes, including appointments to committees and panels and decision making on matters of national significance.

Environment Southland strongly supports the introduction of Regional Spatial Plans, subject to key refinements. Te Uru Kahika's submission is likely to recommend the following recommendations which this Council could support.

- Supports mandatory regional spatial planning that integrates land use, environmental outcomes and infrastructure investment.
- Seeks clearer definition of roles, responsibilities and governance, so that spatial plans remain grounded in regional priorities and community input.
- Calls for strong and early engagement with communities and tangata whenua, recognising the foundational role of spatial plans in shaping regional futures.
- Supports limiting mandatory plan content to core issues, while allowing flexibility for regions to address local priorities in more depth.
- Advocates for comprehensive constraints mapping that includes environmental and development constraints across both urban and rural areas, including natural hazards and climate adaptation.

In addition, Environment Southland recommends.

- ***Strengthening public engagement processes, reflecting the long term and strategic nature of Regional Spatial Plans.***
- ***Embedding meaningful iwi and mana whenua involvement at all stages of planning and decision making.***
- ***Reducing the extent of ministerial overreach and intervention to maintain the integrity of local democracy and regional decision making.***

Environmental Limits

Environmental limits are a central feature of the Natural Environment Bill. They are intended to act as bottom lines that protect human health and the life supporting capacity of the environment. Human health limits will be set through national standards by the responsible Minister, while ecosystem health limits must be set by regional councils in Natural Environment Plans, following methodologies that will be set in national standards.

Environmental limits must be expressed in measurable terms, tied to defined management units, and supported by robust information. Where a risk of breach exists, regional councils will be required to prepare action plans and use tools such as caps on resource use to stay within limits.

Environment Southland strongly supports the concept of environmental limits, subject to refinements that make them workable and effective in Southland. TUK's draft position:

- Supports providing national consistency while allowing sufficient flexibility for local adaptation to Southland's environmental and economic context.
- Favors a staged approach that focuses first on areas where environmental pressures and risks are greatest, while building capability over time.
- Supports flexible implementation that allows the use of both regulatory and non-regulatory tools, including partnerships and voluntary programmes, to achieve limits efficiently.
- Emphasises the importance of high quality national standards for limit setting methodologies that are developed in close collaboration with regional councils.

In addition, Environment Southland recommends:

- ***Limits should, where possible, be set before Regional Spatial Plans are finalised, to ensure that growth and infrastructure decisions are grounded in environmental bottom lines.***
- ***Regional councils should be able to use a full range of tools at all times, not only after a breach has occurred, so that proactive management is encouraged.***
- ***National standards for resource allocation must address fairness and equity, including impacts on Māori interests and communities that rely on natural resources.***
- ***Methodologies be developed with an expanded focus on environmental outcomes.***
- ***Competitiveness in the international market be considered when developing the relevant policy framework.***
- ***Greater consideration for Southland's context, where a degrading baseline is not acceptable. Communities should be able to strive for improvement from status quo.***

Private Property Rights

A key objective of the reform is to prioritise the enjoyment of private property rights. More activities will be permitted, and effects will only be considered where they are more than minor. Opportunities for third party involvement in consenting will be reduced, and a regulatory relief regime is proposed where planning controls have a significant impact on the reasonable use of land, particularly for indigenous biodiversity, outstanding landscapes and sites of significance to Māori.

Environment Southland supports the general promotion of private property rights to encourage innovation and economic growth, but has significant concerns about the proposed regulatory relief regime.

Environment Southland recommends:

- ***That private property rights sit alongside other fundamental rights, including the public interest in a healthy environment and the rights protected by the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act.***

- ***Opposes the regulatory relief regime in its current form because it could create an unfunded mandate on ratepayers and undermine the achievement of environmental limits and spatial plan directions.***

If a regulatory relief framework is retained, the submission is likely to advocate that improvements be made to ensure it will not lead to unworkable implementation challenges that could undermine the effectiveness of the system.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori Rights and Interests

The Bills change the way Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori interests are reflected in the planning system. Treaty clauses are framed in descriptive rather than directive terms, engagement is expected to move largely to the plan making stage, and there is no guarantee of mana whenua representation on Spatial Plan Committees. National templates and tight timeframes may not align with local tikanga or mātauranga Māori, and there is uncertainty about the treatment of Treaty settlement instruments during the transition.

Environment Southland does not support the proposed approach and is likely to recommend reconsideration, in alignment with TUK's position.

Environment Southland recommends:

- ***Meaningful mana whenua participation (expanded to include early iwi engagement in national direction development): the legislation should explicitly enable and protect bespoke joint decision-making arrangements, including guaranteed iwi representation on spatial plan committees. The system also needs an operative 'Te Tiriti clause' that applies across the whole framework.***
- ***Consenting changes risk excluding mana whenua: the consenting framework should better recognise cultural effects and cumulative impacts and retain flexibility for mana whenua input where appropriate.***
- ***Certainty for treaty settlements during transition: the legislation must provide assurance that Treaty settlement redress will not be undermined, diminished or rendered uncertain both during and after transition, and must uphold the "full and final" nature of settlements.***
- ***Ngāi Tahu context requires stronger recognition of rangatiratanga: Bills must go beyond merely "upholding" Treaty settlements and actively reflect Crown commitments under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act, including recognition of mana whenua rangatiratanga over their takiwā.***
- ***Loss of s33-Style Transfer Powers Reduces Partnership Options: the new system should clearly enable the transfer or sharing of functions, powers, or duties with iwi authorities, where councils and mana whenua mutually agree this would achieve better outcomes.***
- ***Flexible Plan-Making Timeframes and Templates: greater flexibility is required to genuinely reflect local context and to support mana whenua participation at a strategic level, without undue reliance on justification reports or ministerial discretion.***
- ***Ministerial Override Powers Undermine Local Partnership: strong safeguards are needed to ensure that local partnership agreements are not overridden without transparent justification and engagement with affected mana whenua and councils.***

Centralisation

The Natural Environment Bill embeds extensive central government direction through national instruments such as National Policy Direction and national standards. These tools will set binding policy and technical rules, may apply nationally or to particular regions, and can require councils to amend plans without going through the usual plan change process. The default position shifts from regional discretion to central control, unless the legislation clearly allows local variation.

Environment Southland supports the intention to improve national consistency and efficiency, but is concerned about the scale of centralisation and the potential impacts on local democracy and regional responsiveness. TUK's draft position:

- Recognises that national direction can improve coherence and clarity, but warns that too much prescription risks one size fits all policies that do not reflect Southland's circumstances or Treaty settlement context.
- Highlights risks to local accountability, as key decisions are shifted further away from communities.
- Notes the potential for increased implementation workloads, as councils must continually update plans and systems in response to national instruments.

Environment Southland also recommends:

- ***Reducing the limits of ministerial intervention powers, in addition to clearly defined criteria when powers can be sued and transparent processes.***
- ***Stronger requirements to consult and work with councils when developing national instruments.***
- ***That the sector needs greater certainty about where councils retain discretion to adapt national direction to local needs.***

Consenting Framework

The consenting framework under the new system narrows the range of activity statuses and refocuses participation. Activities will fall into permitted, restricted discretionary, discretionary or prohibited categories. Public notification will be more limited and only available where significant adverse effects are present. Submissions will generally be restricted to residents of the region. Hearings will occur in defined circumstances rather than by default, and all notified applications must be decided by independent commissioners.

Conditions on consents must be directly linked to plan provisions or agreed by the applicant, and there is an expectation that the total number of consents will reduce significantly, particularly in the Territorial Authority sphere.

Environment Southland's recommends:

- ***That the use of independent commissioners for all notified applications may reduce flexibility and increase cost, especially where issues have already been resolved between the council and applicant.***
- ***Tighter rules on consent conditions may limit the ability to craft practical solutions, leading to more applications being declined rather than improved through conditions.***

- ***Limiting submissions to qualifying regional residents could restrict the involvement of affected interest groups that operate nationally but have a genuine stake in local outcomes, along with investors and mana whenua that reside outside Southland.***

The submission will seek a consenting framework that remains efficient while still allowing for meaningful participation and flexible, outcomes focused decision making.

Transition and Implementation

Transition from the Resource Management Act to the new system will occur over a defined period after the Natural Environment Act receives Royal assent. During this time, existing plans and policy statements will remain in force until replaced, and councils will need to prepare new Regional Spatial Plans and Natural Environment Plans. Resource consents and approvals granted under the Resource Management Act will continue to have effect, and councils will hold enforcement responsibilities under both systems.

Implementation will require major effort at both central and local levels, including development of national direction, new plans, environmental limits and supporting regulations. There will also be significant work to ensure that Treaty settlement arrangements are carried into the new system in a clear and durable way.

Environment Southland recommends:

- ***Opposes the proposed transition timeframe as it is too tight to support effective delivery without undue risk or cost.***
- ***Calls for an extension to allow robust planning, meaningful engagement with iwi and communities, and realistic sequencing of tasks.***
- ***That national instruments be accompanied by clear implementation feasibility assessments, including consideration of council capacity, funding needs and regional variation.***
- ***Supports a statutory advisory or co design role for regional councils in the development of national instruments, recognising their central role in implementation.***

Risks/Opportunities

Various risks and opportunities associated with the proposals included in the two bills have been discussed above and will be covered in more detail in the draft submission to be circulated.

Given the tight timeframe to analyse the draft legislation, workshop Environment Southland positions with the Council and consequently prepare a submission this report seeks council approval for the above recommendations. The final draft of the submission will be circulated as a supplementary item prior to the Council meeting.

Views of affected parties

Views of key regional stakeholders have been identified wherever possible and were taken into consideration in the development of Council's positions as noted in the introduction.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		

Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity	X		

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

It is our understanding that Significance and Engagement Policy is not triggered by this matter.

Considerations

Financial implications

There are significant implications associated with the proposed new legislation as noted in this report. More details will be discussed in the final draft submission to be circulated as a supplementary item.

Legal implications

There are significant legal implication associated with the proposed new legislation as noted in this report. More details will be discussed in the final draft submission to be circulated.

Attachments

Nil

10.7 Retrospective approval for rates capping proposal

Report by: Marcus Roy, Strategy and Policy Manager
Approved by: Rob Phillips, Acting Chief Executive
Report Date: 9 February 2026

Purpose

To get retrospective approval for Council's submission on the rates capping proposal.

Summary

In December 2025 the government announced a proposal to cap local government rates to only allow increases between 2% and 4% annually. The rates cap is proposed to apply to all rates revenue except for water charges and fees and charges. It is proposed that the rates cap would be implement a transition from 2027 and be fully in place by 2029.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1. Receive the report - Retrospective approval for rates capping proposal.
2. Retrospectively approve Environment Southland's submission on the rates capping proposal.

Background

On Wednesday 28 January Council had a workshop on the replacement Resource Management Bills, Emergency Management Bill and the Rates Capping Proposal.

Since the workshop the full draft submission was circulated to Council and the final version of the submission is attached for retrospective approval.

Risks/Opportunities

No risks or opportunities identified

Views of affected parties

No community views have been sought to inform this submission

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity	X		

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

Not applicable

Considerations

Financial implications

Submitting on the proposal does not have financial implications

Legal implications
Submitting on the proposal has not legal implications

Attachments

1. FINAL submission on the rates capping proposal [**10.7.1** - 7 pages]

Our Reference: A1417886

3 February 2026

Department of Internal Affairs
Wellington

Environment Southland's Submission on the rates target model for New Zealand

Introduction

1. The Southland Regional Council, trading as Environment Southland (Environment Southland), welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation on the rates target model for New Zealand. Engagement at this stage in the policy cycle, prior to legislation development, is appreciated. As a local authority governed by the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act), Environment Southland relies on rates revenue to service the Southland community across its statutory mandates. Consequently, Environment Southland is keen to see that any changes to New Zealand rating system enable a continued level of service.

2. Environment Southland supports the conscientious and efficient use of rates revenue whilst fulfilling key obligations that are of high importance and value to ratepayers, such as flood protection work. Additional clarity and consistency of rates increase calculations would be welcome, provided the rates target model is designed to adequately reflect councils' costs and there is sufficient flexibility in the model to reflect the varied local circumstances across the country.

3. Environment Southland recognises that further policy development is underway, and that detailed policy information and legislation is some months away. Consequently, this submission aims to highlight those areas Council considers most critical to the successful development of a rates target model, drawing on examples from Environment Southland's operations by way of illustration.

4. In summary, the key points of this submission are:

   - The proposed rates target model, including the exemptions framework will benefit from further detailed policy development to improve clarity and transparency. A quantitative methodology is critical, and to ensure workability, the model should be tested against a number of council test cases. Environment Southland may be a useful test case for a regional council with low growth and a high percentage of the population living rurally.
   - Council is concerned that this proposal could reduce councils' ability to fulfil their statutory roles, resulting in reduced service provision and assets being run-down, with adverse outcomes for communities and the natural environment that supports them and their economic activities. Biosecurity is a particular concern, which could

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be addressed by conceptualising pest eradication in a similar way to infrastructure renewal.

- Adequate provision within the model for replacing or improving infrastructure is critical. In Southland, there is a significant body of work underway upgrading the flood protection infrastructure, which is required of the Council under s101B of the Local Government Act 2002. This work is of critical importance to the Southland community, and provision for it, including interest costs for associated borrowing, is a key concern for Council.
- Environment Southland considers that the current fiscal accountability measures for local government are satisfactory. However, the following benchmarking metrics would provide cabinet with additional oversight while minimising the additional administrative burden of benchmarking: FTEs per population served and FTEs per km² of region.

Clear and quantitative model

5. Conceptually, Environment Southland supports the intent behind the proposed model, with its aim of greater clarity and transparency, and reducing the rates burden on households. Of the change options assessed in the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS), a rate target is preferable to the alternatives assessed, such as a hard rate cap, or a cap on all council revenue. However, we note that the Quality Assurance Statement of the RIS raises concerns about the ‘limitations on options imposed by prior decisions’, and the mismatch between this and the problem identified by Ministers, particularly given the evidence suggests rates have risen in response to ‘a range of unavoidable cost pressures’[1] on councils. Further, the Australian examples analysed in the briefing material make for sober reading, with their rate capping system resulting in asset degradation, higher debt, weaker operational efficiency and reduced community access to services[2]. Council agrees that avoiding these negative outcomes needs to be a key focus of the detailed design of a rates target system for New Zealand, especially as New Zealand councils are already operating at below sustainable funding levels in response to sustained political pressure to keep rates down over successive decades[3].

6. In relation to the proposed formula, our primary concern is the lack of clarity about what the constituent elements mean in practice. Essentially, the proposed formula provided feels conceptual rather than quantitative. It is not until further detail is available that local authorities will be able to assess whether the model is workable for their particular situations. The Cabinet Minute seems to support this, agreeing in principle ‘to the target model for a rates cap, subject to further policy development on regulatory design and the development of worked examples using actual council financial information, showing planned expenditure mapped against rates revenue allowable by the rates target’[4]. Environment Southland agrees with this position. Further, given the range of local authorities across the country, it would be prudent to conduct this testing using a diverse range of councils, both regional and district, both in large urban centres and rural areas with lower population density and growth. Environment Southland would be a useful test case for the latter.

[1] Quality Assurance Statement of the Regulatory Impact Statement: Rates Capping, Department of Internal Affairs, 22 December 2025, page 6.
[2] THE NEW SOUTH WALES RATE PEG SYSTEM, DIA – Te Tari Taiwhenua, November 2024, Pages 25 & 26.
[3] Treasury Report: meeting Between the Treasury and the Minister of Local Government, Treasury, 18 June 2025, para 8.
[4] Cabinet Minute ECO-25-MIN-0189, decision 9.

7. Beyond the general desire for greater clarity, Environment Southland has some concerns about specific components of the formula. Firstly, in terms of inflation, we believe that the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is primarily focused on household affordability, does not adequately reflect Council cost pressures, which are primarily driven by labour costs and (in our case) contractor costs associated with flood resilient asset maintenance. We recommend consideration be given to an inflation index which more accurately reflects the costs that Councils typically bear than CPI.

Recommendations:

- ***Clarify how the proposed rates target model will provide more efficient and transparent fiscal management of rates revenue while avoiding the negative rates capping outcomes experienced in Australia.***
- ***Provide clarity on the implementation of the formula for setting rates.***
- ***Specify an inflation index which more accurately reflects the costs that Councils typically bear than CPI.***
- ***Use financial data from a range of councils to develop the worked examples. Environment Southland is interested in being a test case for a low growth, rural regional example.***

Our ability to fulfil statutory obligations

8. A rates target model may weaken implementation of Environment Southland's statutory mandates, including flood infrastructure provision, hazard management, environmental monitoring, compliance, biosecurity and regulatory services. This is likely to be exacerbated by the additional workload associated with the government's reform programme. For example, Emergency Management Reform requires increased staffing overheads with no additional central government funding, and navigating a new resource management and planning framework[5] will incur high costs for councils. Inevitably, this will increase the risk to the natural environment, upon which Southland's economy is heavily reliant, more so than other regions. For example, agriculture contributes 22% of Southland's GDP, more than double most other regions[6], and tourism in the region centres on the natural environment. There is a risk that in attempting to alleviate the pressure on households, the rates target model may unintentionally compromise both the environment and the Southland economy.

9. While Environment Southland is committed to honouring the level of service agreed with the Southland community through the long term planning process, unless the rates target model is accompanied by central government investment, it will reduce the level of service councils are able to provide to their communities. Reduced funding would constrain Environment Southland's ability to fulfil its statutory obligations, exposing the community and the natural environment to the physical and legal risk associated with poor provision of these legislatively mandated functions. The rates target model requires careful design and testing to ensure the objectives of the proposal are achieved across the board.

10. Environment Southland believes that one of the key responsibilities of councillors in local government is to critically analyse legislative requirements, community desires and anticipated costs to deliver assets and services. Councillors are required to balance various components in order try and achieve a win-win for cost effective service delivery. We believe that an alternative to rates capping could be to incorporate annual planning

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[5] Assuming the enactment of the Planning Bill and National Environment Bill.

[6] The Southland Economic Project: Agriculture and Forestry, Environment Southland, 2019, page 20.

and long term planning cycles into the audit requirements to ensure that there is a level of independent oversight of cost effective service delivery.

Recommendation:

- ***Test the rate target model using a range of councils with different local situations, to ensure that legislated and community agreed levels of service are met across council's regulatory responsibilities. As mentioned above, Environment Southland could are interested in being a test case.***
- ***Rates capping may impact upon council's ability to implement new regulatory changes whereby reducing the efficiency and impact of much changes sought by Government.***
- ***Consider other mechanisms to ensure councils are being cost effective with ratepayer funds such as incorporating it into our auditing requirements.***

Biosecurity - exemptions and an infrastructure approach

11. Biosecurity provides an example where compromise carries significant potential consequences for Southland. Commensurate and timely biosecurity response is core regional council business[7] which risks being deprioritised under the proposed rates target model. In addition to the legislative requirement for Regional Councils to respond to pest incursions[8], the ecological and economic cost of pest incursions can be significant.
12. Environment Southland's *Undaria* eradication programme provides an example of the value of investing in biosecurity programmes. *Undaria* was discovered in Fiordland's Breaksea Sound in 2010. Since then, a huge eradication effort led to the successful eradication of *Undaria* from Chalky Inlet in 2024. While funding constraints have put eradication in Breaksea and Dusky Sounds out of reach, the eradication effort to date, has limited the spread of *Undaria* to around 400 ha of ocean in Fiordland. The remaining 60,000-odd hectares of Fiordland waters remain *Undaria*-free, including the iconic Milford Sound, the jewel in the crown of New Zealand's tourism industry.
13. Another pest management issue, arguably the biosecurity equivalent of deferred maintenance, is Southland's wilding pine problem. A legacy issue from underinvestment in wilding tree management last century, it is estimated that left un-managed, wilding trees could eventually cover 20% of Aotearoa's land area[9]. Currently, the impact on Southland's vulnerable sub-alpine ecosystems from wilding trees is significant, worsening, and expensive to manage, costing around $2 million a year. The primary wilding species, Douglas fir, remains a popular plantation species in Southland. Together, Otago and Southland have a disproportionately large area of Douglas Fir plantations, accounting for 60% of the national Douglas Fir forests. This means wilding trees in Southland are only going to spread further unless there is significant additional investment to get the existing problem under control (the equivalent of infrastructure renewal), before moving to an ongoing maintenance phase.
14. Left unchecked and underfunded, biosecurity incursions will significantly impact Southland's environment, community values and regional economy. Furthermore, the impacts of an uncoordinated regional approach will disproportionately impact individual businesses who likely did not contribute towards the issue.

[7] Although not proposed to be included as such under proposed changes to the Local Government Act.
[8] The Biosecurity Act 1993 mandates regional councils to respond to pest incursions.
[9] https://www.wildingpines.nz/national-control-programme/national-strategy

15. It is unclear whether the proposed rates target model will provide for biosecurity programmes explicitly, either in the base formula, or through its exemption process for new incursions. Environment Southland would like to see the ability for significant biosecurity programmes to be specifically provided for within the model, perhaps in a similar way that the infrastructure deficit is explicitly considered through the 'quality of infrastructure' component of the formula. Pest eradication and infrastructure renewal follow a similar cost structure, with higher short term costs (for initial knock-down/containment and construction respectively), before moving into a lower cost maintenance phase over time. Further, the severity of the problem (existing pest levels and quality of infrastructure) determines how much cost is involved. In our view, these similarities could be reflected in the rates target model.

Recommendations:

- ***Include a measure within the model to specifically account for biosecurity eradication programmes, perhaps conceptualising them in a similar way to the infrastructure deficit. Whereby, after a period of initial knock-down/containment where costs are higher (the equivalent of infrastructure renewal), the programme moves to a maintenance or steady state phase.***
- ***Explicitly provide for responses to new pest incursions through the exemption framework.***

Exceptions for replacing or improving infrastructure

16. Environment Southland is concerned the rates target model could perpetuate existing assets being run-down. Our primary concern is in relation to flood-infrastructure. A significant portion of Environment Southland's resources is dedicated to ensuring flood resilience assets are reinforced, well-maintained, and function effectively to safeguard communities and businesses against natural hazard risks. These assets include various flood banks, drainage channels, floodgates, and pump stations. Environment Southland currently manages a drainage network spanning 1,400 kilometres, with the total value of its flood resilience infrastructure, including pump stations, exceeding $460,000,000.
17. Adequately developing and maintaining these flood resilience assets, as well as the broader floodplains, is critical to safeguarding lives, properties, and livelihoods, particularly in areas prone to flooding. Numerous public and private properties of substantial value are protected by flood protection schemes. If upgrades and renewals are not adequately accounted for in the rates target model, the increased flooding risk associated with run-down assets could create a private insurance burden that outstrips any rates savings for individuals.
18. Renewing and upgrading this infrastructure requires significant investment, not dissimilar to the nationwide renewal of water infrastructure. Given that the proposed model excludes water charges and water targeted rates (among other things), we would like to see the river management rates also excluded. Excluding river targeted rates from the model would solve a good proportion of the overall challenge the rates target model poses for Environment Southland.
19. It's expected that climate change will intensify the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Failure to effectively plan and address climate change will leave communities exposed to costly and damaging impacts, endangering life and property. Changes in the frequency and intensity of severe weather events mean that natural hazard infrastructure upgrades are required alongside renewals and new infrastructure. Essentially, with climate change some existing flood infrastructure will no longer be adequate. If flood infrastructure remains part of the regional council mandate we would

like to see the impacts of climate change on communities and infrastructure recognised in the model, perhaps as an explicit climate change consideration when calculating the 'quality of infrastructure'.

20. Necessary infrastructure renewals and upgrades are likely to be funded, at least in part, by long term borrowing. Funding these projects out of rates revenue is untenable, and arguably inequitable to existing rate payers given these projects' long-term benefits and the existing infrastructure deficit. Maintaining Environment Southland's ability to meet interest payments across a range of future interest rate scenarios is critical to our credit rating and ability to borrow.

21. Environment Southland supports the recommendation to design the model to avoid councils being reliant on exemptions to undertake infrastructure renewals. However, it is important that the exemptions pathway is available and fit for purpose. While Environment Southland appreciates the need to constrain the time period for an exemption, the proposed requirement to return within the rate target in two years may not be in the best interests of households. This constraint may drive greater increases during the 2-year exemption rather than moderate increases over a longer period. Council would like to see greater flexibility by allowing the regulator to specify the timeframe councils may be outside the target for a given exemption.

Recommendations:

- ***Ensure that the consideration of infrastructure within the model includes natural hazard infrastructure[10].***
- ***Ensure that infrastructure renewals and upgrades are accommodated in a transparent, clear and realistic way to ensure councils don't have rely on exemptions to fund renewals and can maintain their credit rating.***
- ***Incorporate consideration of how climate change impacts communities and the adequacy of existing and proposed infrastructure into the model. Perhaps through the 'quality of infrastructure' component of the formula.***
- ***Provide a clear exemptions methodology for determining and gaining approval for higher rates rises to facilitate infrastructure renewal/improvement if required.***
- ***Allow the regulator to set the timeframe that rates rises may be outside the rate target if an exemption is granted.***

Strengthening council transparency and accountability

22. Environment Southland acknowledges the value of accountability and transparency when using public funds.

23. It is challenging to compare levels of service and performance across different councils as they have different levels and sources of funding, and unique local priorities that reflect the local democratic setting.

24. However, Environment Southland supports the implementation of measures that seek to ensure that councils are prioritising their work to meet their obligations and to deliver on the City/District/Region's priorities. Introduction of additional benchmarks such as FTE per population served of FTE per km^2 of region and coast would provide a useful indication of how cost effectively councils are delivering their work programmes relative to their peers.

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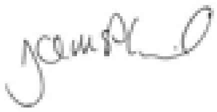
[10] It is Council's understanding that flood infrastructure would currently be covered based on S101B(6)(a)(iv) of the Local Government Act 2002.

Recommendation:

- ***Consider benchmarking metrics in relation to efficiency of council spending such as FTE per head of population served of FTE per km^2 of region and coastal area.***

25. Council thanks the Department of Internal Affairs for considering this submission and looks forward to future opportunities for collaboration.



Jeremy McPhail
Chairman

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12 Public excluded business I He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

In accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Ordinary meeting of Council – 10 December 2025
- Adoption of public excluded committee resolutions – Chief Executive's Review Committee – 27 January 2026
- Adoption of public excluded committee resolutions – Integrated Catchment Management Committee – 28 January 2026
- Item 12.1 Waiau River Erosion and Gravel Works

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below:

General Subject Matter	Reason for Passing the Resolution	Grounds under S.48(1)
Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Ordinary meeting of Council –	To protect the privacy of natural persons To allow Council to carry out negotiations, including commercial and industrial negotiations, without prejudice or disadvantage. To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(a) S.7(2)(i) S.7(2)(h)
Adoption of public excluded committee resolutions – Chief Executive's Review Committee – 27 January 2026	To protect the privacy of natural persons	S.7(2)(a)
Adoption of public excluded committee resolutions – Integrated Catchment Management Committee – 28 January 2026	To maintain legal professional privilege.	S.7(2)(g)