

Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement 2025-2028

Background

1. Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) requires local authorities within a regional council area to enter into a Triennial Agreement (the Agreement) by 1 March following triennial local body elections.
2. The purpose of the Agreement is to ensure appropriate levels of communication, co-ordination and collaboration between local authorities within the region. The agreement must include:
 - protocols for communication and co-ordination between the councils
 - the process by which councils will comply with section 16 of the Act, which applies to significant new activities proposed by regional councils
 - processes and protocols through which all councils can participate in identifying, delivering and funding facilities and services of significance to more than one district.
3. Agreements may also include commitments to establish joint governance arrangements to give better effect to the matters set out in paragraph 2 above.

Parties to the Agreement

4. The Parties to the Agreement are the Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council, and the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury).

Standing together for Canterbury

5. The Parties agree to work collaboratively and in good faith for the good governance and sustainable development of their districts, cities and region.

Communication

6. The Parties value and will maintain open communication, collaboration and trust. In the interest of "no surprises", the Parties will give early notice of potential disagreements between, or actions likely to impact significantly on, other Parties.

Significant new activities

7. When a Party is considering a major policy initiative or proposal that may have implications for other Parties, they will give early notification to the affected Parties and share the information with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum.
8. The Canterbury Regional Council will provide early advice to the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum and the Canterbury Mayoral Forum of any significant new activity, in addition to other requirements specified in s.16 of the Act.

Local government structure in Canterbury

9. Notwithstanding the spirit of co-operation and collaboration embodied in the Agreement, the Parties, individually or collectively, reserve the right to promote, consult and/or research change to the structure of local government within the Canterbury region.
10. This right is consistent with the intent to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local government (Local Government Act 2002 s.24AA), having regard to communities of interest and community representation.

Regional Policy Statement review

11. The Agreement applies to any change, variation or review of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement.

Collaboration

12. The Parties commit to working collaboratively to:
 - enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities
 - [promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future (Local Government Act 2002, s.10)].

[or]

 - *[to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses; and to support local economic growth and development by fulfilling the purpose set out above (Local Government (Systems Improvement) Amendment Bill (clause 6)]*
13. Collaboration may be undertaken on a whole-of-region, or sub-regional, basis.
14. The primary mechanism to implement this Agreement is the Canterbury Mayoral Forum. The Forum will meet quarterly and operate in accordance with its agreed terms of reference, which are attached as **Appendix 1**.
15. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will:
 - continue to provide governance of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy
 - develop and lead implementation of a sustainable development strategy for Canterbury region for the local government triennium 2025-2028
 - advocate for the interests of the region, its councils and communities.
16. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will be supported by the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum and other regional forums and working groups as agreed from time to time.
17. The Chief Executives Forum will:
 - report quarterly to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on delivery of its work programme to implement and manage collaborative projects and agreed actions of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum
 - identify and escalate to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum strategic issues and opportunities for collaboration from the Policy, Corporate and Operational Forums and other regional and sub-regional working groups.

18. As requested by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Environment Canterbury will host a permanent regional forums secretariat and resource this from the regional general rate.

Other agreements






19. This Agreement does not prevent the Parties from entering into other agreements among themselves or outside the Canterbury region. Any other such agreement should not, however, be contrary to the purpose and spirit of this Agreement.

Agreement to review

20. A triennial agreement may be varied by agreement between all the local authorities within the region and remains in force until local authorities ratify a new agreement.
21. Any one or more of the Parties can request an amendment to this Agreement by writing to the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum at least two weeks before a regular quarterly meeting of the Forum.
22. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will review the Agreement no later than the final meeting before triennial local body elections and recommend any changes to the incoming councils.

Authority

23. This Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement 2025-2028 is signed by the following on behalf of their respective authorities:

COUNCIL	SIGNATURE	DATE
Ashburton District Council Mayor		4 February 2026
Canterbury Regional Council Chair		25 February 2026
Christchurch City Council Mayor		4 February 2026
Hurunui District Council Mayor		16 December 2025
Kaikōura District Council Mayor		25 February 2026

Mackenzie District Council Mayor		24 March 2026
Selwyn District Council Mayor		10 December 2025
Timaru District Council Mayor		24 February 2026
Waimakariri District Council Mayor		31 March 2026
Waimate District Council Mayor		16 December 2026
Waitaki District Council Mayor		17 February 2026

Appendix 1: Canterbury Mayoral Forum terms of reference

1. Name

The name of the group shall be the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

2. Objectives

- (a) To provide a forum to enable Canterbury councils to work more collaboratively with each other and with central government and other key sector leaders in Canterbury to identify opportunities and solve problems together.
- (b) To identify and prioritise issues of mutual concern and foster co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration to address these issues (including where appropriate joint work plans).
- (c) To formulate policies and strategies on matters where all member councils may act collaboratively in determining plans for the co-ordination of regional growth.
- (d) To ensure increased effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury communities.
- (e) To act as an advocate to central government or their agencies or other bodies on issues of concern to members.
- (f) To develop and implement programmes, which are responsive to the needs and expectations of the community.

3. Principles

In pursuit of these objectives the Canterbury Mayoral Forum will observe the following principles.

- (a) Establish and maintain close liaison with other local government networks to ensure as far as possible the pursuit of common objectives and the minimisation of duplication.
- (b) Establish and maintain close liaison with Ministers of the Crown and local Members of Parliament.
- (c) Establish and maintain close liaison with a wide number of diverse stakeholders and key sector organisations within the region.
- (d) Exercise its functions with due regard to the tangata whenua and cultural diversity of the Canterbury community.
- (e) Keep the local community informed about its activities by proactively releasing information about key projects in a timely manner, as agreed by the member councils.
- (f) Encourage member councils to promote and apply cross-boundary structures and systems.
- (g) Establish a provision for reporting back to its respective Councils.

4. Powers

- (a) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum shall have the power to:
 - (i) levy for any or all of its objects in such amount or amounts as may be mutually determined and acceptable to individual local authorities
 - (ii) determine and make payments from its funds for any or all of the purposes of its objects
 - (iii) receive any grant or subsidy and apply monies for the purposes of such grant or subsidy
 - (iv) fund appropriate aspects of the Forum's activities regionally.
- (b) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum does not have the power to legally bind any council to any act or decision unless that act or decision has been agreed to by decision of that council.

5. Membership

- (a) Membership of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum shall be open to the following councils:
 - Ashburton District Council
 - Canterbury Regional Council
 - Christchurch City Council
 - Hurunui District Council
 - Kaikōura District Council
 - Mackenzie District Council
 - Selwyn District Council
 - Timaru District Council
 - Waimakariri District Council
 - Waimate District Council
 - Waitaki District Council
- (b) Each member council shall be represented by its Mayor (or Chair in the case of Canterbury Regional Council) and supported by its Chief Executive. On occasions where the Mayor or Chair cannot attend, a council may be represented by its Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair.
- (c) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum shall have the power to invite people to attend and participate in its meetings on a permanent and/or issues basis.
- (d) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum shall extend an invitation to the Chairs of the ten Waitaha Papatipu Rūnanga to meet at least annually with the Forum

6. Chairperson

- (a) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum shall select a Chair at the first meeting immediately following the Triennial Elections. This appointment may be reviewed after a period of 18 months.
- (b) The Chair selected will preside at all meetings of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.
- (c) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum shall select a Deputy Chair at the first meeting immediately following the Triennial Elections.
- (d) The Canterbury Mayoral Forum may appoint spokespersons from its membership for issues being considered, in which case each member council agrees to refer all requests for information and documents to the duly appointed spokespersons.

7. Meetings

- (a) Meetings will be held as required with an annual schedule, covering a calendar year, to be determined by the members. Meetings will be held quarterly at venues to be determined.
- (b) Special meetings may be called at the request of four members.
- (c) The secretariat will prepare an agenda for Mayoral Forum meetings in consultation with the Chair and the Chief Executives Forum.
- (d) Agendas for meetings will be issued, and minutes will be taken and circulated.
- (e) A summary of each meeting will be drafted and shared on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website for members to distribute within their councils as a high-level record of the meeting.
- (f) Approved minutes and approved final reports and papers will be made available via the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website as agreed by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

8. Decision making

- (a) The practice of the Forum will be to determine issues before it by consensus.
- (b) If the consensus is to determine issues by voting, the determination shall be determined by a majority of votes of the authorities represented at the meeting through the Mayor or Chair or their nominated representative.

9. Secretariat

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will appoint Environment Canterbury to carry out the secretariat function on such terms and conditions as it shall decide for the discharge of duties. This includes taking minutes, keeping any books and accounts and attending to any other business of the forum.