

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

BOARD PACK

for

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Friday, 20 February 2026

8:30 am (NZDT)

Held at:

Commodore Hotel

449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch

INDEX

Cover Page

Index

Agenda

Attached Documents:

1.3 a	Minutes : Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 28 Nov 2025.....	8
1.4 a	Action List.....	21
2.1 a	CMF Central Government reform of local government Feb 2026.docx.....	23
2.1 b	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 1 Feb 2026.docx.....	28
2.1 c	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 2 Feb 2026.pdf.....	35
2.1 d	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 3 Feb 2026.pdf.....	44
2.1 e	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 4 Feb 2026.docx.....	66
3.1 a	CMF briefing note Sir Brian Roche Feb 2026.docx.....	68
5.1 a	CMF Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury Feb 2026.docx.....	70
5.2 a	CMF Regional Spatial Planning update Feb 2026.docx.....	74
5.2 b	CMF Regional Spatial Planning update Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pptx.....	80
5.3 a	CMF Canterbury Water Management Strategy Feb 2026.docx.....	81
5.4 a	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Feb 2026.docx.....	87
5.4 b	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 1 Feb 2026.docx.....	95
5.4 c	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 2 Feb 2026.pdf.....	104
5.4 d	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 3 Feb 2026.docx.....	176
5.5 a	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Feb 2026.docx.....	190
5.5 b	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf.....	196
5.5 c	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 2 Feb 2026.docx.....	197
5.6 a	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update Feb 2026.docx.....	213
5.6 b	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update Attachment 1 Feb 2026.docx.....	217

5.6 c	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update Attachment 2 Feb 2026.docx.....	219
5.7 a	CMF Chief Executives Forum report Feb 2026.docx.....	222
5.7 b	CMF Chief Executives Forum report Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf.....	225
6.1 a	CMF Activities and Engagements Feb 2026.docx.....	226
6.1 b	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf.....	229
6.1 c	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 2 Feb 2026.pdf.....	231
6.1 d	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 3 Feb 2026.pdf.....	233
6.1 e	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 4 Feb 2026.pdf.....	234
6.1 f	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 7 Feb 2026.docx.....	241
6.2 a	CMF Connecting Canterbury White Paper Feb 2026.docx.....	244
6.2 b	CMF Connecting Canterbury White Paper Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf.....	245

AGENDA

CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM



Name:	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Date:	Friday, 20 February 2026
Time:	8:30 am to 2:00 pm (NZDT)
Location:	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch
Board Members:	Nigel Bowen (Chair), Craig Mackle, Craig Rowley, Dan Gordon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Liz McMillan, Lydia Gliddon, Marie Black, Melanie Tavendale
Attendees:	Alex Parmley, Angela Oosthuizen, Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Hamish Dobbie, Hamish Riach, Jeff Millward, Mary Richardson, Nigel Trainor, Steve Gibling, Stuart Duncan, Will Doughty, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald
Apologies:	Scott Aronsen, Phil Mauger, Justin Tipa, Tania Wati
Guests/Notes:	Rit Fisher, Deputy Mayor Mackenzie District (for Mayor Scott Aronsen), Sir Brian Roche, Public Service Commissioner, Diane McDermott, Regional Public Service Commissioner (Item 3.1); Matthew Bacon, Amanda Thompson, Canterbury Planning Managers Group (Item 5.2); Jesse Burgess, Canterbury Regional Council (Items 5.4, 5.5, 5.6); Nick Leggett, Infrastructure New Zealand, Catherine Shipton, Simpson Grierson (Item 6.2)

1. Open Meeting

1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies 8:30 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

1.2 Confirmation of agenda 8:35 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting 8:40 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

1.3.a	Minutes : Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 28 Nov 2025	8
-------	--	---

1.4 Action List 8:45 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

1.4.a	Action List	21
-------	-------------	----

2. For discussion and decision

2.1 Central Government reform of local government

8:50 am (40 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

2.1.a	CMF Central Government reform of local government Feb 2026.docx	23
2.1.b	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 1 Feb 2026.docx	28
2.1.c	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 2 Feb 2026.pdf	35
2.1.d	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 3 Feb 2026.pdf	44
2.1.e	CMF Central Government reform of local government Attachment 4 Feb 2026.docx	66

3. For discussion

3.1 Sir Brian Roche (Public Service Commissioner)

9:30 am (30 min)

Nigel Bowen

Diane McDermott, Regional Public Service Commissioner

Supporting Documents:

3.1.a	CMF briefing note Sir Brian Roche Feb 2026.docx	68
-------	---	----

4. KAI - Morning tea

4.1 Kai - morning tea

10:00 am (20 min)

5. For discussion and decision

5.1 Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028

10:20 am (20 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

5.1.a	CMF Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury Feb 2026.docx	70
-------	---	----

5.2 Regional Spatial Planning update

10:40 am (30 min)

Angela Oosthuizen

Matthew Bacon, Chair Canterbury Planning Managers Group

Amanda Thompson, Canterbury Planning Managers Group

Supporting Documents:

5.2.a	CMF Regional Spatial Planning update Feb 2026.docx	74
5.2.b	CMF Regional Spatial Planning update Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pptx	80

5.3 Canterbury Water Management Strategy

11:10 am (5 min)

Dr Deon Swiggs

Supporting Documents:

5.3.a	CMF Canterbury Water Management Strategy Feb 2026.docx	81
-------	--	----

5.4 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update 11:15 am (10 min)

Dan Gordon

Jesse Burgess, Chair Climate Change Working Group

Supporting Documents:

5.4.a	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Feb 2026.docx	87
5.4.b	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 1 Feb 2026.docx	95
5.4.c	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 2 Feb 2026.pdf	104
5.4.d	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Attachment 3 Feb 2026.docx	176

5.5 Regional Energy Workstream update 11:25 am (5 min)

Hamish Riach

Jesse Burgess, Chair Regional Energy Steering Group

Supporting Documents:

5.5.a	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Feb 2026.docx	190
5.5.b	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf	196
5.5.c	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 2 Feb 2026.docx	197

5.6 Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update 11:30 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal working group

Supporting Documents:

5.6.a	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update Feb 2026.docx	213
5.6.b	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update Attachment 1 Feb 2026.docx	217
5.6.c	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update Attachment 2 Feb 2026.docx	219

5.7 Chief Executives Forum report 11:35 am (5 min)

Hamish Dobbie

Supporting Documents:

5.7.a	CMF Chief Executives Forum report Feb 2026.docx	222
5.7.b	CMF Chief Executives Forum report Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf	225

6. For information

6.1 Activities and Engagements

Supporting Documents:

6.1.a	CMF Activities and Engagements Feb 2026.docx	226
-------	--	-----

Supporting Documents:

6.1.b	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf	229
6.1.c	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 2 Feb 2026.pdf	231
6.1.d	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 3 Feb 2026.pdf	233
6.1.e	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 4 Feb 2026.pdf	234
6.1.f	CMF Activities and Engagements Attachment 7 Feb 2026.docx	241

6.2 Connecting Canterbury White Paper 11:40 am (30 min)

Nigel Bowen

Nick Leggett, Infrastructure NZ

Supporting Documents:

6.2.a	CMF Connecting Canterbury White Paper Feb 2026.docx	244
6.2.b	CMF Connecting Canterbury White Paper Attachment 1 Feb 2026.pdf	245

7. General business

7.1 General business 12:10 pm (10 min)

7.2 Meeting review 12:20 pm (5 min)

7.3 Closing karakia 12:25 pm (5 min)

Kia tau te rangimarie ki runga I nga iwi o te ao
Haumi e
Hui e
Taiki e

Let peace reign on all the people of the world
Fixed
Bound as one

8. Kai - lunch

8.1 Lunch 12:30 pm (30 min)

9. Road Safety Week Campaign

9.1 Road Safety Week Campaign filming 1:00 pm (60 min)

10. Close Meeting

10.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 29 May 2026, 8:30 am

MINUTES (in Review)

CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM



Name:	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Date:	Friday, 28 November 2025
Time:	8:30 am to 1:10 pm (NZDT)
Location:	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch
Board Members:	Nigel Bowen, Marie Black, Craig Rowley, Craig Mackle, Dan Gordon, Phil Mauger, Lydia Gliddon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Melanie Tavendale, Liz McMillan, Scott Aronsen
Attendees:	Hamish Dobbie, Hamish Riach, Angela Oosthuizen, Mary Richardson, Nigel Trainor, Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Stuart Duncan, Will Doughty, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald, Sharon Mason
Apologies:	Alex Parmley, Jeff Millward
Guests/Notes:	Simon Hart, Waimakariri District Council (for Jeff Millward), Jesse Burgess, Canterbury Regional Council (Items 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6); Paul Barker and Warren Ulusele, Department of Internal Affairs (Item 5.1)

1. Open Meeting

1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies

Hamish Dobbie, as Chair of the Chief Executives Forum, welcomed participants to the meeting, particularly the new members around the table, noting that he will lead the first part of the meeting until the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum is elected.

The meeting was opened with a karakia.

Apologies from Chief Executives Alex Parmley and Jeff Millward were noted. Simon Hart, Waimakariri District was welcomed to cover for Jeff.

1.2 Confirmation of agenda

The agenda was confirmed as presented with one item of general business – Simplifying Local Government A draft proposal.

1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting

Canterbury Mayoral Forum 22 Aug 2025, the minutes were confirmed as presented.



Decision

The minutes of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting held on 22 August 2025 were confirmed as presented.

Decision Date:	28 Nov 2025
Mover:	Marie Black
Seconder:	Nigel Bowen
Outcome:	Approved

1.4 Action List

Due Date	Action Title	Owner(s)
30 Jun 2025	Action Status: On Hold	Maree McNeilly
30 Jun 2025	Action Status: On Hold	Nigel Bowen

2. For discussion and decision

2.1 Selection of chair and deputy chair



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. agreed to use the first past-the-post voting procedure for the selection of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum
2. agreed that, in the event of a tie between the highest polling candidates, a coin toss will determine the successful candidate.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Craig Rowley
Seconder: Melanie Tavendale
Outcome: Approved



Decision

That Nigel Bowen be appointed Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for the 2025-2028 triennium.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconder: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved



Decision

That Marie Black be appointed Deputy Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for the 2025-2028 triennium.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconder: Phil Mauer
Outcome: Approved

Hamish Dobbie, Chair of the Chief Executive Forum, led the nomination process for the selection of the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

Following Mayor Nigel Bowen's appointment to Chair, he took over the meeting and led the process for the selection of the Deputy Chair.

2.2 Introduction to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Hamish Dobbie, Chair of the Chief Executives Forum, introduced the paper providing a brief introduction to the Mayoral Forum, and noting the Forum is the key mechanism to implement the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement.

Discussion noted:

- the Forum has and can continue to operate as an effective and collective voice for the region. The success of regional advocacy against proposed changes to rural policing in Canterbury was noted as an example
- continuing the Forum's regional advocacy role with central government is critical, particularly given the recently announced local government reform, anticipated rates capping, resource management reform, and the 2026 central government elections
- that members speak in their own right at the Mayoral Forum, as leaders for Canterbury
- the recent make-up of the Minister for the South Island's regional groups that has Canterbury split between 3 groups is likely a reflection that the Minister wishes to engage with smaller groups at this point, rather than any signal of proposed local government boundary changes
- it is important that the Mayoral Forum continue to work together to identify and lobby for priorities across the region.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the role and mandate of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconder: Craig Mackle
Outcome: Approved

2.3 Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement

Hamish Dobbie, Chair of the Chief Executives Forum, introduced the draft Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement for 2025-2028, noting that this needs to be ratified by member councils before 1 March 2026.

The draft Agreement includes the Terms of Reference for the Mayoral Forum and mandates the Mayoral Forum as the primary mechanism for implementing the Agreement in Canterbury and mandates the Chief Executives and other regional forums and working groups.

It was noted that the only change from the 2022-2025 Agreement is a change to the terms of reference that following ratification, the Mayoral Forum will extend an invitation to the Chairs of the ten Waitaha Papatipu Rūnanga to meet at least annually with the Forum.

Discussion included:

- queries around whether a review of the five forums is needed in light of the reforms to local government. CEs acknowledged this was discussed at their meeting in November and it was considered that the balance was right, however noted that the settings may have changed as a result of the recent proposal from central government to simplify local government and the resource management legislation that is to be introduced
- noting that not only do the regional forums fulfill the Mayoral Forum's work programme and priorities, they provide a mechanism for staff to connect on regionally significant matters. The incidental benefit is collegiality, networking, and a healthy debate of views
- the Chair indicated he is happy to attend individual council meetings to support discussions regarding the Triennial Agreement and Mayoral Forum.



Action

Chief Executives Forum to review Regional Forums structure and roles.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026
Owner: Hamish Dobbie



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. adopted the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement 2025-2028
2. agreed to arrange for the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement to be ratified by member councils before 1 March 2026.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconder: Craig Mackle
Outcome: Approved

3. KAI - Morning tea & photos

3.1 Mayoral Forum and Chief Executives Forum photos

3.2 Kai - morning tea

4. For discussion and decision

4.1 Regional Strategy (Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury)

Hamish Dobbie, Chief Executives Forum Chair, introduced this paper and the proposal for reviewing and updating the Regional Strategy (Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury).

Members discussed:

- the importance of having a regional strategy as a comprehensive tool for advocacy and what it should primarily focus on: the significant local government reforms, the Mayoral Forum's priorities and associated workstreams and actions, or both
- the 2026 central government election and the need to agree the Mayoral Forum's priorities to have meaningful engagement. It was acknowledged in previous years the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury has put us in a place of strength to confront other moving parts
- concerns around spending on external facilitators, noting expertise may exist in-house to support this discussion, however given the significance and sensitivity of the reforms, there was discussion on the value of an independent facilitator to help navigate difficult conversations
- options for an external facilitator were proffered, such as reaching out to Canterbury tertiary institutes.

It was confirmed that funding for the strategy has been allocated from the regional forums levy, and includes facilitated workshops, research, drafting, and presentation. No additional funding is being sought.

- funding for the secretariat and support functions for the Mayoral Forum comes from the Canterbury Regional Council regional rate
- a question was asked about possible funding assistance from the Department of Internal Affairs, such as that with Local Water Done Well
- acknowledging that timing for workshopping reforms and developing a strategy is tight, and will be undertaken with an incomplete picture while the functions of regional councils are determined centrally
- the Canterbury Regional Council Chief Executive highlighted some of the functions and legislation that territorial authorities will need to consider, and that under the current

proposal Mayors will need to simultaneously understand the impacts of the new resource management legislation, draft a regional spatial plan, understand any implications related to Ngāi Tahu, govern a regional council through a major change process, while acting as Mayor for their territorial authority, with a rates cap in place.

A suggestion that two workshops are held was generally supported – 23 January 2026 with a focus on local government reform for Canterbury, followed by 30 January 2026 to refresh the regional strategy 2026-2028.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. agreed to review and update the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025 for the 2025-2028 triennium
2. agreed to the proposed approach to review and update the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025 for the 2025-2028 triennium.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Dr Deon Swiggs
Seconder: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved



Action

CMF workshops for Mayors and Chief Executives

- 23 January 2026 with a focus on local government reform for Canterbury
- 30 January 2026 workshop to refresh the regional strategy 2026-2028.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026
Owners: Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald, Maree McNeilly

4.2 Canterbury Water Management Strategy

Chair Swiggs introduced the paper, noting that with the significant local government legislative reform underway it is important that local leadership groups continue to progress.

Cameron Smith summarised progress to date, noting four establishment hui have been held, and plans for the remaining four to be convened in December 2025.

Discussion included:

- roles and functions of zone committees, local leadership groups and catchment groups, and the importance of delineating roles.
- Waimakariri District expressed concerns with the zone review changes and noted that the former Zone Committee worked well for Waimakariri, happy to keep engaging and to keep things moving
- Selwyn District - concern that the proposed leadership group will not be appropriate, consider basing membership around existing catchment groups
- Ashburton District boundary concerns, and the concept of sharing Rangitata - north bank with Ashburton, south bank with Timaru, and where there are issues affecting both, the two groups work together
- Christchurch City Council view that with the upcoming reforms the council has more pressing priorities. It was noted that Canterbury Regional Council has already rated for the water management strategy work
- Kaikōura have a second hui soon and should be operational early in the new year
- Canterbury Regional Council will support those who are ready to stand up the new structure, while working with others through remaining issues

- the matters discussed today will be taken into consideration at each of the local leadership hui, in particular boundary discussions
- with regard to the recent Canterbury Regional Council declaration of a “nitrate emergency”, it was noted that the regional council and private landowners have invested significant resources over decades into addressing this issue. The Regional Council is progressing a Drinking Water Action Plan, focused on improving drinking water supplies, including better understanding of the numbers of domestic self-suppliers in high-risk areas, better targeting of information and seeking a coordinated, multi-agency response to the issue. It was noted that it is critical to have good data to inform responses
- noting the package of Resource Management reform that is to be introduced into Parliament in early December 2025.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the update for July to September 2025 on work underway to implement the Canterbury Water Management Strategy
2. noted that the establishment of local leadership groups is progressing with establishment hui held in four out of eight areas, including discussions on the refinement of catchment boundaries.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Dr Deon Swiggs
Seconder: Scott Aronsen
Outcome: Approved

4.3 Canterbury Biodiversity Champions

The paper summarising the work undertaken by the Canterbury Biodiversity Champions during the 2022-2025 term was received.

The group has elevated biodiversity as a regional priority and strengthened its visibility in long-term and annual plans. The group has provided oversight and input into the revitalisation of the Waitaha Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy, amongst a range of other activities.

The Mayoral Forum confirmed the continuation of the Biodiversity Champions Group for the 2025-2028 local government term.



Action

Secretariat to seek council nominations for Canterbury Biodiversity Champions.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026
Owner: Maree McNeilly



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted a Canterbury Biodiversity Champions group comprised of councillors from each of Waitaha Canterbury’s 11 councils has been in place since 2020 to strengthen governance-level engagement on biodiversity
2. noted the overview of work undertaken by the Canterbury Biodiversity Champions during the 2022-2025 local government term
3. agreed to reinstate the Canterbury Biodiversity Champions councillor group for the 2025-2028 local government term.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Nigel Bowen

Seconder: Liz McMillan
Outcome: Approved

4.4 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

Mayor Gordon, Chair of the Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group, introduced the paper, noting the success of this work, the collaboration between all councils and the successful launch attended by Minister Simon Watts. He acknowledged the work of the elected members of the Climate Champions Reference Group, and the staff led working group.

Mayor Gordon recommended to the Forum the continuation of the Climate Champions Reference Group and that he would be prepared to continue to chair this group. Mayor Gordon then introduced Jesse Burgess, Chair of the Climate Change Working Group, to speak to the detail in the paper.

Jesse advised of the two Transition to Low Emissions stakeholder workshops held in Timaru and Rangiora recently. With 60 attendees between the two, action leads are analysing the commentary which has provided great insight in considering the next steps.

Further discussion included:

- three years funding for the CCPP has been committed through councils' 2024-2034 Long-Term Plans
- a question was raised on the noted spend on consultants in the report – the Climate Change Working Group is a small group of council staff working across an array of complex issues. Consultants are engaged when there is particular expertise required
- an explanation of the risk visualisation tool, which is designed to strengthen Canterbury's understanding of climate-related hazards and risks to support evidence-based decision making and improve regional resilience. The intent is to ensure councils have reliable, up-to-date information to identify who and what is at risk, enabling targeted adaptation planning and efficient resource allocation
- the climate actions committed to in this Plan, particularly key actions 1-4, are complex and large in scale. Year 1 was used to establish working groups and set up for Year 2, where the work really began. From Year 3 we will start to see progress on the actions
- the link between the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan, regional energy strategy workstream, and the planning work for a regional deal proposal was discussed. These workstreams are directly related to each other; as just one example, the work to bring the energy sector and local government together to form a regional energy strategy directly complements the work in the CCPP to transition to a low-emissions region. The five pillars included in the preparation of a regional deal proposal ties this together alongside housing and transport. The interdependencies across these workstreams mean progress in one area accelerates outcomes in others, and also highlights the need for innovative, collaborative, and coordinated solutions
- noting that central government has recently released the National Adaptation Framework, which will be factored into future work.



Action

Secretariat to seek council nominations for Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026
Owner: Maree McNeilly



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the quarterly Canterbury Climate Change Partnership Plan implementation progress report

2. approved the continuation of the Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group for the 2025-2028 triennium and its terms of reference
3. approved the continuation of the Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group:
 1. selected Mayor Dan Gordon as the Mayoral Forum member as chair of the Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group
 2. will advise the Regional Forums Secretariat of the nominated councillor for the Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group from each council, as soon as practicable
4. noted that analysis of the National Adaptation Framework will be undertaken and advice provided, as appropriate, to the Canterbury Policy Forum in December 2025
5. noted the presentation on the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan at the recent Adaptation Futures 2025 conference.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Marie Black
Seconded: Dr Deon Swiggs
Outcome: Approved

4.5 Canterbury Regional Deal development approach

Hamish Riach introduced the paper, noting that this work is building on the work undertaken in the previous triennium with Business Canterbury and development of the World-Stage ready document. Hamish introduced Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal working group member to speak to the detail in the paper.

Jesse summarised the work undertaken to date and the publication of World-Stage Ready Key Pillars for Canterbury's regional deal proposal. The next step is to develop the scope of works to outline the development of a full regional deal proposal. Canterbury Regional Council has agreed to hold the pen on developing the scope, working with the Regional Deal Governance and Working groups.

While in-kind resources are available to develop the scoping document, additional funding will be required for the expertise to develop the full regional deal proposal from 2026-2027.

Members noted that while they are supportive of the work, most are currently undertaking line-by-line budget reviews. Any additional budget allocation will need to be confirmed by each council individually.

The proposal aims to identify the region's high-level priorities for discussion with central government and other interested parties and is linked to the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury discussions.

Existing budget and in-kind resource have been utilised to date and will continue to be used to form the scope of work for the next stage, pending future decisions on additional funding for the development of a full regional deal for Canterbury. Further detail will be included in the scoping document to come, including the relevant expertise that will be required.

There was acknowledgment that a conversation on budget needs to be had now, in order to be included in council planning processes.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. approved the continued development of a regional deal proposal
2. approved the proposed process to develop a regional deal proposal
3. noted the proposed budget for development of the regional deal proposal, subject to individual council decisions

4. nominated Mayors Black, Bowen, Gliddon, Gordon, McMillan, Chair Swiggs for the Canterbury Regional Deal governance group, supported by Chief Executive Hamish Riach.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Dan Gordon
Seconder: Maree McNeilly
Outcome: Approved

4.6 Canterbury Regional Energy workstream

Hamish Riach introduced this paper and invited Jesse Burgess, Chair Regional Energy Steering Group to speak to the details.

Jesse highlighted the Energy Inventory that was completed last triennium and the continued work to progress Phase 2 – strategic framework, followed by the strategic road map or action plan. Jesse spoke of the significant engagement this work has had from across the energy sector, industry, local and central government and other subject matter experts. As the work has been progressing stakeholders have expressed strong support for proceeding to Stage 2 focused on developing a roadmap or action plan.

In response to members' questions, clarification included:

- acknowledging the current gap in energy planning and strategy both regionally and nationally, the link with spatial planning, and the importance of understanding the full range of energy requirements – both supply and demand – for Canterbury
- identification of future energy scenarios that can best support economic growth in the region
- the significant energy sector support for the work, demonstrated in breadth of attendance in workshops and a commitment of in-kind support to continue the work
- conversations that have been held with electricity distribution businesses
- discussions with Papatipu Rūnanga.

There is current in-kind resource and funding available to progress this work for this financial year. Work post 1 July 2026 will be dependent on budget decisions.

The energy work will contribute to spatial plan discussions and is one of the key pillars of the regional deal work.

The steering group is in discussion with the energy sector in respect of any potential financial contribution to the workstream and exploring opportunities to collaborate with universities and other research institutions.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. agreed to continue to endorse the development of a regional approach to energy for the Canterbury region
2. noted the funding of up to \$150,000 for FY 2026/27 to progress the regional energy workstream, including preparation of a regional energy strategy and action plan/roadmap, subject to individual council decisions.

Mayor Mauger requested his vote against the resolutions be recorded.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconder: Dr Deon Swiggs
Outcome: Approved

4.7 Regional Forums budget

Hamish Dobbie presented the proposed regional forums budget to support the regional forum work programme through to June 2027.

In addition to the regular regional forums budget, the proposed budget includes funding for development of a Canterbury Regional Deal proposal and the next phases of the energy workstream.

It was noted that funding for the Canterbury Climate Change Partnership Plan is levied separately and has already been included in councils' 2024-2034 Long-Term plans.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the proposed budget through to June 2027 to support the regional forums work programme, subject to individual council processes.
2. requested that Chief Executives
 1. include the additional funding requests for development of a Canterbury Regional Deal proposal and Regional Energy Workstream in council draft annual plans for consideration – noting that Mayor Mauger did not support the regional energy workstream
 2. review the Mayoral Forum's current priorities in light of the recent reform announcements for discussion in the new year.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconder: Dan Gordon
Outcome: Approved

4.8 Chief Executives Forum report

Hamish Dobbie presented the report noting that in addition to the update on the recent CE Forum meeting and the strategic workplan 2023-2025, there are two additional items that need approval:

- CMF Gift Policy – which includes minor change from earlier versions with the exclusion of the purchase of alcohol, noting that members can still gift alcohol, but it will not be reimbursed from the regional forums budget
- CMF guidelines for preparing regional submissions – which includes one minor change from the 2020 approved version to note that submissions to select committees may be proactively released on the Mayoral Forum website, prior to select committee publication.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the quarterly report from the Chief Executives Forum
2. approved the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's gift policy
3. approved the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's guidelines for preparing regional submissions
4. noted updates on work under way or completed on the key actions in the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Craig Rowley
Seconder: Liz McMillan
Outcome: Approved

5. For discussion

5.1 DIA Local Government update

CMF media release

Prior to discussion on item 5.1, a draft media release was circulated to members for their review and comment, which covered the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair, commented on the Mayoral Forum's upcoming work programme, and acknowledging receipt of "Simplifying Local Government – a draft proposal".

Item 5.1 discussion

Paul Barker, Warren Ulusele, and Marlon Bridge, Department on Internal Affairs joined the meeting to discuss the local government update from Department of Internal Affairs and the 25 November central government proposal to reorganize local government "Simplifying Local Government – a draft proposal"

A range of questions and concerns around the draft proposal were raised and covered a variety of topics and themes: funding, engagement, planning, functions, escalation points, timelines. These have been summarised below.

- why didn't central government engage with local government prior to the announcement, noting councils were advised after media were briefed? Will DIA meet directly with Canterbury Regional Council to discuss the proposed changes?
 - It is usual practice to provide embargoed copies to media
 - DIA will meet directly with Canterbury Regional Council
- how is this work to be funded?
 - funding will be from existing regional council budgets, not central government
- further queries around funding this in the context of rates capping, and existing annual and long-term plans. How should councils be setting 2026-2027 Annual Plans / 2027-2037 Long-term plans? What is the Long-Term Plan process expected to look like? At what point will we see economic/financial impacts, for what, and for whom?
 - the government is expecting this to be managed within this policy framework and alongside other reforms
- what engagement is occurring with iwi?
 - consultation with Iwi will be managed through Ministry for the Environment. Iwi have already received correspondence regarding this
- request that timelines for changes avoid a crossover with local government elections
- there is a rapid review of regional council roles and functions running concurrently, so the outcome will not be known until after submissions close, likely to be released around March 2026. Comments were expressed around the challenge of considering form ahead of function
- has there been consideration of including some central government functions in the rapid review that may be more effectively delivered at a more local level?
- has there been consideration of the secretariat or policy services that may be required for a Combined Territories Board (CTB)
 - there is flexibility here; it could sit separately, or it could come from the existing regional council resources
- noting the 1989 local government review started in 1985. This short timeframe means councils are not able to consult with communities
- does this proposal have cross-party agreement?

- the proposal has come through the Coalition, considering efficiencies and cost savings
- where does Civil Defence and Emergency Management sit, recognising the Emergency Management Bill is also in play
- there have been many reforms in recent years at significant cost to local government
- how will CTBs make decisions, if CTBs are unable to reach agreement what will happen?
 - there will be escalation points, the details of these are still to be worked through. Local Government Commission will have a role in this space
- is there a pre-determined end goal? Unitary councils? Amalgamation?
 - it could be shared services/functions, there is no pre-prepared solutions, but there will be parameters to work within
- where is the work to support the proposed economics / efficiencies to be gained?
- has consideration been given to the cost and complexities of other recent changes and amalgamations – for example Local Water Done Well, DHBs, Polytechnics

Members discussed having a second workshop on 23 January 2026, in addition to the scheduled 30 January “Plan for Canterbury” workshop, to discuss the “Simplifying Local Government” proposal.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum media release

Following this discussion, feedback was provided on the draft media release. Subject to the proposed changes being made, was approved for release. The media release is available on the Mayoral Forum’s website [media release](#)



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the local government update from the Department of Internal Affairs Partnership Directors on the range of central government activities, as they affect local government.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconder: Marie Black
Outcome: Approved

6. For information

6.1 Mayoral Forum Activities and Engagements

This paper providing a summary of activities, engagements, and correspondence since the last Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting on 22 August 2025 was taken as read.

It was noted that a response has been received from Hon Louise Upston on the Forum’s letter regarding the Tourism Growth Roadmap. This will be circulated to members.



Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the update on Canterbury Mayoral Forum activities, engagements and correspondence since the Forum’s last meeting on 22 August 2025.

Decision Date: 28 Nov 2025
Mover: Nigel Bowen
Seconder: Dr Deon Swiggs

Outcome: Approved

7. General business

7.1 General business

The local government reorganisation proposal was discussed at item 5.1.

7.2 Meeting review

7.3 Closing karakia

The Chair led members in the closing karakia.

8. Kai - lunch

8.1 Lunch

9. Close Meeting

9.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 20 Feb 2026, 8:30 am

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Action List

Canterbury Mayoral Forum



As of: 13 Feb 2026

Action On Hold

The Chief Executive sub-group to report back to the Chief Executive Forum in July 2025 and the August 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting on options with regard to a regional building consent authority.

Due Date: 30 Jun 2025
Owner: Maree McNeilly
Meeting: 30 May 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 4.6 Future regional and local government for Canterbury

Latest Update:

At the 22 August 2025 meeting it was agreed that with the recent Ministerial announcement of significant changes to the building consent system, this work will be paused until details of the proposed legislative changes are known.

Ann Fitzgerald | 27 Aug 2025

Action On Hold

Genetic Engineering national conversation

Chair to circulate summary information from William Rolleston to CMF members.

Due Date: 30 Jun 2025
Owner: Nigel Bowen
Meeting: 30 May 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 6.1 General business

Latest Update:

28 Nov Nigel Bowen to request an update from William Rolleston to be circulated to members

Ann Fitzgerald | 3 Dec 2025

Action Not Started

Chief Executives Forum to review Regional Forums structure and roles.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026
Owner: Hamish Dobbie
Meeting: 28 Nov 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 2.3 Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement

Action In Progress

Secretariat to seek council nominations for Canterbury Biodiversity Champions.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026
Owner: Maree McNeilly
Meeting: 28 Nov 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 4.3 Canterbury Biodiversity Champions

Latest Update:

Emails sent to CEs seeking council nominations Dec 2025

Maree McNeilly | 18 Dec 2025

Action

In Progress

Secretariat to seek council nominations for Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group.

Due Date: 30 Jan 2026

Owner: Maree McNeilly

Meeting: 28 Nov 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 4.4 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

Latest Update:

email sent to CEs seeking council nominations Dec 2025

Maree McNeilly | 18 Dec 2025

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Nigel Bowen, Chair

Central Government reform of local government

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval of the final draft Mayoral Forum submission on the simplifying local government proposal, receive the summary from the Mayoral Forum's January 2026 workshops, note the submissions on the rates target proposal, and resource management and emergency management bills and identify options for future funding required to address the simplifying local government proposal.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **approves the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's submission to the Simplifying Local Government Proposal**
2. **receives the summary from the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's January 2026 workshops**
3. **notes the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's submissions on the Rates Target Model proposal, Natural Environment and Planning Bills, and Emergency Management Bill**
4. **notes that funding (quantity, scope and source) to address the simplifying local government proposal still needs to be identified and confirmed.**

Background

2. On 25 November 2025, Central Government released its proposal for simplifying local government. The proposal includes two steps:
 - the establishment of a Combined Territories Board (CTB), made up of the region's territorial authority Mayors, to govern the regional council and take over the current regional council's role and obligations
 - the CTB to develop a regional reorganisation plan (RRP) for how councils in the region can work together more effectively and efficiently to be approved by the Minister of Local Government.

3. Representatives from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) attended the November 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting to provide an update on the proposal and answer members' questions.
4. The Mayoral Forum agreed to hold two facilitated workshops in January 2026, the first to discuss the Mayoral Forum's approach to responding to the Simplifying Local Government proposal, alongside the other government reforms and bills (Rates Target Model proposal, Emergency Management Bill, Natural Environment Bill, and the Planning Bill) and the second to consider the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028.

Mayoral Forum Workshops

5. The Mayoral Forum held their facilitated workshops to discuss the Government's reform proposals, bills and Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 on 23 and 30 January 2026.
6. The first workshop primarily focussed on the Simplifying Local Government proposal and identifying areas of agreement for a collective Canterbury response, along with a decision that the Mayoral Forum would support a combined submission on the Rates Target Model Proposal and the resource management reform bills.
7. It was also agreed that the reform programme will be a key area of focus for the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028.
8. The second workshop recapped and refined the thinking for the Mayoral Forum's submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal, discussed the requirements for regional spatial planning (as set out in the resource management reform bills) and confirmed the draft vision, priorities and actions for the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028.

Simplifying Local Government proposal – draft submission

9. The Mayoral Forum agreed to prepare a regional submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal (Attachment 1).
10. Key points from the submission are:
 - recognition of and support for the Government's objectives to improve system performance
 - agreement that there is a case for change, but it needs a strong evidence-led approach
 - noting a number of challenges of the current system of local government
 - the need for central and local government to work collaboratively for the communities that we serve

- support for the Combined Territories Board developing regional reorganisation plan(s)
- support for Mana Whenua partnership being embedded at the outset
- a desire to work together, with Mana Whenua and Central Government, to get the best outcomes for Canterbury
- support for the proposed functional review to provide a strong foundation for reform
- some concern with the timing of the proposal and the development of the re-organisation plans, particularly in relation to the 2028 local government elections
- concern about the lack of analysis and information on how the proposal will be resourced and funded, noting the scale and uncertainty of costs associated with the proposal
- noting transactional funding and cumulative costs of the suite of local government reforms need to be considered
- need for strong alignment between the range of reforms currently facing local government, e.g. resource management reform, emergency management, rates target model, noting that funding all of these changes conflicts with, and distracts from, the intent of the Local Government (System Improvements) Bill to focus on core services
- noting the need for councils to continue with their business as usual, including 2026-2027 Annual Plans and preparation for the 2027-2037 Long-Term Plans.

11. There is a difference of opinion on whether the CTB should undertake the roles of the regional councillors. Alternative wording, from that originally circulated, has been suggested at paragraphs 24 and 26 in the attached draft submission. Agreement to include this, or alternative, wording, will need to be determined at this meeting.

12. Subject to approval from the Mayoral Forum, the submission will be lodged with the Department of Internal Affairs on 20 February 2026.

Resource Management Reform

13. At the January workshops the Mayoral Forum agreed to make submissions on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills.

14. The draft submission, based on input from all Canterbury councils' submissions was circulated to the Mayoral and Chief Executives Forums on Thursday 5 February for feedback, then finalised and lodged with the Environment Select Committee on 13 February 2026.

15. The final submission is provided at Attachment 2.

Emergency Management Bill

16. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum and Joint Civil Defence Emergency Management Committee made a joint submission on the Emergency Management Bill.
17. The draft Emergency Management Bill submission was discussed with members on Friday 30 January, feedback included, finalised and lodged with the Governance and Administration Committee to meet the 15 February 2026 closing date.
18. The final submission is provided at Attachment 3.

Funding reform bills and proposals

19. Current advice from the Department of Internal Affairs is that the funding for Simplifying Local Government proposal is to come from Regional Council budgets.
20. While not yet determined, it is expected that the cost of reform will be significant. In the Mayoral Forum submissions on the proposal, it is noted that transitional costs will need to be identified early, quantified realistically and supported by clear funding mechanisms.
21. At the same time as considering the Simplifying Local Government proposal, the changes proposed in the resource management reforms, and emergency management, represent a significant undertaking for the sector, and to support successful implementation adequate resourcing will be required.
22. Central Government is also proposing rates capping for local councils.
23. Council funding is identified through current Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan processes.
24. Draft 2026-2027 Annual Plans are currently being discussed around council tables in preparation for engagement with communities, and finalisation by 30 June 2026.
25. Some councils will be making reference to the array of reforms currently in front of local government in their draft Annual Plans, some reforms with more definite requirements such as resource management and emergency management, others less defined at this stage, such as the Rates Target Model and Simplifying Local Government proposals.
26. Council staff are commencing their processes for the preparation of their respective 2027-2037 Long-Term Plans.
27. It is expected that as work on the Long-Term Plan processes continues, costs and resources required for the proposed reforms will become clearer and be considered in these Plans.
28. These Plans are the opportunity for councils to consult with their communities on how they propose to respond/incorporate all the proposed reforms and proposals from Central Government into their work programmes and the impact on standard of services.

Communication

29. A Mayoral Forum press release on the Rates Target Model proposal was provided to media on Monday 9 February (Attachment 4). The press release noted that the Mayoral Forum will also be making submissions on the resource management bills, emergency management bill and Simplifying Local Government proposal and that we will continue to proactively release the submissions on each of the reforms and proposals as they are completed.
30. A press release on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills and Emergency Management Bill was provided to media on Monday 16th February. This will be available on the Mayoral Forum website.

Next steps

31. Lodge the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal.
32. Following introduction of the Simplifying Local Government proposal legislation into the House, revisit the funding requirements and consider a proposal for proceeding with the reform.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Canterbury Mayoral Forum draft submission Simplifying Local Government proposal
- Attachment 2: Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission Natural Environments and Planning Bills
- Attachment 3: Joint Civil Defence Emergency Management Committee and Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission Emergency Management Bill
- Attachment 4: Canterbury Mayoral Forum press release – Canterbury Mayoral Forum concerned about rates cap proposal

CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life, for all.

20 February 2026

Department of Internal Affairs

Via online platform: <https://consultations.digital.govt.nz/simplifying-local-government/proposal>

Tēnā koutou

Canterbury Mayoral Forum Submission on Simplifying Local Government

1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal.
2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum comprises the mayors of the ten territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council, supported by our Chief Executives. The purpose of the Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.
3. All Canterbury councils actively participate in the Forum: the Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council, and the Canterbury Regional Council.
4. This submission has been developed with input from all our members and focuses on matters of general agreement in the proposal. Our council members are also making individual council submissions on these matters, and we ask that the Department carefully consider each of these.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

Introduction

5. The Mayoral Forum recognises and is supportive of the Government's objectives to improve system performance, strengthen accountability, lift economic productivity, and deliver better long-term outcomes for communities. The Mayoral Forum acknowledges that aspects of the current system are under pressure and that change is required to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges.
6. The scale and pace of change across the reform programme will require careful management, and significant investment from communities and councils to transition to new statutory responsibilities. This submission should also be read alongside the Mayoral Forum's submissions on the broad suite of reforms currently under consultation; including the Planning Bill, Natural Environment Bill, Rates Target Model proposal and the Emergency Management Bill.

Canterbury context

7. Canterbury is the largest region in New Zealand with a land area of 44,500 sq. km extending north of Kaikōura to the Waitaki River in the south, and from Te Pātaka-o-Rākaihautu Banks Peninsula to Aoraki Mount Cook. Within the region are diverse and iconic landscapes and ecosystems, including alpine and high-country tussock habitats, major lakes, and globally significant braided river systems.
8. Canterbury is the second largest region in terms of population, and in the year ended June 2025, Canterbury was the fastest growing region. The population of the Canterbury region is close to 700,000, and includes Christchurch, the second largest urban area in New Zealand. The population is unevenly distributed across Canterbury and the ten territorial authorities, with most of the population (77%) in the greater Christchurch urban area.
9. Five of ten fastest growing districts in New Zealand were in Canterbury, and our region has forecast population to increase to about 900,000 by 2048.
10. Waitaha Canterbury lies wholly within the Takiwā of Ngāi Tahu whānui, with 10 of the 18 Papatipu Rūnanga holding interests within our regional boundaries.
11. Canterbury boasts one of New Zealand's most diverse and connected business communities in the country. With a global city at our doorstep, an international airport, two deep-water ports, and two leading universities driving research and innovation, we are connected and aligned in a way that few regions can match.
12. Manufacturing and agriculture are the 'twin engines' of Canterbury's economy, but there is diversity between the industry compositions of Canterbury's sub-regions. For example, primary industries accounted for the smallest proportion in the whole Canterbury region compared with 25.3% in the region excluding the Greater Christchurch area. In some districts,

tourism is a significant component of the economy – tourism is 42.5% of Mackenzie’s total employment. Emerging innovative economies include aerospace.

13. It is within this broad context that this submission has been developed.

Case for change

14. The Mayoral Forum agrees that an evidence-led approach to determining how functions are delivered across Canterbury is timely and has the potential to deliver benefits for communities and ratepayers. However, the proposal put forward by Government is not wholly supported by the Mayoral Forum in its current form.

15. The Mayoral Forum recognises the critical role that local government has in supporting and building strong, healthy, and prosperous communities. We strongly support the concept of localism and subsidiarity in that the function of governance and decision making should be devolved to the level of government closest to affected communities.

16. The current system has a number of challenges, not least of all:

- i. highly prescriptive legislative framework for local government, with increasing responsibilities, unfunded mandates and complex changes that happen quickly
- ii. current structure and funding system constrains local government’s ability to govern, deliver and fund services to their communities in an environment of limited revenue and increasing costs
- iii. the demand on infrastructure that comes with growth, the challenge adapting to climate change and responding to the increasing frequency and intensity of weather events.

17. The Mayoral Forum supports simplification where it genuinely improves clarity of roles, accountability, and delivery outcomes.

18. The changes presented in this proposal must be robust and well thought through in their implementation to ensure local governance and government systems are fit for purpose for the next 30-40 years.

Central and local government relationship

19. A genuine central and local government partnership, founded on mutual respect and trust is critical to how local government, central government and communities are effectively integrated to deliver genuine wellbeing outcomes.

20. The Mayoral Forum believes that local and central government need to work collaboratively for the communities we serve, noting the critical part each plays in providing safe, healthy, and productive environments.

21. Whether our funding comes from taxes or rates, we are supporting the same people and the same communities.
22. We welcome a more deliberate conversation about how we could work collectively to design a fit for purpose and contemporary public sector for our communities and how the various layers of local and central government, the roles we play and functions we respectively deliver play out for our communities.
23. The challenges associated with funding pressures and the central and local government relationship should be addressed as a priority, working together to establish co-investment opportunities and sustainable local government financing and funding mechanisms. Local government financial viability is being challenged, and our ability to invest in 'core services' reduced through the unfunded or underfunded mandates from central government.

Combined Territories Board

24. The majority of the Mayoral Forum does not support the Combined Territories Board (CTB) simultaneously undertaking the roles of the regional councillors. Beyond the issue of democratic mandate, members feel there is insufficient capacity for the CTB to assume regional councillor responsibilities while also developing the regional reorganisation plan (RRP) and implementing the new resource management regime, while continuing to lead their territorial authorities.

24.25. The Mayoral Forum supports the establishment of the combined territories board (CTB) to develop the regional re-organisation plan(s) (RRP).

25.26. The Mayoral Forum also notes that given the changes imposed by the resource management reforms, it is critical that the CTB fully understands regional council functions which could be achieved by having regional council representation.

26.27. The Mayoral Forum wants to work together, with mana whenua and Central Government, to get the best outcomes for Canterbury.

Combined Territories Board – voting

27.28. Determining the process for voting on the CTB is complex and challenging. Proportional voting is not seen as resolving underlying representation or legitimacy concerns, neither was a single vote system. Clarity of purpose for the CTB is seen as more important than setting voting mechanism too early in the process.

28.29. The Local Government Commission should play a key role in determining final voting structures, and we agree that different matters may have different voting systems.

Mana Whenua, Treaty Settings, and Māori outcomes

[29-30.](#) The Mayoral Forum is of the view that partnership with mana whenua needs to be embedded from the outset. Treaty partnership should shape how functions are assessed, how outcomes are defined and how decision-making settings are designed.

[30-31.](#) Any arrangements, whether transitional or in the new system, should not weaken existing Canterbury settings, including current Ngāi Tahu representation arrangements and established partnership mechanisms.

[31-32.](#) The RRP must demonstrate how Treaty settlement commitments administered by councils will be upheld, and how Māori outcomes and kaitiakitanga are supported across environmental, infrastructure and planning functions.

Functional review

[32-33.](#) The Mayoral Forum supports the proposed functional review, starting with an assessment of what functions are required, how they are currently delivered, how well they are performing and at what scale they are best placed. This approach provides a stronger foundation for reform and is consistent with the Mayoral Forum's view that form should follow function.

[33-34.](#) The functional review should identify where delivery is fragmented, where capability is duplicated, where outcomes are inconsistent and where coordination failures produce unnecessary cost or risk.

[34-35.](#) Different functions may be best delivered at different scales, including metropolitan, sub-regional, regional, local, shared service, or national, and the process should be explicitly designed to identify the right scale for each, rather than defaulting to region-wide solutions.

[35-36.](#) Care needs to be taken that the review is comprehensive enough to support the development of the re-organisation plans for enduring outcomes for our communities.

Timing of re-organisation

[36-37.](#) The Mayoral Forum has concerns with the timing of the proposal and the development of the re-organisation plans, particularly in relation to the 2028 local government elections.

[37-38.](#) There is a view that the development and finalisation of any RRP should not straddle a local election cycle, for two main reasons. First, momentum will be key to delivering these reforms in an orderly way. Local elections will necessitate a 'distraction' from developing the RRP for a period and – depending on the results – could result in a change of direction for its content (including needing work to be re-completed).

[38-39.](#) Second, there is a risk that a local election straddling the development of the RRP could undermine electoral integrity and public participation, especially if it will be implemented

partway during the following triennium. In the 2028 elections – if a partially completed, yet to be finalised RRP, looms to take effect during the following triennium – there is likely to be voter confusion on what they are voting for, and what candidates can expect to represent and/or confidently campaign on.

Financial cost associated with reorganisation

[39.40.](#) The Mayoral Forum is concerned about the lack of analysis and information on how the Simplifying Local Government proposal will be resourced and funded, particularly given the scale and uncertainty of costs to transition and implement other cost of the reforms in this proposal.

[40.41.](#) Transitional costs must be identified early, quantified realistically, and supported by clear funding mechanisms. These costs should not be underestimated or left to ratepayers without transparent support settings, including how costs will be shared, who will fund what and how central government requirements will be funded.

[41.42.](#) At a time when councils are exercising financial discipline in response to community signals and rate-capping proposals, whilst also facing climbing costs for infrastructure and service delivery, it is expected that central Government would in part fund set up costs to alleviate a cost burden on local government.

[42.43.](#) The Mayoral Forum would not favour any outcomes where reform results in unfunded mandates, hidden cost transfers, or opaque cross-subsidisation that is not justified by demonstrable regional benefit. Transitional funding and cumulative costs of the suite of local government reforms need to be considered. Funding these changes conflicts with, and distracts from, the intent of the Local Government (System Improvements) Bill to focus on core services.

Link with other government reforms

[43.44.](#) There are several government reforms currently underway, and the Mayoral Forum would like to see stronger alignment between the multiple changes that are either in process or being mooted. The two Resource Management bills, the Emergency Management bill, the Rates Target Model and Simplifying Local Government proposals, and implementing local water done well, will all change how things operate at a local government level.

[44.45.](#) Poor alignment of the major reforms leaves our communities vulnerable. Quick change with limited consideration quickly becomes redundant, uncertainty of outcomes or direction leaves ratepayers and voters confused and frustrated, and the associated costs will continue to rise. These costs are inevitable, despite a rates cap, and in some way will be borne by the ratepayer, likely through increased user charges and/or reduced services.

Business As Usual

[45.46.](#) The proposal raises significant questions and uncertainty about councils' business as usual over the next several years.

46-47. Councils have begun planning their next Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2027-2037. This is a significant undertaking involving considerable cost and resource for all our councils and built on a number of assumptions.

47-48. Some of our Canterbury councils are legislatively required to complete a Representation Review in 2027 for the 2028 elections. How could this be credibly undertaken in light the of the development of the RRP?

48-49. Councils are also delivering on their current LTPs and Annual Plans that have been through extensive public consultation with their communities. Re-organisation has not featured in these to date.

49-50. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about how Audit NZ's processes will take the reform proposals and legislation changes into consideration. We will be required to meet the audit requirements of the legislation that is in force at the time, but the new legislation may change the focus of our Plans.

Conclusion

50-51. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum thanks you for the opportunity to make this submission on the Simplifying Local Government Proposal.

51-52. The Mayoral Forum would be very happy to expand on any points covered in this submission. Please contact our secretariat, Maree McNeilly at secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz or on 027 381 8924.

Nāku iti noa,nā

Nigel Bowen
Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Mayor Timaru District Council



CANTERBURY
Mayoral Forum

A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life, for all.

13 February 2026

Committee Secretariat
Environment Committee
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

en@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou

Canterbury Mayoral Forum Submission on Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill

Introduction

1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills.
2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum comprises the mayors of the ten territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council, supported by our Chief Executives. The purpose of the Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.
3. All Canterbury councils actively participate in the Forum: the Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council, and the Canterbury Regional Council.
4. The following submission on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills has been developed with input from across Canterbury councils and focusses on matters of general agreement, noting that Canterbury councils are each making individual submissions on the Bills.
5. The Mayoral Forum does wish to appear before the Committee in support of this submission.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

General comments

6. The Mayoral Forum recognises and is supportive of the Government's objectives to improve system performance, strengthen accountability, lift economic productivity, and deliver better long-term outcomes for communities. The Mayoral Forum acknowledges that aspects of the current systems are under pressure and that change is required to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges.
7. The scale and pace of change across the reform programme will require careful management, and significant investment from communities and councils to transition to new statutory responsibilities. While this submission is focussed on the Planning and Natural Environment Bills it should be read alongside the Mayoral Forum's submissions on the Simplifying Local Government proposal, Rates Target Model and combined Mayoral Forum and Civil Defence Joint Committee submission on the Emergency Management Bill.
8. For reform to be successful, it must work for the communities it serves by establishing an enduring framework that meets the needs of current and future generations.

Case for change

9. The Mayoral Forum agrees reform of the resource management system is necessary and over-due, and that the Resource Management Act (RMA) is no longer fit for today's challenges.
10. The current resource management system has not adequately protected the natural environment nor provided the necessary outcomes for the built environment.
11. Reforming the resource management system represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and with the Simplifying Local Government proposal, the changes that are being proposed at this time need to be robust and well thought through in their implementation to ensure local governance and government systems are fit for purpose for the long term.
12. The importance of securing a stable and enduring resource management system for the future cannot be overstated. The resource management system has been subject to significant amendments and reforms as priorities change, each of which come at significant cost to taxpayers, ratepayers, communities and resource users. The Government's own economic analysis¹ showing implementation costs for the RMA have reached \$10 billion, with ~\$9 billion borne by ratepayers.

Central and local government relationship

13. The Mayoral Forum supports a strong partnership between central and local government and appreciates opportunities to work proactively and collaboratively for the benefit of our communities and New Zealand. A more deliberate partnership can support greater understanding of the impacts on

¹ Castalia Report – Economic impact analysis of proposed resource management reform, page 20, para 2.1 <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/26.2-Final-Report-economic-impact-analysis-of-proposed-Resource-Management-Act-reforms-1.pdf>

funding and delivery of services and reduce the challenges that come with the u-turning of each new government, and the subsequent funding and resourcing requirements of implementing new policy.

14. The Mayoral Forum, however, is concerned that a shift towards centralised decision-making will lead to a loss of voice for communities, environmental frameworks that don't provide for the outcomes sought by our communities, and loss of partnership at place. This shift is evident in most central government reforms currently being considered (e.g. simplifying local government, emergency management legislation and rate-capping and the resource management bills).
15. The Mayoral Forum believes that local and central government need to work collaboratively in partnership for the communities we serve, noting the critical part each plays in providing safe, healthy, and productive environments.
16. Whether our funding comes from taxes or rates, we are supporting the same people and the same communities.

Mana Whenua and Treaty Settings

17. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about the Bills' exclusion of consideration for the principles of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi, broader cultural landscapes, ancestral relationships, kaitiakitanga, tikanga principles, and customary rights. We are not supportive of the change from a general Te Tiriti Principles provision to a descriptive provision.
18. Both Bills should uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi to enable meaningful iwi and hapu participation through the resource management system. Transitional arrangements should not inadvertently weaken existing Canterbury settings including current Ngāi Tahu representation arrangements and established partnership mechanisms.
19. Failure to honour Te Tiriti could lead to litigation and undermine trust and compliance. Furthermore, the term Māori 'interests' is ambiguous and lacks clarity, leaving it open to varied interpretation depending on context, which again could undermine certainty and result in litigation.
20. The proposed provisions shift the nature of our relationship with mana whenua and risks limiting the voice of local mana whenua and represent a significant weakening of the protections, rights and interests afforded to iwi and hapū.
21. The Mayoral Forum recognises and supports the Government's desire for cost-effective and efficient system. Partnering with Iwi offers substantial benefits that extend across cultural, social, environmental, economic, and legal spheres and the experience of our Canterbury councils of working with Ngāi Tahu is that outcomes are delivered faster, and at lower cost, with reduced risks of litigation when partnership approaches are implemented.
22. These partnerships, founded on the principles of Te Tiriti, foster better outcomes for all parties and the wider community. This includes access to unique knowledge and perspectives, stronger community support and social licence, enhanced outcomes, environmental stewardship, cultural respect and preservation, and economic opportunity and growth.
23. This is unique to New Zealand and goes to the heart of our national identity.

Link with other government reforms

24. The Mayoral Forum would like to see stronger alignment between the multiple changes that are either in process or being mooted. The significance of the resource management system reform cannot be understated, nor easily separated from the wider local government reform agenda of central Government.
25. The two Resource Management bills, the Emergency Management bill, the Rates Target Model and Simplifying Local Government proposals will all change how things operate at a local government level. These reforms are also happening at the same time as mergers of Government ministries, and the implementation of Local Water Well Done.
26. The result of all the reforms is a complex set of parallel and interconnected system changes, with risks for financial sustainability and the continuity of services.
27. Without appropriate alignment there are a number of high risks for our communities, such as changes that quickly become redundant, uncertainty of outcomes, and the associated costs to our communities that will inevitably continue to rise.
28. The implementation of a new resource management system relies on a well-resourced and stable local government. Reform of local government including rates capping and simplifying local government has the potential to impact on this implementation.

Implementation and Transition

29. The timeline for transitioning to the new resource management system is extremely ambitious and poses a significant risk to the quality of decision-making and plan development. A critical measure of success will be how well the legislation supports a smooth transition to the new system.
30. The RMA has suffered from poor and inconsistent implementation. Most notably, the lack of or slowness of national direction being created and implemented has led to lengthy and costly planning processes that have had to relitigate issues from region to region and district to district. Limited system oversight and guidance on the application of national direction, has seen inconsistent implementation of the RMA through planning processes nationally.
31. To support transition into the new system, we consider it will be important for national direction to be stable, and responsive to different regional and urban contexts. Understanding how the various parts of the new system interact will help avoid confusion and ensure consistent implementation across the region, as well as the wider country.
32. Managing transition risk must be a core focus of the Government's implementation strategy, with decisions on timeframes for implementation that take into account cost, capability and capacity.
33. The truncated process places considerable pressure on councils to deliver system-wide change within an extremely short period, increasing the risk of unintended consequences and poorly integrated outcomes. The timeframes also create substantial resourcing and capacity challenges for councils. These pressures are compounded by other major reforms occurring simultaneously, as previously noted, which also demand significant staff attention.

34. We only get once chance for a successful transition.

Transition Costs

35. The proposed changes represent a significant undertaking for the local government sector. To support successful implementation adequate resourcing will be essential.

36. The reforms will require significant investment in people, capability, and time.

37. It is important that central government recognises these demands and share the costs with those charged with implementing the new requirements introduced through the legislation.

38. At a time when councils are exercising financial discipline in response to community signals and rate-capping proposals, while also facing climbing costs for infrastructure and service delivery, it is expected that central Government would in part fund set-up costs to alleviate a cost burden on local government.

National Policy Direction

39. It is positive to see the system that is the mandatory development of concise and consistent national policy direction and extensive use of mandatory planning standards ahead of planning processes being undertaken by Councils. This overarching direction of the reform is supported by the Mayoral Forum.

40. We consider that these aspects of the system are as equally important to successful implementation as the bills themselves.

41. We would encourage meaningful consultation and analysis alongside local government as these responses are being prepared, and that the Minister specifically considers the costs of implementing future regulations before decisions are made.

42. There are potential conflicts that the national direction will need to reconcile. The same tensions that exist in the RMA framework exist in the goals in the Bills. Clear national direction on how these tensions are to be reconciled will be important to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty in implementation.

43. Climate change is an existential issue facing the country and the world. The absence of explicit goals related to its effects and mitigation of it is a significant gap in the Bills. We seek changes to the goals to reflect the importance of climate change issues.

Spatial planning

44. The Mayoral Forum supports the requirement for the proposed spatial planning framework. Regional spatial planning (RSP) will be critical in navigating the trade-offs required between enabling development and protecting environmental values.

45. We do have some concerns with respect to requiring the spatial planning processes to commence before national direction has been finalised. This will likely increase uncertainty for resource users, businesses and communities, with the risk that spatial plans may need to be reworked if the content of national instruments changes through the policy development process.

46. The Mayoral Forum supports planning processes being sequenced, commenced and completed in a logical order, with decisions on higher order instruments (e.g. national direction) completed first, before the development of spatial plans commences.
47. In principle, the Mayoral Forum generally agrees with the proposed governance arrangements set out in the Bill for regional spatial plan-making. While Spatial Planning Committees are formed to prepare and deliver the plans, local authorities retain decision-making on these plans. In a more centralised system, we see it as important that local authorities remain the final decision-makers to ensure accountability and responsiveness to local needs and requirements.
48. We do note that the discretion afforded to councils within a region to determine how they will participate in the Spatial Planning Committee, and ultimately jointly approve the plan, means that achieving consensus may require considerable effort and collaboration.
49. The Mayoral Forum recommends establishing decision-making principles in the legislation to guide the agreements between councils on decision making rules for the Spatial Plans. This approach could streamline decision-making and ensure that localised issues are addressed efficiently – while still ensuring collaboration on region wide matters.
50. If councils in a region are unable to reach consensus and no decision is achievable, the Mayoral Forum does not support the proposal in the Planning Bill that the Minister be the decision maker on that regional policy dispute. The Mayoral Forum recommends that it is more appropriate that the dispute be adjudicated and decided by planning and legal professionals through a quasi-judicial process such as arbitration or the Planning Tribunal.
51. The proposed timeline (RSPs by September 2027, decisions by March 2028, plans by December 2028) presents significant challenges without adequate funding support. Realistically, timeframes need to be doubled if local authorities are to have any chance of a successful transition to the new system, whilst meeting existing commitments, and navigating other change proposals.
52. We strongly support a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure funding and investment by Central Government, local government and other infrastructure providers. A coordinated approach is required to achieve the goals of the Bills, which needs to be supported by companion legislation enabling growth to be funded by growth.
53. Spatial planning is inherently strategic, place-based, and sensitive to scale. In Canterbury, many of the most complex and consequential planning challenges, including housing supply, infrastructure coordination, transport integration, climate adaptation, and economic development, operate at metropolitan scale and cut across existing administrative boundaries. These challenges will all need to be carefully considered with a region-wide decision-making model as proposed.
54. If resource management reform proceeds ahead of local government reform, there must be flexibility to amend regional spatial plans to reflect any new governance or boundary arrangements.
55. We note that with a regional spatial plan needing to be notified by September 2027 that local authorities would have needed to allocate funding within annual plans that have already been prepared for consultation or are in effect (noting that this is also prior to the enactment of the bills). While this is now unavoidable, we consider it would be appropriate for consideration to be given to the timing of long-term plan updates across the 2027 – 2037 Long Term Plan period.

Regulatory Relief

56. The Mayoral Forum has serious concerns about the proposed mandatory regulatory relief framework and considers that, as drafted, it will have a number of adverse impacts for both councils, our ratepayers and community.
57. With the possibility of a rates cap being introduced, there is potential that mandatory relief will deter Councils from protecting important areas because they are not in a position to provide suitable relief. Without seeing the national instruments and understanding the standardised zoning, it is difficult to fully quantify what this means in a Canterbury context, however, we see that there is potential that this could lead to worse outcomes for the region.
58. It is of concern that the test for when a regulatory relief framework is required is not defined in the Bill. It is not clear what a “significant” impact on the “reasonable use” of the land is. We request that this be clarified in the legislation, together with more direction about how councils decide which relief mechanisms to use and what adequate relief constitutes.
59. The Mayoral Forum has concerns around the eligibility criteria. If the Government intends on progressing with the regulatory relief framework, the eligibility criteria must be clear and unambiguous.
60. Along with clear eligibility criteria, a framework for how compensation for such protections is to be worked out should be included in the prescribed provisions. This would provide certainty to councils and public as to how this is to be done.
61. The absence of a prescribed framework for calculating compensation for protection means the potential cost implications are unclear and could lead to councils simply not including protections in land use plans, resulting in significant special environments not being protected for present and future generations.
62. Long-established RMA case law recognises that landowners do not possess an absolute right to develop their land in any particular way. Planning controls serve the public interest and sound resource management principles rather than guaranteeing specific development outcomes for private property. The regulatory relief provisions risk undermining this fundamental planning framework.
63. The Mayoral Forum is also concerned about the double standard that is evident in the Bills where local authorities are subject to ‘regulatory relief’ provisions, but the Crown is not. Where national standards impose controls on land use that significantly impact on a landowner’s reasonable use of land, the Crown is not required to provide regulatory relief. This creates a double standard, with local authorities subject to higher financial risk and cost, despite having less capacity to pay.
64. If significant fiscal compensation becomes associated with regulatory protection methods, councils may rationally retreat from these methods, resulting in diminished protection of environmental and heritage values. This outcome would undermine the Bill's stated objectives.
65. Under the Bill, spatial plan committees not local authorities, are responsible for preparing, consulting and notifying the draft spatial plan. Mandatory matters to be provided for through spatial plans include “constraints on the use and development of land ... including significant natural areas”. Councils will be statutorily required to implement the direction set by the spatial plan. In some instances, this will require controls to be placed on land use, with the compensatory costs of these decisions falling to

ratepayers. If councils and ratepayers are required to fund the costs of a decision, they should have a role in decision-making.

66. Many councils may be unlikely to include protections for significant special environments due to potential cost implications of regulatory relief, especially if in a rate capped environment and instead encourage voluntary protections.

Community

67. The shift towards greater centralised decision-making is one of particular concern to the Mayoral Forum. This is reflected in the design of the proposed planning system, with more decisions made by Government Ministers, and fewer decisions made locally by communities or elected members. As a result, the system dilutes the role of elected members as advocates and decision-makers for their communities and results in a loss of community voice.
68. The proposed system is intended to be more directive – driven from the top down. While this aims to provide greater certainty and consistency through nationally set goals and direction, which can be beneficial, it inevitably reduces opportunities for local decision-making and public participation at each level of the new system.
69. Public participation is highly valuable to understand and to take into account local context, the appropriate management of adverse effects, and maximise opportunities to achieve well-functioning urban and rural environments.
70. We acknowledge the Government’s objective to provide for a more enabling system, premised on the enjoyment of private property rights. While we recognise the benefits that can be gained, particularly with unlocking housing and business development and facilitating infrastructure delivery, these must not come at the expense of achieving well-functioning environments, delivering good environmental outcomes alongside development, and ensuring appropriate public involvement and local voice in the planning process.
71. However, under the proposed ‘funnel approach’, with key decisions being made earlier in the process, there are fewer opportunities for the public to revisit them at a local level. In our experience, people are far more likely to engage in the planning process when a proposed activity is tangible and directly affects them, such as a development on a neighbouring site.
72. National instruments will likely be disconnected from local context making it challenging for the public to engage and fully comprehend the impacts on them. We question whether this proposed approach enables public participation at an appropriate level, specifically where the notification threshold for affected parties is changing to more than minor and the scope of effects that can be considered is limited.
73. A community’s sense of place and identity, for urban and rural, is fundamental to its ongoing success, delivering multiple benefits – economic, social and environmental. Successful planning for communities requires holistic understanding of local context, which may not be best served through standardisation. It should be within the remit of the system to identify where and when this is the case, and the Bills must provide appropriate scope for bespoke provisions which are not significantly or unduly restricted. Regulation, when thresholds are set appropriately (and tested through robust evidence), promotes

growth, enabling and shaping great cities, townships and neighbourhoods – all set within an environment which complements and enhances their identity.

Conclusion

74. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum thanks you for the opportunity to submit on the Natural Environment and Planning Bills.
75. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum does want to be heard in support of this submission.
76. If you have any questions please contact our secretariat, Maree McNeilly at secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz or on 027 381 8924.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Nigel Bowen
Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Mayor Timaru District Council

CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

*A strong regional economy with resilient, connected
communities and a better quality of life, for all.*

13 February 2026

Committee Secretariat
Governance and Administration Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6021

By email: ga@parliament.govt.nz

Tena koutou

Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee and Canterbury Mayoral Forum combined submission – Emergency Management Bill (No 2) 2025

1. The Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee (CDEM Group) and Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) thank the Governance and Administration Committee for this opportunity to make a joint submission on the proposed Emergency Management Bill (No 2) 2025 (the Bill).
2. Given the common membership and shared interests of both the CDEM Group and Mayoral Forum we make this joint submission taking a regional strategic perspective to the Bill, in the interests of a shared voice for Canterbury and efficiency of the submissions process.
3. We note that individual councils within the region will be submitting on the Bill reflecting more specific viewpoints on its provisions from a constituent local authority perspective and we ask that the Committee carefully considers these.
4. This letter and the attached comments on the Bill make up our joint submission.
5. We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

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

Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Joint Committee

6. The Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee comprises elected representatives of local authorities within the region and was formed under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) pursuant to S.12 of the CDEM Act 2002 (the Act).
7. Members of the CDEM Group Joint Committee are the mayor or chairperson (or delegated councillor) from Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate District Councils, Christchurch City Council and Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury). In February 2019, it was agreed that Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu would be invited to a guardianship role – Kai Mataara – and is treated as a full voting member during meetings.
8. The CDEM Group exercises governance, sets regional funding, and determines CDEM policy for member authorities in relation to risk analysis, reduction, readiness, response, and recovery from emergencies. The Canterbury CDEM Group operates a devolved model where, apart from the Group Office, all Emergency Management staff are employed by their respective Local Territorial Authorities.
9. The CDEM Group is supported by the Canterbury CDEM Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) established and maintained under s.20 of the Act. Apart from statutory appointments of CEs from councils and representatives from emergency and health services, a range of representatives from partner agencies and sub-groups with roles and responsibilities in emergency management also sit on CEG. Several operational subcommittees operate below CEG.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

10. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) comprises the mayors of the ten territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury), supported by our chief executives. The purpose of the Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.
11. The eleven local authorities are: Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury.
12. All Canterbury councils actively participate in the Forum to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.

Context

13. Canterbury is the largest region in New Zealand by land area, extending from north of the Clarence River to south of the Waitaki, and from the main divide of the Southern Alps to the

South Pacific Ocean. We comprise some of the largest and fastest-growing urban areas in New Zealand. Greater Christchurch is New Zealand's second most populous urban area.

14. The low-lying Canterbury Plains and the Southern Alps are iconic natural features but are also significant factors in the wide range of natural hazards and risks the region faces, including fire, flood, wind, earthquakes, and tsunamis. As a region we have significant experience in recorded history of all of these hazards resulting in natural disaster events and giving rise to preparedness for and activation of emergency response and recovery activities.
15. Additionally, as widely reported, we face the prospect of a 75 percent probability of a vast Alpine Fault earthquake within the next 50 years with an 82 percent probability it will be above 8.0 in magnitude.
16. The devastating Canterbury earthquake sequence of 2010-2012, the Hurunui/Kaikōura earthquakes of 2016, the Port Hills fires of 2017, the mosque attacks of 2019 and the Canterbury floods of 2021 are but several recent examples. Through the CDEM Group, regional capability, and capacity to regionally coordinate larger events and support local Councils in delivery of emergency management response is well established, as are emergency management resources at local levels.
17. Like other CDEM Groups with regional and territorial councils, CDEM Group resourcing for emergency management relies on the funding that constituent local authorities agree to contribute through a targeted rate by the regional council as administering authority. This also funds the CDEM Group office that includes a range of professional emergency management staff and delivers a programme of work to an agreed budget. Local council rates fund local councils' emergency management activities, including employing their own professional Emergency Management staff, among many other activities.

Our Overview of the Bill

18. We support the intent of the Bill to strengthen and modernise New Zealand's emergency management system. In particular, we support the strengthening of regional (and local) emergency management, stronger national leadership and direction, and the intent to formalise and support the role of iwi Māori in emergency management. We also endorse the move towards greater consistency, coordination and accountability. In these respects, the Bill addresses some long standing weaknesses in the current system.
19. However, the Bill does not deliver the level of transformational reform that is required. Instead, it largely retains the existing framework, providing only modest and incremental enhancements that do not address the underlying deficiencies of the current emergency management system. It does not fully address critical challenges such as building long-term disaster resilience, or establishing a comprehensive and intentionally structured recovery framework. As a result, although the Bill will improve system performance, further legislative and policy development will be required to deliver a fit-for-purpose emergency management system capable of meeting the significant and increasingly complex demands anticipated over the next 25 years to 2050.
20. We also see the legislative context of the Bill, and its relationship to other proposals for local government reforms, as key issues. There is a lack of cohesion and clarity in the

interrelationship of this Bill with other current legislative changes. Further, the local government structures that are required to deliver emergency management are themselves subject to significant uncertainty.

21. Perhaps most vitally, the Bill imposes heightened expectations on local government in relation to preparedness, response and recovery at the same time as other reforms – particularly the introduction of rates caps – will significantly and materially reduce the financial capacity of Councils to deliver these. There is a clear misalignment between the policy objectives of the Bill and the imposition of rates caps, which will actively limit Councils' ability to fund the requirements set out in the Bill. Without mechanisms to address the investment required by local and central government, we will struggle to deliver desired and equitable outcomes to New Zealand communities.
22. Thank you for your consideration of our joint Group and Forum regional submission.
23. Key contacts in relation to this submission are: James Thompson, Regional Manager/ Group Controller Canterbury CDEM Group, James.Thompson@cdemcanterbury.govt.nz (phone 027 277 1505), or Maree McNeilly, Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz (Phone 027 381 8924).

Nāku, iti noa, nā

Marie A Black.

Marie Black
Chair Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency
Management Group Joint Committee
Mayor, Hurunui District Council

Nigel Bowen
Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Mayor, Timaru District Council

Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee and Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

Combined Submission on the Emergency Management Bill 2023

General Comments

1. The Bill is supported as a positive step forward in a number of areas. In particular we support the intention to:
 - Strengthen the regional and local emergency management framework
 - Formalise and support the role of iwi Māori in emergency management
 - Provide clearer direction for both response and recovery
 - Introduce processes for stronger national direction and guidance
 - Provide for community representation
 - Formalise the role of lead agencies
 - Enable a higher minimum standard of emergency management
 - Recognise and provide for essential infrastructure and essential services
 - Introduce stronger compliance measures.
2. However there remain a number of important aspects that must be addressed, if the purpose of the legislation is to be achieved.

Role of iwi Māori

3. Te Rūnanga O Ngāi Tahu, Papatipu Rūnanga and hapū have made, and continue to make, a significant contribution in readiness and activation in emergency management in Waitaha Canterbury. While the Bill does provide for some recognition of the importance of iwi Māori in the emergency management framework, there are other opportunities to strengthen and support the role of iwi Māori that should be included in the Bill. These are further addressed in the sections below.

Local Government Reform proposals

Simplifying Local Government

4. The current proposals for local government reform create uncertainty and the potential for significant impacts on how the functions in the Bill will be carried out, including on the ability to mount responses and coordinate recovery, and on the capacity to meet additional standards. If local government reform results in staff losses this will directly impact on the ability to staff emergency operations during a response. It may also impact on the retention of technical staff such as hazards and river management staff, who perform essential roles supporting emergency management from within Councils.

Rates caps and costs – inconsistent drivers

5. Given that emergency management is dependent on rates, it is clear that the introduction of rates caps will have the potential to significantly impact emergency management functions (noting that the proposed exclusions relate only to natural disaster in extreme circumstances and not to BAU). The Bill provides for the development of rules which may include prescribed standards, training requirements, qualifications, and additional reporting, all of which will require additional rates resourcing. The timing of the proposal to implement rates caps is clearly at odds with Councils' need to comply with such rules.
6. The Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the Bill identifies initial costs of \$82.8m to local authority members of CDEM groups over the first 4-year period, with potentially 'medium' level costs on an ongoing basis thereafter. In this regard, we are not aware of any government proposals to review funding sources or address the rising costs identified. Indeed, there is likely to be downward pressure on rates funding, which will impact the implementation of the Bill.

Inconsistency with the Government's Roadmap for Strengthening Emergency Management

7. In June 2025 the Government released 'Strengthening Emergency Management: A Roadmap for Investment and Implementation', which identifies the initiatives and investments that Cabinet has agreed are needed to change the emergency management system. The Bill provides a platform for some of these changes, but it is not clear why some have been omitted from the Bill. The Roadmap clearly links the delivery of actions for supporting local government to a stated acknowledgement that local government needs more investment to deliver emergency management to desired standards¹. The RIS for the Bill acknowledges the risk that lack of resources, capacity and capability to implement all requirements fully or in a timely manner will '*delay realisation of expected benefits of improved system [sic]*'². However, it proposes no mitigation, simply stating that costs will fall on local government.
8. It is clear that while the lack of support and investment in local government to deliver emergency management remains unaddressed, the outcomes set out in the Roadmap will not be achieved.

Relationship with other legislative reforms

9. Given the number of overlapping areas of reform affecting local government, across both form and functions, there is a risk of misalignment and a lack of coherence across regimes. With the number of Bills currently before the House that are focused on risk, hazards, reduction and resilience we believe that an integrated approach across these Bills would provide a more coherent and systematic framework to address these issues, which ultimately will provide better outcomes for our communities.
10. For example, there are inconsistencies in the wording of definitions and in planning requirements relating to natural hazard management across a number of pieces of legislation.

¹ New Zealand Government, June 2025 *Strengthening Emergency Management: A Roadmap for Investment and Implementation*

² National Emergency Management Agency, July 2025 *Regulatory Impact Statement: Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation*

The purpose, functions and definitions across this Bill, the Planning Bill and other applicable local government legislation should be aligned, with a view to avoiding duplication, overlap, and gaps.

Structure of the Bill

11. We support the Bill's objective of providing greater clarity around response and recovery arrangements and processes. However, as currently drafted, the Bill contains inconsistencies and areas of ambiguity that could create confusion and increase operational risk. For example, at separate sections of the Bill, provisions relating to the powers of controllers during emergencies variously include some controllers while excluding others. The introduction of new terms for different types of controllers further adds to this complexity, making it difficult to interpret and apply the legislation consistently. At times, local and regional roles appear to be seen as interchangeable, which they are not. It is essential that the powers, responsibilities, and interrelationships of each specified role are clearly set out in the Bill.

Oversight

12. The Bill should include provision for independent, system-wide assurance or oversight by an independent party outside NEMA, such as an Inspector-General. This would support improvement across the sector, and strengthen accountability and public confidence in the emergency management system.

Undeclared Emergencies

13. At present there is a significant operational gap between routine business-as-usual activities and formally declared emergencies. A statutory framework for undeclared emergencies would enable earlier more proportionate intervention and reduce reliance on informal or improvised arrangements. There is an opportunity in the Bill to include formal processes that provide appropriate mandates and protections for those working in undeclared emergency situations, such as pre-declaration situations, where immediate action may be necessary to protect life safety.

Recovery responsibilities

14. The responsibilities for coordination of resources and implementation of recovery activities after a state of emergency or transition period are unclear. This lack of clarity has affected numerous recoveries in the past, including the Canterbury Earthquakes and the North Island Severe Weather Events (NISWE). The confusion has resulted in unnecessary delays in establishing recovery activities, to the detriment of the affected communities. Clearly defining these post-transition roles and responsibilities is essential for efficient and effective delivery of recovery activities. Included in our submission below are proposals and provisions to address this within the scope of this Bill, noting our overall view below that a wider inquiry is necessary. We would be pleased to provide any further information or clarification the Committee may require.

Recovery framework

15. While outside the scope of this Bill, it is recommended that the Government consider a wider inquiry into the recovery from natural disasters and the adequacy of existing arrangements and responsibilities. The genesis of this Bill was the response and subsequent inquiries in relation to NISWE. There have been similar inquiries into responses to other events. To our knowledge, there has never been an independent inquiry regarding recovery from natural hazards. It is therefore not surprising that the shortcomings of recovery have been neglected in the emergency management framework.
16. Such an inquiry could also consider arrangements for risk reduction or resilience. Like the longer-term recovery process, building resilience is a far longer, more costly, and vastly different process than emergency management response. The inquiry could look at this as an end-to-end process, across all 4Rs including the aspects of long-term risk reduction and recovery. While risk reduction and recovery are part of the theory of emergency management, in practice they are given little consideration and are rarely prioritised in the New Zealand emergency management system.

By provisions

Clause 2 Commencement

17. We seek that the commencement dates associated with the following two provisions are amended so that they do not come into effect until after national guidance on each is released:
 - Clause 2(3)(a) referring to clause 44, which relates to the obligation on Chief Executives regarding the use and provision of resources
 - Clause 2(3)(e) regarding the inclusion of arrangements for disproportionately affected communities in Regional Emergency Management Plans (clause 91(k)).
18. We provide further information on the reasons for this below, in our submission on clauses 44 and 91.

Clause 3: Purpose

19. The purpose of the Bill is supported, subject to the changes set out in paragraphs 19-22 below.
20. Clause 3(b) should include a reference to the protection of life as well as property. This aligns with national response priorities.
21. Clause 3(f) should include reference to regional emergency management planning, as follows:

*(f) providing for the integration of national, **regional** and local emergency management planning and activity through the alignment of **regional and** local planning with a national emergency management strategy and national emergency management plan.*
22. As evidenced here, throughout the Bill there is inconsistency in the use of terminology in a number of clauses, which results in a lack of clarity as to the meaning and application of provisions. Another example is in Part 3 of the Bill, where subpart 4 is headed '*Local and Sector*

Planning' but there is no further reference in that subpart to local plans, nor any provisions for them. There is also no definition included in the Bill for local plans.

23. The Bill should be amended to ensure there is a single set of definitions located in the Interpretation section, with those terms then being used consistently in headings and clauses throughout the Bill.

Clause 5: Interpretation

24. For the sake of clarity, all interpretive provisions should be located in one place. There are a number of interpretation provisions currently located in several other parts of the Bill, such as in Parts 4 and 5. These should be relocated to this section, with reference included as to where and how they apply.
25. The definition of risk in the Bill is outdated, and should be expanded to include components of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity. This would align it with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030³, the current National Disaster Resilience Strategy⁴, and the focus areas in the Government's Response to the Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events⁵.

Clause 7: Meanings of essential infrastructure and essential infrastructure provider

26. The move to a principles-based approach to the definition of essential service in the Bill is a significant step forward and is supported. However, the benefits of this approach are not adequately realised in the current Bill. The Discussion Document described a number of additional services that could be considered "essential", being certain digital services, distribution of groceries to retailers, cash and payments services, solid waste management services, and hazard warning systems⁶. However, the Bill in its current form makes no provision for these essential services.
27. Clause 7 should be amended to include an additional reference to 'essential service provider' as follows (or similar):
'Essential service provider' means an entity or a member of a class of entities that—
(a) provides, or is responsible for providing, essential services; and
(b) is named or described in Schedule 3.
28. Schedule 3 of the Bill should then provide a list of these essential service providers, for example solid waste services, fast moving consumer goods, finance/banking and cloud computer services.
29. We are also very clear that flood protection infrastructure and telemetry systems must be included as essential infrastructure in the Bill. This is addressed in our submission on Schedule 3.

³ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), 2015 *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*

⁴ New Zealand Government, April 2019 *Rautaki ā-Motu Manawaroa Aituā | National Disaster Resilience Strategy*

⁵ New Zealand Government, October 2024 *Strengthening disaster resilience and emergency management - Government response to the Report of the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events*

⁶ National Emergency Management Agency, 2025, *Discussion document - Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation*, NZ Government

Clause 14: Functions of Director-General of Emergency Management

30. The Bill includes requirements for Emergency Management Committees⁷ and local authorities⁸ to promote, monitor and report on compliance with not only the Act but also other legislation relevant to the purpose of the Act, as listed in Schedule 2. At present the scope and standard of this monitoring and reporting that will be required of Emergency Management Committees and local authorities is not clear. Clause 14 should be amended to include the development of guidelines by the Director General on this requirement, to ensure committees and local authorities are supported to deliver what is sought.
31. We consider that the same requirement for monitoring and reporting on compliance with related legislation should also apply to the Director-General. This is important in order to demonstrate the linkages across related legislation, at national level. Clauses requiring this should be inserted in this section.
32. This section should also be amended to introduce a mandatory role for the Director General to support and assist in coordination of resources made available by government agencies. In local and regional scale events, the current Act and the Bill state that Regional Recovery Managers “must direct and coordinate” during a transition period. This includes resources made available by government departments and Councils for the purposes of recovery. It is implied in the Bill that territorial authority Chief Executives will be responsible for this function following a transition period (clause 44). However, both in transition and after transition, it is unclear how this coordination is achieved in any practical sense across government agencies. If this responsibility is given to Recovery Managers and Council Chief Executives, it must come with the resources and support to ensure it can be implemented.
33. This would be achieved by adding this to the functions of the Director General in clause 14. This would explicitly recognise the role of NEMA, through the Director General, in supporting the coordination of resources and recovery activities across all government agencies. We suggest the addition of two new clauses following 14 (h), as follows (or similar):
- (x) during a local state of emergency or a local transition period, assist Regional Controllers and Regional Recovery Managers in directing and coordinating resources made available by government agencies:***
- (y) following the end of a national or local transition period, assist council Chief Executives or others to whom responsibility for recovery coordination and implementation is transferred, in coordinating resources made available by government agencies: ...***
34. Inclusion in this section is needed to anchor this as a core responsibility of the Director General. It could be supplemented, but should not be substituted, by a further clarification in the National Plan or other mechanisms as to how this function will be achieved.

Clause 15: Powers of Director-General

35. We believe it would be a valuable addition to the current framework if the Director General was to be given explicit authority to authorise any suitably qualified and experienced Controller to operate in any district or region in New Zealand. The reason for this is that any Controller

⁷ Clauses 27(1)(g) and (h) and 28(2)(h) and (i)

⁸ Clause 42(2)(h) and (i)

deployed 'out of region' needs to be delegated the authority to act by the Joint Committee of that region. This may be administratively challenging and may not always be operationally possible in a timely manner. We seek that a new subclause is added to this section, 15(2)(c), which provides that the Director General may authorise any suitably qualified and experienced Controller to operate in any specified district or region, for any specified period.

36. We acknowledge the introduction of new mechanisms in the Bill for increased accountability, including the ability for the Director General to issue compliance orders under clause 174 of the Bill. We consider this new statutory tool available to the Director General should be accompanied by guidance on thresholds for compliance orders and in what circumstances they will be used. Clause 15(4) should be amended to add this as a matter on which guidance will be issued.
37. The word 'strategic' in clause 15(4)(c) should be deleted, so that guidelines for recovery planning are not limited to strategic matters only. Such guidelines might usefully include operational matters. This should not be precluded.

Clause 24: Members of Emergency Management Committees

38. In general the intent to enhance iwi Māori participation in the Bill is supported, although we note the Bill does not propose to include iwi representation on Emergency Management Committees. This is in our view a significant omission and does not adequately recognise the nature of partnership, nor does it acknowledge the critical knowledge, capability, and networks that iwi bring that strengthen emergency management outcomes. Full participation in decision-making processes that affect iwi should be enabled in the Bill. The clause should be amended to provide for mana whenua representation on Emergency Management Committees, as members with full voting rights. It should also provide for and enable iwi to appoint their representative.
39. Consequential amendments would also be required to clauses 25 and 26, to provide for this.

Clauses 27 & 28: Functions of multi-member Emergency Management Committees and Functions of unitary authority Emergency Management Committees

40. Under both clauses 27(1)(a)(iii) and 28(2)(a)(iii), one of the functions of Emergency Management Committees is to identify and implement cost-effective risk reduction. While we are very supportive of risk reduction, it is unclear how this relates to the same requirement given to local authorities under s42(2)(iv). The relationship between these requirements should be made clear.
41. As outlined above, we consider that clauses 27(1)(h) and clauses 28(2)(i) requiring compliance monitoring and reporting should be the subject of guidelines issued by the Director General under clause 14.

Clause 36: Membership rules in event of local government reorganisations

42. As outlined above in our submission on clause 24, the Bill must ensure iwi Māori representation is provided for as part of the establishment of Emergency Management Committees. This also applies following reorganisation.

Clause 38: Functions and costs of administering authorities and chief executives of administering authorities

43. The arrangements relating to administrative authorities in the Bill do not reflect the reality that considerable support is required to enable Joint Committees to carry out their functions under the current CDEM Act. Given the increase in responsibilities for Emergency Management Committees under this Bill, there will be a consequent increase in workload for administrative authorities. We support the view that consideration should be given to providing for suitably resourced and dedicated offices to support Emergency Management Committees. Provision for this in the Bill would reduce an area of operational risk to the functioning of Emergency Management Committees. This is particularly so in light of the current proposals for local government reform, in that many Regional Councils are currently administering authorities but their future under the reforms is currently uncertain.

Clause 39: Appointment of Emergency Management Co-ordinating Executive Group

44. The inclusion of ambulance service and rural representation on the Coordinating Executive Group is supported. Currently Canterbury's Coordinating Executive Group includes a representative from each of the Rural Advisory Group (RAG) and ambulance service, and we welcome the formalisation of this involvement.
45. We also strongly support the iwi perspective representation provision in clause 39(2)(f). In the Canterbury context, we recognise that Papatipu Rūnanga of Canterbury hold manawhenua. We submit that this clause should be amended to ensure that iwi make their own appointments to the Coordinating Executive Group.

Clause 41: Provision of support to certain members of Emergency Management Co-ordinating Executive

46. This provision is supported.

Clause 42: Role of local authority members of multi-member Emergency Management Committees

47. Clause s42(2)(iv) requires local authorities to identify how to reduce risks and implement cost-effective risk reduction. As outlined above, clauses 27(1)(a)(iii) and 28(2)(a)(iii) require the same of Emergency Management Committees. While we are very supportive of risk reduction, it is important that the relationship between these requirements is clarified.

Clause 44: Role of chief executives of territorial authorities to co-ordinate use of resources

48. As outlined above on clause 2, we have a concern with the proposed commencement date for this requirement. We do not consider that a 12-month period is sufficient given the need to work through and assess what is required, and the need for alignment with Council planning and budgeting cycles. We note this new requirement also sits in the context of the new accountability provisions in the Bill, including the compliance order regime.
49. We consider this is a matter on which the Director General should issue guidance to further define what is required. The timeframe for commencement should then be coordinated with the availability of this guidance, taking in to account local government planning cycles.

Clause 45: Costs incurred by local authorities or water organisations in connection with emergency may be reimbursed or paid

50. We acknowledge the significant contribution Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Papatipu Rūnanga and hapū have made in readiness and activation of emergency response and recovery. It is noteworthy that this has relied on these groups bearing the cost of readiness of facilities, such as maintenance of marae, that may be called upon in emergencies. The present system of iwi or Māori organisations having to lodge claims for welfare expenses with local authorities, who in turn, request reimbursement from the Government, is inadequate and inefficient. This clause should be amended to include provision for reimbursement of iwi and Māori organisations directly, for welfare expenses they incur during emergency management activities.

Clause 57: Role of District Controllers

51. Clause 57(2) should be amended to provide powers to District Controllers to direct the use of resources, and not just coordinate. Where there may be multiple local emergencies, it would be inefficient and impractical for only the Regional Controller to have powers of direction. It is important that District Controllers are able to direct the use of resources in local emergencies.
52. We also consider that the same accountability requirements in clause 56(4) that apply to Regional Controllers when authorising other persons to undertake functions, should apply to District Controllers. District Controllers should remain responsible for the exercise of any functions or powers that they authorise another person to undertake. A parallel clause should be included in this section.

Clause 58: Role of Local Controllers

53. This clause establishes a new process whereby a unitary authority Chief Executive also has the ability to direct a Local Controller to exercise the powers in clauses 127-135. This falls outside the established system of emergency management hierarchy and control. It creates significant potential for confusion during emergency situations, noting that Local Controllers are also required to follow any directions given by Regional Controllers. Other parts of the Bill, such as the provisions for compensation, rely on a clear understanding of under whose direction parties are acting. We consider that only Regional Controllers should be able to direct Local Controllers

in respect of the powers in clauses 127-135, to maintain a clear line of authority and accountability.

54. Clause 58(6) allows Local Controllers to authorise any other suitable person to exercise or further delegate functions. We submit that all controllers, including Local Controllers, should remain accountable for duties they have authorised other persons to undertake. The same accountability requirements in clause 56(4) should apply to Local Controllers and should be added here.

Clause 65: Role of Regional Recovery Managers

55. Regional Recovery Managers only have the ability to direct and coordinate resources during a transition period. There is currently no clarity in the Bill as to post-transition period arrangements, including who is responsible for ongoing recovery once the transition period ends and the powers are no longer available. We have submitted that such arrangements are added to the Bill – refer paragraphs 83-87.

Clause 66: Role of District Recovery Managers

56. Clause 66(2) should be amended to provide powers to District Recovery Managers to direct the use of resources, and not just coordinate. It is inefficient and impractical for only the Regional Recovery Manager to have powers of direction. It is important that District Recovery Managers are able to direct the use of resources in transition periods.
57. We also consider that the same accountability requirements in clause 65(4) that apply to Regional Recovery Managers when authorising other persons to undertake functions, should apply to District Recovery Managers. District Recovery Managers should remain responsible for the exercise of any functions or powers that they authorise another person to undertake. A parallel clause should be included in this section.

Clause 67: Role of Local Recovery Managers

58. Refer the previous point regarding Recovery Managers remaining accountable for duties they have authorised other persons to undertake. The same accountability requirements in clause 65(4) should apply to Local Recovery Managers.

Clause 69: Role of lead agencies

59. We support the intent to clarify roles and accountabilities across the emergency management system, including the role of national level lead agencies for particular hazards. However, the clause lacks considerable detail on how this is to work in practice.
60. The Bill has not clarified the interaction between the role of a lead agency and the statutory powers held by controllers. We note the RIS at paragraph 163 states that it would '*...require planning with CDEM Groups to clarify the role of the Controller or Director CDEM when*

*supporting the lead agency*⁹. However, this has not been reflected in the wording of the Bill, nor is it supported. If the Bill is going to establish a national framework whereby lead agencies have 'primary responsibility for managing the response to the emergency' it must also make explicit their authorities and accountabilities in doing so, and any limits to those. It is also essential that the Bill specifies how those authorities relate to all other role-holders and their functions in an emergency. Not only would it be inefficient for lead agencies to have to work this out with each CDEM group individually, it also introduces a risk of variation between regions in how emergencies are led and managed.

61. It is also unclear what stages and functions of emergency management the lead agency is responsible for. For example, it is not clear in the Bill whether lead agencies are responsible for welfare needs during a state of emergency. We are also concerned that the Bill does not establish any explicit linkage between decision-making by a lead agency during a response and the implications of those decisions for subsequent recovery. Good practice is that decisions by controllers during a response are made with due regard to their effects on post-response and recovery outcomes, such as the protection of key infrastructure essential to community functioning. The Bill does not require a lead agency managing the response to undertake such an assessment.
62. The Bill also does not set out how complex multi-hazard emergencies are to be managed, or how differences of interpretation or conflicts are to be resolved.
63. As worded, there is considerable potential for operational risks including overlap, inconsistency, and delays in decision-making. A much more detailed framework is required.
64. We support the requirement in Clause 69(2)(b) for lead agency participation in developing regional emergency management plans. However, we consider it should also require lead agencies to participate in the development of local plans, where relevant, in relation to responding to particular hazards. There are a number of local plans in Canterbury where lead agency participation is important. Examples include Bottle Lake Forest in Christchurch and McHughs Forest Park Forest near Darfield, where collaborative planning is required between the territorial authority and Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Clause 70: Transfer of lead agency role

65. We support the provision for transfer to another agency or Committee, with that party's agreement. As noted above, further detail is needed around the exercise of such a transfer.

Clause 82: National emergency management plan

66. Elsewhere in this submission we have sought that the Bill be amended to provide clarity on national, regional and local responsibilities and processes for recovery¹⁰. It is also recognised however that in nationally severe or catastrophic events, the resources, level of coordination, and the legislative tools required will exceed the capacity and authority of NEMA and the emergency management framework prescribed by this Bill. For these historically rare but

⁹ National Emergency Management Agency, July 2025 *Regulatory Impact Statement: Strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation*

¹⁰ Paragraphs 31ff, 54, 87ff

devastating events, unique national arrangements will be required. This should be anticipated, planned, and provided for. Clause 82 should be amended to require the National Plan to provide for alternative recovery arrangements for nationally severe or catastrophic events, including who will be responsible for putting in place alternative arrangements that may be required.

Clause 86: Preparation and approval of proposal relating to review of national emergency management plan

67. The requirement for the Director General to engage with and seek advice from iwi Māori as part of developing a proposal is supported.
68. We also support the requirement for the Director General to consult those who would have roles and responsibilities under the proposed national emergency management plan. We consider that section 86(2)(c) should be amended to include a specific reference to Emergency Management Committees, to ensure this is clear. The wording '*including Emergency Management Committees*' should be added to 86(2)(c) (or similar relief).

Clause 91: Content of regional emergency management plan

69. Clauses 91(k), (l) and (m) are new clauses requiring the plan to provide for arrangements for disproportionately affected communities, how offers of assistance will be managed, and arrangements for managing animals. We support the addition of these in the Bill. We do however note that Regional Emergency Management Plans should be strategic documents, and that these new matters are more operational in nature. The ability to incorporate material by reference under clause 92 of the Bill will be a useful mechanism in this regard.
70. In relation to clause 91(k) regarding the inclusion of arrangements for the needs of disproportionately affected communities, this is a matter that is likely to require significant initial assessment which may be complex, and engagement which should not be rushed. A period of time will then be required for the process of incorporating provisions into the regional plan. While there will obviously be variations between regions, we think it would be of significant benefit to have national guidance from the Minister on engagement and requirements for this process. We have submitted earlier, on clause 3 of the Bill, that the commencement of this provision should follow the release of such guidance material. We recommend an addition to clause 212 to explicitly provide for the development of such guidance.

Clause 94: Community engagement in developing proposal for regional emergency management plan

71. The requirement for engagement with representatives of disproportionately affected communities as part of developing a proposal is supported, noting our submission on the time needed to work through this process.
72. We also support subclause (b) requiring the Committee to involve iwi Māori in developing a proposal. We reiterate our earlier submission that manawhenua should also have

representation at governance level in this process, as part of Emergency Management Committees.

Clause 98: Targeted amendments to regional emergency management plan

73. The provisions for flexibility in plan-making allow for a more efficient and effective process, including providing for tailored consultation. We support the provisions as outlined.

Clause 99: Minor amendments to regional emergency management plan

74. The ability to make minor amendments to the Plan is also supported.

Clause 101: Preparation of regional emergency management planning standards

75. The wording '*and any applicable Emergency Management Committee*' should be added to 101(2)(a) (or similar relief). It is essential that Emergency Management Committees that may be subject to a planning standard are consulted as part of the development of the standard/s, not just given the opportunity to submit once it is developed.

Clause 104: Director-General may develop sector response plans for essential infrastructure providers

76. This new provision, which provides for the Director General to develop sector response plans for essential infrastructure, is supported subject to the inclusion of a specific requirement to consult with Emergency Management Committees.

77. Under Clause 105, sector response plans may include responsibilities for Emergency Management Committees. It is therefore appropriate to include specific reference to Emergency Management Committees in 104(3) for completeness, to ensure they are consulted with, as follows:

104 (3) Before approving the sector response plan, the Director-General must consult—

(a) ...

(b) relevant government agencies, Emergency Management Committees and local authorities; ...

78. Similar amendment is required to clause 106(2) which sets out the process for changing sector response plans.

Clause 115: State of local emergency may be concurrent with national emergency declarations

79. This is supported as it recognises and provides for situations where there may be complex and overlapping emergencies.

Clause 120: Form and publication of declarations of states of emergency, extensions, and terminations

80. The modernisation of publication and form requirements for declarations and terminations is a useful update and is supported.

Clause 121: Interpretation of this subpart

81. Local controllers should be added to the definition of '*authorised Controller*' and '*specified person*' to enable them to exercise relevant powers in an emergency, at the direction of a Regional Controller. It should be clear in the Act that all controllers have this authority, when so directed (noting our submission on clause 58 that the ability of Chief Executives to direct local controllers should be removed- refer paragraph 52 above).
82. Overall, the way terminology is included in and used in Part 4 is confusing. New terms are referenced, such as '*authorised controller*', '*specified person*' and '*primary specified person*'. If these are to be retained, all such interpretive provisions should be included in Clause 5, to ensure there is a single set of definitions located in one section. Those terms should be used consistently in headings and clauses throughout the Bill.

Clause 124: When authorised Controllers or specified persons may exercise powers

83. The terminology used in the Bill is not internally consistent, which creates a risk of uncertainty. This should be avoided. Clause 124 currently refers to a location for which a person is 'responsible'. This section should be amended as follows:

*An authorised Controller or a specified person may exercise the powers conferred on them by sections 127 to 135 only in respect of a location for which the person is ~~responsible~~ **authorised**.*

84. Amendments to the Bill should be made throughout, to ensure consistency and clarity in the use of these terms.

Clause 127: Emergency Powers of authorised Controllers

85. It is not clear why these emergency powers are not made available to the National Controller. We think it is appropriate that national controllers are able to access these powers during a national emergency. The section should be amended to include the National Controller.

Clause 141: Interpretation of this subpart

86. Further to the submission point on clause 121 above regarding confusing use of terms, another new term is introduced in this clause, '*authorised person*'. If these terms are to be retained, all such interpretive provisions should be included in Clause 5, to ensure there is a single set of definitions located in one section. Those terms should be used consistently in headings and clauses throughout the Bill.

Clause 149: Local transition period may be concurrent with national emergency declarations

87. This is supported. It provides for situations where there may be complex and overlapping emergencies.

Clause 154: Form and publication of declarations of transition periods, extensions, and terminations

88. The modernisation of publication and form requirements for declarations and terminations is supported.

New clause to be inserted after clause 154 to provide for transfer of recovery activities

89. The responsibilities for coordination of resources and implementation of recovery activities after a state of emergency or transition period ends are unclear at present. The Bill does not adequately address this. It is implied in the Bill that territorial authority Chief Executives are responsible for recovery activities after a transition period (clause 44). However, an amendment is sought so that the responsibilities for recovery after a transition period (or state of emergency if there is no transition period) are explicit. This will help define the boundaries of emergency management roles in relation to recovery, where recovery activities frequently continue for years after the event. It emphasises that the emergency management role after an event is to enable the transition to other arrangements, i.e. genuinely give effect to the transition period.

90. In addition, there may be circumstances where other arrangements are more suitable, such as a regional recovery agency spanning multiple districts or retention of the responsibility by a Regional Recovery Manager for a period after the transition period. These arrangements are often event-specific. An amendment is sought to enable the transfer the responsibility for post-transition recovery activities to such an agency or person, if required. The proposed mechanism for this a transfer notice.

91. It is recommended that amendments are made to the Bill to:

- make recovery responsibilities explicit; and
- include a mechanism to enable the transfer of post-transition responsibilities where this is appropriate for the event specific context.

92. Proposed wording to be included in the Bill is as follows:

New section [154A] Provisions relating to recovery responsibilities

(1) Sections (2) and (3) apply unless a transition period is extended or a transfer notice is issued under section (3).

(2) Upon expiry or termination of a local transition period, the responsibility for the coordination of recovery resources and the implementation of recovery activities moves to the Chief Executive of the relevant territorial or unitary authority.

(3) The Minister or an Emergency Management Committee may transfer, through the approval of a transfer notice, the responsibility for the coordination of recovery resources and the implementation of recovery activities under section (2) to another person or authority under the control of the Emergency Management Committee, or to another authority

established for the purpose of coordinating the recovery or any other person that has accepted this responsibility and who may be reasonably expected to perform this function.

(4) An Emergency Management Committee may approve a transfer notice during a transition period (and the transfer take effect within a transition period) for the purpose of transferring the coordination and implementation functions to a person other than an appointed Recovery Manager. The transfer of the recovery powers within this Act cannot be transferred.

(5) The transfer notice issued under section (3) must specify:

- a) The person or authority to whom the responsibility is transferred;*
- b) The area (districts or wards) to which the transfer applies;*
- c) When the transfer takes effect;*
- d) If specified, when the transfer expires;*
- e) Any limitations or exceptions to the transfer of this responsibility;*
- f) That the person or authority to whom responsibility is being transferred accepts the transfer.*

(6) The Minister or an Emergency Management Committee may at any time approve the extension or termination of a transfer notice previously approved under section 3.

(7) [section 7 should set out notification requirements, formulated in the same manner as other EM declarations].

93. Sections (2) and (3) ensure that responsibilities for the coordination and implementation of recovery activities are clear: it either rests with Chief Executives or is explicitly transferred to another person or authority. The intended effect of section (4) is to enable someone other than a Recovery Manager under the Act to take on the primary recovery leadership role during a transition period. The preclusion of recovery powers from this transfer recognises that if powers are included then the appointed person should be appointed as a Recovery Manager under the Act. It is envisaged that it may apply where the recovery task is substantial and the Recovery Manager is required to return to their emergency management role or is otherwise unable to fulfil this substantive leadership role to the extent required.

Clause 168: Reporting requirements at expiry of state of emergency or transition period

94. The requirement to provide a report which records the emergency, dates, duration, and powers exercised, is a useful addition. We understand these would be factual reports only, to build a consistent national record of events. We note the Bill does not include a 'lessons learned' framework for evaluation and learning post-event. Further work outside the legislative process would be needed to develop such a framework.

Clauses 202-204: Protections from liability in civil proceedings

95. We support the extension of protections from liability provided for in these clauses. This protection provides positive support for role holders and community members, including volunteers.
96. We do have an ongoing concern that this protection applies only to actions taken during a state of emergency or transition period. There may be instances where actions may be needed prior to a declaration, for example where it may be a matter of urgency to protect life. A framework for legal protection should be developed for actions taken in circumstances such as these. Without this, there is a risk of a dampening effect on individuals' or controllers' willingness to

take urgent actions prior to a formal declaration. Alternatively, declarations may be made early or unnecessarily.

Clause 210: Regulations

97. A process is needed to ensure Schedule 2 remains current, as legislation evolves or changes. Clause 210 should explicitly include a mechanism for this.

Clause 211: Minister must consider alternatives, benefits and costs, and appropriateness before recommending making of regulations

98. Clause 211(1)(c), which exempts the Minister from having to consider the impacts of proposed regulations on Emergency Management Committees, should be deleted. This will ensure there is a focus on costs and benefits, and appropriateness, of regulations that would impose requirements on Emergency Management Committees (and thereby Councils). It is appropriate that the Minister should be required to consider these matters.

Clause 212: Minister's power to make rules

99. In general, we support the development of rules, but they must be developed in collaboration with the sector.

Clause 213: Procedure for making rules

100. We support the procedure as outlined, but we believe it is essential that consultation with committees and local authorities is mandated in the Bill. We seek an amendment to clause 213(1)(c) as follows:

*(c) consult **Emergency Management Committees and local authorities, and any other persons and groups as the Minister thinks fit; ...** (or similar relief).*

Schedule 2: Legislation relevant to emergency management

101. The following legislation should be included in Schedule 2:

- Policing Act 2008
- Defence Act 1990
- Waste Minimisation Act 2008
- Animal Welfare Act 1999

Schedule 3: Essential infrastructure providers

102. It is considered essential that public entities that provide flood telemetry systems and flood protection infrastructure are specifically included in Schedule 3. These assets are not only fundamental to life safety and risk reduction, but they underpin effective emergency preparedness and response. Flood warning systems, river and rainfall monitoring networks, stopbanks and floodwalls provide early warning, enable timely decision-making, and directly reduce the severity of flood impacts. Reliable telemetry data is critical for forecasting, situational awareness, and triggering evacuations or other protective actions. We seek that they are added to Schedule 3,

as follows: ***'Any public entity that provides: telemetered river flow and rain gauge data, and/or flood protection, erosion control or land drainage infrastructure.'***

103. The Schedule identifies the New Zealand Transport Agency and local authorities as essential infrastructure providers in respect of roading services. The Department of Conservation should be added to this list, as they are responsible for sections of public roading networks in key areas where hazards are present such as Aoraki Mount Cook.
104. Further to our submission on clause 7, we seek a consequential amendment to Schedule 3 to add a new heading '***Essential Service Providers***'. A list of essential service providers should be added, including solid waste services, fast moving consumer goods, finance/banking, and cloud computer services. It should also include those services which are critical to the operation of the essential infrastructure identified earlier in the Schedule, such as air traffic control services.
105. In respect of petroleum services, it is unclear whether this would include retail or bulk fuel outlets themselves, as the wording refers to entities that distribute '***to retail outlets and bulk customers***'. It should be made clear that delivery to farms and from retail outlets are included.
106. Timaru Airport should be added to the list of airports in Schedule 3. It is considered a vital component of regional transport and lifeline infrastructure in South Canterbury.

Schedule 4: Reporting requirements for states of emergency and transition periods

107. Clause 3(2) contains a requirement for the Regional Controller to consult with any other 'Recovery Manager', but this reference is incorrect. It should read 'Controller', not 'Recovery Manager'. Recovery Managers do not have any powers under a state of emergency.

End



CANTERBURY
Mayoral Forum

**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

9 February 2026

Canterbury Mayoral Forum concerned about rates cap proposal

The Mayoral Forum and Secretariat are supported by the Regional Council but remains a separate entity.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum has expressed concern in a formal submission on Central Government's proposal to cap rates at a local government level.

Late last year, the Government announced a suite of proposed reforms, including to cap rates set by Councils at between 2 percent and 4 percent per year.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum Chair and Timaru District Council Mayor Nigel Bowen said the Forum acknowledged the government's intention to reduce rates and improve efficiency and accountability - all of which are central to councils' work in Long-term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

"We held two workshops in January discussing all the government proposals and were able to have some good in-depth and robust discussions. These have been reflected in the first of our submissions, for the rates cap proposal," Mayor Bowen said.

"We appreciate the Government's intention is to implement a rates cap, but we have significant concerns with the proposed model and the limited analysis that accompanies it."

In its submission, the Forum recommended the establishment of a funding model for activities provided by local government that can be sustained for generations.

"We acknowledge that the current local government system requires reform to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges. However, the scale and pace of the change across the proposed reforms will require careful management and significant investment from communities and councils to transition to new statutory responsibilities.

"Each Mayor and the Canterbury Regional Council Chair will continue to engage with Central Government, their councils, and communities to understand the implications of these proposals and their potential impacts," Mayor Bowen said.

The Mayoral Forum will also submit on the Planning Bill, Natural Environment Bill, Simplifying Local Government, and the Emergency Management Bill later this month.

"Our submissions will focus on the importance of aligning reforms, funding, timing, and change for the benefit of communities and ratepayers. Our focus is to work in partnership to get the best outcomes for Canterbury," Mayor Bowen said.

Background information

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission for the rate cap proposal can be [viewed on the website](#). The Forum will continue to proactively release its submission on each of the reforms and proposals as they are completed.

[Sign up](#) to receive Mayoral Forum updates.

ENDS

For more information, contact the Environment Canterbury media team on media@ecan.govt.nz

CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life, for all.

Briefing note: Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting Sir Brian Roche Friday 20 February 2026

Where/when

- Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Ave, Christchurch
- 9.30 – 10.00am (followed by morning tea)
- car parking is available on the hotel grounds
- your contact on the day is Maree McNeilly (secretariat), 027 381 8924

Who

- Sir Brian Roche, Public Service Commissioner
- Diane McDermott, Regional Public Service Commissioner.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is made up of the Mayors/Chair of the Canterbury councils (supported by their respective Chief Executives). The Mayors/Chair and Chief Executives of Canterbury councils are:

Mayor / Chair	Chief Executive	Council
Nigel Bowen (CMF Chair)	Nigel Trainor	Timaru District
Marie Black (CMF Deputy Chair)	Hamish Dobbie (Chair CE Forum)	Hurunui District
Craig Mackle	Will Doughty	Kaikōura District
Dan Gordon	Jeff Millward	Waimakariri District
Phil Mauger	Mary Richardson	Christchurch City
Lydia Gliddon	Steve Gibling	Selwyn District
Liz McMillan	Hamish Riach	Ashburton District
Rit Fisher (Acting Mayor)	Angela Oosthuizen	Mackenzie District
Craig Rowley	Stuart Duncan	Waimate District
Melanie Tavendale	Alex Parmley	Waitaki District
Dr Deon Swiggs	Dr Stefanie Rixecker	Environment Canterbury

The Forum is mandated by the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement as the primary mechanism for local government co-ordination, collaboration and advocacy in Canterbury.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

Local and Central Government reform and re-organisation

Local government is poised for a significant amount of change through a range of legislation and reform proposals. Central Government is going through its own re-organisation.

Members are particularly interested to hear from you on both central government re-organisation and local government reforms and how we get from where we currently are to where we need to be to ensure great outcomes for our communities.

What does the **Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport** (MCERT) mean for local agencies and how does it fit for Canterbury?

What will partnership look like under re-organisation – both local and central?

How will the bills and proposals currently in front of local government be aligned to get the best outcomes for our communities – particularly around timing and funding.

- Resource Management Reform
 - Planning Bill
 - Natural Environments Bill
- Emergency Management Bill
- Simplifying Local Government Proposal
- Rates Target Model

What, if any, other changes will we be seeing at Central Government to support the reforms?

The reforms proposed for local government will all require significant investment, currently unbudgeted in local government Long-Term and Annual Plans – in the face of potential rates capping, how will the reforms and implementation be funded? Development of Annual Plans for 2026-2027 is well underway, Long-Term Plans 2027-2037 is commencing. There is no guidance on how much the current reforms will cost and no legislation in place, yet the message is that local government will be funding the reforms and re-organisation.

Regulation

Regulation is a complex space, how will all the various regulatory commissioners ensure alignment where regulation intersects across a number of spaces?

- Biosecurity - MPI
- Water: Water Services Authority (standards) / Commerce Commission (economic regulator)
- Building regulation - MBIE
- Electricity - Electricity Authority

Resource management reform

National direction is a key pillar of the resource management reform. The current Bills note that there will be limited timeframe available for feedback and comment on these key instruments – how can we ensure there is reasonable time for local government input to ensure development of enduring national direction?

The new Planning Bill requires regional spatial plans within 15 months of gazettal. When will Central Government identify all the nationally significant infrastructure, including any national security issues, for inclusion in regional spatial plans?

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Nigel Bowen, Chair

Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to confirm the vision, priorities and actions for the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028, including a draft 'elevator pitch', and provide and update on the approach for finalising the document.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **confirms the vision, priorities and actions for the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028**
2. **confirms the draft elevator pitch to support the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028**
3. **notes the process to update and finalise a draft document for approval at the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting.**

Background

2. The Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement states that the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) will develop and lead implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the Canterbury region for the local government triennium 2025-2028. Since 2020, the strategy has been packaged as the [Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury](#) (the Plan).
3. At the first meeting of the 2025-2028 triennium, the Mayoral Forum agreed to review and update the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025 for the 2025-2028 triennium.
4. Two facilitated workshops were held in January 2026 to agree the vision, values, priorities and actions, informed by input from the regional forums and updates on existing and potential actions.
5. The workshops also covered robust discussion on the significant central government reforms which will be reflected in the context and development of the strategy.

Vision, priorities and actions

6. At the second January workshop, the Mayoral Forum agreed a draft vision, priorities and actions for the 2026-2028 Plan for Canterbury.

Vision

7. The proposed vision for Canterbury is:
- a strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life for all.
8. To help meet our vision, together we
- care for our natural resources to secure both present and future opportunities
 - create shared prosperity so no one is left behind
 - nurture caring, hope and kindness, standing strong together to withstand and adapt to challenges and change
 - celebrate our diverse identities – and take pride in our common identity as Cantabrians.

Priorities

9. The priorities from the 2023-2025 Plan for Canterbury remain, with minor amendments (underlined) for the 2026-2028 Plan:
- Sustainable environmental management of our habitats (land, air, water and ecosystems) – focusing on land use and freshwater management
 - Shared prosperity for all our communities – focusing on building on our economic strengths and developing emerging sectors; growing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce; improving the transport network; coordinating strategies for housing and communities; and maximising the opportunities presented by regional re-organisation
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation – working together on climate action planning, building community resilience, and making our infrastructure as strong as it can be

Actions

10. The proposed actions to support the vision and priorities are:
- **The Mayoral Forum will provide leadership for Canterbury through central government reforms, including supporting development of the regional spatial plan**
 - **The Mayoral Forum will continue oversight of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy**

- **The Mayoral Forum will** continue to support the Te Uru Kahika – Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa business case for permanent co-investment from the Government in river management for flood protection
- **The Mayoral Forum will** support the Biosecurity and Biodiversity Champions as the key conduit for a shared regional approach to biosecurity and biodiversity
- **The Mayoral Forum will** work with the region's Economic Development Agencies to encourage, and advocate for, economic development opportunities for investment in our regional economy
- **The Mayoral Forum will** support the region to foster partnerships and advocate to improve our energy security and systems
- **The Mayoral Forum will** advocate with government to address the chronic underinvestment by Central Government in Canterbury's transport network
- **The Mayoral Forum will** oversee the implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.

Draft Elevator Pitch

11. A draft elevator pitch, proposed to support Mayoral Forum advocacy, is outlined below:

- Waitaha Canterbury is on the move – we're becoming globally innovative, increasing trade and investment as well as attracting top talent. All this comes from the recognition that our strong businesses and cohesive communities are innately linked to our environment, our lifestyle, and our capacity for innovation
- We've delivered the strongest economy in New Zealand, partnering with business and our communities
 - Canterbury contributes over 12% of New Zealand's Gross Domestic Product, and growing faster than the national economy
 - Canterbury has 13% of New Zealand's population, with 1.9% average annual growth
 - 15% of New Zealand total exports come from Canterbury (\$15.5 billion)
- It is critical to invest in the strengths of Waitaha Canterbury and Te Waipounamu for the benefit of the whole motu
- By partnering with local government, iwi and central government we can achieve our objectives for a thriving and growing nation
- We are a stable partner for the government
- We are showing leadership through the reform, working together to shape the future of local government while keeping Canterbury moving forward and taking the motu with us.

Next steps

12. Subject to confirmation of the vision, priorities and actions, the secretariat will continue drafting the Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028, in particular a clear articulation of the current context.
13. The draft outline of the Plan will be considered at the regional forums in March 2026. All final feedback to be received by COB 20 March 2026.
14. Draft designed Plan finalised for consideration and approval at the May 2026 Chief Executives and Mayoral Forum meetings.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Angela Oosthuizen, Chair Policy Forum
Matthew Bacon, Chair Canterbury Planning Managers Group
Amanda Thompson, Canterbury Planning Managers Group

Regional Spatial Planning Update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on the Chief Executives Forum direction to commence early preparatory work for a Regional Spatial Plan under the draft Planning Bill, and to outline how the Canterbury Planning Managers Group is progressing that work, including initial programme scoping and interim arrangements for foundational work, and initial findings from the targeted gap analysis.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **notes the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum has directed early preparatory work to enable Canterbury to be ready to meet proposed statutory obligations and timeframes for preparation of a regional spatial plan under the draft Planning Bill**
2. **notes the Canterbury Planning Managers Group is progressing, using existing staff resources, the tasks requested by the Chief Executives Forum, including:**
 - 2.1. **a targeted gap analysis against the Canterbury Spatial Planning Stocktake to identify priority evidence, data, staffing, and coordination needs**
 - 2.2. **draft Terms of Reference for a regional Spatial Planning Committee under the Planning Bill and a supporting Working Group/Secretariat**
3. **notes the initiation of early engagement with Mana Whenua to inform the approach to regional spatial planning, including future governance and work programme options**

Background

2. The draft Planning Bill proposes mandatory preparation of a Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) for each region, with statutory timeframes that may require Canterbury to have an RSP prepared and notified as early as mid-2027 (subject to enactment timing and national direction).
3. In light of these proposed obligations and timeframes, the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum (CEF) agreed preparatory work should commence now to support regional

readiness, while acknowledging the Planning Bill and national direction are still developing.

4. Along with the spatial planning committee and secretariat functions, all councils will still need to resource their own planning programmes delivering the plan outcomes appropriate for their district and the region.
5. The CEF requested Canterbury Planning Managers Group (CPMG) undertake targeted early work to:
 - complete a targeted gap analysis against the Canterbury Spatial Planning Stocktake and report back by Monday 16 February 2026
 - draft Terms of Reference for a regional Spatial Planning Committee under the Planning Bill and a supporting Working Group/Secretariat.
6. This paper provides the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) with an update on progress to date, including the proposed approach for interim arrangements to enable foundational work to begin immediately while formal governance and secretariat arrangements are developed for confirmation once legislation is enacted.

Progress against Chief Executives Forum tasks

Initial programme scoping and interim preparatory arrangements

7. CPMG has progressed initial programme scoping so that foundational work can commence immediately and inform options for governance, secretariat/working arrangements, and programme sequencing.
8. The immediate priority is to confirm a high-level programme scope (early deliverables and milestones, decision points and sign-off requirements, and key dependencies/risks/information gaps), supported by a draft high-level work programme and identification of priority foundational workstreams arising from the gap analysis.
9. Scoping work is now underway, and a draft high-level work programme has been prepared (Attachment 1). The work programme is intended to support early technical readiness (e.g. evidence and spatial layer development, approach notes, and methods), so that the future Spatial Planning Committee can consider options and engagement sequencing once established.
10. Initial scoping indicates that an interim multi-council officer working arrangement (interim secretariat) would best enable foundational work to continue while the Bills move through the Select Committee and Parliament processes, until formal statutory governance and secretariat arrangements are confirmed following enactment (anticipated June–July 2026).
11. The interim arrangement is intended to progress preparatory technical work where no statutory governance decisions are required, while ensuring transparency and regular reporting through CPMG to the Chief Executives Forum.

Governance and working arrangements: draft Terms of Reference

12. CPMG is progressing draft Terms of Reference for:
 - a Spatial Planning Committee under the Planning Bill (noting the expectation it will comprise of elected members, and other appointments consistent with proposed legislative requirements)
 - a supporting Working Group/Secretariat to coordinate programme delivery and technical advice.
13. Draft Terms of Reference have been prepared in principle and are currently with CPMG members for comment. The Terms of Reference will be finalised for circulation once further project scoping has been completed, to ensure the governance and working arrangements are appropriately aligned to the scale and sequencing of the programme.
14. CPMG notes that several decisions will need to be made in 2026 on both resourcing for RSP preparation and content direction. While an interim officer arrangement can progress foundational work now, these matters will need to be addressed through the establishment of formal governance and secretariat arrangements once the Bills are enacted.
15. For any governing structure established for the working group, the following matters will need to be considered and agreed as part of its establishment:
 - following agreement of the Terms of Reference, commitment to the required funding and staff resources
 - appropriate delegations to the staff group to enable decision-making
 - procurement processes, financial authorities, and consensus decision-making arrangements
 - responsibilities for updating and reporting.

Targeted gap analysis against the Canterbury Spatial Planning Stocktake

16. The CPMG has undertaken a targeted analysis of existing spatial strategies and mapped spatial layers within District Plans and the Regional Plan across the region, assessed against the proposed mandatory matters in the Planning Bill (as introduced in December 2025).
17. The draft Planning Bill specifies mandatory matters for inclusion in an RSP, which differ from previous non-statutory spatial plans. CPMG also notes the RSP is intended to sit within the formal resource management document hierarchy, meaning it will have to follow a prescribed statutory process supported by an appropriate evidential base.
18. The gap analysis has been completed at a high level, and a short summary has been presented to the Chief Executives Forum and will be tabled at the Mayoral Forum meeting.

19. The stocktake confirms there is a substantial base of spatial planning material across Canterbury. However, coverage and approaches are uneven, and several proposed mandatory matters are not consistently mapped or addressed region-wide.
20. Notable gaps identified include infrastructure supporting activities, strategic sites, priority locations for adaptation plans, customary marine titles, and other protected customary rights areas.
21. CPMG recommends the findings be used to inform the initial programme scope, including priority foundational workstreams and where consistency, standardisation, and/or development of new spatial layers is likely to be required. The body responsible for preparing the RSP will also need to consider how the underlying evidence base will be consolidated and rationalised across Canterbury within the likely available timeframes.

Key themes from the CPMG discussion and intended approach

Governance requirements and decision points

22. Staged advice will be provided to support timely decisions by elected members and Chief Executives while the Planning Bill remains in draft.
23. Officers are developing advice that will:
 - set out what the draft Planning Bill requires for formation and functions of governance bodies
 - identify where Canterbury has genuine choices (and the implications of those choices)
 - signal where Ministerial agreement/approval may be required, or where Ministerial intervention powers may apply.
24. This will form the basis of a governance options paper for reporting back through the Chief Executives Forum and, as appropriate, to the Mayoral Forum.

Secretariat / Working Group arrangements (to be informed by programme scope)

25. CPMG agreed it is not yet possible to make a detailed recommendation on secretariat and Working Group arrangements until there is a clearer view of the early-phase scope, expected deliverables, and workload.
26. As that scope is clarified, officers will develop practical options that address:
 - composition and resourcing of the secretariat/Working Group
 - day-to-day operating model
 - reporting lines and escalation pathways

- mechanisms to keep all councils informed and able to contribute.

Cost, compliance and communication

Financial implications

27. Consistent with Chief Executives Forum direction, this initial preparatory work is being undertaken using existing staff resources. No commitment has been made at this stage to permanent staffing or long-term funding arrangements.
28. As programme scope and working arrangements are clarified, any resourcing pressures and future funding implications will be identified for consideration through the appropriate governance forums.

Risk assessment and legal compliance

29. Key risks include:
 - legislative and national direction uncertainty, which may require rework
 - timeframe risk if preparatory work does not commence early
 - capacity risk across councils and agencies if work expands beyond existing resources
 - coordination risk if operating arrangements are not clear early.
30. Mitigations include staged advice, early gap analysis, early programme scoping, establishment of interim arrangements for foundational work, and development of clear governance and operating arrangements.

Significance and engagement

31. The Chief Executives Forum has agreed to support early engagement with Mana Whenua to inform the approach to regional spatial planning, including governance and work programme options.
32. Officers will work with Mana Whenua partners to scope appropriate early engagement, recognising capacity considerations and the need for meaningful participation from the outset.

Communication

33. Updates will be provided through established governance and officer forums, including the Canterbury Policy, Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums, supported by CPMG coordination across councils.

Next steps

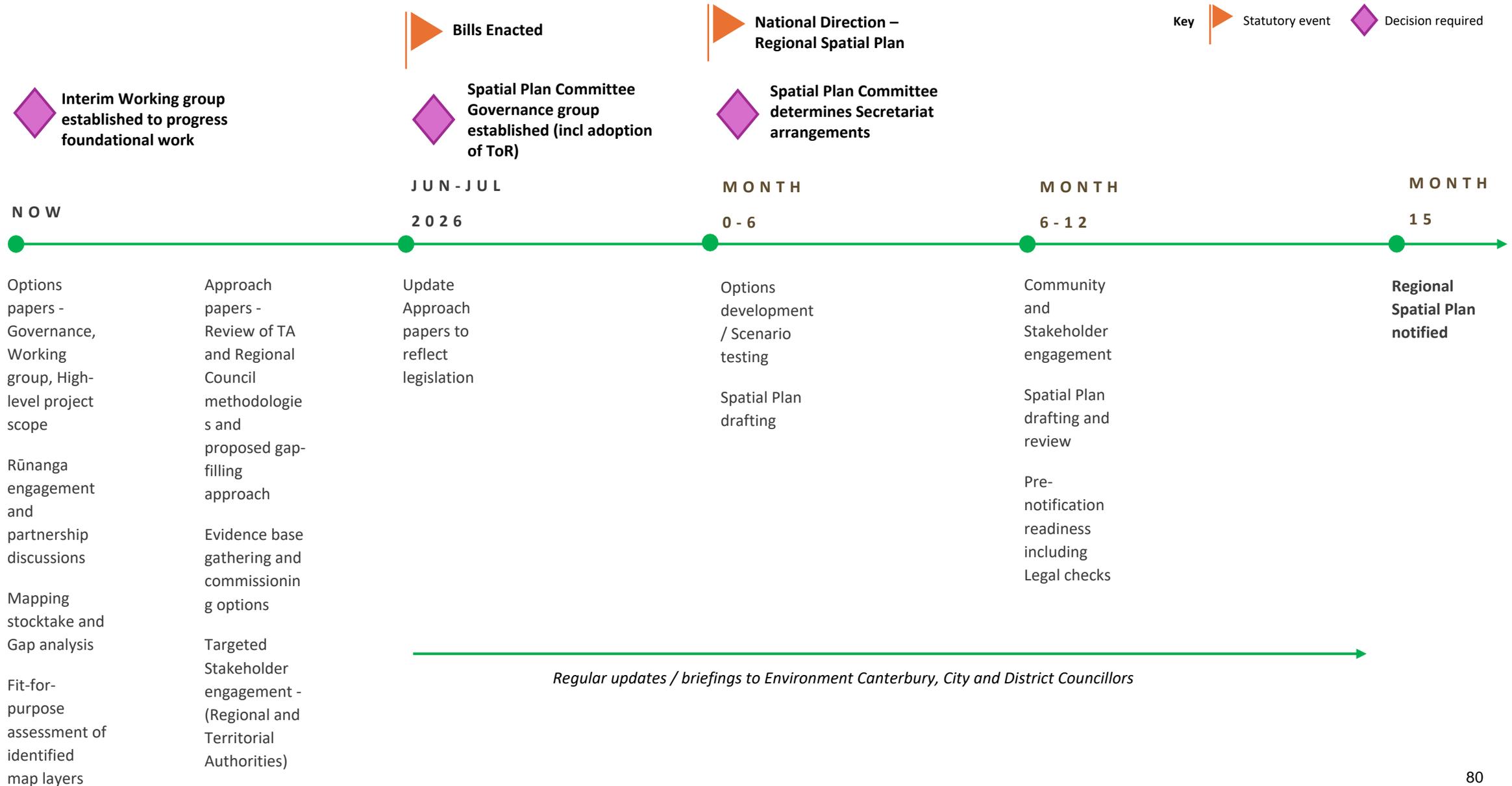
34. The immediate next steps are to:

- provide the gap analysis summary and report to the Chief Executives
- confirm an initial high-level programme scope and identify priority foundational workstreams
- confirm interim secretariat/working arrangements and commence foundational work
- develop options for Working Group/Secretariat operating arrangements informed by programme scope
- finalise Terms of Reference for the regional Spatial Planning Committee under the Planning Bill and Working Group/Secretariat and circulate to partner organisations
- initiate early engagement with Mana Whenua to inform approach, governance, and programme design
- provide a further update to the Mayoral Forum once the initial programme scope and operating arrangements are sufficiently developed to outline practical implementation options and decision points.

Attachment

- Attachment 1: Draft work programme

Indicative timeframes



Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Dr Deon Swiggs, Chair Canterbury Regional Council

Canterbury Water Management Strategy Progress Report

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Canterbury Mayoral Forum with a Canterbury Water Management Strategy implementation update, including on the work occurring across all Councils and Papatipu Rūnanga to establish Canterbury Water Management Strategy local leadership groups.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **notes the update for October to December 2025 on work underway to implement the Canterbury Water Management Strategy**
2. **notes that the establishment of local leadership groups is progressing, with establishment hui held in six out of eight areas**
3. **notes that the Rangitata catchment will act as the boundary between the Ōrāri Temuka Ōpihi Pareora and Hakatere local leadership group areas, with the final status of the Rakaia and Ihutai catchments still to be confirmed by all relevant parties.**

Simplifying Local Government and Resource Management Reforms

2. Central Government made a suite of announcements at the end of 2025 that will shape the operating environment for local government and freshwater management across Aotearoa New Zealand. These include proposals for Simplifying Local Government, the introduction of the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill, and amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 through the Resource Management (Duration of Consents) Amendment Act 2025.
3. The reform proposals are intended to achieve economic growth and improved environmental outcomes through national consistency and more efficient planning and consenting processes. Concurrently, the Simplifying Local Government proposal also aims to transfer regional council functions to a Combined Territories Board comprised of mayors.

4. Alongside legislative reform, updates to national direction under the Resource Management Act came into effect on 15 January 2026 and must now be reflected in decision-making on resource consents, including those already in progress. Further changes are anticipated following Government consultation in 2025 on freshwater national direction and upcoming targeted consultation on exposure drafts of a revised National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater expected in early 2026.
5. Taken together, the reforms represent a significant system shift for how freshwater and natural resource decisions are made and implemented, which will impact on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's (Mayoral Forum) approach to freshwater management that has been delivered through the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS). Through its catchment-based governance arrangements and collaborative approach, the CWMS has enabled communities, mana whenua, stakeholders, and elected members to shape priorities, trade-offs, and long-term outcomes at a local level. The reforms will have significant implications on these arrangements.
6. While further advice will come to the Mayoral Forum on these changes and the impacts on the CWMS, the following implications are apparent:
 - a. a shift towards greater centralised decision-making, with more decisions made by Government Ministers, and fewer decisions made locally by communities or elected members, rubs up against the subsidiarity approach applied through the CWMS where decisions are taken as closely as possible to the communities who are affected.
 - b. a weakening of the protections, rights and interests afforded to iwi and hapū, and reduced opportunities for mana whenua input into strategic decisions on resource management. This contrasts with the CWMS approach where an explicit strategic driver was the protection of Ngāi Tahu rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, with mana whenua being a key partner of the CWMS with representation on past zone committees and now local leadership groups.
 - c. the inclusion of a clear environmental limits framework as a part of the reforms represents a substantive improvement on the Resource Management Act and aligns well with the CWMS where the setting of environmental limits has been a goal since its inception.
7. The Mayoral Forum's new local leadership groups provide a clear opportunity to continue local collaboration and support the transition through this change. At several local leadership group hui through the end of 2025, the need to continue working together collaboratively on behalf of local communities was shared and made clear.
8. As the reform programme progresses, further analysis will be required to understand how legislative and institutional changes interact with existing CWMS arrangements and partnership settings. The Mayoral Forum will have an important role in considering these implications and in guiding how councils collectively respond, including how CWMS partnerships with mana whenua and communities continue to be supported and

strengthened within a changing national framework. Further advice will be provided to the Mayoral Forum as reforms are clarified and implementation pathways become more certain.

CWMS Progress and Local Leadership Groups

Local Leadership Group establishment hui

9. Initial hui have been held in six out of eight local leadership group areas with representatives from territorial authorities, Papatipu Rūnanga, and the regional council to progress establishment of each group. These hui have helped refine geographic boundaries, group structure, and membership details. These areas are:
 - Clarence/Waiiau Toa – Kaikōura
 - Hurunui Waiiau
 - Whakaraupō – Te Pātaka
 - Hakatere
 - Ōrāri Temuka Ōpihi Pareora
 - Waitaki – Waihao.
10. Initial hui are being scheduled for the remaining two local leadership group areas, namely Rakahuri Waimakariri and Waihora. At the same time, follow up hui are being organised across all areas to progress each group's establishment. Several groups are now at the stage of discussing and finalising collaborative agreements. These agreements will provide the foundation for groups to commence formal meetings and begin developing work programmes from early 2026.

Potential adjustments to local leadership group areas

11. Discussions have continued between relevant parties on boundary adjustments for three catchments. These are:
 - *Rangitata catchment* – Following discussions between core parties in September and October 2025, Mayors Bowen and McMillan agreed that the Rangitata catchment will be split, with the Rangitata River forming the boundary between the Ōrāri Temuka Ōpihi Pareora and Hakatere local leadership group areas. This agreement includes a commitment to work collaboratively on catchment-wide matters. Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua has previously indicated comfort with this approach.
 - *Rakaia catchment* – Discussions between Mayors McMillan and Gliddon have resulted in agreement to split the Rakaia catchment, with the Rakaia River forming the boundary between the Hakatere and the Waihora local leadership group areas. This position is still to be tested with Papatipu Rūnanga.

- *Ihutai catchment* – The status of the Ihutai catchment requires further discussion between councils and Papatipu Rūnanga, including the possibility of it being established as a standalone leadership group. In parallel, establishment hui are continuing for the Rakahuri Waimakariri and Whakaraupō – Te Pātaka local leadership groups, which are the two areas on either side of the Ihutai catchment.

12. Given agreement among core parties on shared management arrangements for the Rangitata catchment, the boundaries of the Ōrāri Temuka Ōpihi Pareora and Hakatere local leadership group areas will be adjusted accordingly. Canterbury Regional Council staff will continue to work with key parties to confirm the final status of the Rakaia and Ihutai catchments to support the establishment of the relevant local leadership groups.

CWMS Targets Progress Report 2025 and 2030 Targets

13. Canterbury Regional Council staff are leading work to consolidate the 2030 CWMS Targets to align them with the reported 2025 Targets and provide clearer measures and a more streamlined framework to prioritise action and demonstrate improvement. This work aligns with the CWMS reporting framework update, which was endorsed by the Mayoral Forum in August 2025.
14. A progress update and request for engagement on both work programmes were presented to the Canterbury Operations Forum on 8 December 2025. The Operations Forum agreed that Canterbury Regional Council staff run a workshop in early 2026 to help guide this work, which is now being organised.
15. Both the 2030 CWMS Targets consolidation and reporting framework update will be informed by the national resource management system reforms which are currently underway. The outcomes of these work programmes are intended to be presented to the Mayoral Forum for consideration by mid-2026.

Interim approach to Action Plan funding

16. Canterbury Regional Council's 2024–34 Long-Term Plan provides community incentive funding for local environmental projects including the implementation of CWMS Action Plans. For 2025/26, \$500,000 is allocated to fund these Action Plans.
17. For the 2025/26 year, and until local leadership groups are established, the CWMS Budget will be distributed via a contestable application process.
18. This year's CWMS Action Plan Budget will:
- be aligned with processes for existing contestable funds, i.e. Waitaha Action to Impact Fund (WAI Fund)
 - continue to be equally distributed across each of Canterbury's ten water zones
 - be focused on projects delivering towards the CWMS and existing Zone Committee Action Plans.

19. The Action Plan Fund opened on 8 December 2025, with details outlined on [Environment Canterbury's Community funding website¹](#). Applications closed on 15 February 2026.

Other developments

Nitrate Notice of Motion update

20. In response to Canterbury Regional Council's decision of 17 September 2025 on the Notice of Motion concerning nitrate impacts on drinking water, key actions are being progressed and there has been good progress.
21. Canterbury Regional Council is working alongside others to take a regional leadership role where gaps exist, particularly regarding nitrate risks to private household supplies where national regulatory settings are limited. Actions include:
- establishing an agricultural sector strategic leadership group to strengthen relationships and build shared understandings of groundwater quality issues
 - providing ongoing support to the Canterbury Drinking Water Reference Group, which brings together Taumata Arowai, territorial authorities, Te Whatu Ora and Canterbury Regional Council. This group remains the primary regional forum for joint oversight of drinking water risks
 - working with the Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai to align guidance for private household suppliers.
22. The advice on drinking water treatment costs and options is being progressed through the Drinking Water Action Plan, which Canterbury Regional Council endorsed on 11 September 2025. The Action Plan's workstreams are outlined below:

Workstream	Purpose	Delivery
1. Strengthen the evidence base	Update nitrate risk maps and establish how many private household suppliers are affected.	30 Jan 2026
2. Targeted engagement with private household suppliers	Encourage testing and promote treatment options in high-risk areas.	31 Mar 2026
3. Investigate support and funding options	Investigate options, including funding support, for facilitating increased uptake of nitrate treatment by private household suppliers in high-risk areas.	30 Apr 2026

Table 1. The workstreams of Canterbury Regional Council's Drinking Water Action Plan

Next steps

23. Canterbury Regional Council staff will continue work with core parties in each local leadership group area to progress establishment of the new groups and commence first

¹ <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/community-funding>

meetings where appropriate. At the same time, staff will progress the CWMS 2030 Targets consolidation and updated reporting framework in collaboration with key partners, including through the Operations Forum.

24. An overview of the outcome of this year's CWMS Action Plan Fund will be provided at the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting.
25. Advice on the cumulative impacts of the current Central Government reforms on regional freshwater management and the CWMS will be presented at the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting as further analysis and understanding of implications are progressed.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Mayor Dan Gordon, Chair Climate Champions Reference Group
Jesse Burgess, Convenor Climate Change Working Group

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to present:
 - a. the quarterly implementation progress and budget summary report for quarter 2 of year 2 (FY25/26)
 - b. the findings of the preliminary scoping of a regional natural hazard risk visualisation tool (Action 1 – Understanding Risk and Improving Resilience) and recommendations for next steps
 - c. the Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment (Action 2 – Emissions Reduction)
 - d. an analysis of the National Adaptation Framework and its alignment with, and impact on, the implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **receives the quarterly Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan implementation progress report and accompanying budget summary**
2. **notes the:**
 - i. **procurement of a regional natural and climate hazard and risk data inventory analysis, and**
 - ii. **request for information to test the market and complete the scoping of action 1.1, a regional natural hazard risk visualisation tool for use by councils to support climate adaptation and resilience planning**
3. **receives the Emissions Reduction - Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment summary report, noting the completion of sub-action 2.2 with this deliverable**

4. **notes the analysis of the recently published National Adaptation Framework, and the alignment of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan to it and the broader suite of central government reforms**
5. **notes the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group will initiate a review of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan, bringing further advice to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum at its meeting in May 2026.**

Key points

2. The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP) is halfway through its second year of implementation.
3. To date, \$246,471.08 has been expended this financial year, out of a total available budget of \$858,510.25.
4. Preliminary scoping of Action 1.1 confirms strong council support for a Canterbury-wide multi-hazard risk visualisation tool to support council decision making and improve adaptation and resilience planning. Next steps include undertaking a regional data inventory analysis and issuing a Request for Information to define scope, governance, and funding options.
5. A comprehensive Emissions Reduction - Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment has been completed, evaluating 57 emissions reduction options and developing a decision-support tool. Findings highlight priority actions under council influence (e.g. public transport, afforestation, waste initiatives) and the necessity of partnerships for high-impact options.
6. The CCPP aligns well with the Government's recently released National Adaptation Framework and related reforms. The actions in the CCPP, particularly the key actions, such as Action 1 (Risk visualisation tool), Action 3, (Adaptation Planning), and Action 4 (Blue Green network) are critical and foundational to a range of core council functions, including land use and spatial planning under the new resource management system, emergency management, and the development of local climate adaptation plans. Canterbury's collaborative approach positions the region ahead nationally, and continued implementation can support transition to a new operating context.
7. A project manager to support delivery of the CCPP started in January 2026 at Canterbury Regional Council (CRC). A review of the CCPP will begin in early 2026 to ensure the plan aligns with the significant proposed reforms from central government and remains relevant and fit for purpose. Findings will be presented to the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting.

Background

8. The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP) was approved by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) in August 2024.

9. The CCPP is now halfway through its second year of implementation and has confirmed funding from all Canterbury councils until the end of the 2026/27 financial year through 2024-34 long term plans.

CCPP Implementation progress update

10. The progress update is included in Attachment 1, table 1 (quarter 2, year 2 FY25-26). Most actions are tracking well, and collaboration remains strong between councils.
11. Since the last update to the Canterbury Policy Forum (CPF) in December 2025, there has been a change in the risk profile of several actions. Actions 1 and 4, which were previously reported as being at risk due to project complexity and staff resourcing constraints, are now back on track following targeted mitigation and resolution by staff. In contrast, minor risks remain across Actions 5 (Education & Advocacy) and 9 (Monitoring and Evaluation), relating to strategic direction and staff resourcing respectively. These new risks are being actively managed to ensure both actions return to 'on track'. Further detail is provided in Attachment 1.
12. A project manager to support the delivery of the CCPP has started, hosted by Canterbury Regional Council (CRC). The position is shared and jointly funded between the existing budgets for CCPP (0.6 FTE basis) and the Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan, administered by CRC.
13. Preliminary work has commenced on a review of the CCPP.
14. This review is intended to determine whether current actions remain relevant, appropriately prioritised, and aligned with emerging legislative, planning, and funding frameworks, while clearly identifying associated risks and opportunities. This work is critical to position ongoing collaborative climate action in a way that supports evolving local government functions and investment decisions. The CCWG will bring further advice to the Mayoral Forum at its meeting in May 2026.

Year 2 CCPP budget allocation

15. A summary of the budget, actual, committed and forecasted expenditure is shown in tables 3 and 4 of Attachment 1. The total available budget for year 2 is \$858,510.25, comprising council contributions of \$741,049 and a year 1 carry forward of \$117,461.25.
16. At the time of writing, the total financial year to date expenditure is \$246,471.08.
17. Attachment 1, table 3 shows that \$55,754 is currently committed under contract for the remainder of the 2025-2026 financial year. An additional \$554,565 is forecasted for expenditure; however yet to be committed through procurement processes.
18. An assessment of forecasted expenditure indicates a likely underspend this financial year, primarily due to the low likelihood of completing the proposed \$340,000 investment in the regional risk visualisation tool (Action 1) and the \$150,000 investment in the development of the blue green network plan within the 2025/26 timeframe. This

reflects the complexity of these projects, and the time required to align all councils and key stakeholders on scope, data requirements, and system needs, as well as the interdependency with the regional data inventory work that must precede tool development (for Action 1).

19. Although there is currently limited budget committed under existing contracts for this financial year, procurement for a data inventory for Action 1 is imminent (see paragraph 28) and will generate critical information to inform future regional spatial planning, the identification of priority areas for local adaptation planning and other investment decisions by councils (e.g. asset management planning).

Action 1.1 Understanding Risks and Improving Resilience – scoping a Canterbury-wide risk visualisation tool

20. Councils currently have statutory obligations to avoid or mitigate natural hazards, consider climate change effects, and build community resilience.
21. The recently released National Adaptation Framework further expects councils to assess, communicate, and plan for climate risks. While some national tools (e.g. a national flood map, and hazards portal) are in development, these are hazard-specific and high-level. They do not replace the multi-hazard, risk and vulnerability-focused risk assessment functionality envisaged by the CCPP.
22. Action 1 of the CCPP aims to strengthen Canterbury’s understanding of climate-related hazards and risks to support evidence-based decision making and improve regional resilience. It is considered a key action in the plan because of its complexity, cost and number of stakeholders involved. There are two sub-actions:
 - Action 1.1 - Scoping and developing a Canterbury-wide risk visualisation tool
 - Action 1.2 - Updating the regional risk and urgency assessment
23. The benefits of this action are that it will provide councils with a consistent spatial tool which shows reliable, up-to-date information, identifying who and what is at risk from different hazards, supporting statutory obligations and informed decision-making across multiple council functions within both the current and future resource management system e.g. in the development of land use and regional spatial plans, regional emergency management plans and local adaptation plans.

Scoping of a Risk tool: Engagement and Preliminary Findings

24. CRC commissioned True North Consulting to scope options for a regional natural hazard and climate risk tool. This work focused on understanding what councils need, their technical capability, and the requirements for a tool that supports consistent, defensible risk assessment across the region.
25. Engagement with council staff highlighted two leading tools in the New Zealand market: Resilience Explorer (REx) and Riskscape. REx emerged as the most promising option

due to its usability and ability to model hazard exposure, vulnerability, cascading impacts, and climate scenarios. It is already in use at Christchurch City and Waimakariri District Councils, making it a practical candidate for wider regional adoption.

26. Larger councils have the capability to use such tools now, but smaller councils face challenges around cost of procuring a tool, data quality, and resourcing. A regional approach would help address these gaps and ensure equitable access to robust risk information.
27. The findings of the preliminary scoping emphasise that a successful regional tool will require addressing data inconsistencies, meeting varied council needs, and taking a phased or modular implementation approach.
28. In December 2025, the Canterbury Policy Forum endorsed two next steps to address these needs:
 - a regional data inventory analysis to assess the accuracy and completeness of existing hazard and risk data.
 - a Request for Information (RFI) to test the market, refine the minimum viable product, and explore governance and funding options.
29. Once these steps are complete, the CCWG will recommend whether to proceed with procurement.
30. A single regional visualisation tool for Canterbury continues to represent a significant opportunity to align regional spatial planning, infrastructure investment, and resilience decision-making across the region, while enabling efficiencies through shared systems and increased council capability.
31. This approach is well aligned with government reforms focused on regional collaboration and improved resource management outcomes. It is likely that funding will need to be carried forward to Year 3 (2026/27) to support acquisition and implementation of the tool. The resulting underspend anticipated in the current year is a matter of timing, not diminished ambition or commitment to the successful delivery of regional climate actions.

Action 2: Emissions Reduction

Sub-action 2.2 complete – Transition risks and opportunities assessment

32. The Policy Forum received the Emissions Reduction Strategic Overview in June 2025, enabling the initiation of the Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment (the Assessment). Tonkin & Taylor have now completed this assessment (the summary report, Attachment 2), analysing 57 emissions reduction options across environmental, economic, social, cultural, equity and implementation impacts.

33. A decision support tool was developed to help councils compare and prioritise actions based on emissions impact, feasibility, council influence, timing, and wellbeing outcomes.
34. Initial findings point to strong near-term opportunities where councils have direct influence, such as public transport improvements, native planting, community waste initiatives, farm advisory services, and active travel. High impact options outside council control will require collaboration with central government, industry, and mana whenua.
35. The Assessment has already informed two regional workshops involving more than 60 stakeholders in late 2025, and a fun and engaging youth workshop held in Christchurch in January 2026.
36. The next phase is developing a regional emissions reduction plan. BECA is leading this work, with a draft strategic framework and indicative actions to be presented to the Policy Forum in March 2026.
37. Further engagement with individual councils and key stakeholders is planned before the end of the financial year to test the strategic framework and draft actions.

Reforms and the National Adaptation Framework

38. In late 2025, the Government released a significant package of reforms with direct implications for local government, planning, climate and resilience functions of councils. These include changes to the resource management system, proposed reforms to emergency management legislation, initiatives aimed at simplifying and refocusing local government roles and responsibilities, and the development of a national framework to guide climate change adaptation.
39. Collectively, these reforms signal a considerable shift in the legislative and policy settings within which councils operate, with implications for spatial planning, natural hazard risk management, infrastructure investment, and long-term funding decisions. Understanding and responding to this evolving reform context is critical to ensuring the CCPP remains relevant and fit for purpose.

The National Adaptation Framework

40. The Government released The National Adaptation Framework (NAF) on 16 October 2025. The NAF sets out central government's approach to prepare New Zealand for climate change, and supports the Government's Climate Change Strategy, published by the Ministry for the Environment in 2024. It also compliments the first National Adaptation Plan and wider work under the National Risk and Resilience Framework. Further supporting information is provided in the proactively released cabinet paper.
41. The NAF was developed alongside broader local government and resource management reform proposals, which signal future expectations for the form and function of councils and how they will plan for, fund, and implement climate adaptation, amongst other responsibilities.

42. A high-level analysis of the NAF for the continued implementation of the CCPP is provided in Attachment 3.
43. Analysis confirms that the CCPP is well aligned with the recently published National Adaptation Framework (NAF). The collaborative actions being undertaken by Canterbury councils, such as improving the understanding and sharing of climate risk information (Action 1), identifying best practice in adaptation planning (Action 3), and facilitating the development of a blue green network (Action 4), are critical and foundational to a range of core council functions. This includes land use and regional spatial planning under the new resource management system, development of regional emergency management plans, and the identification of priority areas of local adaptation planning by territorial authorities. This positions the region ahead nationally and well placed to respond to potential climate-related changes arising from local government and resource management reform.

Risk assessment and legal compliance

44. There is ongoing uncertainty regarding the progression of existing workstreams due to the scale, pace and interdependency of current and forthcoming reforms. While the CCWG is reviewing previously agreed deliverables, any delay or decision to pause implementation presents a material risk. Deferring or halting CCPP actions could undermine councils' organisational readiness to meet new statutory and policy requirements arising from the reforms and the NAF. Failure to progress key actions also carries financial risk, as delayed delivery may weaken the case for future funding allocations. Collectively, these risks could adversely affect most councils' ability to meet emerging obligations, including readiness for regional spatial planning and local adaptation planning.
45. A robust assessment is therefore required to ensure that any consideration of halting, delaying, or reallocating funding from agreed regional climate actions is informed, transparent, and balanced across both potential risks and opportunities.

Communication and engagement

46. A communications and engagement plan is currently being developed for the CCPP, and a draft will be taken to the Communication and Engagement Forum in March 2026.

Next steps

47. Action leads, with the support of their sub-groups, will continue to progress implementation across each of the actions.
48. For action 1.1 (risk visualisation tool), the Climate Change Working Group will receive a demonstration of Riskscape from Earth Sciences New Zealand and will procure a data inventory analysis and request for information, providing further detail on recommended next steps for tool development at the Policy Forum meeting in June 2026.

49. Staff will commence preliminary work relating to the review of the CCPP and will bring advice to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum in May 2026.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – CMF CCPP Implementation Y2 Q2 Oct-Dec 2025 Progress Report.docx
- Attachment 2 – Action 2 Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment
- Attachment 3 – The National Adaptation Framework and the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Implementation Plan Quarterly Progress Report

October 2025 – December 2025

NB the action wording has been summarised. For a full account of the actions, please refer to page 42 of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.

Action Theme	Primary Action	Sub-actions	Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)
1. Understanding Climate Risks and Improving Resilience	Understand climate hazards and risks in Canterbury to support evidence-based decision making and improve regional resilience.	<u>Sub-action 1.1</u> Risk visualisation tool	Selwyn District Council	On track	<p>Preliminary scoping by True North Consulting has been completed and has informed the next stages of scoping, endorsed by the Policy Forum: a data inventory analysis and request for information to test the market.</p> <p>The Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) is focusing on understanding the capability and requirements of the two main risk tools in NZ – Resilience Explorer (Rex) and Riskscape. A demonstration of Riskscape will be held in mid-February.</p> <p>A regional tool is unlikely to be fully developed this financial year but remains achievable within the three-year term of the plan.</p>
		<u>Sub-action 1.2</u> Climate change risk and urgency assessment	Canterbury Regional Council	Not started	Work on this action will commence from year 4. The scope and approach depend on several factors including evolving national direction/legislation, and on the progress made toward a regional risk visualisation tool.
2. Emissions reduction	Work together across the region to build equitable, inclusive pathways, targets, and key actions to support New Zealand's commitments towards global	<u>Sub-action 2.1</u> Develop carbon inventories and identify transition pathways	Canterbury Regional Council	On track	Work continues through the Local Emissions Data Platform initiative to produce a regional emissions inventory for 2025 and an emissions-reduction pathways model for Canterbury. The 2025 GHG emissions inventory development is currently underway, and the pathway model is being refined, with a BAU emissions pathway established based on the Government's second Emissions Reduction Plan.
		<u>Sub-action 2.2</u> Regional transition risk and opportunities assessment	Canterbury Regional Council	On track	Tonkin & Taylor has completed a Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment (summary report and decision-making tool), which looks at greenhouse gas impacts of the opportunities and risks identified as part of the project's first stage, as well as assessing their economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts.

Action Theme	Primary Action	Sub-actions	Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)
	greenhouse gas emissions reduction.				<p>The Assessment informed two stakeholder engagement workshops with industry, iwi and mana whenua, local and central government, and youth in October and November 2025.</p> <p>Further engagement, including a youth engagement session as well as online surveys, is underway and will be completed before the end of 2025.</p>
		<u>Sub-action 2.3</u> Regional low emissions transition strategy plan	Canterbury Regional Council	On track	<p>Consultancy firm, Beca, has been appointed to develop the strategic framework and emissions reduction actions due around March 2025, in line with 2027-37 Long-Term planning.</p>
3. Adaptation planning	Support best practice approaches for local adaptation planning with communities	<u>Sub-action 3.1</u> Best practice approach for adaptation planning and implementation by councils in Canterbury	Hurunui District Council	On track	<p>The action is making some progress despite uncertainties resulting from various legislative reforms happening at the national level.</p> <p>The sub-working group met on 2 December and reviewed the project plan (including scope). It was concluded that the scope and therefore the project plan was still relevant, and even more importantly so pending clearer and concrete support from central government with regards to climate adaptation planning and implementation in the district and Canterbury region.</p> <p>The sub-working group agreed to progress the work while keeping a watching brief on developments within the climate adaptation space.</p> <p>Planning is underway to obtain feedback from Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities on support needed for climate adaptation planning. This work is expected to be carried out in the first half of 2026.</p>
4. Nature Based Solutions	Facilitate the development of a Canterbury blue-green network to increase natural capital,	<u>Sub-action 4.1</u> Ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment	Environment Canterbury	On track	<p>Wildlands has completed the Ecosystem Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and a training session on the report and StoryMap was held with the CCWG in early December. The project team are now working through the findings and considering how these will inform the implementation of action 4.2.</p>

Action Theme	Primary Action	Sub-actions	Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)
	indigenous biodiversity and offer nature-based solutions to climate change effects	<u>Sub-action 4.2</u> Blue-green network plan for Canterbury	Waimakariri District Council	On track	A blue green network (BGN) literature review and draft regional inventory have been completed to inform the delivery of the BGN. A scoping report is to be procured early in 2026 with a view to going out for tender for a BGN plan prior to June 2026.
		<u>Sub-action 4.2a</u> Collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on blue-green infrastructure placement and hazard resilience investment	Waimakariri District Council	On track	A draft regional inventory of existing blue-green network planning documents, projects, community groups and relevant government legislation has been developed and circulated for feedback from CCWG members by 16/1/26. The aim of this is to promote collaboration and avoid duplication of effort. It will form part of the consultant brief for the delivery of the BGN.
		<u>Sub-action 4.2b</u> Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key stakeholders to deliver a blue-green network	Waimakariri District Council	On track	Collaboration with the CCPP blue-green network project is listed on the GCP work programme and the group is represented on the BGN project team. Community groups engaged in work relevant to the project are recorded in the regional inventory.
		<u>Sub-action 4.2c</u> Investigate the feasibility of establishing blue-green infrastructure on council-owned land	All councils	Not started	
5. Climate Change Education and Advocacy	Support community understanding about the local impacts of	<u>Sub-action 5.1</u> Continue to develop the “It’s Time, Canterbury” initiative	Canterbury Regional Council	At risk	The It’s time, Canterbury platform faces several challenges in terms of resourcing by Canterbury Regional Council (CRC) and strategic direction. The project team is planning to commission an external review of the platform (funded by CRC) in early 2026 and findings will be presented to the Communications and Engagement Forum to discuss next steps.

Action Theme	Primary Action	Sub-actions	Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)
	climate change and promote individual and collective climate action	<u>Sub-action 5.2</u> Produce communications materials with CDEM that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards	Canterbury Regional Council	Not started	This action is due to be scoped in Year 2 of the CCPP. Work has yet to commence however and is due to be discussed at an upcoming meeting with the communications team at Canterbury Regional Council.
6. Supporting Papatipu Rūnanga	Support papatipu rūnanga with climate action at place and provide continuing opportunity for their involvement with the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.	<u>Sub-action 6.1</u> Understand the climate action requirements of papatipu rūnanga across Canterbury	All councils	On track	The project team has received comment from seven councils on their understanding of papatipu rūnanga climate action requirements in their respective areas. The combined responses showed differing understanding, relationships, and climate action requirements. To enhance this understanding and pending clarification of the capacity and priorities of the Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities, the intention is to commission the entities to provide further advice on the climate action requirements of rūnanga and how councils can support them in this, and in council-led adaptation planning processes.
		<u>Sub-action 6.2</u> Support councils to work in partnership with papatipu rūnanga on climate action planning	Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat	On track	
7. Integrating climate change considerations in council processes	Work collaboratively to build local government capability and enhance its capacity to adapt to the climate change challenges it faces	<u>Sub-action 7.1</u> Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business	Ashburton District Council	On track	The sub-group has met several times to progress this action and tested key questions with the CCWG. The group proposes to build a central repository of shared information to help build council capability and knowledge. This is being further investigated.

Action Theme	Primary Action	Sub-actions	Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)
8. Climate Funding and Financing	Identify co-funding and financing opportunities for climate adaptation and resilience.	<u>Sub-action 8.1</u> Advocate to central government for funding to be made available for the climate-related actions	Christchurch City Council	On track	Staff met with NZ Centre for Sustainable Finance about climate-related funding opportunities in Canterbury (interested in large-scale nature-based solutions to flooding and energy projects). Approached EECA and MBIE about hosting information sessions for Canterbury councils on what funds are available and how best to access these funds. Christchurch City Council secured funding from Horizon Europe to explore ways to make climate adaptation more attractive for private investment continues.
		<u>Sub-action 8.2</u> Explore the feasibility of a Canterbury Climate Commitment	Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat	Completed	A feasibility study was undertaken, and the findings show it would not be feasible to undertake a Canterbury Climate Commitment. Approval to discontinue work on this action pending new information was confirmed by CMF on 30 May 2025. No further update.
9. Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitor and report on progress towards achieving the actions and outcomes of the Partnership Plan.	<u>Sub-action 9.1</u> Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan	Environment Canterbury	Paused	The Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan was approved by the CMF in August 2025. The next steps are to collect the baseline information for the indicators and metrics. Work is currently paused until January 2026 due to resourcing challenges at Canterbury Regional Council, the council leading this action.
10. Implementation	Assemble an implementation team to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.		Environment Canterbury (with action leads)	Complete	A Project Manager has been appointed by Canterbury Regional Council to support implementation of the CCPP starting 19 January 2026. The position will assist the implementation and action leads with planning, aligning and delivering projects. This is a shared role - hosted by Canterbury Regional Council - and will also support the delivery of the Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan. Funding for the role will come from the available CCPP budget and is estimated at approximately \$60,000 (0.6 FTE).

Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Budget Summary 2024-2027

1. The total CCPP budget agreed by the Mayoral Forum (excluding GST) is as follows: \$190,140 Year 1, \$741,049 Year 2, and \$540,143 Year 3, as shown in Table 1 and 2 below.
2. The spread of the budget (Table 3) across all the actions continues to evolve and is dependent on several factors including progress of actions and testing the market through procurement, so it is necessary to maintain some flexibility to spending within the total budget over the three years. Any unspent funds are carried forward to the following financial year.
3. A total available budget of \$858,510.25 is available in financial year 2025-2026. This includes year 2 council contributions of \$741,049, and a year 1 carry forward of \$117,461.25.
4. Table 3 indicates the detailed breakdown of expenditure to date, contractual commitments (shown in red font) and forecasted expenditure (shown in blue font) for Year 2 and Year 3 of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan. Note, the summary below does not include any supplementary financial contributions from partner councils to support actions.

Table 1: Revenue (2024-2027): Canterbury Council Financial Contributions

Council	CMF ratios (%)	Y1 LTP	Y2 LTP	Y3 LTP	Total Y1-Y3 LTP
Canterbury Regional Council	20.5	38,950	151,700	110,700	301,350
Christchurch City	20.5	39,000	152,000	110,000	301,000
Selwyn	10.7	20,330	79,180	57,780	157,290
Waimakariri	10.7	20,330	79,180	57,780	157,290
Ashburton	9.8	18,620	72,520	52,920	144,060
Timaru	9.8	18,620	72,520	52,920	144,060
Hurunui	5.2	9,880	38,480	28,080	76,440
Waimate	3.9	7,410	28,860	21,060	57,330
Waitaki	3.9	7,500	29,609	21,903	59,012
Kaikōura	2.5	4,750	18,500	13,500	36,750
Mackenzie	2.5	4,750	18,500	13,500	36,750
TOTAL budget	100 %	190,140	741,049	540,143	1,471,332
		RECEIVED	RECEIVED	TO BE INVOICED August 2026	

Table 2: Summary of allocated budget per year

Year	Approved budget	Underspend /carry forward	Adjusted budget
Y1	\$190,140	\$117,461.25	-
Y2	\$741,049	-	\$858,510.25
Y3	\$540,143	-	-

Table 3: Detailed breakdown of expenditure to date, contractual commitments and forecast for Year 2 and Year 3 of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (excl. GST)

Action	Deliverable	Expenditure to date (FY25/26)	Committed Forecast (FY25/26)	Committed Forecast (FY26/27)	Supplier
1.1	1.1 Risk Visualisation tool: Preliminary scoping report	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	True North Consulting
	1.1 Risk Visualisation tool: Tool development and implementation (TBC)	\$0	\$340,000	\$70,000	TBC
2	2.1 Emissions Reduction: GHG Emissions modelling pathway tool subscription	\$70,600	\$0	\$70,600 (TBC by June 26)	RSHL/Kinesis
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: Transition risks, opportunities assessment	\$43,478.26	\$0	\$0	Tonkin + Taylor
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: stakeholder engagement facilitation	\$7,875	\$1,564	\$0	Mene Solutions
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: stakeholder engagement catering	\$561.30	\$0	\$0	Sopheze
	2.3 Emissions Reduction: Regional low emissions transition plan (Strategic framework and actions development)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$29,000 \$25,000	BECA
3	3.1 Best practice approach for adaptation planning	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	TBC
4	4.1 Ecosystem Risk Assessment: Final risk and vulnerability assessment	\$99,956.52	\$0	\$0	Wildlands
	4.2 Develop a blue-green network plan and guidance to support implementation.	\$0	\$150,000	\$90,000	TBC
	4.2.a Collaboration with key stakeholders on blue-green infrastructure placement	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	TBC
	4.2.c Feasibility of establishing blue-green infrastructure	\$0	\$0	\$80,000	TBC
6	Understand the climate action requirements of papatipu rūnanga	\$0	\$20,000	\$50,000	TBC
9	Monitoring and evaluation indicators and plan	\$0	\$23,000	\$27,000	TBC

10	Project Manager (0.6 FTE)	\$0	\$35,754	\$85,809.60	N/A
----	---------------------------	-----	----------	-------------	-----

Table 4: Summary of Budget, Actuals, Commitments, and Forecast (Y2–Y3)

Category	Y2 (FY25/26)	Y3 (FY26/27)
Approved Budget	\$858,510.25	\$540,143
Actual Expenditure to Date	\$246,471.08	-
Contractual Commitments	\$55,754.00	\$114,809.60
Forecast (Uncommitted)	\$554,564.70	\$422,600.00
Total Expected Spend	\$856,788.78	\$537,409.60

Final report

Assessing the impacts of emissions reduction risks and opportunities in Waitaha Canterbury

Prepared for: Canterbury Regional Council

Prepared by: Tonkin & Taylor Ltd

Job Number: 1099243.0000

Date: 26 September 2025

www.tonkintaylor.co.nz

Authors:

Simon Harvey

Tessa Allan

Approved by:
Peter Cochrane

Job Number
1099243.0000

Version 4.0

Tonkin & Taylor Ltd



Document control and review

Title: Final report - Assessing the impacts of emissions reduction risks and opportunities in Waitaha Canterbury					
Date	Version	Description	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Authorised by
08/09/25	1	Draft final report	Simon Harvey	Peter Cochrane	Peter Cochrane
12/09/25	2	2 nd draft final report after client feedback	Simon Harvey	Simon Harvey	Peter Cochrane
24/09/25	3	Final report to confirm changes with client	Simon Harvey	Simon Harvey	Peter Cochrane
26/09/25	4.0	Final report	Simon Harvey	Peter Cochrane	Peter Cochrane

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Context	1
1.2	Purpose	1
1.3	This report	2
2	Assessment approach	2
2.1	Clarifying options to assess	2
2.2	Assessment methodology	8
2.2.1	Review with subject matter experts	8
2.3	Assessment challenges and limitations	9
3	Outcomes and findings	10
3.1	Outcomes	10
3.2	Findings	11
3.2.1	Highest overall wellbeing score	12
3.2.2	High emissions reduction potential / High council influence / Overall wellbeing score	15
3.2.3	High emissions reduction potential / Low council influence / Overall wellbeing score	17
3.2.4	High emissions reduction potential / High positive equity impact / Overall wellbeing score	20
3.2.5	High emissions reduction potential / High positive economic impact / Overall wellbeing score	23
3.2.6	High emissions reduction potential / Short-term emissions reduction impact / Overall wellbeing score	26
4	Summary of insights from the assessment	28
4.1	Insights	28
4.2	Enablers	29
5	Recommendations	31
5.1	Clarify opportunities	31
5.2	Fill identified gaps	32
5.3	Position the emissions reduction assessment	32
5.4	Use the assessment as a platform for engagement	32
6	Applicability	33
Appendix A	Source documents used for assessment	

Appendix B	Prompts used for the GPT assessment model
Appendix C	Full list of options in order of wellbeing assessment scores
Appendix D	Full list of options in order of scale of potential GHG reduction
Appendix E	Enablers extracted from the Strategic Overview document

Executive summary

This report presents the findings following a comprehensive assessment of 57 emissions reduction options for Waitaha Canterbury. The assessment applied a semi-quantitative framework across greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction potential and wellbeing outcomes (environmental, social, cultural, equity, and economic). To deliver breadth within a limited budget, the methodology used a customised AI GPT model alongside expert review, enabling analysis of a large number of options and criteria, using a consistent approach and broad evidence base.

A valuable output of the work is a practical decision-support tool. The assessment spreadsheet of results allows options to be filtered by GHG reduction potential, feasibility, adoption likelihood, lead time, time to impact, measurability, council influence, policy alignment, and all wellbeing domains. This enables flexible analysis to inform prioritisation, stakeholder engagement, and provide useful future input into Waitaha Canterbury's transition plan.

Main findings

- Six options scored highest overall for wellbeing outcomes including improved public transport, native afforestation, two forms of community-based waste initiatives, farm advisory services and active travel in urban areas. They are all feasible in the short term, with most delivering medium-term emissions reductions, and councils hold strong influence over several of them.
- Options with both high emissions reduction potential and high council influence highlight the value of public transport improvements, landfill methane capture, and industrial heat transition. These carry trade-offs such as capital costs or environmental risks, requiring careful design.
- Where emissions potential is high, but council influence is limited (for example, freight mode shift, aviation fuels, hydrogen and agricultural technologies), progress will depend on central government, industry, and mana whenua partnerships, with councils acting as enablers and advocates. These options should be more carefully investigated as part of the stakeholder engagement phase of work. These options are also likely to benefit from careful design and choice of different enabling approaches to incentivise and support uptake by relevant stakeholders.
- Equity is the cornerstone of Action 2 in the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan. Poorly designed initiatives could entrench disadvantage (for example, precision agriculture and EV infrastructure), while others can deliver significant gains in affordability, access, and inclusion (for example, public transport and energy efficiency). The assessment findings can help the careful design of initiatives that mitigate inequity and maximise broad wellbeing outcomes.
- The cultural wellbeing assessment primarily highlights impacts relating to Māori and mana whenua, with no material impacts arising from the options assessed for other specific cultural interests. These cultural impacts on Māori and mana whenua proved hard to assess. While many options align with kaitiakitanga and Te Ao Māori values, meaningful evaluation requires direct engagement with Rūnanga and mana whenua. The social and

equity wellbeing assessments include and highlight broader impacts relating to issues of inclusion and equity across the full range of social, socio-economic and ethnic groups.

- A comprehensive range of tangible urban form initiatives is yet to be developed in a form that could be included in this assessment. This is an important area of council influence. For example, compact, transit-oriented settlement design could lock in ongoing emission reductions while delivering broad wellbeing benefits. At this stage, urban form influence is captured as one of a number of a broader cross sector initiatives and enablers.
- A significant number of these broader cross sector initiatives and enablers (referred to collectively as *enablers*) have been identified. Whilst vitally important when considering the implementation design of emission reduction initiatives, these enablers are not yet articulated in sufficiently concrete or tangible terms to assess as part of this project. However, these enablers comprise various levers and areas where councils can strategically influence reductions in GHG emissions.

Implications for next steps

The assessment provides a structured, transparent evidence base for stakeholder engagement. It highlights where councils can lead, where partnerships are essential, and where delivery design will determine outcomes. The spreadsheet tool allows ongoing analysis, helping decision-makers compare and prioritise options under different criteria and weightings. The enablers will be an important component of the next phase of work to design actions for the regional emissions reduction transition plan; but their assessment falls outside the scope of this piece of work.

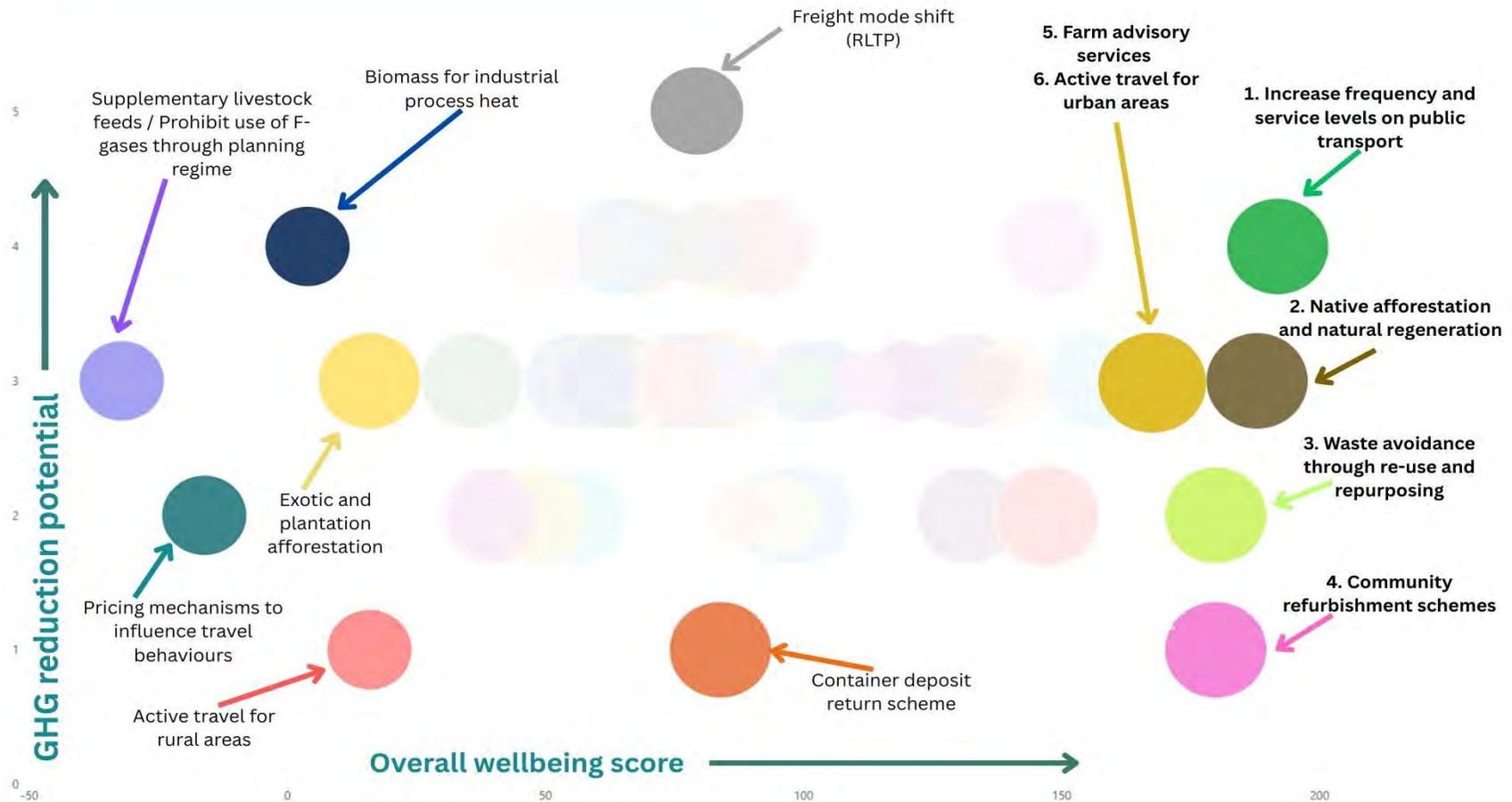
The next phase, stakeholder engagement, should focus on clarifying option scope, addressing identified gaps, embedding equity and cultural perspectives, and aligning options with enabling conditions. This will set the foundation for drafting concrete, implementable actions for inclusion in council long-term plans.

Summary graphic

The graphic below highlights the options which were ranked at the extreme ends of the assessment. Those on the right-hand side show the six highest ranking options for positive wellbeing impacts; the five on the left-hand side scored lowest for wellbeing impacts, with three having overall negative wellbeing scores. The options located towards the top of the chart are those assessed to have a higher emissions reduction potential; whilst those at the bottom were assessed as having lower emissions reduction potential. The size of the bubbles in this chart indicates the amount of time required to implement the option, with a larger bubble reflecting a shorter implementation time.

The bubbles that are lightly shaded and not labelled show the positions of all the other options assessed. A number of these are highlighted in section 3.2 of the report which explores outcomes and findings of the assessment.

In this chart, the size of bubbles indicates lead time to implement the option, with a larger bubble indicating a shorter implementation time.



Graphic showing all options and identifying those scoring highest and lowest for overall wellbeing and GHG emissions reduction potential. The higher the bubble, the greater the potential GHG reduction. Bubbles further to the right have higher overall wellbeing scores.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The overarching context for this project is a three-year emissions reduction programme of work that will result in a regional transition plan for Waitaha Canterbury. That work is being led by Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) (**Canterbury Regional Council**) on behalf of the Mayoral Forum and the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group (**CCWG**). The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (**CCPP**) was approved by the Mayoral Forum in August 2024. The CCWG is made up of climate-focused staff from each of Canterbury's councils and is responsible for driving the actions in the CCPP forward.

Tonkin + Taylor Ltd (T+T) was retained by the regional council for this project acting on behalf of all councils in the Canterbury region, which are working together as partners under the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

Action 2 of the CCPP is the focus of this project. Under CCPP Action 2, the partner councils agree *to work together across the region to build equitable, inclusive pathways, targets, and key actions to support New Zealand's commitments towards global greenhouse gas emissions reduction.*

1.2 Purpose

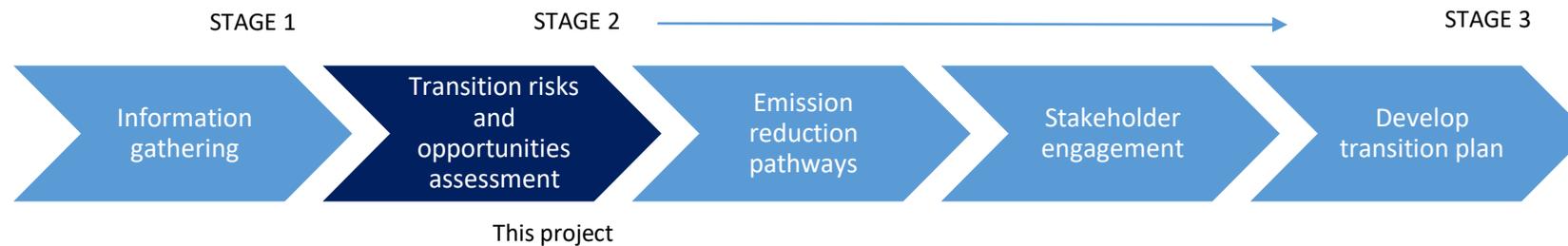
The main purpose of this project is to assess the social, cultural, environmental, equity and economic impacts (both positive and negative) of specific emissions reduction opportunities, or options, under consideration for Action 2 (**the options**). The specific aim of that assessment is to inform and enable communication about the potential impacts (or, risks and opportunities) of different options on people, businesses, and communities, if those options were implemented under Action 2.

The assessment is intended as an important input for stakeholder engagement sessions planned for October 2025. It will provide useful information for the development of a regional transition plan for Canterbury focused on decarbonisation goals. The assessment offers a supporting investment rationale for pursuing various different decarbonisation options by providing an assessment of risks and opportunities arising across the four wellbeings.

The initial list of options to be considered were presented in a detailed research report titled *Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Action 2: Emissions Reduction - Strategic Overview* document (**Strategic Overview**). This was part of the first stage of the regional transition plan work programme. In that document, the options were described as *opportunities*. We have chosen to use the word *options* to avoid confusion with the purpose of the project to assess *risks and opportunities*.

Whilst this project includes a high-level assessment of the decarbonisation potential of the emission reduction options, that aspect of the assessment is broad and indicative only. A more detailed analysis and assessment of decarbonisation options and emissions reduction planning has been commissioned as a separate piece of work for Canterbury Regional Council and is beyond the scope of this work.

The graphic below shows the three stages of the regional transition plan project and highlights where this project fits as the first part of the second stage.



1.3 This report

This report describes the approach and methodology adopted for the assessment and provides an overview of the findings and insights. More detailed findings of the assessment are set out comprehensively in a separate Excel spreadsheet (**assessment spreadsheet**) provided to Canterbury Regional Council as a separate document alongside this report, which presents a full range of specific information relating to the assessment of each option.

The assessment was undertaken using a semi-quantitative approach. This enables the detailed information and findings in the assessment spreadsheet to be reviewed and filtered by a range of different criteria, considering both decarbonisation aspects and impacts across the wellbeing areas. In this report we present the range of findings that we feel are most indicative of the assessment and relevant to the project purpose. However, the assessment spreadsheet provides a tool that can be used to explore a wider range of findings and perspectives arising from the assessment.

2 Assessment approach

2.1 Clarifying options to assess

The first step in the project was to analyse the initial list of options set out in the Strategic Overview. It was agreed with Canterbury Regional Council that the list needed further refinement to be capable of assessment. Some options were a set of multiple different options; some were not sufficiently concrete or tangible to assess; and others were deemed to be enabling actions or conditions (*enablers*) that presented ways in which councils might implement, incentivise or enable different options.

Some illustrative examples of options that were deemed too broad for assessment include:

- Agriculture, forestry and land-use - Promote use of Mātauranga Māori in the development of low-emissions solutions.

- Agriculture, forestry and land-use - Review Good Management Practice guidelines alongside industry and Crown Research Institutes/Public Research Organisations.
- Energy - improve availability of biomass and related alternatives.
- Industrial processes and product use - promote product stewardship and take-back schemes.

Some illustrative examples of options that were deemed to be *enablers* include:

- Funding and finance - leverage council investment priorities, levies and funding to support businesses and communities through the transition.
- Funding and finance – LGFA loans (low-emissions, energy efficient homes and buildings, supporting innovation and sustainable production in the primary industries and afforestation, and transport mode shift).
- Energy - greater investment in innovation (focusing on grid decarbonisation and energy efficiency).
- Transport - enable, advocate for and promote greater use of technology that supports reduced transport emissions (freight as well as public and private transport).
- Industrial processes and product use - consider how regulatory levers and greater sharing of information could be used to promote reduced emissions.

A final set of 53 options and 28 *enablers* were developed from the initial list. This final list of options was confirmed by Canterbury Regional Council and it was agreed that only the options would be assessed, with the enablers being insufficiently concrete or tangible for meaningful assessment. The 53 options were clustered into the five categories established in the Strategic Overview:

- Agriculture, forestry and other land use
- Energy
- Transport
- Waste
- Industrial process and produce use

Many of the enablers were initially categorised as *cross sector* options. Other enablers were identified from within the categories of options above. We have re-categorised the enablers into eight categories as set out below (see **Appendix E** for the full list of enablers).

- Advocacy to government and other stakeholders.
- Partnerships and collaboration.
- Planning, consenting and urban form.

- Funding and finance.
- Data, information and skills.
- Technology and innovation.
- Energy transition support.
- Waste and circular economy.
- Developing the assessment framework.

The assessment framework was developed to address six thematic areas:

- Decarbonisation – Greenhouse Gas (**GHG**) reduction.
- Environmental wellbeing.
- Social wellbeing.
- Cultural wellbeing.
- Equity wellbeing.
- Economic wellbeing.

Canterbury Regional Council requested the equity wellbeing area to be a specific focus of the assessment due to the importance of this issue in Action 2, which explicitly requires an *equitable* and *inclusive* decarbonisation approach.

The specific criteria assessed under each theme (**assessment criteria**) are set out in the graphic below.

GHG reduction	Environmental	Social	Cultural	Equity	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of potential GHG reduction • Technical feasibility of option • Likelihood of adoption • Time to material impact • Lead time to implement • Measurability of potential GHG reduction • Level of council influence • Alignment with existing policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity protection / risk • Habitat disruption and restoration • Climate resilience of ecosystems • Resource use (land, water, minerals) • Air and water quality • Non-GHG polluting emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Safety • Accessibility to services • Mobility • Political voice and democratic participation • Community cohesion and social connection • Cost of living and energy affordability • Opportunities for work and income • Disruption or benefit to daily life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection or enhancement of mātauranga Māori • Inclusion in planning and decision-making • Access to culturally important sites, practices or landscapes • Indigenous values alignment • Risk of cultural loss or erosion • Intergenerational knowledge or community continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of costs, benefits and choice burdens • Intergenerational fairness • Barriers to participation • Risk of reinforcing disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment required and capital access • Economic risk or opportunity for affected industries • Job creation or loss • Local vs national value chain impact • Innovation or diversification benefits • Long-term economic returns vs short-term costs

The assessment criteria for GHG reduction were developed and refined by reviewing existing examples of decarbonisation action plans for Auckland City Council, Wellington City Council and Christchurch City Council, and various overseas examples. The criteria for the wellbeing themes were developed with reference to a range of science-based sustainability frameworks including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Future-Fit Business Benchmark, Planetary Boundaries and Doughnut Economics. The cultural criteria were developed with reference to the foundational principles underpinning Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Participation, Protection and Partnership and also left sufficiently wide to include assessment of impacts to non-Māori cultural and heritage interests.

The 39 assessment criteria were presented to Canterbury Regional Council and agreed as an appropriate basis for the assessment framework. We then developed a spreadsheet-based assessment framework using those criteria, applying a scoring methodology for each of the criteria.

The scoring criteria for the GHG reduction assessment was qualitative, ranking each of the criteria on an estimated basis using existing knowledge and internal peer review. The scope of this project does not extend to more detailed and accurate evaluation of decarbonisation potential; but is the focus of a separate and more specific emissions reduction planning project.

The GHG reduction assessment scoring approach is set out in the graphic below.

Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact	Lead time to implement	Level of council influence	Alignment with existing policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant • High • Moderate • Low • Very low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Medium • Low • Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Medium • Low • Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short (1-3 years) • Medium (3 – 10 years) • Long (10+ years) • Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short (1-3 years) • Medium (3 – 10 years) • Long (10+ years) • Unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Medium • Low • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Partial • Weak • N/A

The wellbeing themes applied a semi-quantitative assessment for each option against each of the agreed assessment criteria. This assessment weighed up the overall risks and opportunities identified for each of the criteria assessed to provide an overall score for the option in each theme. The scoring methodology for the wellbeing themes was developed from the Global Reporting Initiative Standards GRI 3: 2021 methodology for assessing the materiality of sustainability topics. This approach was chosen as a proven methodology that is widely used in New Zealand and globally. Using this approach involves assessing potential impacts against a combination of:

- Scale – the severity of negative impacts or degree of benefit from positive impacts.
- Scope – the extent of the impact (negative or positive). For example, the number of people, groups, industries or communities impacted; or the geographical extent of impact – local, regional, national or universal.

The complete set of scoring methodologies is set out in a separate tab in the assessment spreadsheet.

An example of the assessment scoring approach for the wellbeing theme areas is set out below. For each wellbeing area the scale scoring criteria remain the same, from -5 to +5. For scope scoring, the example below reflects the social and cultural wellbeing criteria. The scoring range, from 1 – 5, remains the same for other wellbeing areas; but the criteria is adjusted to suit the nature of the theme area being evaluated.

Scale of impact		Scope of impact	
-5	Very high – Negative impact is profound	5	Universal – Impacts global / national communities
-4	High – Negative impact is significant	4	Extensive – impacts entire regions
-3	Medium – Negative impact is considerable	3	Broad – impacts multiple communities
-2	Low – Negative impact is noticeable	2	Moderate – impacts a few communities
-1	Very low – Negative impact is negligible	1	Minimal – Impacts isolated individuals
0	Neutral – No impact		
+1	Very low – Positive impact is negligible		
+2	Low – Positive impact is noticeable		
+3	Medium – Positive impact is considerable		
+4	High – Positive impact is significant		
+5	Very high – Positive impact is profound		

Using this approach, the assessment framework was tested using five options across five different option categories. These initial assessments were presented to Canterbury Regional Council and the approach was approved. It was clarified at this review stage that the scoring approach for both decarbonisation criteria and across the wellbeing assessment necessarily involved a degree of estimation, balancing a variety of risks and opportunities to reach the final assessment and scores for each option. Accompanying commentary in the assessment provides a rationale for the scoring.

What became clear quickly during the assessment was that the actual nature and extent of risks and opportunities across the wellbeings ultimately depending on how the option was implemented. For example, the implementation of an option might be specifically designed to mitigate environmental impacts, or engage mana whenua as partners at an early stage. If that were the case, environmental and cultural wellbeing impacts would be increased.

The review at this stage confirmed that the scoring approach was a useful way to compare different options, on the basis of a consistent assessment approach; and that – whilst a range of assumptions about how options might be implemented had to be implied – the assessment approach was identifying all the relevant issues to be considered under each wellbeing theme.

2.2 Assessment methodology

The initial assessment involved a total of 53 options against 39 criteria. However, by the end of the project, the number of options had increased to 57. Two of the 53 options were combined as a result of the assessment, reducing the initial list to 52; and a further five new options were subsequently added during the CCWG review, giving a total of 57 options. 32 source documents were identified as particularly relevant to the assessment. These comprised documents referred to in the Strategic Overview, documents shared by Canterbury Regional Council and other recently released reports. A full list of these source documents is set out in **Appendix A**.

Given the limited budget to carry out the assessment, and the breadth of criteria to be assessed, T+T developed an in-house AI based Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) using ChatGPT to streamline the process. A set of tailored prompts were developed to ensure a consistent approach for assessing each option and applying the scoring methodology. The set of prompts used are set out in **Appendix B**. In addition to the source documents, the GPT was able to access relevant publicly available information from the internet. The assessment spreadsheet records which source information the GPT used for each aspect of the assessment.

The assessment framework and relevant source documents were uploaded to the GPT and initial assessments were used to train the model. This included the five initial options assessed which were reviewed and approved by Canterbury Regional Council before completing assessment of the remaining options.

In addition, T+T developed a closed GPT using the same prompts. This GPT could only access the 32 source documents and did not have access to wider information from the internet. This effectively ensured a 'source of truth' to ensure the GPTs with access to wider information were not 'hallucinating' or making up answers.

As each option was processed by the open GPTs, answers were reviewed by the T+T team as they were transferred into the assessment framework. That review involved:

- Checking answers and reviewing allocated scores based on T+T's professional sustainability expertise and knowledge, as well as their understanding of the local Canterbury context.
- Further research where required to test and check answers.
- Checking answers against the closed GPT 'source of truth' for comparability.

2.2.1 Review with subject matter experts

After completing the assessment of all the options, the T+T team had internal working sessions with subject matter experts in decarbonisation, emissions reduction planning, and Te Ao Māori and tikanga Māori. These sessions focused on a review of decarbonisation, cultural wellbeing and equity wellbeing criteria.

As a result of the review, some minor adjustments were made to the assessment of decarbonisation criteria scoring to better reflect the New Zealand and Canterbury context. Some scores within the cultural wellbeing theme were also adjusted, particularly to reflect the positive cultural impact of decarbonisation initiatives being in general alignment with Te Ao Māori principle of kaitiakitanga and Māori values reflecting care for people and the environment. It was noted by T+T's internal subject matter expert that local engagement with relevant Rūnanga and mana whenua would be required to achieve a more accurate assessment of each option to reflect particular local context and cultural values.

Following the review with T+T subject matter experts, the complete assessment was reviewed by CCWG subject matter experts in a workshop held at Canterbury Regional Council on 15th August 2025. The workshop broke into three separate groups to review different aspects of the assessment as follows:

- Richard Mabon (Ashburton District Council) and Angie Scott (Canterbury Regional Council) reviewed all options and content in the Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use and Waste categories.
- Tammy Phillips (Canterbury Regional Council) and Joe Gentilcore (Selwyn District Council) reviewed all options and content in the Energy and Industrial Processes and Product Use categories.
- Nicole Lynds (Canterbury Regional Council) and Tony Moore (Christchurch City Council) reviewed all options and content in the Transport category.

It wasn't possible to complete the entire review during the time allocated for the workshop. The same workshop groups reconvened to complete the review and sent through the revised scores along with additional comments to amend commentary in the assessment spreadsheet.

Developing the final list of options in the assessment spreadsheet

During the review of the Transport options, an additional five options were identified and scored across all criteria except under the cultural wellbeing theme. T+T used the same GPT to complete the cultural wellbeing assessment scoring of those five new options. However, being outside the scope of the project work and budget, commentary to explain the scoring rationale, barriers, assumptions, risks and other implications of these five additional options has not been generated. The commentary sections for those five options remain blank in the assessment spreadsheet.

Given that the five additional options have been scored consistently with all other options, they are included in the final assessment findings.

As a result of the CCWG review of options in the Waste category, it was agreed that two options effectively covered the same decarbonisation initiative relating to using anaerobic digesters to recover energy from organic waste. It was decided to combine these options into one.

As a result of the review process, therefore, the final completed assessment includes a total of 57 options.

2.3 Assessment challenges and limitations

Scope and certainty of options: Despite reframing the initial list of options from the Strategic Overview, some are still reasonably broad as regards exactly how they might be designed and implemented as concrete initiatives. That could only be avoided by fully scoping the options into implementable initiatives, which was beyond the scope of this project. The implications of this are twofold:

- The emissions reduction impact of options may be higher or lower depending on the final scope. For example, if the agricultural option relating to *Promote incorporation of GHG reductions into Good Management Practice guidelines and enforce through consent condition* covers fuel, energy and fertilizer use on farms it is likely to have a more significant impact on emissions reduction. As another example, the emissions reduction impact of the option relating to *Support waste avoidance with re-use and repurposing of resources* will depend upon the range of materials covered by that initiative.
- Risks and opportunities arising under all the wellbeing themes will ultimately be determined by the way initiatives are designed and implemented. For example, in terms of cultural wellbeing, the GPT assumed that business as usual practices generally apply a sub-optimal approach to co-design and full participation with Rūnanga and mana whenua stakeholders. However, if initiatives are specifically designed to maximise the potential for working in partnership with those stakeholders, the cultural wellbeing scores are likely to be higher. By the same token, many of the initiatives could be designed in ways that maximise environmental, social or economic benefits. For the purposes of the assessment, the scoring approach adopted has assumed a 'business as usual' approach – in so far as that could be estimated.

Scoring approach: Risks and opportunities arising under the wellbeing areas were assessed by their scale and scope. These assessments are necessarily estimates, rather than a scientifically defensible quantification. The estimations are supported and explained by commentary in the assessment spreadsheet and have been reviewed by subject matter experts, as set out above. This approach provides a starting point for comparison using a consistent semi-quantitative assessment approach.

Stakeholder perspectives: Whilst a variety of stakeholders may subjectively have different views about the significance of risks and opportunities for wellbeing themes; the assessment has identified a comprehensive range of relevant issues. The next step of work involves weighing and assessing those issues as part of the stakeholder engagement phase and final decision-making process about which options to include in the regional transition plan.

3 Outcomes and findings

3.1 Outcomes

The assessment has delivered an analysis of emissions reduction potential and wellbeing risks and opportunities with accompanying commentary for 52 options, and a semi-quantitative scored assessment for all 57 options (full commentary was not possible for the five new options added during the CCWG review, as explained above). This is all contained in the assessment spreadsheet which offers an ongoing tool that can be used for the subsequent phases of work to develop a regional transition plan. As an analytical tool, the spreadsheet provides:

- A means of filtering and reviewing all options based on:
 - Scale of potential GHG reduction
 - Technical feasibility
 - Likelihood of adoption

- Lead time to implement
 - Time to material emissions reduction impact
 - Measurability of potential GHG reduction
 - Level of council influence
 - Alignment with existing policies
 - Environmental wellbeing
 - Social wellbeing
 - Cultural wellbeing
 - Equity wellbeing
 - Economic wellbeing
- The ability to list all options in ranked order of their overall wellbeing risk and opportunity scores.
 - The ability to adjust the weighting applied to one or more of the wellbeing themes.

3.2 Findings

The full list of all 57 options is presented in two different ways in **Appendix C** and **Appendix D**. These show:

- **Appendix C** set out the options in order of their total wellbeing risk and opportunity assessment scores, from the option with the highest overall wellbeing impacts to the option with the lowest overall wellbeing score.
- **Appendix D** sets out the options in order of high to low emissions reduction potential. Each group is set out from highest to lowest overall wellbeing score.

Below, we present a range of findings using specific filters agreed with Canterbury Regional Council for this report. Against each one, we offer short commentary to provide additional context. The filters applied cover:

3.2.1 - Highest overall wellbeing score.

3.2.2 - High emissions reduction potential / High council influence / Overall wellbeing score.

3.2.3 - High emissions reduction potential / Low council influence / Overall wellbeing score.

3.2.4 - High emissions reduction potential / High positive equity impact / Overall wellbeing score.

3.2.5 - High emissions reduction potential / High positive economic impact / Overall wellbeing score.

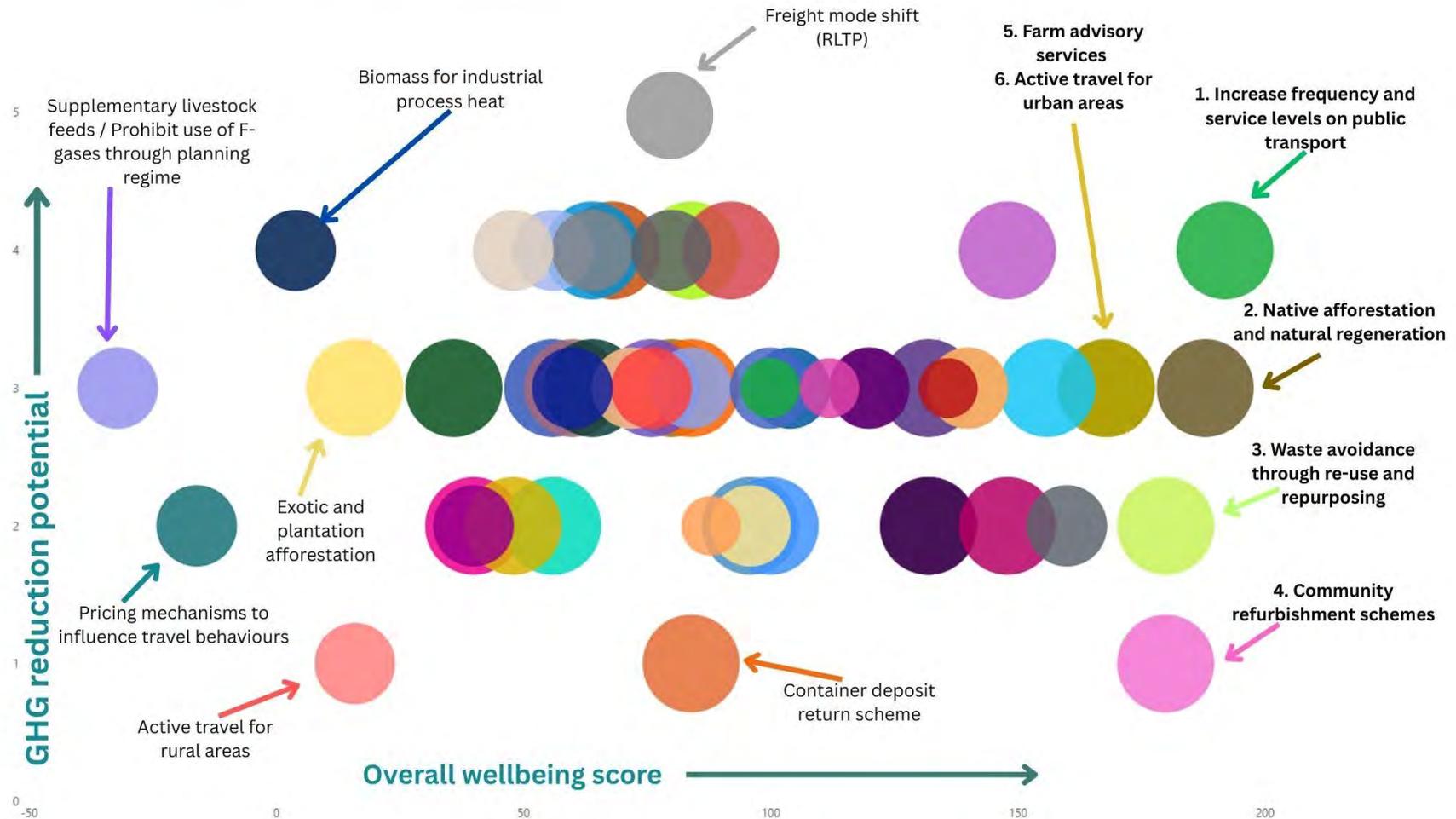
3.2.6 - High emissions reduction potential / Short-term emissions reduction impact / Overall wellbeing score.

3.2.1 Highest overall wellbeing score

Opportunity Attributes										Weightings (0-1)						Final results	
										1	1	1	1	1	500		
Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility of opportunity	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Measurability of potential GHG reduction	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Alignment of initiative with existing policies	Env	Social	Cultural	Equity	Econ	Total	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Increase frequency, reliability, service levels and customer experience on public transport to increase patronage	High	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	High	Strong	24	32	24	64	48	192	38.4%	1
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support native afforestation and natural regeneration across the region, including restoring wetlands and indigenous biodiversity	Moderate	Medium	Medium	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	High	Strong	64	24	60	24	16	188	37.6%	2
Waste	Support waste avoidance with re-use and repurposing of resources (e.g. through for-purpose organisations)	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	Medium	Strong	48	36	24	36	36	180	36.0%	3
Waste	Partner with small enterprises to establish community refurbishment schemes	Very low	High	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Unknown	Medium	Strong	36	48	24	48	24	180	36.0%	3
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote use of farm advisory services	Moderate	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	High	Strong	36	24	24	36	48	168	33.6%	5
Transport	Promote active travel (cycling, scootering and walking) for urban areas	Moderate	High	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	Medium	Strong	32	40	24	24	48	168	33.6%	5

These options are identified on the right-hand side of the graphic below, numbered 1 to 6. The graphic showing all options assessed and, for reference, it also highlights the options with the lowest overall wellbeing scores, as well as those with the highest and lowest assessed emissions reduction potential.

In this chart, the size of bubbles indicates lead time to implement the option, with a larger bubble indicating a shorter implementation time.



Graphic showing all options and identifying those scoring highest and lowest for overall wellbeing and GHG emissions reduction potential.

Observations

- The six highest scoring options for wellbeing risks and opportunities are all implementable in the short term, with all but one expected to yield emission reductions in the medium term. For three options, councils have a high level of influence and estimated carbon reductions are high or medium. These characteristics suggest the options should be explored further with stakeholders as options with strong merits. It should be noted, however, that the two waste avoidance initiatives (ranking 3rd and 4th have 'low' and 'very low' anticipated emissions reduction potential respectively.
- *Increase frequency and service levels on public transport*: This initiative ranks highest due to particularly high equity benefits and high economic benefits. It is also an option where councils have high influence. Emissions reduction potential is high, though uptake depends on wider behaviour change and supporting infrastructure. The option is technically feasible but requires sustained investment and coordination. Benefits extend beyond emissions, improving accessibility, cost of living, and social cohesion.
- *Native afforestation and natural regeneration*: This option scores strongly on environmental and cultural wellbeing, reflecting biodiversity protection, water quality, and alignment with mātauranga Māori. GHG reduction potential is moderate, but impacts are long-term, with benefits evident only after a decade or more. Councils have significant influence through planning and partnerships, but financing and land availability are dependencies. Engagement with mana whenua and rural communities will be critical for equity.
- *Community refurbishment schemes*: Though GHG reduction potential is very low, this initiative scores highly on social and equity outcomes, benefiting affordability, local enterprise, and community connection. Highly feasible and quick to implement, but emissions impacts are hard to measure. This option shows how "low-carbon" actions can still enable progress by building capability and reducing barriers, especially for lower-income households.
- *Support organisations enabling re-use and repurposing of resources*: This initiative has low direct emissions reduction potential (depending on materials included in any scheme) but aligns with a circular economy approach and produces clear social and equity benefits. Measurability is limited, with outcomes reliant on assumptions and indirect impacts. Councils' influence is moderate, via funding, partnerships, and policy. Despite modest GHG reductions, it can shift norms towards resource efficiency and waste minimisation.
- *Farm advisory services*: Farm-level advisory services have moderate emissions reduction potential, mainly by supporting adoption of proven practices. Feasibility is reasonable, though dependent on farmers' willingness and capacity. Councils have high influence, especially if linked to planning, consenting, and funding. Environmental and economic outcomes are positive, but equity considerations are needed to avoid disadvantaging smaller or less-resourced farms.
- *Active travel for urban areas*: Active travel has strong co-benefits for health, mobility, and cost of living. Emissions reduction potential is moderate, and the initiative is technically feasible and aligned with councils' influence on infrastructure and planning. Uptake depends on urban form and supporting infrastructure, highlighting the need to integrate with land-use planning. Equity benefits are positive, but design must ensure safe and accessible infrastructure across communities.

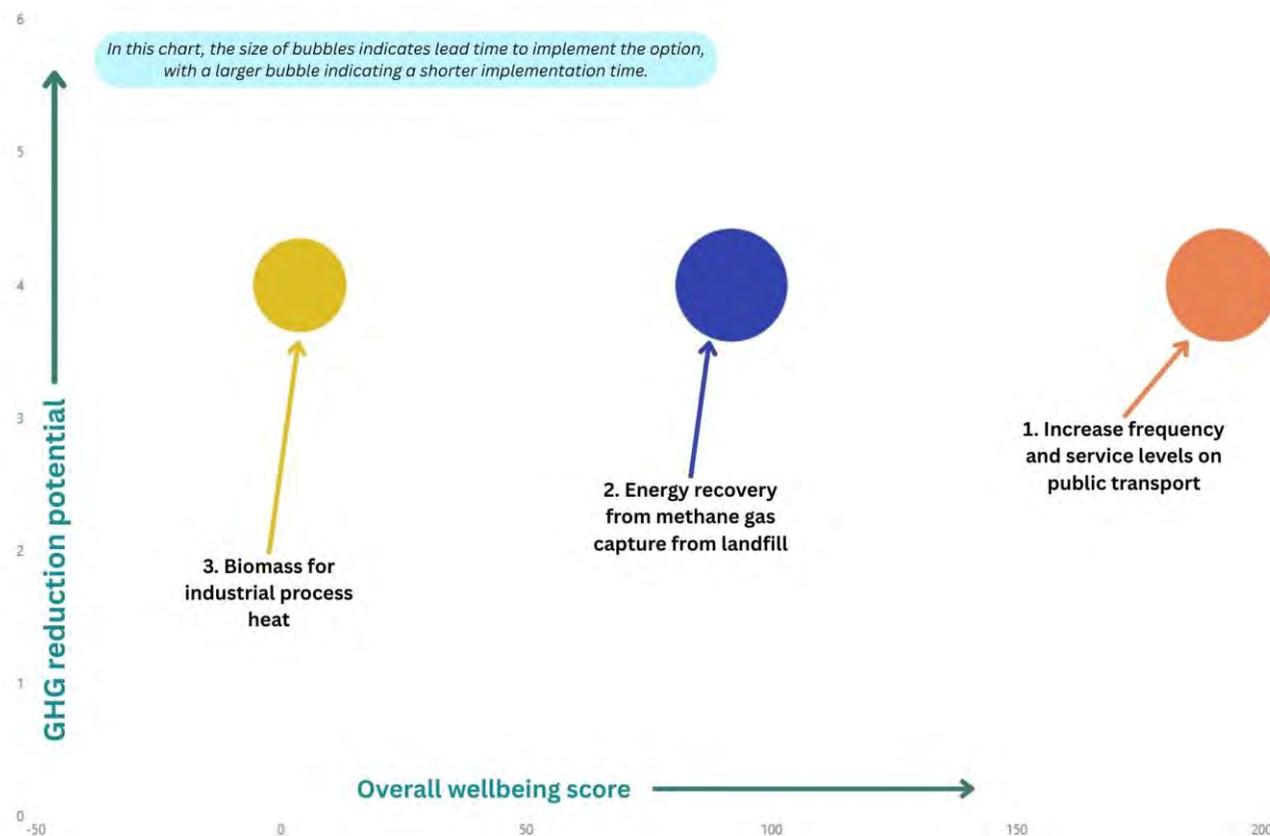
3.2.2 High emissions reduction potential / High council influence / Overall wellbeing score

Opportunity Attributes										Weightings (0-1)						Final results	
										1	1	1	1	1	500		
Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility of opportunity	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Measurability of potential GHG reduction	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Alignment of initiative with existing policies	Env	Social	Cultural	Equity	Econ	Total	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Increase frequency, reliability, service levels and customer experience on public transport to increase patronage	High	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	High	Strong	24	32	24	64	48	192	38.4%	1
Waste	Energy recovery from methane gas capture from landfill	High	High	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	High	Strong	32	24	12	8	16	92	18.4%	26
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of biomass for industrial process heat	High	Medium	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	High	Strong	-32	-12	12	0	36	4	0.8%	54

Observations

- Increasing the frequency, service levels and customer experience on public transport has high emissions reduction potential, is an area where local government has significant control and influence; and is the highest scoring option in terms of positive wellbeing impacts. This option:
 - Has the highest positive equity score of all options.
 - Has the second highest positive economic score.
 - Can be implemented reasonably quickly but will take some time to achieve emissions reduction objectives because of the time lag in building patronage numbers.
- Energy recovery from methane gas capture at landfills is a high emissions reduction solution that is proven and can be implemented reasonably quickly. The lower overall wellbeing score for this initiative is dragged down by high up-front capital costs and the potential for increasing inequity. The capital costs may translate into higher rates or gate fees, affecting lower-income households. Smaller councils may also, arguably, struggle to fund high-performance gas capture systems, thereby missing out on the potential benefits.

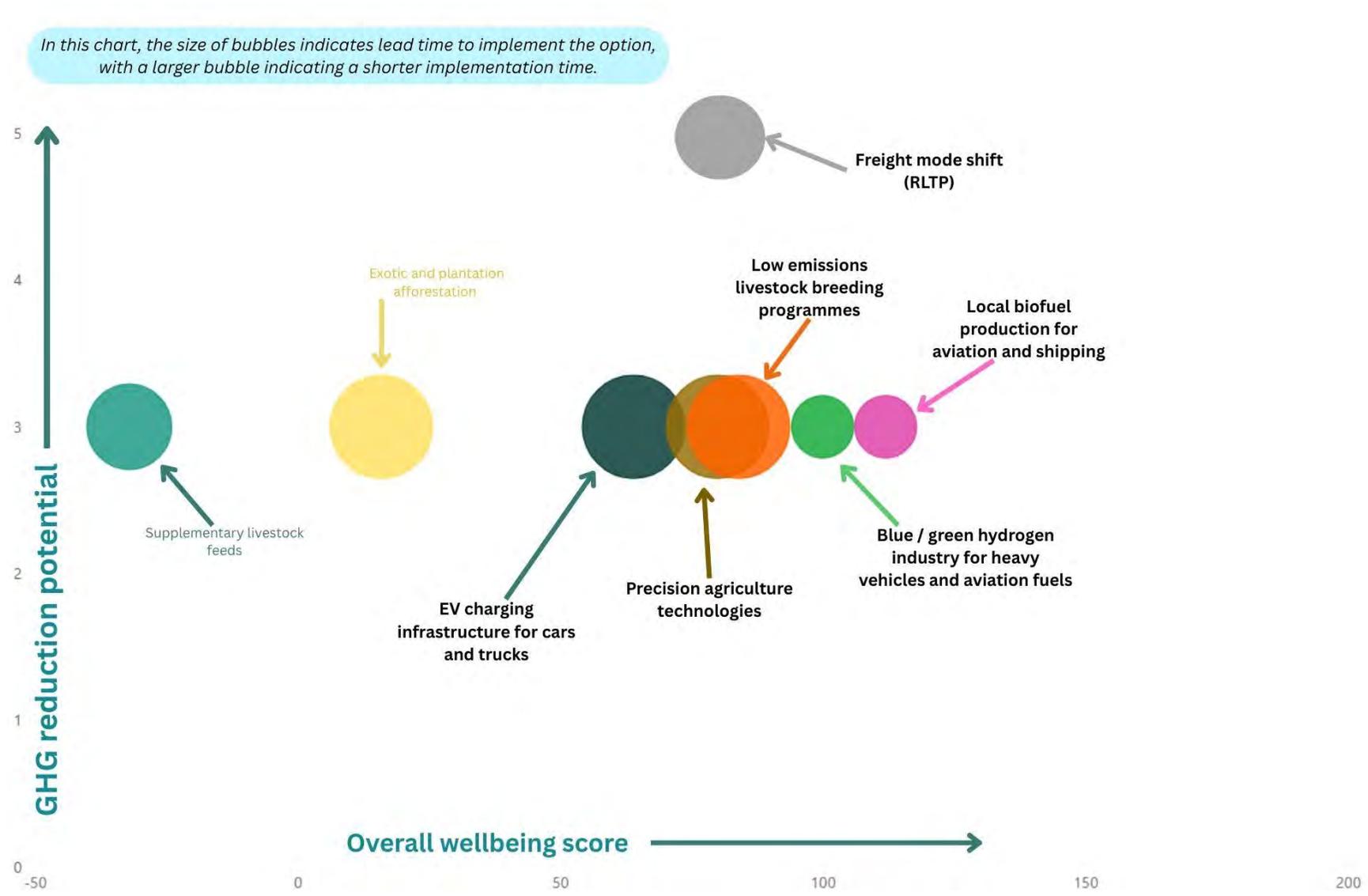
- Facilitating an increased use of biomass for industrial process heat is one of the lowest scoring options in terms of overall wellbeing impacts, despite a reasonably positive economic wellbeing score. Securing feedstock for biomass facilities presents environmental risks for biodiversity and habitat protection and, at scale, can become an intensive land-use that also affects water availability. The option also presents a slightly negative social wellbeing impact as a result of air quality risks. This option also has a longer implementation lead time, so offers less immediate carbon emission reductions; and, whilst council influence is high in terms of consenting levers under National Environmental Standards, it is reliant on private sector investment for non-council owned assets.



Graphic showing the three options having a high GHG reduction potential and a high level of council influence; with their comparative wellbeing ranking.

3.2.3 High emissions reduction potential / Low council influence / Overall wellbeing score

Opportunity Attributes										Weightings (0-1)						Final results	
										1	1	1	1	1	500		
Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility of opportunity	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Measurability of potential GHG reduction	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Alignment of initiative with existing policies	Env	Social	Cultural	Equity	Econ	Total	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Promote and support the Regional Transport Committee's work to enable freight mode shift to shipping and rail (see RLTP for initiatives)	Significant	Medium	Medium	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	Low	Strong	32	24	16	-16	24	80	16.0%	32
Transport	Enable the local bioenergy sector to provide second generation biofuels for aviation and shipping (e.g., Sustainable)	Moderate	Low	Medium	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Medium	Low	Partial	36	16	8	16	36	112	22.4%	19
Transport	Support a blue / green hydrogen industry to provide fuels for heavy vehicles and aviation	Moderate	Low	Low	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	High	Low	Partial	32	24	8	12	24	100	20.0%	21
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote low-emissions livestock breeding programmes	Moderate	High	Medium	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	Low	Partial	32	16	12	-24	48	84	16.8%	28
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote precision agriculture technologies	Moderate	Medium	Medium	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	Low	Strong	36	24	0	-16	36	80	16.0%	32
Transport	Support and encourage installation of EV charging infrastructure for cars and trucks through the region	Moderate	High	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	Low	Strong	24	24	16	-24	24	64	12.8%	39
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support exotic and plantation afforestation	Moderate	High	High	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	Low	Partial	-24	12	12	0	16	16	3.2%	52
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote supplementary livestock feeds that lower emissions	Moderate	Medium	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	Low	Partial	-16	4	-16	-16	12	-32	-6.4%	56



Graphic showing the options where councils have a low level of influence positioned by their emissions reduction potential and overall wellbeing score.

Observations

- Canterbury Regional Council is interested in understanding options where there is low council influence and high emission reduction potential because implementing those options will rely much more on effective stakeholder engagement and activation. In the category of 'low council influence', there is only one option with 'significant' emissions reduction potential and none which were assessed as having 'high' GHG emissions reduction potential. As a result, we have added those options with a 'moderate' level of GHG emissions reduction.
- All options in this selection, which will require specific attention to stakeholder engagement, fall within the Transport and Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use categories.
- Enabling freight mode shift to ship and rail transport was the only option of all 57 assessed as having a 'significant' emissions reduction potential. This is a long-term initiative, with a moderate lead time to implement, and will take a significant time to achieve material emissions reduction impact. It is highly reliant on non-council stakeholders and investment, although Lyttelton Port is owned by Christchurch City Council and Timaru Port is partly owned by Timaru District Council – so there may be limited potential for council influence. Freight mode shift policies may also be challenged by road freight industry bodies and companies which have significant sunk investment costs in the current vehicle fleet.
- The two options with the higher wellbeing impacts: *Local biofuel production for aviation and shipping* and *Hydrogen fuels for heavy vehicles and aviation* are both long-term plays, with an estimated implementation period of 10+ years. They are also initiatives that will take a considerable amount of time to have a material emissions reduction impact and have a low current technical feasibility.
- The 3rd, 4th and 5th options in this selection have negative equity wellbeing scores. The required investment in precision agriculture technologies is likely to favour larger and well-capitalised farms, which will likely reinforce structural gaps in productivity and profitability. Similarly, up-front costs to participate in low-emissions livestock breeding programmes are likely to favour larger, well-capitalised farms giving them an additional competitive advantage. EV charging infrastructure also favours those with the resources to buy an EV, who then enjoy the reduced costs of ownership. That said, these initial EV purchasers will support a second-hand market which increases accessibility to more affordable EVs for others over time. However, there is also an argument that more effective public transport could actually reduce the need for private vehicle ownership of all types and is, from a systemic perspective, better aligned with a genuinely sustainable future.
- Despite economic benefits and drivers associated with the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), exotic and plantation forestry scores poorly on the basis of negative environmental impacts, with specific risks for native biodiversity, habitat and water catchment impacts for an activity that could involve significant amounts of land-use. Forestry also poses broader risks if not well managed, contributing to increased pests and risks from post-harvest slash during significant rainfall events.
- Supplementary livestock feeds can present environmental risks, depending on how and where they are produced. There are also issues with cultural values alignment if synthetic feed products conflict with natural systems and food sovereignty values; and equity risks where costs or farming practices make the use of supplementary feeds impossible or impractical.
- Of this selection, only *Support exotic and plantation afforestation* has a high likelihood of adoption; and only three options are rated as 'high' for current technical feasibility. This suggests that these three would have a higher level of interest with relevant stakeholders:

- Promote low-emissions livestock breeding programmes
- Support and encourage installation of EV charging infrastructure for cars and trucks through the region
- Exotic and plantation afforestation

3.2.4 High emissions reduction potential / High positive equity impact / Overall wellbeing score

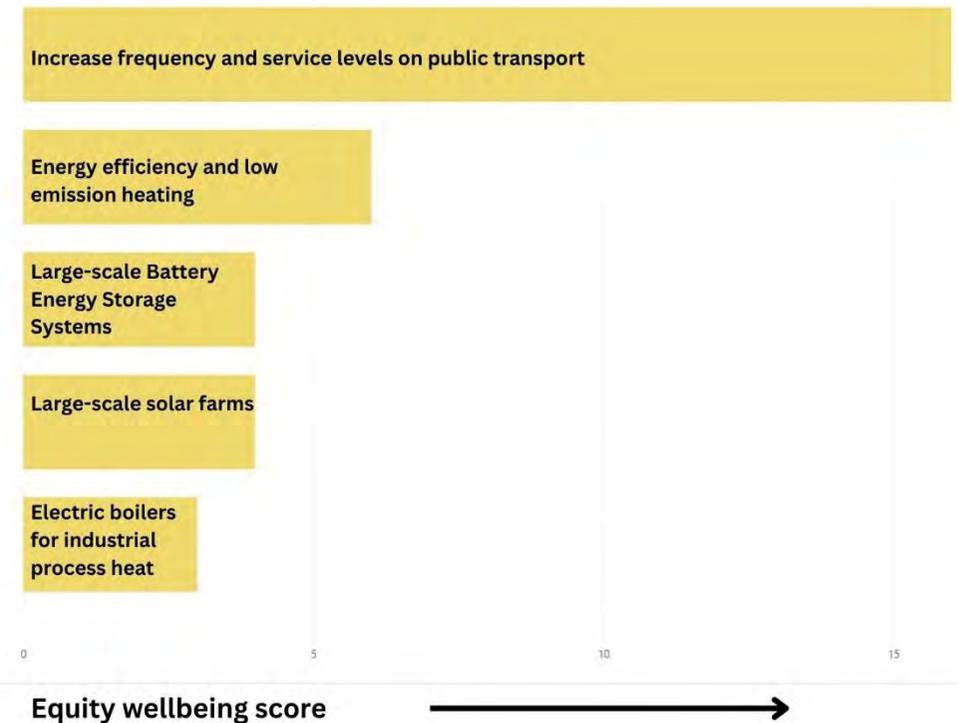
Opportunity Attributes										Weightings (0-1)						Final results	
										1	1	1	1	1	500		
Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility of opportunity	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Measurability of potential GHG reduction	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Alignment of initiative with existing policies	Env	Social	Cultural	Equity	Econ	Total	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Increase frequency, reliability, service levels and customer experience on public transport to increase patronage	High	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	High	Strong	24	32	24	64	48	192	38.4%	1
Energy	Partner collectively and / or with EECA to increase investment in energy efficiency and low emission heating sources in houses, commercial and industrial buildings.	High	High	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	Medium	Strong	36	48	24	24	16	148	29.6%	9
Energy	Support development of large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems	High	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	Medium	Strong	-8	12	0	16	64	84	16.8%	28
Energy	Support development of large-scale solar farms	High	High	High	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	Medium	Strong	-8	12	12	16	48	80	16.0%	32
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of electric boilers for industrial process heat	High	High	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	Medium	Strong	24	16	8	12	8	68	13.6%	38



Graphic showing the options with a high emissions reduction potential and comparative wellbeing scores (numbered 1 - 5). The size of the bubbles indicates equity wellbeing ranking, with larger bubbles indicating a higher level of equity wellbeing. Those with lower equity and overall wellbeing scores are also identified for reference.

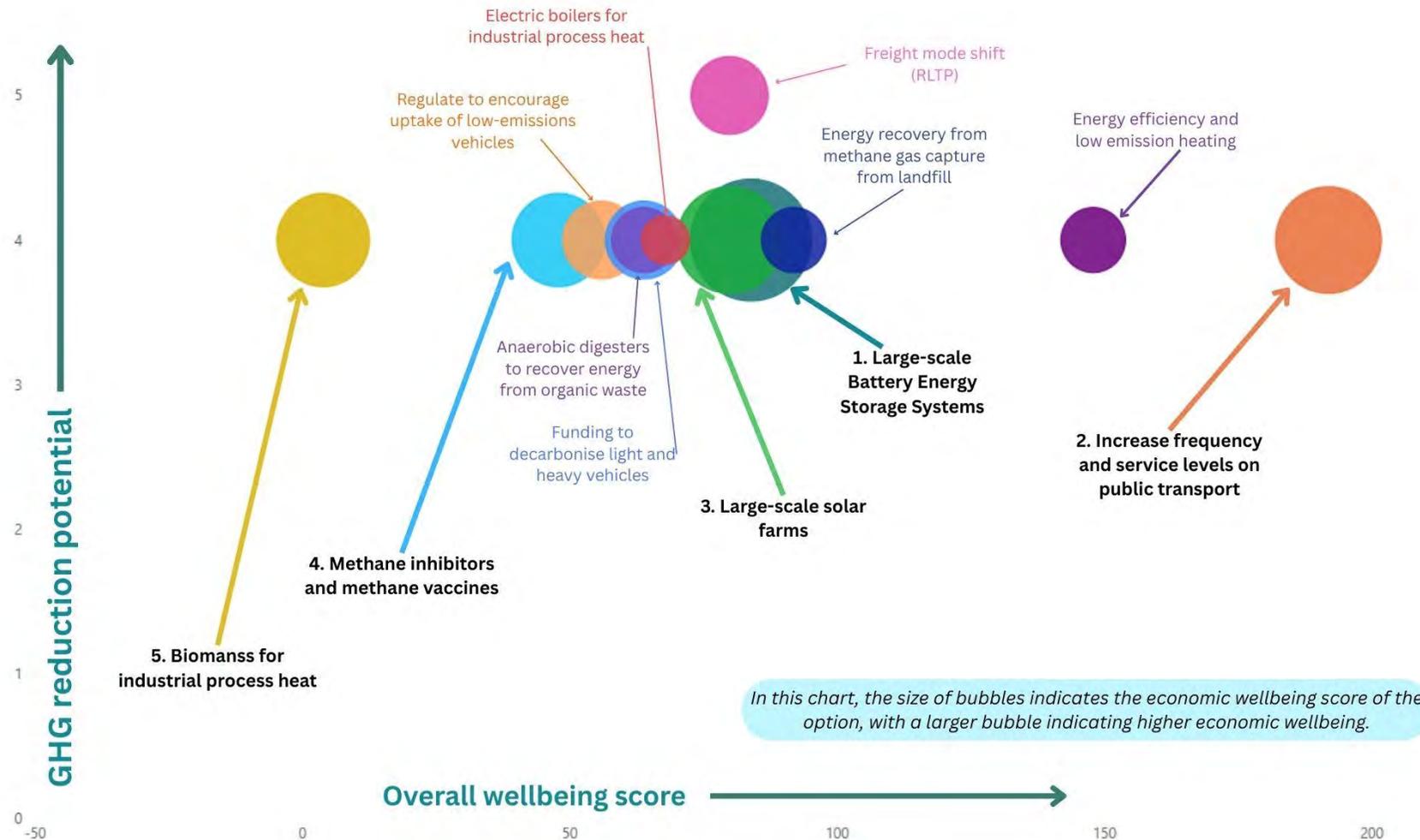
Observations

- Increasing frequency, service levels and customer experience on public transport has both high emissions reduction potential and ranks highest overall for wellbeing outcomes. It has the highest equity wellbeing score of all options, by some margin. Whilst this initiative can be implemented in the short-term, the decarbonisation impact is likely to take some time to materialise and is dependent on changing citizen behaviour.
- Supporting energy efficiency and low-emission heating through EECA funding is likely to support lower income households to both reduce emissions and improve health outcomes. This option could help overcome barriers for those in rental accommodation or who cannot access bank finance through targeted subsidies and financial support.
- Supporting large-scale battery energy storage systems (**BESS**) and solar farms can improve energy resilience for communities and provide storage to support wind and solar energy projects. This option also provides strong economic wellbeing benefits, despite high upfront capital costs. As battery costs decline and new markets for battery storage and virtual power plants emerge, financial returns are increasingly attractive. Battery storage also supports the deployment of more local solar, both grid-scale and roof-top, which is the lowest cost energy source.



3.2.5 High emissions reduction potential / High positive economic impact / Overall wellbeing score

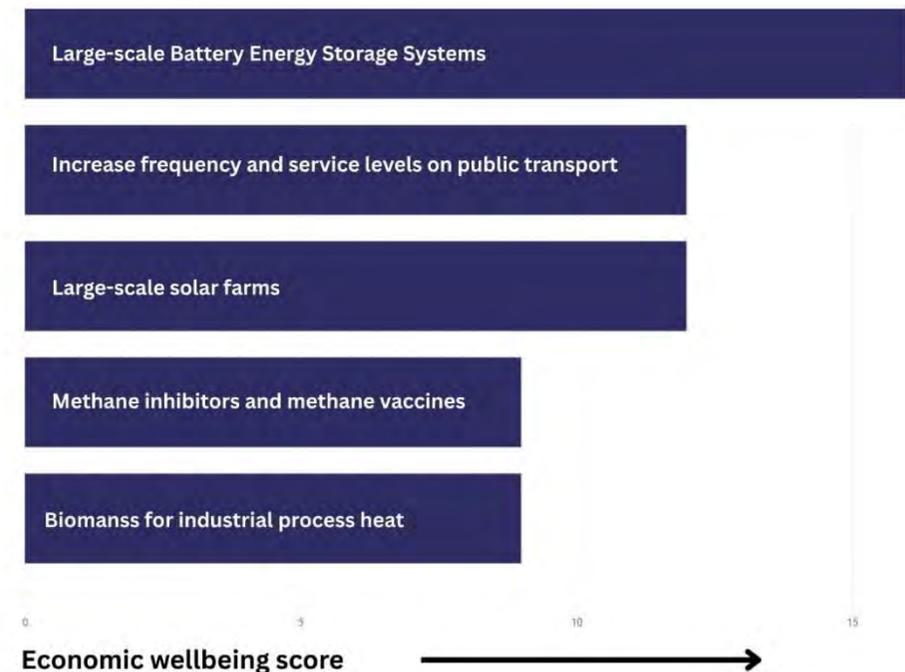
Opportunity Attributes										Weightings (0-1)						Final results	
										1	1	1	1	1	500		
Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility of opportunity	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Measurability of potential GHG reduction	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Alignment of initiative with existing policies	Env	Social	Cultural	Equity	Econ	Total	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Support development of large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems	High	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	Medium	Strong	-8	12	0	16	64	84	16.8%	28
Transport	Increase frequency, reliability, service levels and customer experience on public transport to increase patronage	High	Medium	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	High	Strong	24	32	24	64	48	192	38.4%	1
Energy	Support development of large-scale solar farms	High	High	High	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	Medium	Strong	-8	12	12	16	48	80	16.0%	32
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of biomass for industrial process heat	High	Medium	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	High	Strong	-32	-12	12	0	36	4	0.8%	54
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support innovation and uptake of methane inhibitors and methane vaccines	High	Medium	Medium	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	Medium	Strong	16	24	-12	-16	36	48	9.6%	47



Graphic showing the options with a high emissions reduction potential and comparative overall wellbeing scores (numbered 1 - 5). The size of the bubbles indicates economic wellbeing ranking, with larger bubbles indicating a higher level of economic wellbeing. Those with lower economic and overall wellbeing scores are also identified for reference.

Observations

- In addition to the observations at 3.2.3 above, the economic returns of BESS and solar farms are likely to improve over time as demand for new grid services and flexibility increases; and as carbon prices increase. Large-scale BESS also provide short and medium-term employment opportunities in engineering, construction and systems integration; whilst agrivoltaics can provide dual income streams for landowners. BESS and solar farms, as an integrated solution, may also support investment in the region by new clean-tech industries seeking reliable and uninterrupted renewable energy supply (e.g., datacentres).
- The economic benefits of improved and more convenient public transport services are likely to improve labour market access and reduce indirect costs from congestion. This may also lift competitiveness of urban centres by improving mobility efficiency. Reduced traffic volumes will also lower road maintenance expenditure, health related costs and enhance economic participation for those without private vehicles.
- Methane inhibitors and vaccines offer one of the most economically attractive mitigation pathways for New Zealand’s agriculture sector. They can potentially decouple productivity from emissions growth, allowing Canterbury and national producers to remain competitive and protect market access, while meeting domestic and international climate obligations. Developing local methane mitigation technologies could support a high-value bioeconomy and stimulate additional employment in biotechnology, research, manufacturing and advisory solutions.
- Switching industrial process heat plant to biomass can reduce long-term exposure to ETS costs and protect market access to customers seeking lower carbon products. If biomass is locally or regionally sourced, it can also support local supply chains, employment and the development of circular economy models. In Canterbury, where food processing and manufacturing are major economic drivers, biomass conversion aligns with decarbonisation goals while maintaining productive capacity. The EECA Regional Energy Transition Accelerator reports for Mid and North Canterbury region (RETA reports) identify several industrial emitters with feasible biomass switching pathways. However, if adopted at scale regionally and nationally, there could be challenges sourcing reliable quantities of biomass feedstock; and there is a growing risk that electrification may outcompete biomass on an operational cost basis. There is also a risk that biomass fuels may increasingly be associated with the negative environmental and biodiversity impacts arising from plantation forestry.



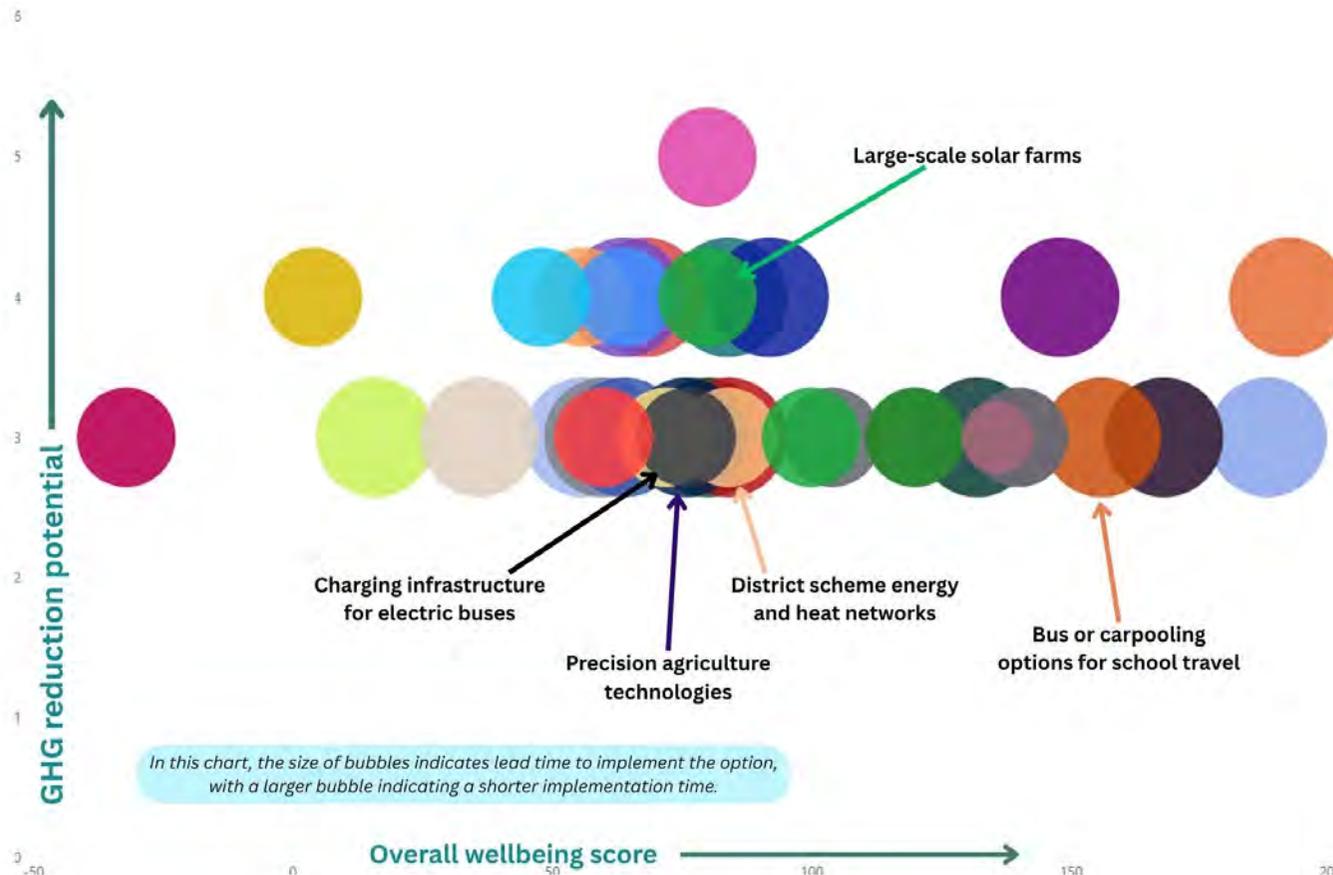
3.2.6 High emissions reduction potential / Short-term emissions reduction impact / Overall wellbeing score

Opportunity Attributes										Weightings (0-1)						Final results	
Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Technical feasibility of opportunity	Likelihood of adoption	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Measurability of potential GHG reduction	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Alignment of initiative with existing policies	Total - Normalized to lie between 0 and 100						Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
										Env	Social	Cultural	Equity	Econ	Total		
Transport	Increase support for bus or carpooling options for travel to schools	Moderate	High	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	High	Strong	24	36	24	48	24	156	31.2%	8
Energy	Support district scheme energy and heat networks (provided renewables available locally, like geothermal / waste from energy) for industrial / housing developments	Moderate	Medium	Unknown	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	Medium	Strong	12	24	16	8	24	84	16.8%	28
Energy	Support development of large-scale solar farms	High	High	High	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	Medium	Strong	-8	12	12	16	48	80	16.0%	32
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote precision agriculture technologies	Moderate	Medium	Medium	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	Low	Strong	36	24	0	-16	36	80	16.0%	32
Transport	Enable wider electric bus fleet uptake by providing high-capacity charging infrastructure	Moderate	High	Medium	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	Medium	Strong	24	24	24	-12	16	76	15.2%	35

Observations

- Supporting development of large-scale solar farms is the only option with high emissions reduction potential that delivers a material impact within a short period of implementation. However, solar farms can take years to develop. The implementation lead time is generally 5 – 8 years depending upon consenting requirements. Similarly, district energy schemes and heat networks can also take many years to plan, fund and implement. Both these options have 3 – 10 year implementation timeframes.
- Bus and carpooling options for school travel can be implemented more quickly with a moderate emissions reduction impact in the short-term. However, the likelihood of these initiatives being adopted is currently low with a need to change ingrained behaviours. Uptake can be supported with associated initiatives, like parking restrictions or time of use charging combined with active promotion campaigns. If successfully implemented, this option is likely to improve safety and health outcomes by reducing traffic around schools. It also has a strong equity wellbeing score because it reduces transport costs and increases access to schools for households without reliable private transport.

- Precision agriculture solutions can provide short-term emissions reduction opportunities, with technology available now to improve farm system level efficiency and reduce emissions intensity of farm produce. The cost of adopting these technologies can be a barrier, favouring well-capitalised and larger farms with risks of exacerbating existing inequalities in the agricultural sector. The level of direct council influence is also low.
- Providing high-capacity charging infrastructure for electric buses will support further decarbonisation of public transport in tandem with further electrification of the bus fleet. In Canterbury, buses make up a reasonably small proportion of regional transport emissions, so emission reductions are likely to be modest. Benefits will be increased by effectively displacing car trips by combining electrification with service improvements, enhanced routes and attractive pricing.



Graphic showing the options with a significant to moderate emissions reduction potential and comparative overall wellbeing scores. The graphic specifically identifies those options with a short-term (1 - 3 years) material emissions reduction impact following implementation.

4 Summary of insights from the assessment

4.1 Insights

Wellbeing outcomes depend on design and delivery

Across the options, it is clear that the final extent of social, cultural, environmental, economic and equity outcomes will depend upon on how intervention options are designed and implemented. For example, transport initiatives can specifically focus on improving accessibility and community cohesion and, thereby, the extent of wellbeing outcomes. A wellbeing focused approach, for example, is likely to favour improvements to public transport over supporting a larger privately owned fleet of EVs.

Equity is the cornerstone of a just transition

Action 2 explicitly requires inclusive and equitable emissions reduction pathways and, therefore, the distribution of costs and benefits should be central to decision-making. The assessment shows that some options have potential to entrench disadvantage if not carefully managed, particularly for some rural, low-income or mobility-constrained groups. Conversely, well-chosen and designed interventions can ease cost-of-living pressures, improve access, and support intergenerational fairness. Again, design of implementation will be critical to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities. In the agricultural sector, for example, initiatives may seek to provide greater support to those farms that might not otherwise be able to afford new methane reducing technologies; rather than an approach that might exacerbate sectoral inequity by increasing competitive advantage of already well-resourced farming operations.

Co-benefits and trade-offs are interlinked across wellbeing domains

Many high-potential emissions reduction options deliver multiple wellbeing co-benefits, such as improved air quality, healthier lifestyles, and cultural connections to land and water. At the same time, trade-offs are present, particularly where land-use change or new infrastructure creates environmental or cultural risks. These interdependencies highlight the need for councils to consider options as part of an integrated approach, rather than in isolation. For example, supporting native afforestation provides a range of wellbeing benefits but involves higher up-front costs and, at scale, will potentially displace other more traditional land uses.

Cultural wellbeing assessment reinforces the importance of partnership

The cultural dimension of wellbeing proved more challenging to assess. While some options clearly align with principles of kaitiakitanga and Te Ao Māori values, many impacts cannot be meaningfully assessed without input from Rūnanga and mana whenua. Future engagement is essential to ensure cultural values, mātauranga Māori, and intergenerational continuity are fully embedded in decision-making. Whilst the assessment included criteria to evaluate cultural impacts beyond mana whenua, no such material impacts were identified under the cultural wellbeing theme. Impacts relating to other cultural and ethnic groups, such as Pacifica, Asian or Pākehā communities have been captured through the social (health, accessibility, cost of living) and equity lenses rather than cultural.

Some of the most significant options depend on wider collaboration

The assessment shows that several high-impact options sit largely outside direct council control; for example, freight mode shift, aviation, industrial processes, and agricultural technologies. For these, councils' role is likely to be enabling, advocating, and convening rather than delivering. The success of these options would depend on active engagement and leadership from industry, central government, and community stakeholders. Building strong partnerships and amplifying local voices in national and sectoral decisions will be critical if Canterbury is to benefit from these wider transitions.

Economic impacts cannot be divorced from social and equity outcomes

While some options score strongly on economic potential, their benefits are uneven unless linked to workforce transition, skills development and affordability measures. The wellbeing assessment shows that a 'just transition' approach - ensuring workers, communities and businesses are supported through change - is critical to aligning economic and social benefits rather than setting them in tension. For example, freight mode shift to shipping and rail is likely to displace employment in the trucking industry. The shift to EVs is also likely to require skills transition and may ultimately displace some mechanic jobs as they generally require lower levels of maintenance and repair.

Urban form may be the most powerful lever within councils' control, but not is yet framed as a range of concrete initiatives

The assessment highlights that the way towns and cities are planned and designed is an influential determinant of long-term emissions. Compact, connected, and transit-oriented urban form can lock in reductions across transport, energy, and infrastructure for decades, while also supporting health, equity, and resilience. At this stage there are few options that directly address specific future urban form outcomes or objectives. While transport initiatives are present, they do not substitute for the broader role of land-use planning and urban design. The use of spatial planning frameworks, legislative regional policy planning processes and consenting levers is explicitly covered in the broad list of enablers. These can complement and reinforce the range of existing options, as well as informing future initiatives specifically designed to lock in emission reductions.

4.2 Enablers

The enablers were not assessed as part of this project because they are not currently expressed in sufficiently concrete or tangible terms to understand specific emission reduction potential or wellbeing risks and opportunities. However, their vital importance becomes clear when read alongside the assessment findings. As an initial step in this project, for which the scope and budget was slightly increased, T+T reviewed the Strategic Overview to extract those options which could be articulated in sufficiently concrete terms for assessment. At the same time, we developed the list of enablers which included what had been called *Cross sector and system changes and interventions* and other *enablers* that were mixed together with options under other themes. Some of these enablers were written in broad terms, for example:

- Working alongside industry and government.
- National goals and targets.
- A Canterbury Regional Deal.

- Carbon pricing.
- Regional Public Transport Plan.
- Regional Land Transport Plan.
- Work collectively as councils.

It is useful to have this list of broad enablers to draw from; yet it is not possible to know at this stage exactly how those enablers might or should be used. It goes without saying that, where possible and appropriate, all these enablers should be leveraged to maximise the reduction of emissions. However, exactly how that should be done will need to come through the proper decision-making processes. The ideal ways for leveraging these enablers should become much clearer as part of the stakeholder engagement work; and then be finalised as part of the next stage of work to develop actions for the regional emissions reduction plan in partnership with CCPP council members.

Some of the other enablers are more specific, for example:

- Review Good Management Practice guidelines alongside industry and Crown Research Institutes/Public Research Organisations.
- Support industry to identify what skills are needed for a successful transition, including through the Industry Skills Boards.
- Partner with stakeholders to develop local area energy plans.
- Specific advocacy to government for national policy settings to support behaviour change and mode shift.
- Support industry capability for implementing alternative F-gases (installers, maintainers, and disposal operatives).

Whether or not these more specific enablers should be addressed will very much depend upon which options CCPP council members choose to progress and submit to their LTP processes as part of developing the regional emissions reduction transition plan.

Linkages between the enablers and options assessed

The enablers provide the policy, financial, institutional, and cultural conditions that make it possible for options to succeed. For example, spatial planning frameworks, regional policy statements, and consenting processes are essential to ensure that transport, energy, and land-use initiatives are designed to lock in long-term low-emissions outcomes. Likewise, partnerships with mana whenua, industry, and research organisations ensure that cultural values, technical innovation, and local knowledge are embedded into option design. In this way, the enablers form the scaffolding around which the most powerful emissions reduction opportunities can be implemented.

The assessment also highlighted that some of the most significant options, such as electrification, industrial process heat transition, agricultural mitigation technologies, or large-scale transport mode shift, will only succeed if supported by specific enablers like investment, advocacy, regulation or incentives. These include access to finance (through levies, loans, or targeted funds), strong data and information flows, industry skills development, and coordinated governance. For instance, agricultural methane inhibitors and precision farming require both innovation partnerships and regulatory guidance; electrification and renewable energy uptake depend on national grid resilience and regional energy planning; and waste options require the development of a regional circular economy strategy. Without these enabling conditions, the risk is that high-potential options stall, or exacerbate inequities, rather than delivering the positive wellbeing outcomes identified in the assessment. Taken together, the enablers represent the bridge between the option-level findings and the eventual design of a coherent, implementable regional transition pathway.

Summary

Aligning the enablers to specific options is outside the scope of this assessment project and not particularly useful until the final design and implementation approach for options is determined. The stakeholder engagement sessions can begin to meaningfully explore which enablers are best suited to specific options, in terms of designing options that are most relevant and acceptable to those who will be affected. The final stage of work, to develop actions for the regional emissions reduction transition plan, is – in our view – the appropriate time to decide which enablers should be aligned with specific options as a core part of scoping the final set of actions for implementation.

A full list of the enablers extracted from the Strategic Overview is set out in **Appendix E**; and also listed on a separate tab of the assessment spreadsheet alongside the options extracted from the Strategic Overview.

5 Recommendations

Based on the assessment and our findings set out in this report, we make the following recommendations:

5.1 Clarify opportunities

It would be useful to sharpen the framing of some options to make them more tangible and complete for stakeholder feedback. Some options require further clarity about their scope to determine the extent of potential emissions reduction (for example, the sorts of materials to focus on for waste avoidance and re-use; and more detail about the activities intended to be covered by Good Practice Management guidelines for farms). It will also be useful to link some of the options to specific levers councils and partners could realistically apply, to explain how they are likely to be implemented (for example, through direct funding, levies, regulation or advocacy). Further clarification about the design of options will also help highlight the most relevant wellbeing risks and opportunities that may need to be addressed as part of their proposed implementation.

5.2 Fill identified gaps

The assessment has shown that some important areas that can have a significant impact on long-term emissions, such as urban form, may not yet be fully captured within the options. The assessment of cultural wellbeing risks and opportunities also needs to be complemented with input from relevant Rūnanga. We suggest these gaps be explicitly noted and that future stages of the project include mechanisms (e.g. Rūnanga and mana whenua engagement) to address them.

5.3 Position the emissions reduction assessment

When using or referring to the assessment spreadsheet, we advise being clear that the estimates of GHG reduction potential provided in the assessment spreadsheet are indicative only. They are high-level assessments, not based on detailed analysis in the particular context of their proposed implementation. Separate work has already been undertaken to develop decarbonisation pathways. We suggest noting this explicitly, and positioning the current assessment as complementary, being more specifically focused on associated wellbeing risks and opportunities related to each of the options.

5.4 Use the assessment as a platform for engagement

The next stage of the project involves stakeholder engagement. Whilst the assessment has provided a semi-quantitative assessment of wellbeing risks and opportunities, stakeholders may have their own subjective views that differ from the scores that have been recorded. The assessment has identified a wide range of issues that are relevant to each option which can usefully be used to inform discussions with stakeholders. We suggest using the assessment findings more broadly in this way - and particularly the equity lens, the role of enablers, and the systemic interconnections - as the basis for structured discussions with communities, industry, and mana whenua.

6 Applicability

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of our client Environment Canterbury, with respect to the particular brief given to us and it may not be relied upon in other contexts or for any other purpose, or by any person other than our client, without our prior written agreement.

Tonkin & Taylor Ltd
Environmental and Engineering Consultants

Report prepared by:



.....
Simon Harvey
Principal Consultant - Strategic Sustainability

Authorised for Tonkin & Taylor Ltd by:



.....
Peter Cochrane
Project Director

Appendix A Source documents used for assessment

Canterbury Regional Transport Committee Hearings Panel - Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-35 Deliberations; 20th March 2025
Moving Forward Waimakariri Integrated Transport Strategy 2035
Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Canterbury 2018 and 2021
ANZCO Foods 2020 Climate-Change and Sustainability Report
BERL Wate to Energy – The incineration option - 2019
Climate Change Commission Annual Report 2023 / 24
Canterbury Waste Joint Committee’s report on waste data
Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025
Canterbury Energy Inventory Summary 2025
Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2034
Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013 – July 2021
Climate Change Commission Monitoring Report: Emissions Reduction July 2024 - Assessing progress towards meeting Aotearoa New Zealand’s emissions budgets and the 2050 target
Climate Change Commission Monitoring Report: Emissions Reduction July 2025 - Assessing progress towards meeting Aotearoa New Zealand’s emissions budgets and the 2050 target
Canterbury Mayoral Forum - Submission on National direction for plantation and exotic carbon afforestation Dec 2022
Draft Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-35
EECA Mid-South Canterbury RETA Report – June 2023
Greater Christchurch Transport Plan 2025
Green Freight Strategic Working Paper - May-2020
Ministry of Transport – Annual Report 2023/24
Ministry for the Environment - National Direction for Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat Industry Factsheet
Ngai Tahu Climate Change Strategy – August 2018
New Zealand Productivity Commission – Low Emissions Economy – August 2018

<u>Office of the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor – Intern Report – International policy overview of organic waste bans to landfill – March 2024</u> (Megan McKenzie)
<u>AgResearch - Reducing New Zealand’s Agricultural GHGs: Methane Inhibitors</u> – July 2017
<u>The Agri Business Group – Report on agricultural mitigation technologies</u> – October 2023
<u>Regional Energy Transition Accelerator – North Canterbury Phase One Report</u> – November 2023
<u>Regional Energy Transition Accelerator – South Island Phase One Report</u> – July 2024
<u>New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre - The science of methane - 2025</u>
<u>Environment Canterbury - Transport Emissions in Canterbury Summary report</u> – June 2022
<u>Te Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu Te Kounga Paparangi Climate Action Plan -2024</u>
<u>Environment Canterbury - Tuia – Our Journey So Far</u>
<u>Reducing New Zealand’s Livestock Methane Emissions</u> – William Aitkenhead – 2023

Appendix B Prompts used for the GPT assessment model

Prompt for Uploading the Excel Assessment Spreadsheet:

You're working with an assessment framework to evaluate 52 decarbonisation **options** across two broad areas:

- 1 Decarbonisation impact (GHG reduction potential and feasibility).
- 2 Consequential impacts across five domains – *Environmental, Social, Cultural, Economic, and Equity*.

I'm uploading our decarbonisation assessment spreadsheet. It contains 52 options and detailed scoring criteria across GHG impact and five wellbeing domains (environmental, social, cultural, economic, and equity).

Read the spreadsheet and confirm you understand the structure and how scoring, scope and commentary fields are to be used. I'd then like to work through the options one at a time, asking you to assess them based on the framework.

For the assessments, only use the scoring criteria set out in the spreadsheet to ensure consistency.

Prompt for Uploading Source Documents

I will upload a set of documents to be used as key reference material for assessing decarbonisation options and their wider wellbeing and equity impacts.

Please read all uploaded documents carefully and index them so you can extract specific information as needed. Use these documents as the **primary evidence base**.

When answering questions or doing the assessments, **always cite from these documents first**, and then use online sources to verify, complement or add to this this information when:

- the uploaded documents don't contain relevant or complete information.
- further clarification is needed, or
- the issue is time-sensitive and may have changed recently.
- More up to date information is available that in the source documents.

When using internet sources, stick to authoritative and up-to-date materials (e.g. from MBIE, MfE, EECA, Stats NZ, Climate Change Commission, Te Uru Rākau, and other reputable research).

Confirm once you've fully read the documents and can begin using them in assessments and analysis.

If helpful, group and tag the documents by theme (e.g. transport, industrial heat, agriculture, energy, policy, adaptation) so they can be retrieved faster when referenced in assessments.

Prompt:

Return the above assessment as a table or structured bulleted list, matching the spreadsheet columns (score, scope, and rationale).

Greenhouse gas emissions assessment**Prompt:**

Assess the decarbonisation potential of this option: [insert option name, e.g. "Low-emissions livestock breeding"].

Use these criteria and score using the drop-down list criteria, with commentary:

- Scale of potential GHG reduction.
- Likelihood of achieving that level of decarbonisation.
- Time to achieve decarbonisation.
- Time to implement the initiative.
- Measurability of the impact.
- Level of local council control.
- Alignment with existing council strategies

Also summarise any uncertainties, barriers, co-benefits, and dependencies.

Reference any sources used.

Environmental Impact Prompt**Prompt:**

Assess the environmental impact of this option: [insert option name].

Assess the option for consequential impacts in the following areas. Score the overall environmental impact from -5 to +5 to reflect both negative and positive impacts, with commentary to explain the reasons for the score with reference to the consequential environmental impacts:

The consequential impacts to assess are:

- Biodiversity protection or risk
- Habitat disruption and restoration
- Climate resilience of ecosystems
- Resource use (land, water, minerals)
- Air and water quality
- Non-GHG polluting emissions

Include:

- Overall environmental score (-5 to +5)
- Scope of impact (Local, Regional, National, Global)
- Barriers, assumptions, risks
- Unique systemic relationships or cascading impacts (positive or negative)
- Any uncertainties or unknowns
- Any other reasons for qualifying the score

Social Impact Prompt

Prompt:

Assess the social impact of this option: [insert option name].

Assess the option for consequential impacts in the following areas. Score the overall social impact from -5 to +5 to reflect both negative and positive impacts, with commentary to explain the reasons for the score with reference to the consequential social impacts:

The consequential impacts to assess are:

- Health
- Safety
- Accessibility to services
- Mobility
- Political voice and democratic participation
- Community cohesion and social connection
- Cost of living and energy affordability
- Opportunities for work and income
- Disruption or benefit to daily life

Include:

- Overall social score (-5 to +5)
- Scope of impact (Local, Regional, National, Global)
- Assumptions, uncertainties, systemic effects
- Identify at-risk or especially impacted groups

Cultural Impact Prompt

Prompt:

Assess the cultural impact of this option: [insert option name].

Assess the option for consequential impacts in the following areas. Score the overall cultural impact from -5 to +5 to reflect both negative and positive impacts, with commentary to explain the reasons for the score with reference to the consequential cultural impacts:

The consequential impacts to assess are:

- Protection or enhancement of mātauranga Māori.
- Access to culturally important sites, practices, or landscapes.
- Indigenous values alignment (e.g., kaitiakitanga, whakapapa).
- Risk of cultural loss or erosion.
- Intergenerational knowledge and cultural practices including mahinga kai, mana motuhake, marae, urupa, wahi tapu and other cultural sites.
- Inclusion in planning and decision-making.

Include:

- Overall cultural score (-5 to +5).
- Scope of impact.
- Assumptions and uncertainties.
- Any iwi/hapū engagement or relevance.

Equity Impact Prompt

Prompt:

Assess the equity implications of this option: [insert option name].

Assess the option for consequential impacts in the following areas. Score the overall consequential equity impact from –5 (entrenches inequity) to +5 (greatly improves equity), with commentary to explain the reasons for the score with reference to the consequential equity impacts:

The consequential impacts to assess are:

- distribution of costs, benefits and choice burdens.
- intergenerational fairness.
- barriers to participation (including cost, location and accessibility).
- risk of reinforcing disadvantage.

Include:

- Overall environmental score (–5 to +5).
- Scope of impact (Local, Regional, National, Global).
- Barriers, assumptions, risks.
- Unique systemic relationships or cascading impacts (positive or negative).
- Any uncertainties or unknowns.
- Any other reasons for qualifying the score.

Include in the commentary:

- Who benefits or is burdened.
- Distributional effects across demographic, regional, and income groups.
- Barriers to participation (e.g., financial, technical, cultural).
- Opportunity to reduce or worsen inequities.
- Commentary on fairness, justice, and social acceptability.
- Identify specific vulnerable or marginalised groups affected.

Economic Impact Prompt

Prompt:

Assess the economic impact of this option: [insert option name].

Use the following impact areas. Score each from -5 to +5 to reflect both negative and positive impacts, with commentary:

- Investment required and capital access.
- Economic risk or opportunity for affected industries and sector specific competitiveness.
- Job creation or loss and any transition support.
- Local vs national value chain impact.
- Innovation or diversification benefits.
- Long term economic returns vs short term costs.

Include:

- Overall economic score (-5 to +5).
- Scope of economic impact.
- Risks, assumptions, and uncertainties.

Appendix C Full list of options in order of wellbeing assessment scores

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Increase frequency, reliability, service levels and customer experience on public transport to increase patronage.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	38.4%	1
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support native afforestation and natural regeneration across the region, including restoring wetlands and indigenous biodiversity.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	37.6%	2
Waste	Partner with small enterprises to establish community refurbishment schemes.	Very low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	36.0%	3
Waste	Support waste avoidance with re-use and repurposing of resources (e.g. through for-purpose organisations)	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	36.0%	3
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote use of farm advisory services.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	33.6%	5
Transport	Promote active travel (cycling, scootering and walking) for urban areas.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	33.6%	5

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Support rural digital connectivity that reduces need for travel.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	32.0%	7
Transport	Increase support for bus or carpooling options for travel to schools.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	31.2%	8
Energy	Partner collectively and / or with EECA to increase investment in energy efficiency and low emission heating sources in houses, commercial and industrial buildings.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	29.6%	9
Waste	Re-use of aggregates for construction.	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	29.6%	9
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support coordinated regional planning to align and balance the availability of local supplementary cattle feed with the volume of cattle farming.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	28.0%	11
Waste	Waste separation at source to divert organic waste from landfill.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	28.0%	11
Transport	Support a mass rapid transit system for Greater Christchurch.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Medium	27.2%	13

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Waste	Review councils' procurement processes and contracts to encourage waste management companies to invest more in infrastructure and assets that improve collection and disposal while reducing emissions.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	26.4%	14
Energy	Promote or financially support distributed energy generation, most obviously through support for an uptake in solar panels for households, commercial and industrial buildings.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	26.4%	14
Transport	Region-wide workplace and school travel planning service (targeting places with the largest travel needs and likelihood of success).	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	26.4%	14
Energy	Support Carbon Neutral Government Programme here (noting that schools and hospitals are some of the larger sources of emissions in the region - as per CCPP Action 2 Strategic Overview).	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	24.0%	17
Transport	Electrify entire bus fleet.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	24.0%	17
Transport	Enable the local bioenergy sector to provide second generation biofuels for aviation and shipping (e.g., Sustainable Aviation Fuels from waste products).	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Low	22.4%	19

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of biogas for industrial process heat.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	20.8%	20
Transport	Support a blue / green hydrogen industry to provide fuels for heavy vehicles and aviation.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Low	20.0%	21
Transport	Increase support for EV car-share vehicle trusts.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	20.0%	21
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote incorporation of GHG reductions into Good Management Practice guidelines and enforce through consent condition.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	20.0%	21
Transport	Support on-demand public transport services (like MyWay).	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	19.2%	24
Transport	Use spatial planning and other transport planning levers– e.g. zoning / corridors to reduce carbon emissions and encourage freight route optimisation.	Low	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	19.2%	24
Waste	Energy recovery from methane gas capture from landfill.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	18.4%	26
Transport	Integrated land-use and transport planning - transit oriented developments in towns and cities.	Low	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Medium	17.6%	27

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Support development of large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	16.8%	28
Energy	Support district scheme energy and heat networks (provided renewables available locally, like geothermal / waste from energy) for industrial / housing developments.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	16.8%	28
Waste	Container deposit return scheme.	Very low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	16.8%	28
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote low-emissions livestock breeding programmes.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	16.8%	28
Energy	Support development of large-scale solar farms.	High	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	16.0%	32
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote precision agriculture technologies.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	16.0%	32
Transport	Promote and support the Regional Transport Committee's work to enable freight mode shift to shipping and rail (see RLTP for initiatives).	Significant	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	16.0%	32

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Industrial process and produce use	Promote responsible disposal management of fluorinated GHGs through recovery, reclamation, recycling and destruction.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	15.2%	35
Transport	Enable wider electric bus fleet uptake by providing high-capacity charging infrastructure.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	15.2%	35
Transport	Support the decarbonisation of ports and airports (operational and transport related).	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	14.4%	37
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of electric boilers for industrial process heat.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	13.6%	38
Waste	Anaerobic digester facilities that make biogas and fertilizers from organic waste, including manure, food waste, crop residues, crop waste and wastewater sewage.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	12.8%	39
Transport	Promote existing funding and financing options to decarbonise light and heavy vehicles.	High	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	12.8%	39
Transport	Support and encourage installation of EV charging infrastructure for cars and trucks through the region.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	12.8%	39

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Industrial process and produce use	Co-develop fluorinated GHG waste handling facility with industry.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	12.0%	42
Industrial process and produce use	Support increased adoption of low-emission fluorinated GHG alternatives.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	12.0%	42
Energy	Support industrial process heat users through the consent application process and with developing emissions reduction plans; and ensure the consenting process is smooth and efficient.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	11.2%	44
Transport	Use regulatory levers to encourage uptake of low-emissions vehicles.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	11.2%	44
Energy	Promote alignment with voluntary energy efficiency certification systems for buildings through councils' advisory, planning and consenting processes.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	11.2%	44
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support innovation and uptake of methane inhibitors and methane vaccines.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	9.6%	47
Transport	Encourage the uptake of electric cars / light-vehicles (e.g., promotional events and funding).	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	9.6%	47

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Promote on-site energy generation on construction sites.	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	8.0%	49
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote methane capture from manure in farm slurry pits.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	8.0%	49
Industrial process and produce use	Support and incentivise initiatives that prevent leakage of Fluorinated GHG gases from refrigeration systems.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	7.2%	51
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support exotic and plantation afforestation.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	3.2%	52
Transport	Promote active travel for rural areas.	Very low	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	3.2%	52
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of biomass for industrial process heat.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	0.8%	54

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total wellbeing scores (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Explore pricing mechanisms (e.g., regional fuel tax, congestion charging or parking fees) to influence travel behaviours and help fund transport decarbonisation (e.g., public transport enhancements).	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	-3.2%	55
Industrial process and produce use	Prohibit use of fluorinated GHGs through planning and consenting levers.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	-6.4%	56
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote supplementary livestock feeds that lower emissions.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	-6.4%	56

Appendix D Full list of options in order of scale of potential GHG reduction

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Promote and support the Regional Transport Committee's work to enable freight mode shift to shipping and rail (see RLTP for initiatives).	Significant	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	16.0%	32
Transport	Increase frequency, reliability, service levels and customer experience on public transport to increase patronage.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	38.4%	1
Energy	Partner collectively and / or with EECA to increase investment in energy efficiency and low emission heating sources in houses, commercial and industrial buildings.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	29.6%	9
Waste	Energy recovery from methane gas capture from landfill.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	18.4%	26

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Support development of large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	16.8%	28
Energy	Support development of large-scale solar farms.	High	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	16.0%	32
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of electric boilers for industrial process heat.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	13.6%	38
Waste	Anaerobic digester facilities that make biogas and fertilizers from organic waste, including manure, food waste, crop residues, crop waste and wastewater sewage.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	12.8%	39
Transport	Promote existing funding and financing options to decarbonise light and heavy vehicles.	High	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	12.8%	39
Transport	Use regulatory levers to encourage uptake of low-emissions vehicles.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	11.2%	44

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support innovation and uptake of methane inhibitors and methane vaccines.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	9.6%	47
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of biomass for industrial process heat.	High	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	0.8%	54
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support native afforestation and natural regeneration across the region, including restoring wetlands and indigenous biodiversity	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	37.6%	2
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote use of farm advisory services	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	33.6%	5
Transport	Promote active travel (cycling, scootering and walking) for urban areas	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	33.6%	5
Transport	Increase support for bus or carpooling options for travel to schools	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	31.2%	8

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support coordinated regional planning to align and balance the availability of local supplementary cattle feed with the volume of cattle farming	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	28.0%	11
Waste	Waste separation at source to divert organic waste from landfill.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	28.0%	11
Transport	Support a mass rapid transit system for Greater Christchurch	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Medium	27.2%	13
Energy	Promote or financially support distributed energy generation, most obviously through support for an uptake in solar panels for households, commercial and industrial buildings	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	26.4%	14
Energy	Support Carbon Neutral Government Programme here (noting that schools and hospitals are some of the larger sources of emissions in the region - as	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	24.0%	17

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
	per CCPP Action 2 Strategic Overview)						
Transport	Electrify entire bus fleet	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	24.0%	17
Transport	Enable the local bioenergy sector to provide second generation biofuels for aviation and shipping (e.g., Sustainable Aviation Fuels from waste products).	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Low	22.4%	19
Energy	Raise understanding and help facilitate increased use of biogas for industrial process heat	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	20.8%	20
Transport	Support a blue / green hydrogen industry to provide fuels for heavy vehicles and aviation	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Low	20.0%	21
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote incorporation of GHG reductions into Good Management Practice guidelines and enforce through consent condition.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	High	20.0%	21

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Support district scheme energy and heat networks (provided renewables available locally, like geothermal / waste from energy) for industrial / housing developments.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	16.8%	28
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote low-emissions livestock breeding programmes.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	16.8%	28
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote precision agriculture technologies.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	16.0%	32
Industrial process and produce use	Promote responsible disposal management of fluorinated GHGs through recovery, reclamation, recycling and destruction.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	15.2%	35
Transport	Enable wider electric bus fleet uptake by providing high-capacity charging infrastructure.	Moderate	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	15.2%	35

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Support the decarbonisation of ports and airports (operational and transport related).	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	14.4%	37
Transport	Support and encourage installation of EV charging infrastructure for cars and trucks through the region.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	12.8%	39
Industrial process and produce use	Co-develop fluorinated GHG waste handling facility with industry.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	12.0%	42
Industrial process and produce use	Support increased adoption of low-emission fluorinated GHG alternatives.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	12.0%	42
Energy	Support industrial process heat users through the consent application process and with developing emissions reduction plans; and ensure the consenting process is smooth and efficient.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	11.2%	44

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Industrial process and produce use	Support and incentivise initiatives that prevent leakage of fluorinated GHG gases from refrigeration systems.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	7.2%	51
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Support exotic and plantation afforestation.	Moderate	Long (10+ years)	Short (1-3 years)	Low	3.2%	52
Industrial process and produce use	Prohibit use of fluorinated GHGs through planning and consenting levers.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	-6.4%	56
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote supplementary livestock feeds that lower emissions.	Moderate	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	-6.4%	56
Waste	Support waste avoidance with re-use and repurposing of resources (e.g. through for-purpose organisations).	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	36.0%	3
Transport	Support rural digital connectivity that reduces need for travel.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Low	32.0%	7

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Waste	Re-use of aggregates for construction.	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	29.6%	9
Waste	Review councils' procurement processes and contracts to encourage waste management companies to invest more in infrastructure and assets that improve collection and disposal while reducing emissions.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	26.4%	14
Transport	Region-wide workplace and school travel planning service (targeting places with the largest travel needs and likelihood of success).	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	26.4%	14
Transport	Increase support for EV car-share vehicle trusts.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	20.0%	21
Transport	Support on-demand public transport services (like MyWay).	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	High	19.2%	24

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Transport	Use spatial planning and other transport planning levers– e.g. zoning / corridors to reduce carbon emissions and encourage freight route optimisation.	Low	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	19.2%	24
Transport	Integrated land-use and transport planning - transit oriented developments in towns and cities.	Low	Long (10+ years)	Long (10+ years)	Medium	17.6%	27
Agriculture, forestry and other land use	Promote methane capture from manure in farm slurry pits.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	8.0%	49
Energy	Promote alignment with voluntary energy efficiency certification systems for buildings through councils' advisory, planning and consenting processes.	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	11.2%	44
Transport	Encourage the uptake of electric cars / light-vehicles (e.g., promotional events and funding).	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	9.6%	47

Opportunity area	GHG reduction opportunity	Scale of potential GHG reduction	Time to material impact (years)	Lead time to implement (years)	Level of council influence over GHG reduction initiative	Total (weighted and normalized as %)	Rank
Energy	Promote on-site energy generation on construction sites.	Low	Short (1-3 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	8.0%	49
Transport	Explore pricing mechanisms (e.g., regional fuel tax, congestion charging or parking fees) to influence travel behaviours and help fund transport decarbonisation (e.g., public transport enhancements).	Low	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	-3.2%	55
Waste	Partner with small enterprises to establish community refurbishment schemes.	Very low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	36.0%	3
Waste	Container deposit return scheme.	Very low	Medium (3-10 years)	Short (1-3 years)	Medium	16.8%	28
Transport	Promote active travel for rural areas.	Very low	Long (10+ years)	Medium (3-10 years)	Medium	3.2%	52

Appendix E Enablers extracted from the Strategic Overview document

Category	Enablers
Advocacy to government and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build stronger relationships with government to advocate for and influence low-emissions policy settings aligned with a just transition. • Working with government, industry and others. • Align initiatives with government policy, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – partnering with the government on afforestation and carbon sink opportunities – making greater use of the Waste Minimisation Fund. • Specific advocacy on: National energy strategy / action plan Energy efficiency in homes and businesses Carbon pricing Prohibition / phase out of gas appliances. • Promote existing funding and financing available. • Specific advocacy to government for national policy settings to support behaviour change and mode shift. • National goals and targets.
Planning, consenting and urban form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop spatial planning frameworks designed to encourage and enable GHG reductions and more sustainable living. • Shape regional planning to support and maximise reduction of GHGs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional Policy Statement. – Regional Public Transport. – Plan Regional Land Transport Plan. • Ensure planning and consenting processes enable the adoption of low-emissions technology and infrastructure; and enable the transition to more sustainable living. • Improve pre-application support to help applicants understand what is required for consents with GHG discharges. • Develop lists of pre-approved and priority technologies. • Work with industry and EECA to ensure sufficient guidance and support available for consent applications. • Work with other councils to ensure an agreed approach for determining who meets criteria for a 'Suitably Qualified Person' to provide more consistency in assessment. • Support smaller businesses to access funding or finance to develop emissions reductions plan for consents. • Planning and consenting regime.

Category	Enablers
Funding and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage council investment priorities, levies and funding to support businesses and communities through the transition. • Promote the availability of funding and financing opportunities from public and private sources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – LGFA Green, Social and Sustainable Loans – LGFA Climate Action loans – Regional Infrastructure Fund (outside CHCH city only) – Regional deals – Climate levy – Targeted rate – Sale of NZU carbon credits. • Borrow against NZU carbon credits. • LGFA loans (low-emissions, energy efficient homes and buildings, supporting innovation and sustainable production in the primary industries and afforestation, and transport mode shift). • Regional deals to support large scale energy supply (Canterbury Regional Deal). • Provide direct funding.
Data, information and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the supply and communication of relevant and reliable information to enable communities and business to access useful and timely advice, funding, research and solutions. • Support industry to identify what skills are needed for a successful transition, including through new Industry Skills Boards. • Work with government and industry to improve emissions data collection and management, with a focus on agriculture and waste-related greenhouse gas emissions. • Improve data accuracy, completeness and management.
Technology and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support or partner with industry to drive innovation in inhibitor research and practice. • Review Good Management Practice guidelines alongside industry and Crown Research Institutes/Public Research Organisations. • Use technology as an enabler. • Lead or support a feasibility study.
Energy and emissions reduction transition support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-invest and work with government and industry to support electrification and uptake of other renewable energy options, including by ensuring improved national grid resilience to encourage electrification, support more renewable energy generation, enable distributed storage and demand flexibility, and mitigate the need for fossil-fuel back-up generation. • Support energy users to make well-informed decisions about energy choices.



Together we create + sustain a better world

The National Adaptation Framework (2025) and the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan

Background

1. The Government released [The National Adaptation Framework \(NAF\)](#) on 16 October 2025. The Framework sets out central government's approach to prepare New Zealand for climate change, supporting the Government's Climate Change Strategy, published by Ministry for the Environment in 2024, and compliments the first National Adaptation Plan and wider work under the National Risk and Resilience Framework. Further supporting information is provided in the proactively released cabinet paper¹
2. The Framework follows on from parliamentary inquiries into climate adaptation by the Māori Affairs, Environment and most recently the Finance and Expenditure committees², as well as a recent report by the Independent Reference Group, whose purpose was to gain insights from its members' experience of making decisions on adaptation challenges and inform the policy advice to support the Government's development of the framework.
3. The basis of the NAF is on escalating costs of climate driven disasters and thus the main objective is to "minimise the net costs of adaptation to society over the long-term". It is intended that people know what risks they face and how these might be addressed and paid for.
4. The government's intent is to move towards an end state where the Crown no longer distorts risk signals and blunts incentives to manage natural hazard risk by providing financial assistance where homeowners suffer significant losses after major events.

National Adaptation Framework Pillars and Actions

5. There are 4 pillars to the NAF and the 16 actions listed under each bring together new and existing work by central government. The pillars, and summarised key actions are outlined below:

1) Risk and response information sharing

- Develop a national flood map using a public-private funding model.

¹ <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/establishing-a-naf/>

² <https://environment.govt.nz/news/independent-climate-adaptation-report-released/>

- Consider publishing the map as part of Toka Tū Ake Natural Hazard Commission's Natural Hazards Portal.
- Develop new hazard datasets and risk standards with the private sector.

2) Roles and responsibilities

- Local government will be required to prepare adaptation plans in priority areas to show how communities will prepare for and respond to climate change impacts.
- Regional spatial planning decision-makers will identify locations that require an adaptation plan through developing a spatial plan (subject to the passing of the Planning Bill).
- Adaptation plans will lay out implementation pathways and intended funding and financing. Where an adaptation plan meets regulatory requirements, councils may have access to accelerated regulatory and/or investment implementation pathways.

3) Investment in risk reduction

- Adaptation plans will ensure that planned investments by local government in priority locations are clearly communicated.
- A Funding & Financing Framework will guide decisions on investment to protect Crown assets or realise broader national benefits.
- The \$1.2bn Regional Infrastructure Fund will support investment in regional resilience.

4) Cost sharing pre and post event

- Decisions to be taken in the next term of government
- Focus will be on ensuring that the Crown no longer distorts risk signals by providing significant financial assistance after major events (in particular, property buy-outs).
- In the near-term, support for local government after a major event will primarily cover infrastructure rebuilding. Any post-event financial support for communities will be available only to "mitigate genuine hardship".
- A new development levy will be introduced as part of Going for Housing Growth.

Key insights

6. The NAF indicates some fundamental changes to how climate adaptation is planned, implemented and resourced in New Zealand:
 - The language in the NAF is geared toward natural hazards, signalling that adaptation is seen under the broader umbrella of natural hazards. The framework represents a stronger integration between adaptation planning and recovery planning and signals a shift from reactive, event-by-event responses toward coordinated, long-term strategies that integrate climate risk, resilience, and adaptation into disaster recovery and future planning.
 - The focus on costs means the NAF will reset expectations around how the costs from natural hazards like floods and storms, and the costs of adapting to them are shared across society and over time. The Government has signalled its intent to leave the private sector, local government and the public to carry the costs of adaptation, with central government only intervening to mitigate genuine hardship.
 - The NAF hinges on central government amending or developing legislation, national direction, national standards and guidance in order to implement the framework (e.g. Climate Change Response Act, Resource Management Act, CDEM, Local Government Act).
 - Access to and quality of hazard and risk data to support decision-making and ongoing governmental reforms is a key area of focus across the Framework's pillars.
 - Regional spatial plans will identify priority areas for adaptation planning, and territorial authorities will be responsible for developing adaptation plans.
 - Long Term Plans and Regional Land Transport Plans must *have regard* to adaptation plans; CDEM Group Plans must *give effect to* local adaptation plans during recovery.

Gaps in the National Adaptation Framework

7. There are significant gaps in the Framework, which make it hard for councils to fully understand and plan for the impacts across organisations, or in relation to the implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan. Gaps include:
 - detail around implementation timeframes, priority, sequencing or dependencies of NAF actions

- a lack of clarity on resourcing and funding of NAF actions, e.g. funding of new hazard datasets/models, hazard portal enhancements, building local government capacity and capability to deal with the adaptation challenges
- scant mention of Te Tiriti and Mātauranga Māori particularly with regard to risk information or adaptation planning, Crown obligations and role of tangata whenua (other than light information in the accompanying Regulatory Impact Assessment³)
- lack of a multi-hazard approach: strong emphasis on flooding, but far less clarity on other hazards which councils must deal with
- no mention of the natural environment or biodiversity, focusing instead on infrastructure and the places people live
- lack of prescribed adaptation planning processes (e.g. Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways DAPP).

What this means for the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan

8. The NAF establishes a stronger national direction for climate adaptation, with clear expectations for high quality, readily available, consistent and up to date hazard and risk information, statutory adaptation planning in priority areas, and investment focused on risk reduction.
9. The CCPP is already well placed to align with the National Adaptation Framework, as the collaborative actions identified by Canterbury councils have proactively focused on improving our understanding and sharing of climate risk information, clarifying roles and responsibilities and developing a best practice approach in adaptation planning, and strengthening climate funding and identifying and leveraging co-funding and finance opportunities. This provides a robust foundation and puts the region ahead of much of the national system in preparing for implementation of the NAF.
10. In broad terms, for CCPP, this means that:
 - strong coordination across councils, Papatipu Rūnanga and central government will remain critical
 - the scope and approach of action implementation, particularly key actions 1-4, will need to be reviewed and aligned to new legislation, direction, data standards, and guidance as it is published or updated.

³ <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Local-Adaptation-Planning-RIS-MfE.pdf>

11. The table below contains a high-level analysis of the CCPP actions 1-8 in relation to the NAF, with advice relating to further action or proceeding as planned. Note CCPP actions 9 and 10 are related to monitoring and overall implementation of the plan and are not considered directly affected by the NAF at this time.

CCPP Action/Sub-action	Relevant National Adaptation Framework pillars and actions (by number)	Analysis	Advice
<p>Action 1: Understanding Risk and Improving Resilience</p> <p>1.1 Scope and develop a Canterbury-wide visualization tool for use by councils to support climate adaptation and resilience planning</p> <p>1.2 Update the Canterbury Climate Change Risk & Urgency Assessment to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of key risks and opportunities under different climate change at a regional and district level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk & response information sharing Actions 1 - 5 (National Flood Map; Hazard datasets and Risk Standards; Natural Hazards Portal; invest in risk info; science/tech reforms). • Roles & responsibilities Actions 6, 7, 8, 10 (RMA direction for hazard management; identify areas of natural hazard risk in development of spatial plans; improving local government system to focus local authorities core service to manage natural hazard risk). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on improving quality and access to hazard and risk information, ensuring accurate and timely data is available to inform decisions on adaptation. • Intention that National Flood Map will bring together the best available national, regional and local-scale data: will likely include existing flood data and modelling from councils in Canterbury to show areas exposed to flooding (not the degree of risk). • Focus on areas of coastal, pluvial and fluvial flooding. First iteration is due early 2027 so that it is available for the first round of post-RMA spatial planning. • NAF anticipates National Flood Map will be used to inform regulatory direction, and to support consent/planning decisions and development of regional spatial plans. • Two new New Zealand Standards relating to flood hazard modelling and natural hazard risk due to be released around April 2027. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of regional multi-hazard risk tool will support the regional spatial planning processes, identification of priority areas, and development of local adaptation plans by territorial authorities. <p>Further action required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a watching brief and active engagement with MfE on the development of the National Flood Map, Natural Hazards Portal and associated national hazard data standards. • Ensure the scope of any visualisation tool procurement includes the technical ability to align with and ingest new national datasets, APIs, standards, metadata requirements

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAF focuses on single hazard (flood) mapping, does not apply a multi-hazard approach: a point of divergence with the approach of CCPP Action 1. • The Natural Hazards Commissions Natural Hazard Portal is based on the Riskscape tool developed by Earth Sciences New Zealand. • National tools unlikely to meet the needs of Canterbury Councils or align with the outcomes sought by the CCPP due to the single-hazard approach, lack of detailed risk assessment and due to lack of alignment with the principles of the CCPP. • NAF pillar and actions make it even more important for councils to develop quality data and tools for multi-hazard risk modelling and information sharing in order to inform adaptation, spatial planning and emergency management etc. 	<p>and update cadences as they are released.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the regional tool to complement and extend, rather than duplicate, national tools by providing Canterbury-specific insights while maintaining interoperability. • Ensure all risk and hazard data are readily available, transparently documented, regularly updated, and consistent with national data structures, quality assurance requirements and information protocols. • Future-proof the visualisation tool so it can use, or be easily updated to use, MfE/National Flood Map and Natural Hazards Portal standards, including metadata, versioning, confidence levels and uncertainty documentation.
--	--	---	---

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify resourcing and governance arrangements needed to maintain data alignment, updates and integration with national systems over time. • Scope the 2027 review of the Canterbury Climate Change Risk and Urgency Assessment (Year 4 of CCPP) to align with national hazard and risk assessment work, incorporating updated datasets, hazard standards and any national guidance on risk methodologies.
<p>Action 2: Emissions Reduction</p> <p>2.1 Collate data and develop models to prepare greenhouse gas emissions inventories and identify emissions reduction pathways for Canterbury to support New Zealand’s national greenhouse gas commitments.</p> <p>2.2 Based on the emissions reduction pathways identified for Canterbury, undertake a regional transition risk and opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NAF is adaptation focused and does not mention emissions reduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NAF establishes roles for councils in local adaptation planning. Although mitigation is not covered, the adaptation framework is likely to influence where and how growth, infrastructure, and land-use change occur, which in turn define emissions pathways. The adaptation framework therefore creates the policy and spatial context within which a low-emissions regional transition plan must operate. 	<p>Proceed as planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No immediate action required, keep watching brief on NAF action implementation

<p>assessment, considering social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts, to inform an equitable and inclusive transition to a low-emissions region.</p> <p>2.3 Work with partners, communities, and key stakeholders to build a regional low-emissions transition strategy that supports equitable, inclusive local pathways to a thriving, climate-resilient region meeting emissions reduction targets.</p>			
<p>Action 3: Adaptation Planning 3.1 Develop and implement a best practice approach for councils in Canterbury to work effectively and efficiently together with communities on adaptation planning and implementation.</p>	<p>Risk, and response information sharing Actions 1-5 (National Flood Map; Hazard datasets and Risk Standards; Natural Hazards Portal; invest in risk info; science/tech reforms).</p> <p>Roles & responsibilities Actions 1-5 (new national direction under RMA; spatial plans; amend CCRA for local adaptation plans; Emergency Management roadmap; focus local authorities on core services).</p>	<p>Legislation / Regulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will result in amendments to the Climate Change Response Act and consequential amendments to other legislation (e.g. resource management etc.) to require local government to undertake adaptation planning in priority locations. • Secondary legislation will prescribe process for developing and communicating plans. <p>Local Adaptation Plans / Roles and Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local adaptation plans will be developed, implemented, reviewed and updated by territorial authorities. Existing plans will need a transition plan. 	<p>Further action Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the CCPP best-practice approach with forthcoming legislation, national direction and guidance on local government, resource management and other reforms. • Consider the link between flood scheme reviews and adaptation planning

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial plans to prioritise risks from flood and coastal hazards in places where people live. TAs may consider wider range of hazards (beyond flooding), at their discretion. • Detail to follow in amended legislation, regulations, & guidance but indications are that it will not bind councils to follow a Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathway (DAPP) approach per se. • Cabinet paper indicates that tasks may be shared between regional councils/bodies and/or territorial authorities at their discretion. It is expected that clarification on this will be provided by central government following release of resource management reform proposals, and local government reform decisions. <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term plans, Regional Land Transport Plan must <i>have regard</i> to adaptation plans, CDEM Group plans <i>must give effect</i> to local adaptation plans during recovery. • Regional council may be responsible for identifying priority locations for adaptation plans through regional spatial planning. 	
--	--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional spatial planning decision-makers will identify locations that require an adaptation plan through developing a spatial plan (under the Planning Act). <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intent to leave the public, private sector, local government to carry the costs of adaptation, resulting in potential equity issues and potentially exacerbating disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities. Where an adaptation plan has been prepared and meets regulatory requirements, councils will have access to accelerated regulatory and/or investment implementation pathways. No detail on what this entails. Development of local adaptation plans will impose cost on councils to develop, implement, monitor, report and review. 	
<p>Action 4 Nature Based Solutions 4.1 Develop a Canterbury wide natural ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment. 4.2 Develop a blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to</p>	<p>Risk & response information sharing Actions 1–4 (for site selection)</p> <p>Investment in risk reduction Actions 11-14 (regulate cost benefit analysis of adaptation options; Funding & Financing Framework; Regional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mention of the natural environment in the NAF, focus on infrastructure and people. The risk assessment that underpins the blue-green network as a nature based solution will need to be consistent with/take into account national and regional data sets. 	<p>Action required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a high-level cost benefit analysis of implementation in the development of the blue-green network plan for Canterbury As part of action 4.2c, investigate projects for

<p>support locally-led implementation.</p> <p>4.2a Maximise opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on blue-green infrastructure placement and hazard resilience investment.</p> <p>4.2b Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key stakeholders to deliver a blue-green network.</p> <p>4.2c Investigate the feasibility of establishing blue-green infrastructure on council-owned land, including identifying priority locations for implementation across Canterbury.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Fund; manage Crown asset risk).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue green networks will need to be consistent with/incorporated into spatial plans as a nature-based solution for managing risk to people, property and ecosystems. • National funding/financing frameworks increase opportunities but will require robust cost–benefit and risk evidence to access funds. Blue-green sites and their contribution to the functionality of a network as a nature- based solution need to be documented to meet national investment cases. • Timing is an issue as the blue green network should be incorporated into the regional spatial plan as a key component of managing natural hazard risk to people, property and ecosystems. For the blue green network - as a Nature based solution - to be effective, natural hazard risk and future growth and development areas (as per NAF action 7) need to be identified to inform the BGN plan and both plans developed conjointly through an iterative process. • The blue green network also needs to be informed by national data sets as well as regional natural hazards information and 	<p>Regional Infrastructure Fund and ministerial funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the timing of the development of the BGN and how it might be used to inform the regional spatial plan required in NAF action 7
---	---	--	--

		guidance. However, the delivery date for the blue green network plan is prior to those for the risk information and draft spatial plan.	
<p>Action 5 Climate Change Education & Advocacy 5.1 Continue to develop the It's time, Canterbury initiative into a comprehensive resource hub for climate education and collective action across Canterbury.</p> <p>5.2 Collaborate with Civil Defence and Emergency Management in Canterbury to produce communications materials that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards.</p>	<p>Risk & response information sharing Actions 1–4 (improve sharing & portals).</p> <p>Roles & responsibilities Action 9 (Emergency Management Roadmap).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National emphasis on consistent public risk info makes the hub a key regional node 	<p>Action required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate messaging in with CDEM when developing the comprehensive resource hub for climate education and collective action across Canterbury Create links to national portals
<p>Action 6 Supporting Papatipu Rūnanga</p> <p>6.1 Understand the climate action requirements of Papatipu Rūnanga across Canterbury.</p> <p>6.2 Support councils to work in partnership with Papatipu Rūnanga to integrate their requirements into local climate action planning.</p>	<p>Roles & responsibilities Actions 6, 8 (national direction; amendments clarifying LG role and adaptation plans). Also cross-cutting principle in NAF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAF does not mention Te Tiriti o Waitangi but cabinet paper refers to expected disproportionate impacts on Māori communities. 	<p>Proceed as planned</p>
<p>Action 7: Integrating climate change considerations in council processes</p>	<p>Roles & responsibilities Action 6 (new national direction via RMA); 10 (focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAF indicates councils will be required to undertake new local adaptation and regional spatial 	<p>Proceed as planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise integrating climate change

<p>7.1 Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business including decisions, policies, projects, procurement, and infrastructure development.</p>	<p>local authorities on core services including risk management); 11 (regulate cost–benefit assessments of adaptation of options).</p>	<p>planning processes with natural hazard risk at the centre of these processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is proposing new regulations to ensure the costs and benefits of adaptation options for communities are adequately considered by councils. 	<p>considerations in councils’ core services and related decision-making processes and anticipate changes to current processes with imminent resource management reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to submit on proposed policies and regulations.
<p>Action 8 Climate funding and finance 8.1 Advocate to central government for funding to be made available to address the gap between current local government funding and what is needed for the comprehensive local government climate action that is required in the future.</p>	<p>Investment in risk reduction Actions 11-14 (Cost benefit analysis, Funding and Financing Framework, \$1.2 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund, protection of Crown Assets) Cost-sharing Actions 15,16 (development levy to cover growth costs, recovery tools to support government’s decisions following events)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAF provides a national funding/financing architecture to align with; councils need to prepare evidence to access funds and influence cost-sharing design. • Where an adaptation plan has been prepared and meets regulatory requirements, councils will have access to accelerated regulatory and/or investment implementation pathways. No detail on what this entails. 	<p>Proceed as planned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider coordinating a joint submission to MfE/Treasury on the Funding & Financing Framework and development levy proposals. • Explore opportunities to access Regional Infrastructure funding.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Hamish Riach, Chair Economic Development Forum
Jesse Burgess, Chair Energy Strategy Steering Group

Canterbury Regional Energy Workstream

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on the regional energy workstream, presents the draft Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report for review and feedback, and outlines the current budget position and funding requirements to progress the work through to 30 June 2026.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **provides feedback on the revised draft Regional Energy Strategic Framework (Attachment 1) and supporting report *Our Energy Future: A regional approach to energy in Waitaha | Canterbury* (Attachment 2) by 2 March 2026**
2. **notes the intention to present the final draft Strategic Framework and supporting report to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum in May 2026**
3. **notes that committed or forecast costs for key activities in FY2025/26 total approximately \$56,607, and that it is proposed that the remaining unallocated funding be used to bring in external resourcing to support the delivery of the draft regional energy action plan / roadmap by 30 June 2026**
4. **notes that targeted engagement with stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups is ongoing.**

Background

2. In 2024, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) initiated the regional energy workstream. The workstream is led by the Economic Development Forum (ED Forum) and overseen by the Energy Strategy Steering Group, a sub-group of Forum members.
3. Phase One delivered an energy inventory, providing the first comprehensive overview of the region's energy landscape. The [Canterbury Energy Inventory](#) and accompanying summary [infographic](#) were approved for publication by the Mayoral Forum on 30 May 2025. At the same meeting, the Forum endorsed the continuation of the regional energy work through a phased and staged approach (as outlined in Table 1). Each stage builds on earlier work.

Table 1 – Phased approach to Energy Workstream

Phase	Regional approach to energy	Progress
One – Develop a regional energy inventory	Energy Inventory for Canterbury (Year 1 – FY24/25)	Complete
Two – Develop a regional energy strategy	Stage 1: Strategic Framework (Year 1 – FY25/26)	In progress
	Stage 2: Roadmap or action plan (Year 2 – FY26/27)	In progress
	Stage 3: Comprehensive energy strategy and implementation plan (Year 2/3+)	Not yet started

4. Stakeholders have expressed strong support for progressing to Stage 2 – development of a regional energy roadmap or action plan – and emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum and enabling tangible action. There is an opportunity to advance this work during the first half of the 2026 calendar year.
5. On 28 November 2025, the Mayoral Forum received an update on the energy workstream and the development of the Strategic Framework. The Forum expressed its support for continuing the regional energy work.

Developing the Regional Energy Strategy

Strategic Framework development

6. The work completed through the energy inventory provided the foundation to develop a Strategic Framework for energy (Phase Two, Stage 1). The Strategic Framework will provide the overarching structure and direction for Canterbury’s regional energy strategy. It will set out a shared vision, outcomes, and strategic priorities for coordinated action. The Strategic Framework will be presented as a high-level ‘plan on a page’ and short supporting report that provides additional context and detail to assist in understanding the framework.
7. Significant progress has been made on the development of the Strategic Framework. Most of the work to develop the draft framework and supporting report has been completed, with the focus now on reviewing and incorporating feedback received through targeted engagement with key stakeholders and through the Economic Development, Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums.
8. The revised draft Strategic Framework and supporting report are provided as Attachments 1 and 2 to this report. The Mayoral Forum is invited to provide feedback on these draft documents by 2 March 2026, noting that the attached versions do not yet reflect feedback recently received from stakeholders and community groups. Both documents will continue to evolve and will be further shaped by stakeholder, community, and mana whenua perspectives.

9. It is intended that the draft Strategic Framework and supporting report will be finalised for presentation to the Mayoral Forum in May 2026.

Action plan / roadmap development

10. Stage 2 will translate the agreed Strategic Framework into an implementable action plan that can effect change. This will be a key part of a coordinated regional approach to energy and has been strongly supported by stakeholders.
11. Scoping of this work has commenced and can run concurrently with finalising the Strategic Framework. Key tasks are likely to include:
- identifying key actions, initiatives and enabling activities that will make a positive difference in the future of energy for Canterbury
 - defining the sequencing and timing for these actions, including any dependencies
 - determining who takes the lead and who supports each action
 - identifying what is needed to enable success i.e. policy alignment, resourcing, governance, data, partnerships
 - working together with stakeholders, mana whenua, and community groups with an interest in energy, to test the action plan / roadmap.
12. To deliver this next stage of work and achieve a draft action plan by 30 June 2026 it is proposed that an external consultant be engaged to lead development of the action plan / roadmap. The consultant would work alongside the existing project team, which would continue to provide the majority of resourcing and coordination support for the regional energy workstream.

Funding and resourcing

13. To date, delivery of the regional energy workstream, including project leadership, has relied heavily on in-kind resourcing. As reported previously, this resourcing reduced from 1 January 2026. For the remainder of FY 2025/26 (February-June 2026), in-kind resourcing for the regional energy workstream has been confirmed at approximately 1.4 FTE across four team members drawn from the Regional Public Service, Canterbury Regional Council (two staff), and Kaikōura District Council, alongside administrative support.
14. Funding of \$50,000 was originally allocated through the Regional Forums budget for the development of the Canterbury Energy Inventory. An underspend of \$40,000 from that work was reallocated to support the next phase of the regional energy workstream. This budget was subsequently supplemented with an additional allocation of \$47,000, providing a total of \$87,000 available through to 30 June 2026.

15. The available funding will support completion of Stage 1 (development of the regional energy Strategic Framework) and the initiation of Stage 2 (development of a regional action plan or roadmap), including external project support and ongoing engagement with stakeholders, community groups, and mana whenua.

16. Table 2 summarises current and projected budget and funding requirements.

Table 2: Summary of budget breakdown FY 2025/26 (indicative)

Cost Category	FY 2025/26 (spent / committed)	FY 2025/26 (forecast)¹
Stakeholder, mana whenua, and community engagement	\$6,299	\$35,000
Capacity building / knowledge sharing	\$308	\$0
External project support / strategic advisory services	\$5,000	\$10,000
Total spent / committed	\$11,607	
Total additional forecast spend		\$45,000
Overall total	\$56,607	
Budget remaining	\$87,000 - \$56,607 = \$30,393	

17. To date, \$11,607 of project funding has been spent or committed in this financial year. Estimated costs for key activities over the next six months to progress development of the action plan – including mana whenua, stakeholder, and community engagement, and project support / strategic advisory services – total approximately \$45,000. It is proposed that the remaining \$30,000 from the existing Regional Forums budget allocation be used to engage an external consultant to work alongside the project team to support delivery of the action plan / roadmap in this financial year. Whether this budget is sufficient to secure the required level of support will be tested through a procurement process.

18. The expectation is that, with the current funding available, the team will be able to complete the Strategic Framework (Phase two Stage 1) and have a draft road map/action plan by 30 June. Finalisation of the road map/action plan would then need to be completed using internal in-kind resources.

19. On 28 November 2025, the Mayoral Forum endorsed the continuation of the regional energy work. Mayors from all Councils except Christchurch City Council indicated support for progressing the work.

20. The energy workstream is not standalone; it will inform and contribute to regional spatial planning by providing a shared evidence base on infrastructure needs, investment priorities, and long-term land use implications.

¹ Indicative forecast only; actual expenditure subject to variation as delivery costs are finalised.

21. A resilient and innovative energy system underpins economic growth and sustainable development – supporting industry, attracting investment, and delivering better outcomes for communities. This strategic importance is reflected in energy being identified as one of the five key pillars signalled in the *Canterbury World Stage Ready* future regional deal foundational document. Maintaining momentum is therefore essential, as there is strong stakeholder appetite to translate vision into tangible action, and slowing progress risks losing confidence and missing opportunities for partnership, investment, and innovation.

Engagement

22. To date, a wide range of stakeholders, including councils across the region, the energy sector, industry, major energy users, Ngāi Tahu Holdings, academics, and central government agencies such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, have engaged positively with the regional energy work. There is broad consensus among stakeholders on the need for a coordinated regional approach to energy – one that aligns with the goals and priorities of central and local government, industry, and communities.
23. The draft Strategic Framework was tested at a stakeholder workshop in September 2025 and revised to incorporate feedback from stakeholders at the workshop and from one-on-one engagement. In December 2025, the revised Strategic Framework and draft supporting report were shared with stakeholders for feedback.
24. The project team is taking steps to engage with all Papatipu Rūnanga across the region, including exploring opportunities for Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities (PREEs) to support mana whenua engagement, consistent with direction from the Mayoral Forum.
25. In November 2025, a hui was held at Rāpaki Marae to discuss the regional energy workstream. The hui was organised and facilitated by Mahaanui Kurataiao Ltd and attended by representatives from the following five Papatipu Rūnanga: Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke, Te Rūnanga o Koukourārata, Wairewa Rūnanga, Ōnuku Rūnanga, and Te Taumutu Rūnanga. Key discussion points included energy infrastructure, climate change adaptation and opportunities for solar in homes and marae. The hui provided valuable insights which have informed changes to the Strategic Framework. Efforts to engage with other Papatipu Rūnanga are ongoing.
26. A light-touch, targeted engagement approach has been developed to connect with community groups interested in energy, as well as disability, youth, and older persons' advocacy groups. The draft Strategic Framework was shared by email with approximately 20 groups on 13 November 2025, together with a short online survey to help guide feedback and an invitation to arrange a kōrero. Responses were received from three community groups – Community Energy Action, the Lyttelton Energy Transition Society, and Electrify Christchurch.
27. The project team is collaborating with Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan leads to ensure alignment between the regional energy work and the regional emissions

reduction plan. Coordinated engagement is being explored to increase efficiency, minimise duplication, and strengthen a coherent regional approach.

28. Engagement will continue to inform both the final Strategic Framework and the design of Stage 2.

Next steps

29. The key next steps for the regional energy workstream include:

- continuing engagement with mana whenua, community groups, and key sector stakeholders to inform refinement of the Strategic Framework and the design of Stage 2 (development of the regional energy roadmap / action plan).
- finalising the draft Strategic Framework and supporting report for presentation to the Mayoral Forum in May 2026.
- confirming the detailed scope, deliverables, and final budget for Stage 2.
- engaging an external consultant to lead or support development of the roadmap / action plan, with the aim of delivering a draft by June 2026.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Draft Regional Energy Strategic Framework (version 2)
- Attachment 2: Draft Strategic Framework supporting report – *Our Energy Future: A regional approach to energy in Waitaha | Canterbury*

VISION

Harnessing our unique strengths to support economic growth, empower communities, protect the environment and ensure the wellbeing of future generations

OUTCOMES



DRAFT

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Create regional benefits and foster innovation and investment

Build resilience and reliability

Enable choices and access

Embed a regenerative energy future

Decarbonise transport and industry

ENABLERS



COORDINATED REGIONAL GOVERNANCE



SKILLS AND WORKFORCE



POLICY, REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE



SHARED KNOWLEDGE, DATA AND INSIGHTS



FUNDING AND INVESTMENT



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

PRINCIPLES

1 CO-ORDINATED AND COLLABORATIVE
Support energy partnerships and align councils, iwi, industry, and communities around shared goals and coordinated action

2 AFFORDABLE AND EQUITABLE
Reducing hardship and supporting inclusive participation

3 TE TAIAO
A holistic view that prioritises the wellbeing and interconnection of Te Taiao. Relationships and Partnerships are grounded in Te Ao values

4 ADAPTATIVE AND ACTION ORIENTATED
Take a least regrets approach that balances urgency with flexibility as technologies and circumstances evolve

5 PLACE BASED
Ensure a place-based approach is integrated into energy system planning enabling local solutions

Our Energy Future:

A regional approach to energy in Waitaha
| Canterbury

This draft Strategic Framework has been developed with early input from stakeholders and will continue to evolve and be refined through ongoing engagement with stakeholders, communities, and mana whenua during early 2026.

Contents

A regional approach to energy in Canterbury	3
Strategic Framework	3
Interconnections.....	6
The Canterbury Energy Strategic Framework - plan on a page	7
Vision and Outcomes	8
Strategic Priorities	8
Strategic Priority 1 - Create Regional Benefits and Foster Innovation	8
Strategic Priority 2 - Build Resilience and Reliability	10
Strategic Priority 3 - Enable Choices and Access	11
Strategic Priority 4 - Embed a Regenerative Energy Future	12
Strategic Priority 5 - Decarbonise Transport and Industry	13
Enabling success	14
Guiding Principles	15
Where to next?.....	16

DRAFT

A regional approach to energy in Canterbury

Energy is a critical lifeline – it is the backbone of the economy and essential to our way of life. The regional approach to energy has been initiated through the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and its ‘Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025’. The plan recognises that energy security will be critical to support opportunities for the region. It also notes that renewable energy will become an increasingly important part of responding to climate change risks, and that Canterbury has an opportunity to be at the forefront of an energy transition to attract and retain talent, investment, and

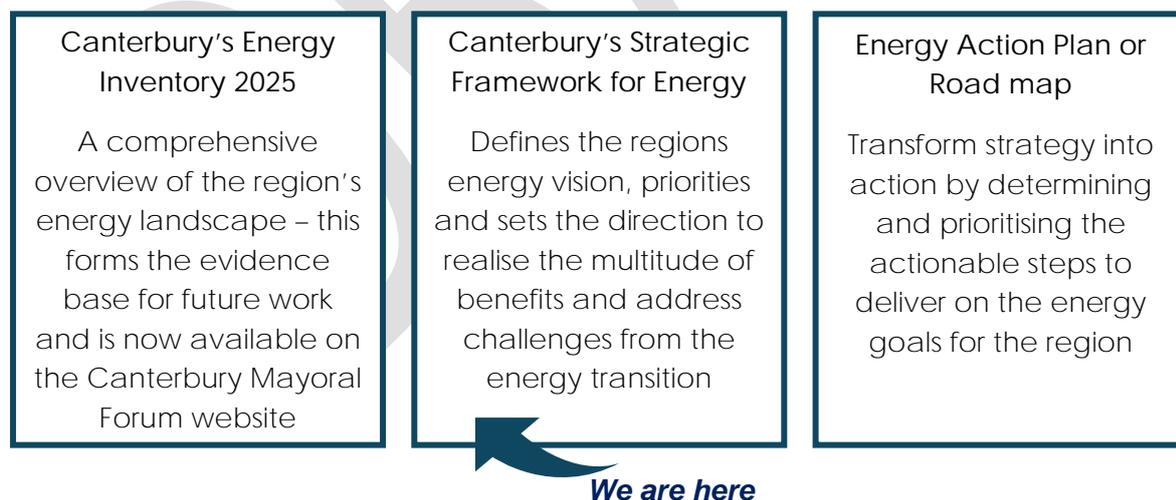
The Canterbury Mayoral Forum made a commitment to supporting the region to foster partnerships, to investigate barriers, harness opportunities to improve our energy security and systems in ways that maximise the benefits for our community, economy and environment

technologies.

The regional approach to energy includes development of:

Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework positions Canterbury as a leader in sustainable energy and recognises the region’s significant role in the wider South Island and New Zealand energy landscape. The Strategic Framework is presented as a high-level ‘plan on a page’, with additional detail outlined in this report



The Strategic Framework is not a static document – it will need to adjust and adapt to shifting public expectations, changing technologies, and increasing energy demands.

Drivers of the strategic framework

<p>The future of energy is changing</p> <p>New Zealand, like many countries, is at a major transition point in shifting to low- or zero-carbon energy. A regional plan will help Canterbury navigate this transition and respond in ways that best support our communities and economy.</p>	<p>A regional strategy for energy will help unlock the many benefits</p> <p>The energy transition brings substantial economic, environmental, and social opportunities. With a clear, committed plan Canterbury can capture these benefits locally and achieve the right balance between protecting the environment and promoting economic growth.</p>
<p>Energy and economic growth are intrinsically linked</p> <p>To support existing industry and attract new industry, energy is critical and there needs to be confidence in the region's direction and security of supply. This has significant impacts for job growth and prosperity of the region.</p>	<p>Coordination is essential</p> <p>Planning for our energy future needs to be coordinated with existing plans and strategies. Energy intersects with nearly every aspect of regional development – including planning, economic growth, climate adaptation and resilience, environmental sustainability, transport, industry, and urban development.</p>

Who we've connected with and what we've heard

The Strategic Framework has been shaped by the aspirations and perspectives of the energy sector, communities, iwi, industry, academia, and local and central government. It brings together diverse views and priorities and, while there isn't always consensus, there is a strong willingness to work together to strike the right balance to create a shared direction for Canterbury's energy future. Some of the key messages we heard from stakeholders that are important for setting the context are:

- Energy is broader than electricity – often these are conflated, but Canterbury's future requires a whole-system approach.
- Canterbury's energy superpower is hydropower – we have some of the largest hydro-electric schemes in the country and make a significant contribution to the national grid.
- Future energy planning must look beyond Canterbury – decisions here have impacts for neighbouring regions, the wider South Island, and New Zealand as a whole.
- An energy future for Canterbury needs to be enduring – stable, long-term settings are important to withstand political change and provide investment certainty.

Ngāi Tahu

Māori have interests across all parts of the energy system. The role of natural resources in Māori culture, values, and worldview (Te Ao Māori) is deeply rooted in the concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship), where land, water, and energy sources are entities with mauri (life force) that must be respected, sustained, and managed for future generations. Ensuring energy is reliable and resilient is particularly important for marae, which often serve as emergency response hubs for their communities. Alongside this, many Māori entities are actively exploring investment opportunities in renewable energy and emerging technologies, positioning iwi as key partners in shaping Canterbury's energy future.

To shape the future of energy in Waitaha Canterbury, concentrated efforts need to be undertaken to build positive and enduring relationships with mana whenua.

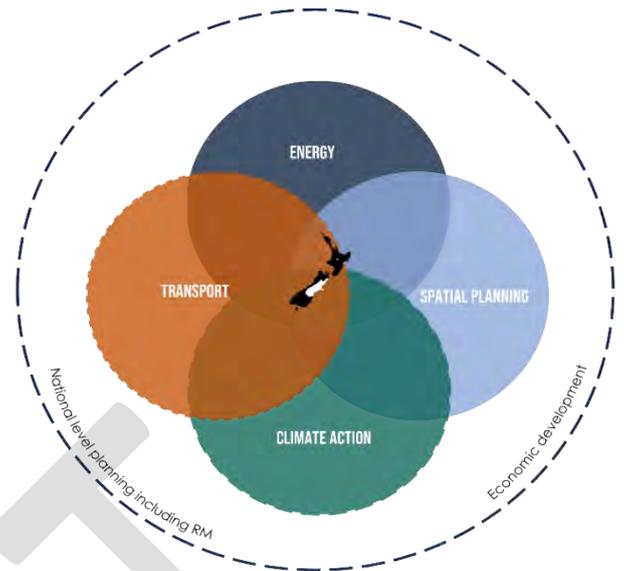
Ngāi Tahu holds rangatiratanga over more than 80% of Te Wai Pounamu South Island, including Waitaha Canterbury. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, established under the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996, is statutorily recognised as the representative tribal body of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. There are ten Papatipu Rūnanga in Canterbury who hold mana whenua over their respective takiwā:

- Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura
- Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga
- Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) Rūnanga
- Te Rūnanga o Koukourārata
- Ōnuku Rūnanga
- Wairewa Rūnanga
- Te Taumutu Rūnanga
- Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Te Rūnanga o Waihao
- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki

Early conversations with some rūnanga have helped to shape the draft Strategic Framework. Further and ongoing dialogue will remain important as the regional energy work progresses.

Interconnections

Energy is closely connected to other regional priorities related to transport, climate action and spatial planning. Progress in one area often accelerates outcomes in others, but the overlap and interconnection also highlight the need for coordinated prioritisation to maximise impact, avoid duplication, and ensure that limited resources deliver the greatest benefit for Canterbury's communities. Examples of these interconnections are outlined in Table 1.

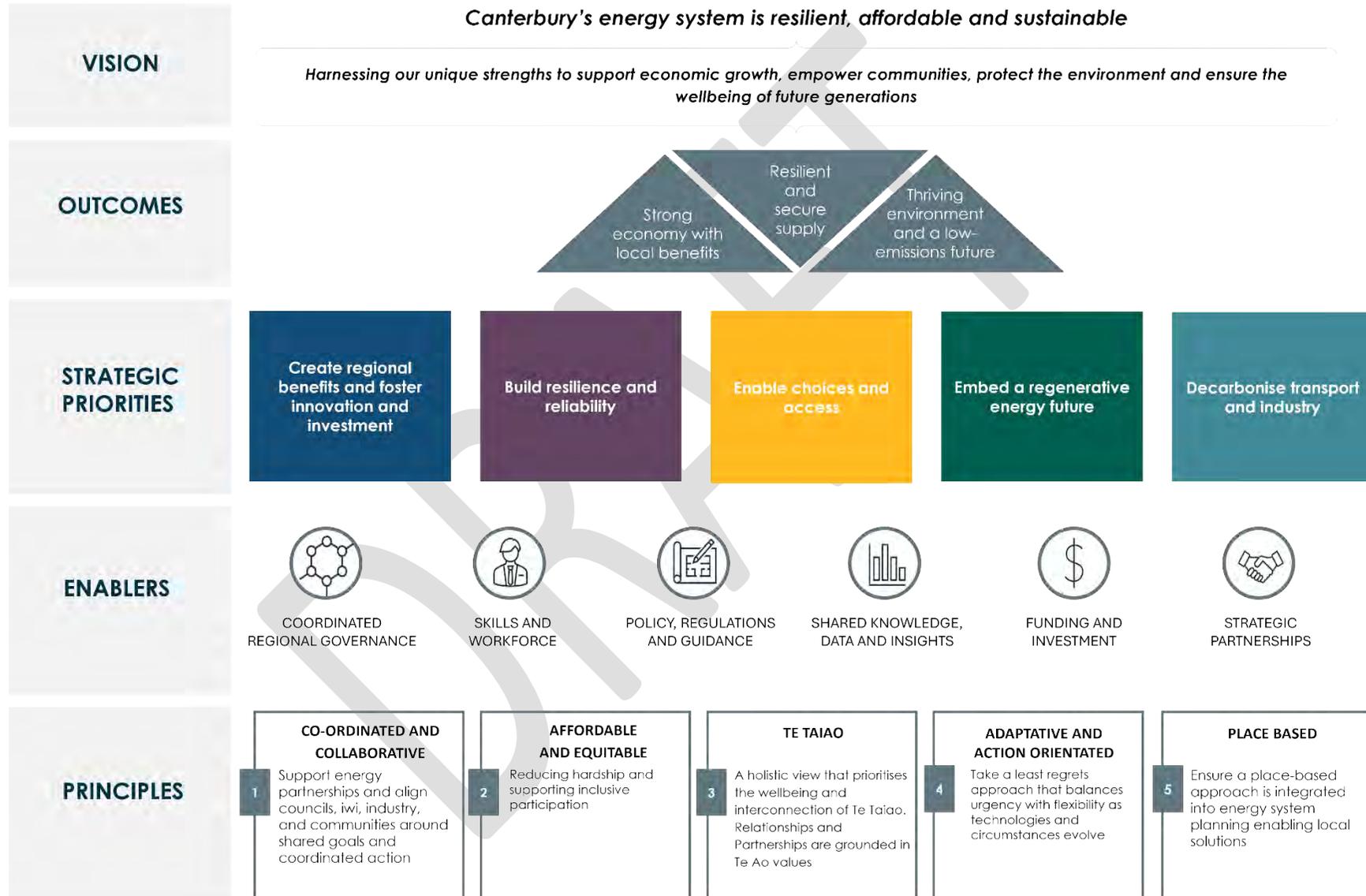


Energy and its interconnection with...	Key information
Climate action	The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is advancing regional emissions-reduction work through the <i>Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024–27</i> . ¹ One of the actions commits partners to working together across the region to build equitable, inclusive pathways, targets, and key actions that support New Zealand's global greenhouse gas emissions-reduction commitments. Progressing both workstreams in a way that is aligned will ensure that energy-focused actions are integrated with wider regional climate priorities.
Transport	The transition to a lower-emission transport system in Canterbury will have significant impacts on the demand for energy – increased demand for electricity, hydrogen, and other low-emission fuels will require supporting infrastructure and investment. The Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2024 – 34 supports the transition by prioritising intermodal freight, public transport, and active travel to reduce fossil fuel reliance. Looking ahead, industry will likely rely on a combination of electric, hydrogen and biofuel-powered trucks, ships and trains.
Spatial Plans	Regional spatial planning creates a significant opportunity to integrate energy planning into long-term land use decisions. Spatial plans could guide where renewable energy infrastructure (e.g. solar or wind farms, EV charging stations, community batteries) can be located. Spatial planning can also promote alignment between land use and energy demand and supply, particularly in areas with high distributed energy resources potential, reduce regulatory barriers, and support the establishment of Renewable Energy Zones. ²

¹ Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Kua tae te wā, Waitaha 2024-27

² Renewable Energy Zones: National Consultation 2022, Transpower, p.4.

The Canterbury Energy Strategic Framework - plan on a page



Vision and Outcomes

Canterbury's energy future is anchored in the strengths that define our region: rich natural resources, a culture of innovation, and a sector committed to working collaboratively to deliver for our communities. By building on these advantages, we can create an energy system that is **resilient, affordable, and sustainable** – positioning Canterbury to lead the way in a changing energy landscape.

Resilience is about building an energy system that can adapt and respond as technologies evolve, demand grows, and climate pressures intensify. It means designing infrastructure that can withstand shocks – from extreme weather to earthquakes and global disruptions. By broadening our generation mix, modernising our networks, and using energy more intelligently, we can strengthen supply across both urban and rural Canterbury and reduce our exposure to future risks.

Affordability means fair, stable energy costs and reducing energy hardship, ensuring the transition to renewables is inclusive and does not place undue pressure on low-income households. Affordable energy keeps businesses competitive, supports innovation and jobs, and ensures households have what they need to live well. Investment in distributed generation, demand-side tools, and smart infrastructure will help lower costs, expand access, and unlock regional opportunities through new industries and skilled employment.

Sustainability supports our long-term ambition – driving down emissions, protecting the environment, and enabling growth that supports future generations. It also means empowering communities to participate in and benefit from the energy transition through local projects, emerging technologies, and pathways for skills development. With our capacity to test and adopt new solutions, Canterbury is well positioned to lead in demonstrating innovative approaches that accelerate the shift to a low-emissions future.

This Strategic Framework provides a clear path forward for an energy system that supports a strong economy, vibrant communities, and a climate-resilient, low-emissions future for Canterbury.

Strategic Priorities

A clear, coordinated plan is needed that best positions the region to meet its energy needs now and into the future. Five strategic priorities have been identified as critical to achieving this. There is significant overlap between these priorities and progress in one area often strengthens the others. Advancing these priorities will require innovative funding and financing mechanisms, strong partnerships and education.

Strategic Priority 1 - Create Regional Benefits and Foster Innovation

What this means: *Prioritise investment, jobs, talent pipeline and economic opportunities that keep value in Waitaha Canterbury. Support research, training, new*

technologies, and smart infrastructure that drive economic opportunity and emissions reduction.

Why this matters:

**CANTERBURY IS
UNIQUELY
POSITIONED TO
LEAD NEW
ZEALAND'S
ENERGY
TRANSITION DUE
TO ITS ABUNDANT
NATURAL
RESOURCES—SUN,
WIND, AND
WATER—AND ITS
ROLE AS A MAJOR
CONTRIBUTOR TO
SOUTH ISLAND
ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY.**

- There are opportunities for regional relationships and public-private or private-private partnerships around energy that are collaborative not competitive – co-creating solutions and co-investing will provides the scale need to deliver
- Empowering local community solutions and grassroots initiatives can make a positive impact
- Building international partnerships and innovation ecosystems that create long-term regional benefits
- An energy ready workforce and pathway for energy jobs that will be needed now and, in the future, from field technicians to engineers. There is significant value in attracting and growing the right talent, the creation of 'green jobs' and providing options for those who want to work in place on their whenua
- University of Canterbury, Lincoln University, and Ara Institute all have energy expertise that support energy research, innovation and workforce development
- Emerging frameworks like Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) offer opportunities to coordinate energy development across districts, ensuring that Canterbury retains its regional advantages while embracing new technologies and investment models.³

³ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.40.

Strategic Priority 2 - Build Resilience and Reliability

What this means: Invest in infrastructure, innovation, and smarter networks to ensure Waitaha Canterbury's energy system is diverse, secure, flexible, and future-ready. Consider the energy needs for adaptation and resilience for emergency hubs, marae etc.

RESILIENCE IS A CRITICAL PRIORITY FOR CANTERBURY'S ENERGY SYSTEM, WHICH FACES INCREASING RISKS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURAL HAZARDS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE VULNERABILITIES.

Why this matters:

- The region's energy transmission and distribution networks are exposed to extreme weather, sea level rise, and seismic threats. Infrastructure interdependencies—particularly with transport and telecommunications—further heighten vulnerability.⁴
- Energy demand is changing - in terms of how much energy is needed, the energy source type, and when and where it's needed
- Everyone agrees that resilience and reliability matter and that coordinated action with clear leadership is needed.
- Local solutions for energy need to sit alongside and align with national frameworks.
- Investment in Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and distributed generation, such as rooftop solar, is essential to improve reliability and reduce dependence on centralised systems.⁵
- The Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is actively assessing risks to electricity infrastructure, and future planning must integrate climate resilience into all new energy developments.⁶

⁴ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.38.

⁵ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.39.

⁶ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.38.

Strategic Priority 3 - Enable Choices and Access

What this means: Empower communities, businesses, iwi and individuals through energy education and partnerships so everyone can participate in and benefit from an affordable, sustainable energy system – with expanded energy options and local energy initiatives.

IMPROVING ENERGY LITERACY, PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACCESS TO ENERGY OPTIONS IS ESSENTIAL FOR COMMUNITIES, BUSINESSES, AND IWI TO PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM CANTERBURY'S ENERGY SYSTEM.

Why this matters:

- Communities, businesses, and iwi face varying levels of access to energy knowledge and resources, which can limit participation in the energy transition and reduce opportunities to benefit from local energy solutions, lower costs, and innovative approaches.
- Rapid technological change and evolving energy markets are reshaping Canterbury's energy landscape, creating both opportunities and challenges for households, businesses, and communities.
- Cost, complexity, and limited awareness can prevent households and businesses from adopting efficient, renewable, or innovative energy solutions.
- Expanding access to diverse energy options and locally led initiatives empowers people and organisations to explore innovative, affordable, and sustainable energy solutions.
- Supporting access to local energy initiatives and building knowledge and skills will enable informed energy choices, helping ensure Canterbury's transition is inclusive, locally led, and innovative.

Strategic Priority 4 - Embed a Regenerative Energy Future

What this means: *Ensure energy choices safeguard the environment, restore ecosystems, reduce waste, and strengthen the circular economy with the right balance on sustainability and te taiao to enable sustainable and healthy options for future generations.*

**WE MUST EMBED
SUSTAINABILITY IN
ENERGY
DECISIONS TO
PROTECT
ECOSYSTEMS,
RESTORE
HABITATS, AND
ENSURE A
HEALTHY
ENVIRONMENT FOR
FUTURE
GENERATIONS.**

Why this matters:

- Canterbury is moving towards a more regenerative energy future, with growing investment in renewable generation, circular energy systems, and emerging technologies such as hydrogen and biofuels.
- Large-scale projects and innovative circular initiatives – including organic waste processing – are demonstrating how renewable generation and waste-to-energy solutions can strengthen the region's energy system.
- These technologies offer opportunities but also come with uncertainties, including supply-chain and implementation challenges that affect how quickly they can contribute to Canterbury's transition goals.
- Protecting te taiao, including valued landscapes, mahinga kai, and taonga species, remains essential as Canterbury expands its renewable and circular energy systems.
- A fair and inclusive transition is critical, so that the shift to new energy technologies and systems does not increase energy hardship and communities, businesses and iwi can access reliable, affordable energy.

Strategic Priority 5 - Decarbonise Transport and Industry

What this means: Accelerate the transition of Waitaha Canterbury's transport and industrial sectors to low-emission energy through multiple energy options, efficiency measures, and support for innovation and investment.

**SHIFTING
CANTERBURY'S
TRANSPORT AND
INDUSTRY TO LOW-
EMISSION ENERGY
OPENS
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR INNOVATION,
ECONOMIC
GROWTH, AND
PROGRESS
TOWARD A LOW-
CARBON FUTURE.**

Why this matters:

- Transport and industry are major energy users and contributors to emissions.⁷
- Canterbury is well-positioned to lead innovation, with local companies, research partners, and initiatives actively developing hydrogen technologies and exploring opportunities in synthetic aviation fuels and electric freight solutions.⁸
- Industrial process heat offers a major transition and decarbonisation opportunity, with coal-dependent operations able to reduce emissions through electrification, biomass, and heat pump technologies.⁹
- Emerging technologies offer new opportunities, but businesses and communities face cost, infrastructure, and knowledge barriers. Canterbury's renewable energy resources and grid capacity can support the shift if investments are targeted effectively.
- Collaboration is essential, bringing together industry, local and central government, iwi, and communities to coordinate action, share investment, and realise economic, social, and environmental benefits for the region.

⁷ With fossil fuels powering approximately 98% of the national vehicle fleet and 91% of Canterbury's regional fleet.⁷

⁸ For example Fabrum and the Hydrogen Aviation Consortium

⁹ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.27.

Enabling success

Below is a brief description of the enablers we expect will be needed to shape a regional approach to energy. This list and the descriptions are far from exhaustive – they will shift and change as needed.



COORDINATED
REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

COORDINATED REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Clear leadership, collaboration, and accountability across agencies to drive collective action.



SKILLS AND
WORKFORCE

SKILLS AND WORKFORCE

Building the capability and capacity needed to deliver and sustain future energy plans. Canterbury's energy future will be built by people – engineers, tradespeople, planners, and innovators.



POLICY, REGULATIONS
AND GUIDANCE

POLICY, REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

Ensuring supportive national and regional policy settings to enable timely, consistent energy action.



SHARED KNOWLEDGE,
DATA AND INSIGHTS

SHARED KNOWLEDGE, DATA AND INSIGHTS

Accessible, trusted information to guide decisions, track progress, and share learning.



FUNDING AND
INVESTMENT

FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

Targeted and coordinated investment to unlock opportunities and innovation.



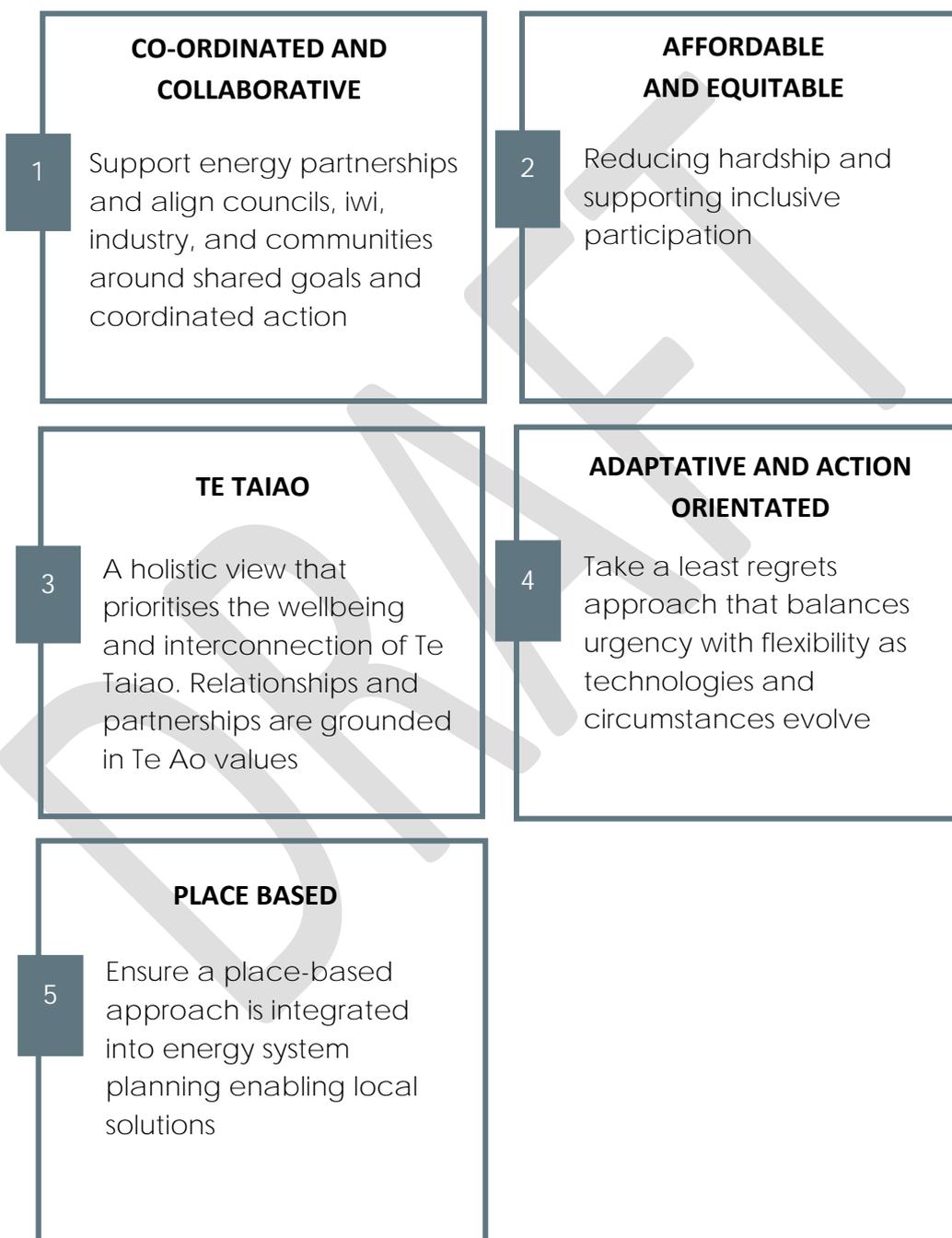
STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborative relationships across sectors and communities to accelerate progress, unlock innovation and facilitate scale.

Guiding Principles

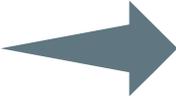
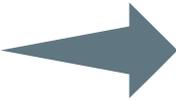
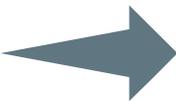
A resilient, affordable and sustainable energy system for Canterbury will be shaped not only by infrastructure and investment, but by the principles that guide our decisions. These principles reflect the values of our communities and the aspirations of our region. Together, these five principles underpin the way in which we will work collectively to build an energy system that supports the wellbeing and prosperity of people and places for generations to come.



Where to next?

Canterbury is still reliant on fossil fuels in the transport, industrial, and agriculture sectors. However, it is well-positioned for the energy transition, with abundant solar, wind, and hydro resources, particularly through the Waitaki hydro scheme.¹⁰

There is a broad set of opportunities for shaping the energy future in Canterbury and while this strategic framework sets the scene and identifies some of the priorities - it is the next step of developing the action plan/road map that will matter the most.

	<p>Building relationships and encouraging partnerships There is a willingness in Canterbury to work together in partnership to achieve shared goals, scale impact, attract investment and share the risk</p>
	<p>Determining actions We'll work together to co-develop the actions that sit underneath the strategic priorities with a focus on what ones we think will make the most positive difference for the region</p>
	<p>Bundling and streamlining We'll look at how to bundle together actions and streamline how we work towards the same or similar goals</p>
	<p>Prioritising action In alignment with the action-orientated principle, we'll need a focus on what we can get going with in the short term, as well as planning for the long-term.</p>

¹⁰ Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.13.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Nigel Bowen, Chair

Jesse Burgess, Working Group member, Environment Canterbury

Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress for the development of a scope of works for the regional deal proposal and seek approval of the draft terms of reference for the Regional Deal Governance and Working Groups.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **notes the update on progress for the development of a scope of works for a regional deal proposal**
2. **approves the draft terms of references for the Regional Deal Governance and Working Groups**

Background

2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) submitted an Expression of Interest in a future Regional Deal for Canterbury to the Minister for Local Government in December 2024, followed by a letter in February 2025 to state that this work is progressing.
3. A sub-group of the Canterbury Economic Development Forum (CEDF) developed the foundational document *Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready: Key pillars for Canterbury's Regional Deal*¹ proposal. This work was supported by a governance sub-group from the Mayoral Forum and included Business Canterbury. This document was approved by the Mayoral Forum in August 2025, subject to the inclusion of a fifth pillar – Innovation, and minor corrections.
4. Alongside this foundational work, the Mayoral Forum worked with Business Canterbury to engage the private sector on its vision for Canterbury. The draft document produced was the Canterbury Ambition and aspects of this was incorporated into the World-stage ready document.

¹[World-stage-ready-FINAL-Oct-2025.pdf](#)

Development of a Canterbury Regional Deal

5. The Mayoral Forum confirmed its intention to continue with the development of a Canterbury regional deal proposal at the November 2025 meeting.
6. A Governance Group meeting was held on 30 January 2026, after the two Mayoral Forum workshops, to discuss whether the development of a regional deal should be prioritised at this time and if so, what direction should be provided in the framing of a scope of works.
7. As in-kind resource has been committed until 30 June 2026, and no additional funding is required to develop the scope of works, it was agreed to proceed. It is recommended that the regional deal work be considered as an investment prospectus to support conversation across the political and private spectrum, and that can be actioned in a modular way, meaning sections can be progressed in time as priorities and funding shift.
8. The intention is to position Canterbury as best we can to a national and international audience.

Governance structure

Governance Group

9. A Governance Group has been nominated by the Mayoral Forum to support this work, led by Mayor Nigel Bowen (Chair), Mayors Dan Gordon, Liz McMillan, Marie Black, Lydia Gliddon and Chair Deon Swiggs, supported by Hamish Riach, Chair Economic Development Forum.
10. Draft terms of reference for the Governance Group (Attachment 1) have been prepared and endorsed by the Chief Executives Forum and the Governance Group for approval by the Mayoral Forum.

Working Group

11. Working Group members have been nominated by the CEDF to support the work. Nominated working group members are Martin Cudd (Christchurch NZ), Nigel Davenport (Venture Timaru), Jesse Burgess (Canterbury Regional Council), Heather Warwick (Enterprise North Canterbury), Peter Kearney (Kaikōura District Council), Murray Dickson (Mackenzie District).
12. Draft terms of reference for the Working Group (Attachment 2) have been prepared and endorsed by the Chief Executives Forum and Governance Group for approval by the Mayoral Forum.

Scope of work

13. It was agreed at the November 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting that the development of the scope of work is completed using in-kind resources from the Working Group, with Canterbury Regional Council holding the pen.

14. A structured, collaborative approach will be taken to develop the scope of work. For the most part this will be managed through the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance and Working groups, Economic Development and Chief Executives Forums, with final sign off by the Mayoral Forum.
15. As previously noted, the project scope would include, at a minimum, the following:
- project purpose
 - key deliverables
 - funding and resourcing
 - governance and reporting
 - communications and engagement
 - provision for endorsement/agreement from member councils
 - ways to progress workstreams independently so progress is still achieved, while balancing competing demands.
16. The development of a scoping document is expected to be completed by the end of this financial year. It is being developed, cognisant of the fact that no budget has been allocated post June 2026. The timeframe for future work will be considered as the scope is developed.

Budget

17. As noted at the November 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting, in-kind resourcing is available to develop the scoping document.
18. Member councils were asked to consider the 2026/27 funding request through their current annual plan processes. At the Chief Executives Forum meeting on 26 January a number of Chief Executives noted that they will not be in a position to include additional budget in their current annual plans.
19. Given this early indication that there will not be full budget available from 1 July 2026, the scope of works will be developed in a way that sections of work may be able to be delivered as budget and/or resource becomes available.

Risk assessment and legal compliance

20. There is no legal obligation to pursue a regional deal proposal.
21. If the project is discontinued, or significantly reduced in scope, there is a reputational risk for the Mayoral Forum. The Mayoral Forum has indicated to the Minister of Local Government that the region wants to progress a future regional deal with government, and work with the private sector.
22. There is a risk if this work does not proceed that Canterbury may be overlooked in future opportunities to capitalise on local and central government alignment, and opportunities

to position Canterbury as best we can to a national and international audience. This could manifest as a missed opportunity for significant investment in Canterbury's future.

23. It is recommended to continue the development of the scope of work in a way which allows progress, subject to budget and resource availability.

Communications & Engagement

24. A Communications & Engagement Plan will be considered during the scoping phase in early 2026.
25. Engagement will be required with a range of partners, sectors and stakeholders in the development of a future regional deal. This includes, but is not limited to, each Canterbury council, Papatipu Rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, health and tertiary education sectors, private sectors, key infrastructure providers, and the community.
26. An element of this engagement may be picked up through councils' usual engagement processes; however, other elements will be bespoke and will be included in detailed scoping for the project.
27. In time, as the scoping work progresses into development of a full proposal, specific engagement and endorsement from each Canterbury council will be sought. This will be incorporated into the scope of works and project plan for next steps.

Next steps

28. Draft terms of references for the Governance and Working Groups are finalised with approval from the Mayoral Forum.
29. Draft scope of work to be reported back to May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: draft terms of reference Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group
- Attachment 2: draft terms of reference Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Working Group

DRAFT - Terms of Reference

Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group

For review and input Chief Executives Forum 26 January 2026

Background and purpose

1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum agreed to the formation of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group in November 2025 to provide governance oversight to the development of a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal.
2. The Governance Group will provide a clear link to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum. Reporting lines are shown in figure 1.

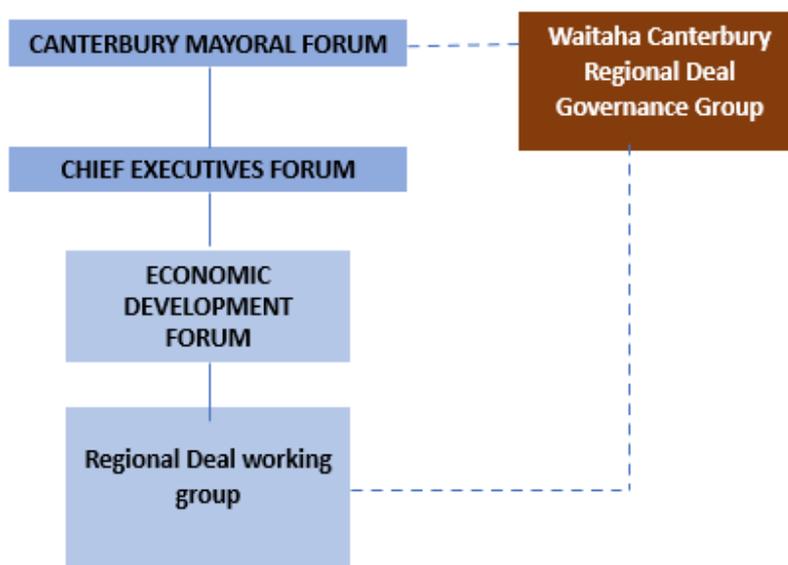


Figure 1: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group

3. The purpose of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group is to oversee and provide governance support to the development of the scope of work for a comprehensive regional deal proposal for Waitaha Canterbury, and the subsequent delivery of the inputs into the regional deal.
4. The Governance Group will be strong advocates regionally and within individual councils, for the development and delivery of a Waitaha Canterbury regional deal.

Scope

5. The scope of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group is to:
 - lead and support the development of the scope of work for a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal
 - lead and support the development of a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal
 - lead and support engagement across local authorities, private sector, mana whenua and communities
 - contribute insights from around Canterbury and provide strong buy-in from each council at every step of development of the regional deal proposal for Waitaha Canterbury

- be high-level super connectors, creating connections amongst councils and communities and between council governance and economic development staff
- encourage our councils to work together to enable transformational action in an inclusive and equitable way, including by sharing information and resources, and working in coordinated ways towards common goals
- provide consistent Canterbury-specific messaging across Territorial Authorities and the Regional Council with regards to development of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal

Membership and operation of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group

6. The members of the Group are nominated by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.
7. Membership will be chaired by a member of the Mayoral Forum and supported by the regional forums' secretariat. Membership also includes one representative of the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum.
8. The Group may invite other councillors, staff, or other agencies to present and participate as the Group considers appropriate.
9. Members may send alternatives in their place if they are unable to attend a meeting.
10. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group will seek representation from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and/or papatipu rūnanga on the group.
11. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group will meet as required, and at a minimum quarterly.
12. Where members of the group wish to share confidential information, they shall identify it as such, and the group agrees to keep this information confidential and will not disclose or use it for any purpose. Confidential information will not be noted in the meeting minutes.

Changes to the Terms of Reference

13. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group may recommend changes to the Terms of Reference to the Mayoral Forum for its consideration and approval.
14. The Group will review these terms of reference on a needs basis and inform the Mayoral Forum of any substantive recommended changes.

DRAFT - Terms of Reference

Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Working Group

For review and input Chief Executives Forum 26 January 2026

Background and purpose

1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum agreed to the formation of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Working Group in November 2025 to progress development of a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal.
2. The purpose of the Working Group is to manage the development of the scope of work for a comprehensive regional deal proposal for Waitaha Canterbury, and the subsequent delivery of the inputs into the regional deal. The working group will also support the provision of consistent information and advice to the community on the development of the regional deal proposal as it progresses.
3. The Working Group supports the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group, reporting to Canterbury Economic Development Forum and through to the Chief Executives Forum. Through the Chief Executives Forum, and the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group, the group will inform the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on the work and associated key messages

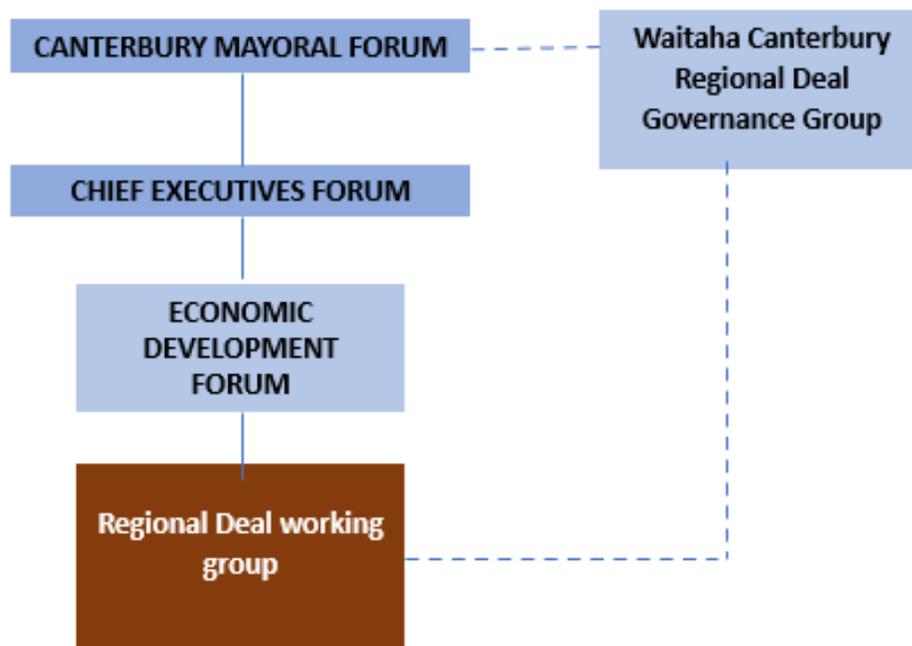


Figure 1: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Working Group reporting line

Scope

4. Matters subject to the Working Group's consideration include:
 - draft a scope of work for a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal for consideration by the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group
 - support the development of a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal proposal
 - sharing resources, learnings and information in the group

- reinforcing networks and connections to support the regional deal workstream
- reaching common ground and having a common understanding of opportunities for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal development
- establishing regional perspectives on the opportunities and challenges with a regional deal
- alignment in policy, approach and communications across the region
- collective advocacy to Central Government and others
- identifying and addressing emerging threats and opportunities
- considering opportunities for collective engagement with public/communities.

Membership and operation of the Forum

5. Membership will be drawn from the Canterbury Economic Development Forum and should demonstrate representation from across the region.
6. The working group may invite/second representation from outside local government, with the approval of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group.
7. The working group may invite/second specialist expertise from outside the Economic Development Forum, if necessary, with the approval of the Chair of the Economic Development Forum.
8. Representatives will be able to engage and influence across their organisation on this complex and significant issue. They will represent a cross-organisational view on inputs into a regional deal proposal.
9. Membership should ensure that there is organisational representation from both territorial authorities and the regional council.
10. The group may allocate an issue(s) to a sub-group(s), which may include other staff, or another appropriate collaborative grouping, to consider and develop a response(s). Sub-group(s) will periodically update the Regional Deal Working Group.
11. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Working Group will be selected from the membership and the appointment will be confirmed by the Chair of the Canterbury Economic Development Forum.
12. Secretariat support for the working group will be provided by the regional forums secretariat
13. The Working Group will meet in person as required, at least quarterly, to:
 - refine the work programme to reflect feedback from the Governance Group, Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums
 - report progress on Working Group work programme items, and review where necessary
 - allocate responsibility for items in the work programme
 - share knowledge and identify emerging opportunities and threats
 - determine any recommended changes in key messaging

14. The Working Group will maintain regular electronic exchanges to consider issues and monitor progress and to exchange ideas.
15. The Working Group Chair shall report quarterly to the Canterbury Economic Development Forum.

Decision Making and Representation

16. The group has no decision-making ability. It will develop advice to be presented to the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance Group. Advice will also be provided to the Canterbury Economic Development Forum for agreement to go to the Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums.

Changes to the Terms of Reference

17. The Working Group may recommend changes to the Terms of Reference to the Economic Development Forum, to be agreed by the Chief Executives Forum.
18. The Economic Development Forum will review the Terms of Reference every three years for agreement by the Chief Executives Forum.

DRAFT

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Hamish Dobbie, Chief Executives Forum

Chief Executives Forum report

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to report on the work of the regional forums since November 2025.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. receives the quarterly report from the Chief Executives Forum
2. notes updates on work under way or completed on the key actions in the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025.

Regional Forums activity

2. Since the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's November 2025 meeting:
 - the Communications and Engagement Forum met online on 5 December
 - the Corporate Forum met online on 8 December
 - the Operations Forum met in person on 8 December
 - the Economic Development and Policy Forums met in person on 12 December
 - the Chief Executives Forum met in person (hybrid option was available) on 26 January 2026.

Chief Executives Forum

3. Key agenda items discussed at the 26 January meeting included:
 - legislative reform– resource management, simplifying local government and rates capping, noting the significant impact this will have on councils, identifying opportunities for collaboration and establishing a process for preparing Mayoral Forum submissions
 - the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury, noting that the priorities and timing of the action plan need to be reviewed in light of legislative reform
 - next steps for regional spatial planning, noting the implications and requirements of the new Resource Management Bills, and the importance of establishing

governance and working groups with appropriate membership and terms of reference

- an update on the Canterbury Water Management Strategy, including the work under way across the region to implement the strategy
 - the Canterbury Climate Change Partnership Plan, including
 - the implementation progress report for October to December 2025 and accompanying budget summary
 - noting the procurement of a regional natural and climate hazard and risk data inventory analysis, and request for information to test the market and complete the scoping of action 1.1, a regional natural hazard risk visualisation tool for use by councils to support climate adaptation and resilience planning
 - receiving the Emissions Reduction - Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment summary report, noting the completion of sub-action 2.2 with this deliverable
 - noting the analysis of the recently published National Adaptation Framework, confirming its strong alignment with the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan and reinforcing that the Plan remains well positioned to deliver on its objectives
 - noting that the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group will initiate a review of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan to ensure alignment with the 2027–2037 Long-Term planning processes and will seek approval of the scope and approach for the review in early 2026
 - a Canterbury Regional Deal update, noting progress on development of a scope of works, and the draft terms of reference for the governance and working groups.
 - an update on the Canterbury Energy workstream, including the draft Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report, targeted engagement with stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups, options for additional funding contributions from external parties, and the need to link with regional spatial planning work
 - a decision to disband the Canterbury Public Records Act Executive Sponsors working group and extend the remit for Information Management to the Chief Information Officers working group
 - approval of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum’s Communications and Engagement Plan 2026-2028
 - an update from the Regional Public Service Commissioner
 - an update on the December Regional Forum meetings, including an update on the workstream tracker and the 2025 – 2026 regional forums budget
 - the draft Mayoral Forum agenda for 20 February 2026.
4. Chief Executives will meet next on 4 May 2024.

Triennium strategic workplan

5. The *Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025* highlights nine specific actions against the three priority issues of sustainable environmental management, shared prosperity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. A strategic workplan has been developed to monitor progress on the actions and will be updated with high-level commentary and reported quarterly to the Mayoral Forum (see attachment 1).
6. To support the strategic workplan, the Chief Executives Forum (CEF) uses a workstream tracker to track and report on progress of the range of initiatives under way that sit under each of the Plan for Canterbury's action areas. The workstream tracker also tracks progress against key projects and programmes from the regional forums. The workstream tracker is updated and reported quarterly to the CEF.
7. The strategic workplan and workstream tracker are both living documents with the ability for additional items to be added as issues for regional collaboration arise.
8. This will be the final time the strategic workplan for the 2023-2025 Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury will be reported to the Mayoral Forum. A new workstream tracker and strategic workplan will be developed to report on the 2026-2028 Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury. Any outstanding activities from the 2023-2025 tracker and workplan will be transferred to the new documents as appropriate.

Attachment

- Attachment 1: Strategic workplan

Canterbury Mayoral Forum strategic workplan 2023-2025					Updated 5 February 2026 Refreshed Plan 23 February 2024
1	Continued support of the Te Uru Kahika - Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa business case for permanent co-investment from the Government in river management for flood protection	Sustainable environment Shared Prosperity Climate Change	Raised with Ministers at Wellington meeting 11 May 2023 and included in briefings to Ministers sent 1 March 2024 Hosted Minister Paterson in Canterbury, which included visits to the sub-regions and river areas	Government provides permanent co-investment for flood protection	The Government confirmed co-investment to enhance the resilience of flood-prone communities in Budget 2024, which included \$5.7 million for Waitaha Canterbury. A further \$97M was announced in October 2025, \$21.5M of this committed to Waitaha Canterbury
2	Advocate with the Government for immigration and skills policies that work for Canterbury	Shared prosperity	Raised with Ministers at Wellington meeting 11 May 2023 and included in briefings to Ministers 1 March 2024. Economic Development Forum members to report quarterly on Labour Market Intelligence to identify evidence to support Forum advocacy	Government adopts a more regional approach to immigration policies	
3	Advocate with Government to review transport funding legislation to better empower local authorities to develop local funding solutions	Shared prosperity	Included in briefings to Ministers 1 March 2024 Included in joint RTC/CMF submission on GPS Land Transport 2024 Discussed at meeting with Minister of Transport in July 2024 RTC Transport Funding Project reporting to RTC Feb 2025 and continuing to progress	Ability for local councils to access additional transport funding	
4	Continue oversight of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy	Sustainable environment	Updates provided to Mayoral Forum (item 5.4) Review of Zone Committees completed, Reported to May 2025 CMF	CWMS remains fit for purpose and the region retains a shared understanding of water management issues	CWMS Zone Committees reviewed and CWMS Local Leadership Groups introduced - end 2025/beginning 2026
5	Support the Biodiversity Champions as the key conduit for a shared regional approach to biodiversity, facilitating work across the region on the revitalisation of the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy, and the development of a regional biodiversity monitoring framework	Sustainable environment	Included in briefings to Ministers 1 March 2024. The Biodiversity Champions continue to meet quarterly and have been actively involved in progressing the revitalisation of the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy (CBS), participating in a series of collaborative workshops.	A revitalised CBS was adopted by Environment Canterbury in September 2025. Following regional adoption, each of the Territorial Authorities will be able to consider adopting the CBS themselves and aligning their biodiversity actions.	It is expected that implementing the CBS and progressing shared approaches to biodiversity monitoring would be the focus of the Biodiversity champions into the next triennium
6	Continue to encourage, support and advocate for research and investment in diversifying and adding value to our agricultural production	Shared prosperity	Raised with Ministers at Wellington meeting 11 May 2023 and included in briefings to Ministers 1 March 2024	Investment in research and technology for the pastoral sector reflects the sector's importance to Canterbury and New Zealand's economy	
7	Develop a regional housing strategy that will identify the range of housing issues affecting communities across the region and a pathway forward to improve them	Shared prosperity	Draft Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan for CMF approval Aug 2025	The Forum has clarity on housing issues affecting communities in Waitaha/Canterbury and understands pathways for improvement	Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan completed Clear actions for advocacy and action from the CMF going forward
8	Oversee a Canterbury-wide climate change partnership plan, which will confirm a collaborative vision for regional adaptation planning, an 'urgency assessment' to support prioritising climate actions, and a funding plan laying out a regional/aligned approach for accessing finance for climate actions in Canterbury	Climate change	Partnership Plan approved August 2024, launched 13 December 2024. Implementation progress provided at Item 5.5	Completion of the Climate Change Partnership Plan and agreement on action planning	Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan completed Funding agreed and approved Implementation of action planning underway
9	Support the region to foster partnerships to investigate barriers and harness opportunities to improve our energy security and systems in ways that maximise benefits for our community, economy, and environment	Shared prosperity Environmental Sustainability Climate Change	Regional Energy Inventory completed, next steps in development of a Regional Energy Strategy are underway (Item 5.6)	Canterbury Regional Energy Inventory to support the development of a Regional Energy Strategy	

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Secretariat

Mayoral Forum Activities and Engagements December 2025 – February 2026

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of activities, engagements, and correspondence since the last Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting on 20 November 2025.

Recommendation

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **receives the update on Canterbury Mayoral Forum activities, engagements and correspondence since the Forum's last meeting on 28 November 2025.**

Background

2. A number of activities, meetings, submissions and correspondence occur between Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) meetings. This paper summarises these in one place for the Mayoral Forum's convenience.

Meetings and engagements

3. The following meetings and engagements were held, in addition to the regular quarterly meeting schedule:
 - Mayoral Forum workshop 23 January 2026 - legislative reform - Simplifying Local Government proposal, Resource Management reform, Emergency Management Bill, Rates Target Model proposals
 - Mayoral Forum meeting with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu on 29 January 2026 to discuss the Government's Simplifying Local Government proposal
 - Mayoral Forum workshop 30 January 2026 - open floor discussion on regional spatial planning requirements, submission content for Simplifying Local Government and Rates Target Model proposals, review of 2023-2025 Plan for Canterbury

Correspondence

4. Incoming correspondence:
 - Letter from Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality (October 2025), acknowledging the Mayoral Forums feedback on the Tourism Growth Roadmap
 - Letter from Business Canterbury (December 2025), sharing an early indication of the position Business Canterbury is likely to take in its submission the Government's Simplifying Local Government proposal
 - Invitation from Justin Tipa, Kaiwhakahaere Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (January 2026) for Mayoral Forum members to meet with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu to discuss the Government's Simplifying Local Government proposal

Submissions

5. Submissions lodged since the November 2025 meeting include:
 - [Rates Target Model for New Zealand](#) 4 February 2026
 - Resource Management Reform Bills 13 February 2026
 - Emergency Management Bill (No 2) 2025 (joint with CDEM) lodged 13 February 2026
6. Submissions are generally available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website: www.canterburymayors.org.nz.

Briefings

7. Mayor Nigel Bowen (Chair CMF) and Hamish Dobbie (Chair, CE Forum) provided a briefing to Selwyn District Council on the value of the Mayoral Forum and working together for Canterbury (Nov 2025)
8. Mayor Nigel Bowen (Chair CMF) and Maree McNeilly (Regional Forums Secretariat) provided a briefing to Ashburton District Council (February 2026)

Media Release

9. Media releases since the November 2025 meeting include:
 - [First meeting of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum 2025-2028 term](#)
 - [Mayoral Forum concerned about rates cap proposal](#)

Media releases are generally available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website: www.canterburymayors.org.nz.

Attachments

- Correspondence
 - Attachment 1: letter from Hon Louise Upston
 - Attachment 2: letter from Business Canterbury
 - Attachment 3: letter from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Submissions
 - Attachment 4: Rates Target Model
 - Attachment 5: Resource Management Reform bills (see item 2.1)
 - Attachment 6: Emergency Management Bill (No 2) 2025 (see item 2.1)
- Media releases
 - Attachment 7: First meeting of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum 2025-2028 term
 - Attachment 8: Mayoral Forum concerned about rates cap proposal (see item 2.1)

Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector
Minister for Disability Issues
Minister for Social Development and Employment
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
Deputy Leader of the House



Nigel Bowen

Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Mayor Timaru District Council

nigel.bowen@timdc.govt.nz

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz

COR24573

Dear Nigel

Thank you for your recent letter and for the thoughtful feedback on the Tourism Growth Roadmap. It was a pleasure meeting with you and the members of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum earlier this year. I greatly value the ongoing dialogue and partnership with local government leaders across the Canterbury region.

Your letter highlights the critical importance of ensuring that tourism growth is both sustainable and beneficial to local communities.

The Tourism Growth Roadmap outlines the Government's plan to grow the value of tourism exports, with a goal to double them by 2034 as part of broader efforts to support economic growth. The Roadmap supports my goals to grow international tourism and increase the number of Kiwis in tourism and hospitality jobs, both of which contribute to economic growth.

I appreciate your emphasis on the need to balance demand-side initiatives with adequate investment in infrastructure and community capacity. I understand that high visitor volumes, especially in smaller Canterbury districts during peak seasons, are putting pressure on local infrastructure and social licence. That is why my officials are currently reviewing the overall tourism system to ensure it remains resilient, adaptable and capable of supporting sustainable growth. This includes helping regions invest in ways that reflect local priorities and addressing pressures on mixed-use infrastructure. The review also looks at how funding across central and local government and industry can better support a sustainable tourism system that is responsive to local, regional and national priorities. As part of this process, officials have engaged with a range of local councils across the country, including Mackenzie and Christchurch, to better understand regional challenges and opportunities.

Another key focus of the System Review is to ensure New Zealand's regional tourism system is well-equipped to deliver a high-quality, coordinated visitor experience. This includes exploring stable and sustainable funding arrangements, and ensuring mixed-use infrastructure is maintained to support international visitor experiences. I support Canterbury's emphasis on delivering quality for both locals and visitors, and I have asked

officials to consider how central government can better support regions facing infrastructure pressure.

Your recommendations regarding the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) are appreciated, and the review will help us understand how IVL revenue and other funding mechanisms can better balance national priorities with local needs.

I want to acknowledge the Canterbury region's investment decisions and support that have enabled key infrastructure developments in Christchurch such as Te Pae Convention Centre, One New Zealand Stadium, and the Sheraton Hotel. These assets position Christchurch to attract and retain more visitors, and I fully support the Forum's ambition to leverage them to encourage longer stays and increased visitor spend. These investments are being actively backed by wider efforts such as recent increased funding for Tourism New Zealand to bring more international visitors to New Zealand.

The Government is focused on supporting local government efforts and aligning national priorities to help regions deliver high-quality visitor experiences.

Your feedback is an important part of shaping the future direction of New Zealand's tourism system. I look forward to our continuing conversations across tourism and local government issues.

Sincerely



Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality



Thursday, 18 December 2025

Nigel Bowen, Marie Black
 Canterbury Mayoral Forum
 PO Box 345
 Christchurch 8140

By email: nigel.bowen@timdc.govt.nz, marie.black@hurunui.govt.nz
 cc: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz

Dear Nigel and Marie

RE: DRAFT POSITION ON 'SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT' CONSULTATION

I'm writing to share an early indication of the position Business Canterbury is likely to take in its submission on the Government's 'Simplifying Local Government' consultation. We are doing this in the spirit of partnership and in recognition of the work we've done together on the Canterbury Ambition to date. We believe these proposals could influence that work on the Canterbury Ambition - or at least create barriers or perceived barriers to achieving outcomes quickly.

As the Canterbury Mayoral Forum considers its own response to the proposals, we would welcome the opportunity for the feedback below to feed into that. This would be to ensure our voices and key messages on this consultation are aligned for the Canterbury region, and reflect the work we have done over the last 18 months to bring together local government and the private sector voice.

Our thinking reflects conversations with businesses and insights from our recent Quarterly Canterbury Business Survey on local government reform.

Summary of Position

Business Canterbury's position and submission will focus on the outcomes we believe any simplification measures should deliver. We do not intend to take a position on whether Combined Territory Boards or Regional Reorganisation Plans are the best mechanisms to simplify local government. Similarly, we will not take a firm stance on rates capping or the proposed 4% threshold.

Our key messages include the need for:

- Consistency across districts in regulatory interpretation and enforcement.
- A shift toward councils acting as enablers of economic activity, rather than primarily enforcement agencies.
- Shared services that create efficiencies and reduce costs for businesses and ratepayers.

Aligned with the Canterbury Ambition, we will also stress the importance of investing ahead of demand in infrastructure. Any rates cap must not compromise the ability to fund critical projects.

We also intend to comment on and acknowledge the challenge ahead for local government. There's a lot for councils to work through at pace, alongside other reform facing local government, and that needs to be balanced with the ability to focus on core service delivery which will be important as the economy starts to gather steam going into next year.

As mentioned, this is draft positioning, but we do not expect any substantive changes between now and the due date for submissions in February. Please reach out to Tait Dench (taitd@businesscanterbury.co.nz) with any questions or feedback in the meantime.

I hope you manage to find some time to relax and unwind over the Christmas period and look forward to hearing back from you and engaging again in the New Year.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leeann Watson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leeann Watson
Chief Executive Officer | Business Canterbury

Business Canterbury
57 Kilmore Street, Christchurch
0800 50 50 96 | 03 366 5096
info@businesscanterbury.co.nz | businesscanterbury.co.nz



23 January 2026

Nigel Bowen
Chair
Canterbury Mayoral Forum
nigel.bowen@timdc.govt.nz

Kai kā koromatua o te rohe o Waitaha, tēnā koutou,

RE: SIMPLIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kāi Tahu and our Papatipu Rūnaka have longstanding relationships with local government entities across the Te Waipounamu, and an enduring interest in the functions that local government exercises in service of our communities and the environment.

In the context of the Government's proposal to 'simplify local government,' and a busy 2026 ahead of us, I see real value in meeting with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for a high-level discussion to begin the year.

In service of that idea, I would like to invite the Forum to meet with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu leadership at our office in Christchurch. Details as follows:

Time & Date: Thursday 29 January – 4pm – 6pm

Venue: Te Whare o Te Waipounamu – 15 Show Place, Addington, Christchurch

Parking: Visitor parking on-site

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to an opportunity to discuss this important kaupapa with the Forum.

Nāhaku noa, nā

Justin Tipa
Kaiwhakahaere
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life, for all.

4 February 2026

Rates Target Model for New Zealand
Department of Internal Affairs
WELLINGTON

By email: ratescapping@dia.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou

Canterbury Mayoral Forum Submission: Rates target model for New Zealand

Introduction

1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission on the rates target model for New Zealand.
2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum comprises the mayors of the ten territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council, supported by our Chief Executives. The purpose of the Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.
3. All Canterbury councils actively participate in the Forum: the Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council, and the Canterbury Regional Council.
4. The following submission on the rates target model for New Zealand has been developed with input from across Canterbury councils and focusses on matters of general agreement, noting that some Canterbury councils will also be making individual submissions.

General Comments

5. The Mayoral Forum recognises and is supportive of the Government's objectives to improve system performance, strengthen accountability, lift economic productivity, and deliver better long-term outcomes for communities. The Mayoral Forum acknowledges that aspects of the current system are under pressure and that change is required to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

6. The scale and pace of change across the reform programme will require careful management, and significant investment from communities and councils to transition to new statutory responsibilities. This submission should also be read alongside the Mayoral Forum's submissions on the broad suite of reforms currently under consultation; including the Planning Bill, Natural Environment Bill, Simplifying Local Government, and the Emergency Management Bill.
7. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about the impact of a rates cap policy being implemented at the same time as these other reforms. The transitional, compliance and cumulative costs of these reforms are substantial and must be funded or offset for a rates cap to be viable.
8. We acknowledge the Government is looking at many ways in which council rates can be reduced, and efficiency and accountability improved. We agree with this sentiment, and it is something each council scrutinises every three years in creating its Long-Term Plans, and yearly through its Annual Plan processes.
9. We note the Rates Target Model proposal is light on detail and include in this submission key concerns and suggestions for the Government to consider in the detailed design work ahead of Cabinet decisions.
10. We reject the notion that our councils have been fiscally irresponsible. As we stated in our submission on the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill, the biggest contributors to rising rates are the impact of inflation related to infrastructure and building activity, audit fees, and unfunded policy mandates issued to local councils by central government.
11. The Mayoral Forum supports a strong partnership between central and local government and appreciates opportunities to work proactively and collaboratively for the benefit of our communities and New Zealand. A more deliberate partnership can support greater understanding of the impacts on funding and delivery of services and reduce the challenges that come with the u-turning of each new government, and the subsequent funding requirements of implementing new policy.
12. The following highlights the key areas we believe need to be addressed.

Key points

13. We appreciate the Government's intention is to implement a rates cap that helps alleviate household spending pressures, while acknowledging that some increase is required to maintain council service levels.
14. We have significant concerns with the proposed model and the limited analysis that accompanies it. We think the solution to the issue is to establish a funding model for activities provided by local government that can be sustained for generations.
15. A statutory rates cap is a significant and enduring intervention. International experience shows such caps are difficult to unwind and can have unintended, long-term consequences for asset condition, debt, and intergenerational equity. Any proposed model must consider unintended ramifications and provide sufficient flexibility to swiftly manage unforeseen circumstances.
16. Transitional funding and cumulative costs of the suite of local government reforms need to be considered. Funding these changes conflicts with, and distracts from, the intent of the Local Government (System Improvements) Bill to focus on core services.
17. The combined impacts of a rates cap, resource management changes, 'Simplifying Local Government' reforms, and the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill must be transparently evaluated and communicated.
18. A rates cap policy should be accompanied by other central government support measures, such as paying rates on government properties, and removing or refunding (in full or in part) GST on rates.

19. A rates cap based on an inflation measure must accurately reflect local government cost pressures. The Consumer Price Index is not a robust method for measuring council inflation. The Producer Price Index or Capital Goods Price Index should be included within the methodology.
20. Gross Domestic Product should not be used to measure demand for council services. Using local indicators would provide a more accurate and evidence-based way to assess growth demand for council services.
21. Local government has a mandate in the Local Government Act to achieve outcomes for the wider community and households. As an example, this is evidenced through the provision of public transport and flood protection works, where the benefit is not specific to households. As Local Government Minister Hon Simon Watts stated in his announcement of the rates cap proposal, it appears to focus on 'essential services like rubbish collection, council roads maintenance and the management of parks and libraries' which falls short of covering the vital regional functions.
22. A rates cap policy must be flexible enough to reflect local conditions (such as levels of growth, hazard exposure, age of assets, and debt levels), with transparent criteria for variations, and must work with the financial tools available to councils. Certain 'permitted activities' should be expedited separately to general variation applications, such as natural hazard events.
23. Councils manage long life assets and debt is a significant funding tool used by councils, to both fund and assist in attending to intergenerational equity. Capping revenue generation on councils will give rise to credit agencies reconsidering credit ratings. The fallout of this likely to be an increase in interest rates, which will need to be funded through council rates.
24. We suggest allowing councils to continue to fully fund depreciation through rates. This could be achieved through a carve-out from the rates cap policy. This would also recognise that a rates cap will reduce a council's debt headroom.
25. A rates cap must be based on the rates increase for existing ratepayers, not the nominal increase, to avoid disincentivising growth and undermining operational and capital requirements.
26. We have concerns as to how the proposal could impact jointly funded projects, such as transport, flood protection, and pest management. The proposed rates cap is likely to reduce councils' ability to co-invest at scale with central government. This could mean a risk of foregoing these core services, funding it at the expense of other services, or requiring the Government to increase its share.
27. We have concerns that the proposed model focuses on providing for local council core services and does not appropriately consider regional-scale functions, such as flood protection, public transport delivery, and biosecurity. Nor does it differentiate between:
 - city and district councils, which have single rating boundaries
 - regional councils, which span multiple territorial authority boundaries with widely varying property values, populations, and service use.
28. Appreciating the Simplifying Local Government proposal is also out for consultation, and we may find change in the structure of local government in Canterbury in the future, these real time implications for regional functions must be considered now.
29. It is noted in the consultation letter from the Department of Internal Affairs that the Government acknowledges that 'councils may not be able to deliver all services they currently provide, as they will need to prioritise core services.' We think there is a misconception of how much is 'left over' once core services are covered.
30. Introducing a rates cap will still leave councils with the challenge of funding core services. Trade-offs may need to be made in the provision of infrastructure, particularly as the deficit has not been addressed yet and the 'steady state,' as mentioned in the proposed rates target formula, not yet achieved. Councils may need to consider reduced service across some functions, and/or an increase in user pays in order to keep within the rates cap.

31. For households, it is possible any savings achieved with a rates cap may be offset with increased costs elsewhere, push essential maintenance, operations, and renewal of infrastructure to future generations, and put limits on the community provisions that they most value.
32. The overseas experience has demonstrated that there are considerable risks in implementing a rates cap policy, and it is important to fully understand these before implementation. The following discussion expands further on some of these key points.

Impact of central government policy on local government

33. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about the impact of central government policies on local government, especially those that impact rates. Councils are increasingly being expected to deliver infrastructure and shoulder the responsibility for implementing the policy decisions of central government without effective funding or transitional support, directly shifting the cost to ratepayers – a point noted by the Productivity Commission in its local government funding and financing report.¹
34. Councils are also required to meet the cost of the many regulatory functions we undertake, which are functions that councils do not have discretion over, while responding to significant changes to resource management, reorganisation of the sector, and other reforms directly impacting local government.
35. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about the impact of a rates cap policy being implemented at the same time the Government is requiring us to reconsider the form of local government through the ‘Simplifying Local Government’ reforms, adapt to the reforms outlined in the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill, and manage the significant changes to the resource management system. The transitional, compliance and cumulative costs of these reforms are substantial and must be funded or offset for a rates cap to be viable.
36. Our councils are required to meet these costs, which has an impact on finances and resources. Unfunded mandates combined with a rates cap are untenable. Moreover, when the government imposes unfunded mandates, it effectively absolves itself from exercising the fiscal restraint it is seeking to impose on councils.
37. We ask that the government considers the impact of any future policies that are unfunded and the impact that this will have on our councils. Implementing a rates cap policy while requiring councils to spend money on policies it has not planned for undermines the ability to be fiscally responsible. Regulatory Impact Statements should quantify the impact of policies on local government and rates, and central government should not introduce new unfunded costs to councils while simultaneously constraining council revenue.
38. Updating our plans and processes to meet the new resource management legislation is likely to drive costs to communities and ratepayers, as well as councils, over several years. Restructuring local government in Canterbury will additionally incur significant costs, as the Auckland experience of local government reform demonstrated. The government has signalled councils should absorb these costs, which is inconsistent with the objective to deliver core services and ease the ratepayer burden.

Scope and timing

39. If a rates cap is introduced, it should apply to the rate increase for existing ratepayers, rather than a nominal rates increase. This approach properly accounts for population growth and the associated operational and capital requirements. A rates cap on the nominal rates increase risks disincentivising growth because increases in population could mean councils are required to increase operational and capital expenditure to match the growth but would not have a means of funding it (without further decreasing services for existing ratepayers).

¹ <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-05/pc-inq-igff-final-report-local-government-funding-and-financing.pdf>

40. The Government intends to align the implementation of the rates cap policy with the next Long-Term Plan (LTP) process. The advice we have received is that the rates cap legislation is planned to be enacted by December 2026, with the transition phase effective from 1 January 2027, and fully in effect by July 2029. This timing intersects with LTP development and audit in a way that creates uncertainty. Councils will be well-advanced in LTP discussions by the time the new legislation is enacted in December 2026. The proposed timing creates uncertainty about what the final legislation will consist of during the time councils are discussing the LTP.
41. It is also not clear how Audit NZ will audit our process, as we will be required to meet the audit requirements of the legislation that is in force at the time, but the new legislation may change the focus. We seek further consideration and clarification of the timing of the rates cap policy with the LTP process. Audit NZ protocols must be clear and stable throughout LTP preparation and legislation should not change requirements mid-process.
42. We recommend a concurrent review of the Rating Act and methodology to aid decision making during this process. While taxation as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has risen overtime, local government's share has stayed at around 2% of GDP. Such a review has been identified by numerous reports (notably the Shand² and Future of Local Government³ reports) and needs to consider ways to share the tax take more appropriately across the country. For example, returning the GST paid on rates (essentially a tax on a tax) to councils would enable these funds to be reinvested in these communities instead of being used to subsidise projects outside of their areas, while also reducing the amounts required to be paid by ratepayers.
43. We do not support the application of the cap at an individual rate level. If a cap is to be applied, it should be applied at the aggregate level. The proposal states 'councils will have discretion to spend rates funding as they currently do,' so, provided councils are spending on core services, the 'unders and overs' should be secondary to application of the rates cap in its aggregate.
44. We support the allowance for depreciation. Depreciation expenses have increased rapidly in recent years, often cited as one of the major drivers in expenditure and based largely on movements in asset values. We understand that this factor alone may test the 4 percent upper limit of the target range based on movements in asset values over recent years. However, it is not clear how depreciation allowances are to be determined. The need for regular asset valuations and the audit requirements may require further consideration.
45. The overseas experience has demonstrated that there is a risk that a rates cap policy can cause asset decay and underinvestment in infrastructure because councils do not have enough funding to maintain assets and meet the pressures related to growth. Councils may risk having insufficient funding available to provide and maintain core services to levels expected by the community. Councils must have a range of effective funding and financing tools. A rates cap that does not reflect actual cost inflation will lead to deferred renewals, growing backlogs, and lower maintenance. These are costs that compound and fall on future ratepayers.
46. If a rates cap is to be implemented, we would expect the Government to have a robust national infrastructure plan with implementation that is appropriately timed and funded. If council funding is demanded elsewhere, it will fall on the Government to ensure infrastructure does not decline.
47. In Waitaha Canterbury, we have over 1,900 bridges that are nearing end-of-life, and some of which are at high risk in a natural disaster. If these are left to dilapidate, economic growth stagnates and communities could be cut off in cases of emergency.
48. Along with the significant number of bridges, we have 14,630km of local roads. Resilience of our transport infrastructure is critical to securing regional and national supply chains. Significant

² Funding Local Government: The Report of the 2007 Independent Inquiry into Local Government Rating ('the Shand report')

³ [Future for Local Government Review - dia.govt.nz](https://www.dia.govt.nz/future-for-local-government-review/)

investment in maintenance and renewals is needed, especially given chronic historic underfunding and the impacts from more frequent and intense weather events.

49. With transport funding already falling far short of what is required to maintain the network, a rates cap is unlikely to bridge the gap.
50. We have concerns of a rates cap on emergency management functions, noting that the proposed exclusions relate only to natural disaster events and not to business as usual. The Emergency Management Bill provides for the development of rules which may include prescribed standards, training requirements, qualifications, and additional reporting, all of which will require additional rates resourcing. The timing of the proposal to implement rates caps is likely to create significant tension with councils' abilities to comply with such rules as proposed in this Bill.
51. We recommend the Government provides clarity on the definitions as the detail is worked through, for example, the criteria to determine 'quality of infrastructure.'

Proposed rates target formula

52. The inflation measure used is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is used to measure the average household consumer prices. This is not a robust method for measuring the impact of inflation on councils. Council spending is not the same as an average New Zealand household and most of the indicators that sit within the CPI measure are not relevant to councils and are not causing increases to rates. Councils do not purchase a "basket of goods," as the CPI expects. Vegetables, fruit, meat, drinks, cigarettes, and alcohol etc, are not the focus of council spending. Councils undertake activities like construction, laying pipes, repairing roads, building community facilities, maintaining assets, professional services, and servicing debt – categories poorly captured by CPI. The difference between CPI and council spending is acknowledged in analysis and research by economic advisors, such as BERL and Infometrics.
53. If the government wants to use inflation as a measure for rates, there are other ways this could be done that are more appropriate and are a better reflection of the realities of council spending.
54. The Mayoral Forum recommends adopting a local government inflation index. For example, the local government inflation index developed by BERL incorporates the Producer Price Index (PPI) in its calculations, with transparent publication and methodology. PPI measures inflation based on the price businesses pay for inputs and the price businesses receive for their outputs. Similarly, the Capital Goods Price Index (CGPI) measures price changes for capital assets purchased by producers. The CGPI measures the price changes for things such as land, buildings, roads, bridges, pipes, plant, and machinery. This is far more relevant than CPI to network infrastructure and building programmes. Both the PPI and the CGPI are indexes produced regularly by the government and should be included within the government's methodology if inflation is to be used as a measure to cap rates.
55. Research undertaken by Infometrics⁴ shows the difference between using the CGPI compared to CPI, which is that the cost of civil construction was much higher than CPI. Across three years (2021-2023), CPI increased by 19%, but the cost of building bridges increased by 38%, the cost of building sewers increased by 30%, and the cost of roads and water supply increased by 27%. A rates cap tied to CPI will therefore lag actual costs and drive deferrals.
56. We need to be cognisant of the instability of the geopolitical environment that we operate in and the consequences this has on councils supply chain and purchasing options. We have recent experience of this through COVID, where the international disruptions significantly impacted prices for local government activities, particularly in the areas of infrastructure.

⁴ "Analysing increases in local government costs for Local Government New Zealand," published February 2024.

Impact on debt, credit ratings, and joint funding

57. Councils manage long life assets and debt is a significant funding tool used by councils, to both fund and assist in attending to intergenerational equity.
58. A rates cap in this target range could have a negative impact on councils' abilities to access and repay debt, which could risk funding for core services. Revenue impacts a council's ability to access and service debt. Rates are generally considered a stable and key source of revenue for councils, with an ability to be adjusted if required. A rates cap will limit both the revenue available to councils and the ability for councils to adjust rates, which reduces available debt headroom and could impact credit ratings.
59. The risk of a credit downgrade has been raised by S&P Global Ratings and in advice by The Treasury. If a council receives a credit downgrade, it will likely lead to an increase in interest rates when debt is renewed or new debt is acquired. This would have to be accounted for in a rates cap formula.
60. With a constriction of revenue, local government contribution to joint projects and implementation of future unfunded government mandates will become challenging. This in turn increases the risk of reduction in quality of service or pushing out maintenance and renewals on fixed assets.

Conclusion

61. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the Rates Target Model proposal.
62. We are happy to expand on any points covered in this submission. Please contact Amelia Wilkins at secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz or on 027 243 4304.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Nigel Bowen
Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum
Mayor Timaru District Council

CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

MEDIA RELEASE



Back row from left: Mayor Liz McMillan (Ashburton), Mayor Scott Aronsen (Mackenzie), Mayor Dan Gordon (Waimakariri), Mayor Craig Mackle (Kaikōura), Mayor Phil Mauger (Christchurch) Mayor Lydia Gliddon (Selwyn).

Front row from left: Mayor Craig Rowley (Waimate), Mayor Marie Black, Deputy Chair (Hurunui), Mayor Nigel Bowen, Chair (Timaru), Dr Deon Swiggs (Chair, Canterbury Regional Council), Mayor Melanie Tavendale (Waitaki).

First meeting of Canterbury Mayoral Forum

The Mayoral Forum and Secretariat are supported by the Regional Council but remains a separate entity.

The members of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum have met for the first meeting of the new term.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is the primary mechanism for local government communication, coordination, and collaboration in Waitaha Canterbury.

The Forum comprises mayors from the 10 territorial authorities in Waitaha, and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council.

At the meeting on Friday 28 November, Timaru District Mayor Nigel Bowen was re-elected Chair, and Hurunui District Mayor Marie Black was re-elected Deputy Chair.

Chair Bowen said he was delighted to be leading the Forum again, and the group was excited about what the next triennium's work programme would bring to Waitaha.

"There is a lot to look forward to. The Forum is poised to continue showcasing what an amazing place our wonderful region is by showing leadership on key issues."

The Forum also discussed the challenges that the communities of Waitaha will face over this term, including the Government's proposed changes to the governance arrangements of regional councils, which would result in regional councillors being replaced with a new governing body.

The Forum acknowledges the proposal and notes that members are still working through what it would mean for each community and collectively as a region.

Chair Bowen said the Forum has been signalling the need for local Government reform for some time and welcomed the opportunity to contribute to this important korero.

"Each Mayor and the Regional Council Chair is working with their communities to understand what the Government's proposal could mean for Waitaha residents. For the Forum, this will be an ongoing conversation, and we will work through the details of the proposals together as well as the legislative changes that we expect to come later this year.

"It's important to remember that there could be opportunities in the Government's proposed changes. The Forum encourages anyone who has a view on the proposals to make a submission.

"In the meantime, the Forum remains focused on our work programme and it's business as usual."

At the meeting, the Forum endorsed the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement 2025-28 for ratification by the region's councils. The agreement outlines the commitment of local councils in the Waitaha Canterbury region to work together effectively.

This agreement is mandated under the Local Government Act, and is reviewed and ratified every three years.

The next Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting will be on Friday, 20 February 2026.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is made up of Kaikōura District Mayor Craig Mackle, Hurunui District Mayor Marie Black, Waimakariri District Mayor Dan Gordon, Christchurch City Mayor

Phil Mauger, Selwyn District Mayor Lydia Gliddon, Ashburton District Mayor Liz McMillan, Timaru District Mayor Nigel Bowen, Waimate District Mayor Craig Rowley, Mackenzie District Mayor Scott Aronsen, Waitaki District Mayor Melanie Tavendale, and Canterbury Regional Council Chair Dr Deon Swiggs.

ENDS

Background for reporters:

The Mayoral Forum provides a mechanism for local authorities in Waitaha Canterbury to come together and speak with one strong voice for the region and its communities, while identifying and prioritising issues of mutual concern and fostering cooperation to address them.

Through leadership, facilitation, and advocacy, the Forum advances regional economic and social development, and works collaboratively with central government and key sector leaders to meet community needs and expectations at the lowest possible cost to ratepayers.

The Forum meets quarterly and is supported by a permanent secretariat hosted by Canterbury Regional Council.

[Sign up](#) to receive Mayoral Forum updates.

For more information, contact the Environment Canterbury media team on media@ecan.govt.nz

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 20 February 2026

Presented by: Nigel Bowen, Chair
Nick Leggett, Infrastructure NZ; Catherine Shipton, Simpson Grierson

Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to receive the Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper prepared by Infrastructure New Zealand and Simpson Grierson.

Recommendation

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

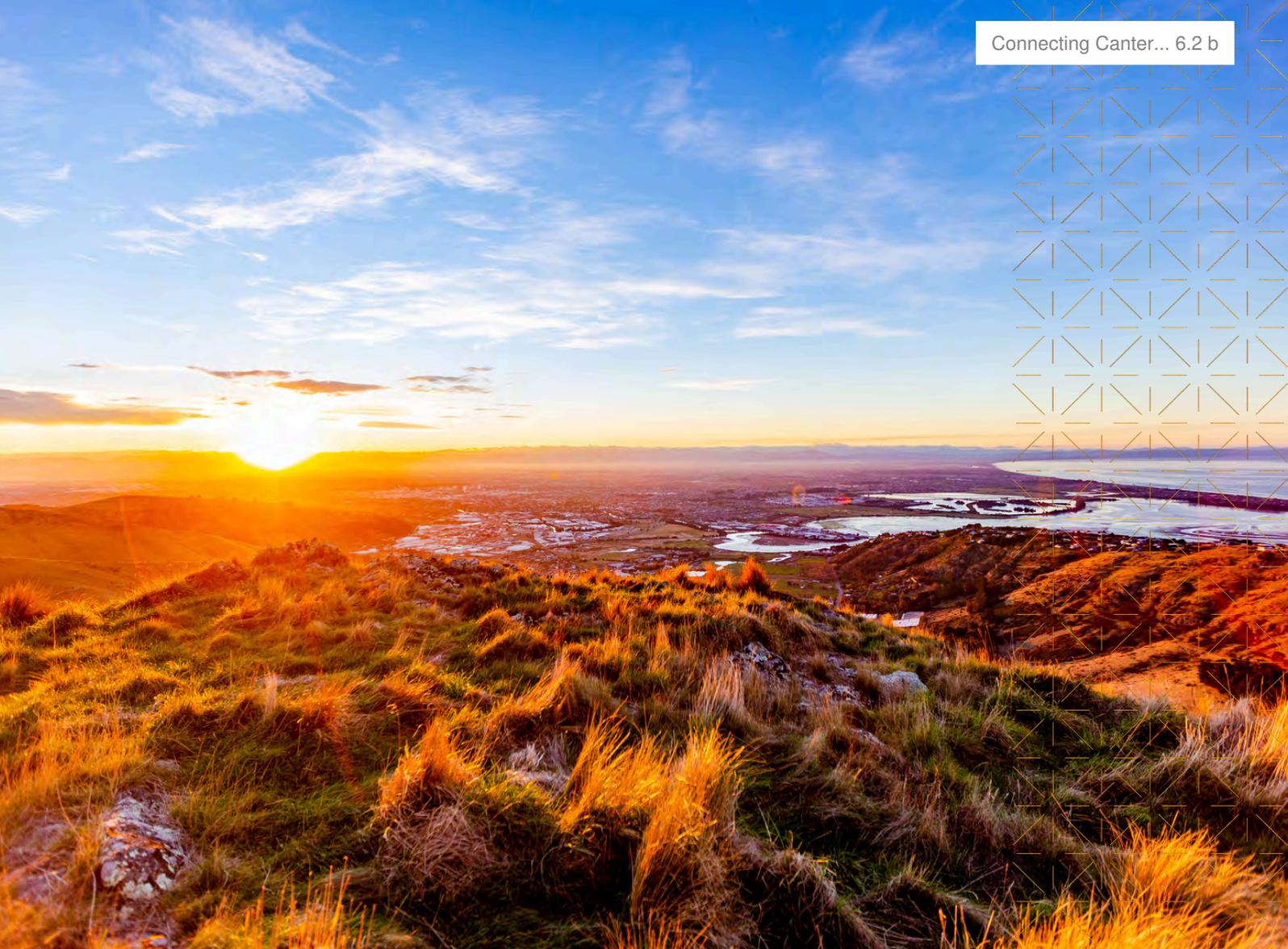
1. **receives the Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper.**

Key points

2. Infrastructure New Zealand and Simpson Grierson have developed the Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper.
3. Nick Leggett, Chief Executive Infrastructure New Zealand and Catherine Shipton, Simpson Grierson will present the paper to the Mayoral Forum and discuss with Mayoral Forum members.
4. The paper will be launched on Friday 20th February 2026 and Forum members are requested to not share the paper, until after the public launch.

Attachment

- Attachment 1: Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper



Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper

February 2026



Contents

Connecting Canterbury: A Call to Act on the Infrastructure that Holds the Region Together	3
A 30-Year Vision: Canterbury as the South Island's Gateway and Growth Engine	3
Immediate Actions	4
The Bottom Line	4
Message from the Minister	4
Action Plan Implementation	5
Introduction	6
Vision for Canterbury to 2056	6
Priority Areas	7
How to Get There	8
• The Critical Priority: Replacing and Future-Proofing Bridges and Culverts	8
• Improvements to Transport Connectivity	9
• Strengthen Infrastructure Lifeline Resilience and Climate Readiness	11
• Implement Alternative Funding and Delivery Models	13
• Collaborate on Whole of Life Asset Management Delivery Mechanisms	16
Conclusion	18
Authorship	18

Connecting Canterbury: A Call to Act on the Infrastructure that Holds the Region Together

Canterbury is one of New Zealand's economic engines and the gateway to the South Island. Its transport, water, energy and digital networks do far more than move people and freight - they connect communities, enable exports, protect the environment, and underpin national resilience. After more than a decade of post-earthquake rebuilding, Canterbury has entered a new growth phase. Population is rising, exports are expanding, and investment confidence is strong. But this momentum is now at risk. Aging infrastructure, climate exposure, fragile transport links, and funding constraints threaten Canterbury's productivity, liveability and resilience. Incremental fixes will not be enough.

This White Paper sets out a clear message: Canterbury must move from project-by-project decisions to a coordinated, long-term infrastructure programme developed in partnership with central and local government, Iwi and the private sector. That programme should deliver directly on the vision and planning the region is developing through a spatial plan and a prioritised regional deal with central government.

A 30-Year Vision: Canterbury as the South Island's Gateway and Growth Engine

By 2056, Canterbury should be a region:

- where people can live, work and age well, with real housing and transport choice;
- where people, freight and exports move reliably through a resilient web of road, rail, port and airport connections - seen as one integrated network and invested in as such;
- where major critical infrastructure can withstand earthquakes, floods and climate shocks and seek to recover in days, not months;
- where long-life assets are planned, funded and maintained beyond political cycles.



Immediate Actions

Delivering this vision requires decisive action now

Commit to Future-Focused Transport Connectivity

Canterbury needs coordinated planning across road, rail, port and airport networks, backed by new capital investment, not just maintenance. This includes upgrading bridges, improving freight corridors, and expanding public transport options as growth accelerates.

Make Resilience and Climate Readiness a Priority

Every major infrastructure decision must assume more flooding, more extreme weather, and greater disruption. Redundancy is not a luxury, it is essential. No major river crossing should be a single point of failure.

Use Smarter Funding and Delivery Models

Traditional funding alone will not close the gap. Canterbury should bundle bridge and culvert renewals for a PPP or programme-based delivery, pursue asset recycling where appropriate (with proceeds locked into infrastructure), use targeted value capture and other user-pays tools where there are clear benefits of doing so.

Lead the Nation in Asset Management

Canterbury proved, post-earthquake, that collaboration works. That approach should now be embedded permanently to create a national benchmark for whole-of-life asset management, transparency and performance.

The Bottom Line

Canterbury's infrastructure is not just a regional issue; it is nationally significant. If Canterbury's connections fail, New Zealand's supply chains, exports, tourism and resilience fail with them.

The case for action is clear. The opportunity is immediate.

A bold, coordinated programme - starting with bridges and culverts - can secure Canterbury's future and set a new standard for infrastructure delivery in Aotearoa.

The choice now is simple: plan and invest with intent or pay far more later for failure.

Message from the Minister

Hon James Meager, Minister for the South Island:
"The South Island can only maintain its growth and productivity advantage by people working together and putting forward a plan.

This paper reflects strong ideas and forward-thinking of infrastructure industry leaders in Canterbury. It shows the value of industry stepping up, not simply to advocate for projects, but to outline better ways of working together over the long-term.

I strongly support the kind of partnership-led approach advocated for here, where central and local government, iwi and the private sector come together around shared priorities, long-term planning, and more coordinated delivery. If we are serious about lifting productivity, resilience and value for money in the South Island, this is exactly the kind of constructive, solutions-focused leadership we need."

Action Plan Implementation

Canterbury's connecting infrastructure improvements require immediate action. This calls for public and private sector market participants and iwi to work together on the key priorities. The below actions should be developed to align with other collaborative forums, including, the development of a mandatory regional spatial plan and the negotiation of a potential "regional deal". It should also be part of the development of the National Infrastructure Plan and central government initiatives regarding asset management.

Action Plan Timeframes

Quick Wins (0-12 months)

Action
Establish Canterbury Infrastructure Coordination Group
Establish a group of owners, operators and asset managers of infrastructure to initiate development of asset management standards framework and standardised climate risk strategies
Development of business case for bundled bridges procurement

Medium-Term Strategy (12 months - 36 months)

Action
Implement a coordinated asset recycling programme
Procurement for multiple bridge renewals bundled
Develop asset management standards framework and standardised climate risk strategies
Develop and secure a regional deal

Long Term Vision (3 - 10 years)

Action
Implement standardised asset management practices and climate risk assessments for all major infrastructure projects

Introduction

Canterbury stands at a pivotal moment in its infrastructure development. As New Zealand's largest region by land area and a vital gateway to the South Island, Canterbury's infrastructure network is foundational to both regional prosperity and national economic resilience. Following the transformative rebuilding period after the Canterbury earthquakes, the region is hitting a boom – local investment is underpinned by new infrastructure developments and a large population growth.

However, the region now faces a new set of challenges, including sustaining the population growth, an aging population, aging transport infrastructure, increasing climate vulnerability and funding constraints. Such challenges can limit domestic and international connectivity and impact regional growth.

Canterbury's infrastructure challenges are also opportunities: opportunities for iwi, government, and the private sector to collaborate in shaping solutions that enhance connectivity, unlock economic potential, and strengthen resilience. Addressing these issues is critical not only for the region's growth but also for its role in supporting New Zealand's domestic and international competitiveness.

This paper summarises the key findings of pan-industry engagement from private sector, public sector and iwi in Canterbury. It has been prepared as input to current wider regional processes, including the development of a mandatory regional spatial plan, the negotiation of a potential "regional deal", and other collaborative forums.

The first step in this journey is agreement on a shared vision for Canterbury's future.

Vision for Canterbury to 2056

Central to the 30-year vision is Canterbury as the South Island's gateway and growth engine. A region:

- where people can choose how and where they live, learn, work, and age, with affordable housing and with choice of travel modes without long commutes.
- where people, freight and exports flow reliably through a resilient web of port–airport–rail–road links and connect seamlessly to local and global networks.
- where international and domestic visitors can experience all the region has to offer and, as the gateway to the South Island, move efficiently to support premium tourism experiences across the region and beyond.
- where digital infrastructure seamlessly connects to and optimise Canterbury's core infrastructure as technologies evolve.
- where clean, plentiful energy and water are available and reliable to support our growing economy.
- where our unique regional exports, such as advanced agri-tech, aerospace-tech, manufacturing, engineering and services are supported on the world stage.
- where infrastructure long-life assets are planned, funded, managed and maintained beyond political cycles.

Unique Regional Strengths

- Strategic transport and freight infrastructure supporting Canterbury as the gateway to and from the South Island. Lyttelton Port, Christchurch Airport, the inland multimodal ports, the north–south and east–west corridors with both rail and road connections are all critical to that. Christchurch Airport also plays a dual role as also the primary visitor gateway to the South Island, shaping first impressions and enabling seamless access to world-class experiences.
- A deep export base of agriculture, engineering/manufacturing, food processing; growing tech and aerospace sectors; and tourism that support Canterbury’s national and international trade.
- Available natural resources such as land, sun, water, and wind supporting future renewable energy generation and water offtake.
- Strong local council governance footprint with existing regional coordination and capacity for enhanced future coordination.
- Liveability attracting regional population growth given the space for housing growth, more affordable housing prices than many other parts of the country, shorter commute times, good schools, an abundance of parks and other green spaces, a revived post-earthquake city centre, and a growing economy.

In achieving this vision, we will:

- plan for a sustainable population growth that also preserve the regions liveability and lifestyle choices (urban, suburban, rural).
- preserve connection resilience to, from and across Canterbury, considering the natural landscape (such as the braided rivers and alpine corridors) so that natural hazards disrupt days, not months.
- unlock and enhance local investment to benefit the region’s people and economy.
- co-ordinate whole-of-life asset planning, funding, management and maintenance of infrastructure assets across the region.

Priority Areas

The paper proposes a coordinated approach to Canterbury’s infrastructure development across five key areas:

1. Replacing and Future-Proofing Bridges and Culverts

Through a Regional Deal, Canterbury should partner with the private sector to establish and fund a region-wide, centrally supported programme to replace and upgrade bridges and culverts at scale. This would eliminate single points of failure across major rivers and corridors, lift safety, freight efficiency and emissions performance and design infrastructure to cope with future climate conditions.

2. Improve Transport Connectivity

Enhance integration and coordination across road, rail, air, and coastal shipping and improve critical bridge infrastructure and transport mode options to ensure reliable connectivity for the movement of people and goods. Focus on intra-regional linkages to support regional connections and enhance the region’s connection into global networks.

3. Strengthen Infrastructure Lifeline Resilience and Climate Readiness (freight and communities)

Integrate climate resilience into all connecting infrastructure investments to ensure long-term sustainability.

4. Implement Alternative Funding and Delivery Models

Establish a long-term regional infrastructure vision that transcends political cycles and provides certainty for investment decisions. Expand the use of value capture, user-pays mechanisms, and asset recycling to diversify funding sources.

5. Collaborate on Whole of Life Asset Management Delivery Mechanisms

Set the national benchmark on asset management. Replicate successful post-earthquake collaboration models across infrastructure owners, operators and managers to improve asset management.

How to Get There

1 The Critical Priority: Replacing and Future-Proofing Bridges and Culverts

This is the White Paper's Central Call. Many hundreds of bridges and culverts are Canterbury's most under-recognised lifeline assets.

Many of the bridges are single-lane bottlenecks that slow freight, emergency response and daily travel. They are vulnerable to flooding, erosion and seismic damage. Many are reaching the end of their design life, with a growing renewal backlog.

These structures are not just transport assets. They are social connectors for rural communities, economic enablers for agriculture and exports, and environmental protectors that manage water flow across braided rivers and floodplains.

Recommendations

Through a Regional Deal, Canterbury should partner with the private sector to establish and fund a region-wide, centrally supported programme to replace and upgrade bridges and culverts at scale. Those would have the explicit goals of:

- eliminating single points of failure across major rivers and corridors;
- replacing single-lane bridges with resilient two-lane structures;
- lifting safety, freight efficiency and emissions performance;
- designing infrastructure to cope with future climate conditions, not historic averages.

Bundling bridge and culvert renewals into a single, long-term programme would reduce costs through standardised, modular designs and accelerate delivery by avoiding piecemeal procurement. Private capital to help fund a large-scale programme could be unlocked via PPPs or other partnership models. This would ensure Canterbury pushed ahead of its renewal backlog, rather than constantly reacting to failures.

This is one of the clearest opportunities in New Zealand today to combine resilience, productivity and value for money.



2

Improvements to Transport Connectivity

To enhance integration across road, rail, air, and coastal shipping and improve critical bridge infrastructure to ensure reliable connectivity for the movement of people and goods.

To focus on intra-regional linkages to support regional connections and enhance the region's connection into global networks.

There is a great opportunity to support Canterbury's recent boom. Transport connectivity is integral to Canterbury's continued population growth and economic growth. It's about linking the rural with the urban, the suburban with the urban. Transport reliability is also a defining part of the visitor experience. Delays, congestion, and network fragility can affect perceptions of Canterbury and the South Island as a premium destination.

Examples

Cherries

Each year, thousands of tonnes of ripened cherries, predominantly grown in Central Otago, make the journey via temperature-controlled trucks to Christchurch Airport to be exported to Asian markets. The journey time is integral in this process given fruit are high-value but also ultra-perishable and rely on a tight cold chain from orchard to consumer. Longer transit times can increase handling points and the risk of temperature breaks.

Transport efficiencies could greatly reduce the risk and improve economic outcomes for all involved along the chain to market. For example, ensuring bridges throughout the region are double-lane to reduce the overall transport time (a significant number remain single-lanes) and increasing the number of double-lane transport corridors within the routes.

Waimakariri

The Waimakariri District Council estimates Waimakariri's population rising to around 77,000 by 2033, with ongoing household growth. will result in increased traffic volumes which can in turn result in increased vehicle emissions, unreliable travel times, increase road faults and decrease road safety. The Council's Long Term plan projects a lack of travel mode choices can result in social disconnect and lack of opportunity for safe and healthy activity. This could in turn increase vulnerability in an aging population.

Transport efficiencies and more varied travel mode choices could reduce risk of the above and support the growth in the regions to better support Canterbury's liveability and economic growth. For example, SH1 Belfast to Pegasus Motorway and Woodend Bypass are expected to deliver an increase of 1.4% of transport services in the South Island and create over 1000 additional jobs post-completion.

More generally it is expected to reduce congestion levels, improve safety, travel times, reliability and resilience of the corridor. In addition, it is expected there will be greater engine efficiency and emission reductions (given the lower gradients are lower based on current design standards).

Complimentary Transport Modes

Complimentary transport modes are crucial for connectivity and development. In Europe, for example, there are significant motorways running alongside high capacity/highspeed rail, plus freight connectivity to ports and airports. The airports are serviced by road and inter regional rail. The main transport nodes are also serviced by high quality, frequent suburban transport systems enabling seamless transitions.

If a similar model was applied to the Canterbury region, Christchurch Airport and Lyttelton Port could become more accessible to regional Canterbury (Kaiapoi, Rangiora, Prebbleton, Rolleston etc.). If the vision was widened further, it could mean commuter services availability from places such as Greymouth or Blenheim.

Recommendations

To improve Canterbury's transport planning to better enhance connectivity, the following actions are suggested:

- Canterbury's transport planning must look beyond immediate needs to ensure infrastructure investments provide long-term value and consider urban form, mobility and access. Better overall coordination of all transport modes is needed to be effective for both passenger and freight.
- Continued identification of agreed regional growth areas combined with clear transport links in advance of or alongside the growth to support the growth (e.g. Waimakariri and Selwyn areas).
- Development of transport plans with partnership buy-in at central and local government level, including with extended planning horizons that transcend political cycles.
- Continued identification of future transport corridors (air, land and sea) through planning mechanisms to prevent urban development from compromising future transport options.
- Incorporating emerging transport technologies into transport planning and infrastructure design to ensure Canterbury's transport system can adapt to technological change. For example, infrastructure to support electric or hydrogen powered vehicles.
- Identification of international competitors of our key export base to consider how they manage the transport issues affecting the relevant export products and make freight more efficient.
- Commitment from central government and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) to ensure new capital investment in the region's road network (rather than only resilience-related investment), noting that only the SH1 Belfast to Pegasus Motorway will be delivered via the Roads of National Significance programme in the region in the next 10 years.

Investment in Multiple Transport Options

To maximise efficiency and enhance multi-modal integration across the transport network, the following actions are suggested:

Freight

- More regular collaboration between the owners, asset managers and operators of Christchurch Airport, Lyttelton Port, the freight hubs, road and rail operators to improve freight outcomes.
- Establish more strategic freight hubs at key interchange points between road, rail, ports, and airports (for example, the South Island Freight Hub). These hubs could facilitate efficient freight transfers and reduce transport costs for regional businesses.
- Participate in the Government's National Freight Demand Study led by NZTA.
- Develop more bypasses to better link to key ports to reduce transport time. For example, a Pound Road bypass on the western side of Christchurch Airport.
- Increase capacity on strategic rail corridors to provide alternatives to road freight and reduce maintenance costs on the road network.
- Develop a South Island coastal shipping strategy to provide additional freight capacity and network resilience.

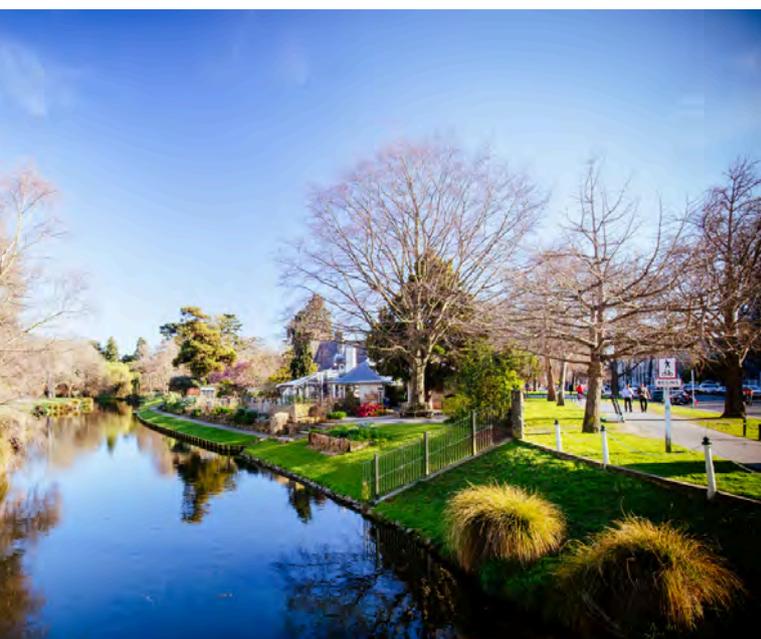
People

- Accelerate investment in public transport infrastructure in Greater Christchurch to provide travel choice and help reduce car dependency for residents. Consider Park and Ride in outer suburbs.
- Ensure all new retirement villages and large new greenfield developments are within 400m of public transport and support bus operations.

3 Strengthen Infrastructure Lifeline Resilience and Climate Readiness

To build infrastructure resilience for lifeline connections and integrate climate resilience into all connecting infrastructure investments to ensure long-term sustainability for both movement of freight and people.

New Zealand is facing increasing climate-related challenges year on year and a critical risk to New Zealand's infrastructure generally is its lack of resilience. Cantabrians know all too well from the lessons of the past how important lifeline connections are to the region when faced with a natural disaster and how imperative it is that owners, asset managers and operators of such infrastructure plan and coordinate together. Properly safeguarding infrastructure is also a critical enabler of economic growth to ensure that the region can get back on its feet following an inevitable natural event. Resilience planning must prioritise not only freight lifelines but also visitor routes that underpin Canterbury's tourism economy and regional identity.



Interdependency of Connecting Infrastructure

Critical transport infrastructure is interdependent and can be affected by the same natural hazards.

For example, the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake cut off both State Highway 1 (road) and the Main North Line (rail) between Picton and Christchurch, isolating communities and disrupting freight and passenger connections. The North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery alliance involving NZTA and KiwiRail was formed to restore both road and rail after major seismic damage. This involved coordinated planning and execution between the two modes.

In a similar vein, advance planning, coordination and investment between owners, asset managers and operators of key transport assets in the region (for example, Christchurch Airport, NZTA, Lyttelton Port, KiwiRail, Orion, Enable) is needed in the face of increasing climate related risks (extreme heat, fires, flooding, slips, sea-level rise and erosion) in order to support better outcomes. Enhancing climate resilience of critical infrastructure across the region in a coordinated manner will help support operability, ensure safety and protect economic activity.

Digital Infrastructure

Digital infrastructure is critical to resilience.

- **Monitoring:** For example: ECan's sensor networks which track water levels.
- **Essential Services:** Canterbury's fibre and mobile networks support emergency coordination, enable faster responses and provide live monitoring during weather events. Fibre monitoring used in the electricity networks also allows for fault detection and power re-routing during weather events.
- **Long-term planning and adaptation:** digital spatial data, modelling and mapping helps to drive planning decisions long term (e.g. Christchurch's post-quake digital mapping).

Investment in Canterbury's digital infrastructure as it evolves is critical to ensuring resilience of the region.

Recommendations

To develop a strategic approach to strengthening the resilience of critical transport infrastructure, the following actions are suggested:

- Identifying, protecting, and developing alternative routes for critical sections of the network, particularly where single points of failure currently exist due to vulnerable bridge connections over large, braided rivers and across the Southern Alps. Establish two resilient crossings over each major river so that there is no single point of failure.
- Owners, asset managers and operators of key transport assets in the region to develop a coordinated program to assess, strengthen, and where necessary replace aging infrastructure along strategic routes to maintain network reliability, including ensuring there is an inland route alternative to SH1.
- Create network redundancy at identified critical vulnerability points to provide alternative pathways when primary routes are compromised.
- Integrate climate-resilience into all infrastructure planning processes rather than it being treated as a separate consideration. For example, standardised climate risk assessments for all major infrastructure projects, ensuring that climate risks are identified and addressed at the design stage.
- Consider a risk-based approach to guide investment in critical bridges. Resilience doesn't always mean longevity – easy to replace fit for purpose infrastructure may be acceptable.
- Modular and standardised designs can deliver faster, more cost-effective solutions, with opportunities for private sector investment if projects are bundled.

Infrastructure Design Standards

To design new transport infrastructure to function under projected climate conditions, ensuring resilience to changing environmental conditions, the following actions are suggested:

- Owners, asset managers and operators to develop a more standardised approach across infrastructure assets to implement climate-resilient infrastructure design standards that incorporate projected climate conditions rather than relying solely on historical data.
- These standards should account for extreme weather event scenarios, including compound events where multiple hazards occur simultaneously or in close succession.



4 Implement Alternative Funding and Delivery Models

Establish a long-term regional infrastructure vision that transcends political cycles and provides certainty for investment decisions.

Expand the use of value capture, user-pays mechanisms, and asset recycling to diversify funding sources.

Ongoing investment in Canterbury's infrastructure is critical. However, it is important that Canterbury's long-term regional infrastructure vision extends beyond political cycles to provide certainty for investment decisions. Other than following the earthquakes, some Cantabrians have historically felt that central government's attention has not always been as focussed on the region as it could have been. With the recent establishment of the Minister of the South Island, there is new opportunity for Canterbury's infrastructure players to be greater advocates for the region to central government when it comes to infrastructure investment decisions.

Canterbury presents several opportunities for alternative funding and delivery models for infrastructure assets across the region. This is important for the region's future given the current affordability crisis and in consideration of Canterbury's rates — especially in Christchurch — which are well above the nationwide average in nominal rates paid. Such opportunities will also allow private sector and iwi participation and investment in the region, particularly if done at scale. This has the potential to bring new innovation and asset operation/management experience to the region's infrastructure.

Value Capture in High Growth Areas

Given the number of high-growth development areas in Canterbury (Waimakariri, Greater Christchurch), there is an opportunity to develop infrastructure in those areas with funding linked to land value capture created by the infrastructure. For example, tax increment financing (TIF), where a charge is assessed on a group of beneficiaries (eg ratepayers near a new train station) by reference to the increase in their property values that is created by the delivery of the new infrastructure.

Previous research by Simpson Grierson shows value capture mechanisms are most suitable for use in connection with projects that directly create value for an identifiable class of beneficiaries. They are less suitable for infrastructure projects where value uplift doesn't occur or is difficult to causally link (such as with wastewater and stormwater infrastructure), or where it is difficult to clearly identify beneficiaries.

Legislative changes would be needed in New Zealand to apply these models to the New Zealand market. For example, TIF could be applied through the existing targeted rates funding mechanism in the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, but changes would be needed to allow a rate to be assessed by reference to a change in capital value over time, rather than total capital value.

Public Private Partnerships as Alternative Delivery Models

Some of Canterbury's core infrastructure assets have been, or are currently being procured, using alternative delivery models.

- Several Christchurch schools, notably Shirley Boys' High School, Avonside Girls' High School, and Haeata Community Campus, were delivered as part of New Zealand's national PPP programme.
- Christchurch Men's Prison redevelopment is being procured by the Department of Corrections using the PPP model. It will be developed in several phases with phases 1 and 2 comprising an indicative capital investment of approximately \$800 million for each phase.

Further use of the PPP model (for example, to develop a bundled bridge and culvert renewal programme) could present further delivery opportunities and private sector involvement in the region.

Recommendations

Long Term Regional Infrastructure Vision

- Establish a dedicated Infrastructure Coordination Group with representation from central government departments and agencies, Canterbury's local authorities, Ngāi Tahu and relevant rūnanga, key industry stakeholders and infrastructure providers, community and environmental representatives to:
 - develop a long-term vision that supports the National Infrastructure Plan with a more enhanced regional focus for Canterbury;
 - meet periodically to discuss the assets they are in charge of to collaborate and coordinate across assets to improve regional infrastructure asset management and development; and
 - meet periodically with the Minister of the South Island to advocate for investment decisions for Canterbury's infrastructure.
- Establish a formal mandate from participating organisations to ensure the Infrastructure Coordination Group has authority to make decisions and commitments.
- Increase monitoring of progress on major infrastructure projects by the Infrastructure Coordination Group to ensure accountability and enable early intervention when projects face challenges. This could also lead to better liaison with central government on policy and regulatory matters, to ensure Canterbury's interests are represented in national decision-making.

Diversify Funding Sources

To diversify funding sources for infrastructure delivery in the region, the following actions are suggested:

- With assistance, support and funding from central government, Canterbury's local authorities to develop a systematic approach to identifying publicly owned assets in the region suitable for recycling, with proceeds dedicated to priority infrastructure investments.
- As part of the portfolio review, Canterbury's local authorities should identify assets that could be partially or fully divested, or leased back, or otherwise monetised without compromising key community outcomes. This should involve consideration of other successful examples such as the Napier Port IPO.
- Identify assets suitable for partial or full divestment in consideration of financial and strategic factors. Structured processes for recycling proceeds into new infrastructure should ensure that asset sales generate maximum benefit for regional infrastructure development. Any sale proceeds should be tied to new assets, no diversion to operating expenditure and include strong consumer protections.
- Local authorities will likely need support from central government regarding the messaging to Cantabrians of how any such recycling will safeguard investment in assets and key regional priorities.

Develop Direct User Pays or Other Value Capture Mechanism Opportunities

- Consider possible examples in Canterbury of user pays or other value capture opportunities such as tolling, levies, targeted rates, or tourist levies. Identify infrastructure investment opportunities that could support these mechanisms. This could be considered as part of any regional deal application.
- This should include clear communication strategies about how the connection between payments and benefits would build public acceptance of user-pays mechanisms, to demonstrate user payments directly fund infrastructure improvements that benefit users, which will more likely increase support for these funding approaches.

Create a Multi-Project Partnership Program

- To develop a programmatic approach to partnerships rather than project-by-project transactions.
- This could include multiple bridge replacements bundled for delivery efficiency, water and wastewater infrastructure across multiple councils coordinated for scale benefits, and renewable energy and resilience infrastructure bundled to attract specialised investors.
- To discuss and develop opportunities to unlock local investment by ring-fencing proceeds and revenues into a Regional Infrastructure Fund to build, not to spend. Develop this as a Canterbury Regional Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) with \$2–3b capital by 2030.



5 Collaborate on Whole of Life Asset Management Delivery Mechanisms

Replicate successful post-earthquake collaboration models across infrastructure owners, operators and managers to improve asset management.

The New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, Te Waihanga, has identified:

- there is little transparency of infrastructure and asset management performance and planning. This includes a lack of user-friendly access to information on how infrastructure is performing and what future funding intentions are.
- capability and capacity are the biggest constraints in improving infrastructure asset management maturity in NZ.

Canterbury is already a gold standard in post-earthquake collaboration in respect of infrastructure asset management and rebuild coordination. The partnerships included local agencies, central government agencies, infrastructure owners and operators, private-sector developers and contractors, iwi, and researchers who together worked to restore, redesign and improve the region's infrastructure after the 2010–11 earthquakes and related events. There is great opportunity to replicate these models in application to whole of life asset management of infrastructure across the region, including to potentially create a national benchmark to improving transparency in asset management practices and build asset management capacity and capability.

The benefits of implementing standardised asset management frameworks across Canterbury's owners, operators and asset managers include:

- improving consistency in asset condition assessment and renewal planning, enabling better comparison of investment priorities across the region;

- facilitation of shared procurement and delivery arrangements, reducing costs through economies of scale;
- more effective coordination with central government and the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission regarding infrastructure planning would ensure alignment between local and national infrastructure priorities; and
- enhancing reporting and accountability for infrastructure investment decisions to improve public confidence in infrastructure management.

Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team

The Government - through the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority and NZTA - and Christchurch City Council established an alliance in September 2011, called the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT). The SCIRT alliance secured the services of five major civil contractors to manage and carry out the repair and rebuild programme of work.

The scale and complexity of the repair and rebuild required for earthquake-damaged horizontal infrastructure (water, wastewater, stormwater, roading, and associated assets) would have been challenging for traditional project procurement processes. Instead, the alliance model brought shared risk, joint decision-making, and integrated planning to asset rebuild and prioritisation. SCIRT delivered hundreds of projects (over 720) worth equating to approximately NZD 1.9 billion through the alliance model, speeding up delivery and improving outcomes.

Recommendations

To collaborate on asset management, with a view to developing a national benchmark.

- Refine understanding of post-earthquake learnings with a view to future asset management application, including in-depth analysis of effective collaboration between central government, local authorities, and the private sector to determine how it's worked in the past and how it could work in the future
- Owners, operators and managers of Canterbury's infrastructure to meet regularly to develop common standards framework and practices specifically for Canterbury conditions, recognising the region's unique geographic and climatic challenges. This should include developing:
 - common asset condition assessment methodologies to enable consistent evaluation of infrastructure condition across the region.
 - shared renewal and replacement planning approaches to facilitate coordination of infrastructure investments.
 - consistent performance monitoring and reporting systems to enable benchmarking and continuous improvement.
- Consider proven technologies (such as extending the Wellington City Council Underground Asset Register) to assist in implementation of asset management practices and development of asset registers for data-based decision-making.
- Focus on developing shared services and capability to make more efficient use of scarce technical resources.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing networks between asset management experts to facilitate continuous learning and improvement.
- Provide and implement training and development opportunities to build local capability and ensure effective implementation of standardised approaches.
- Coordinate regularly with central government and the Infrastructure Commission on infrastructure planning to ensure alignment between local and national infrastructure priorities.
- Develop better procurement strategies that consider operating expenditure impact and lifecycle costs (not just immediate capital expenditure).

Supporting Local Authority Capacity Building Strategies

- Consider asset management benefits that result from co-ownership with private sector owners.
- Facilitate access to specialist expertise in infrastructure financing and commercial arrangements to potentially enable local authorities to implement innovative funding mechanisms effectively.
- Consider opportunities for shared technical support services for complex project management and delivery.
- Develop secondment and exchange opportunities to build internal capability while providing immediate access to required skills.
- Consider resource sharing arrangements to develop shared services for functions where scale economies are available.

Conclusion

Canterbury stands as an example to the nation. Its resilience post-earthquake has led to it becoming an economic powerhouse and the most sought-after region for its liveability. However, it stands at a critical juncture in its infrastructure development. The region has substantial infrastructure needs arising from population growth, ageing assets, and climate change adaptation requirements and to support its continued economic growth. These needs coincide with significant opportunities arising from policy reforms, new funding mechanisms, and growing iwi and private sector interest in infrastructure investment. These all create great opportunity for the region.

Achieving this requires a bold vision supported by all stakeholders. Central government departments and agencies, Canterbury's local authorities, Ngāi Tahu and relevant rūnanga, private sector industry stakeholders and infrastructure providers, community and environmental representatives need to work together to finesse this vision and to develop and implement regional infrastructure priorities to sustain and protect Canterbury's future both locally and as a vital gateway to the South Island.

The foundation has been laid through the post-earthquake recovery experience, policy reforms, and growing recognition of infrastructure's critical importance to regional and national prosperity. In achieving the vision, we will support sustainable population growth while protecting liveability and lifestyle choice; strengthen resilient regional connections that work with Canterbury's natural landscape; enable local investment to support people and the growing economy; and take a coordinated, whole-of-life approach to infrastructure planning, funding, and management across the region. In doing so, Canterbury will become leader in innovative, collaborative approaches to infrastructure development.

Resources

1. Waimakariri District Council "Waimakariri Demographics" (June 2025) Enterprise North Canterbury www.enterprisenorthcanterbury.co.nz/invest/waimakariri-demographics/.
2. Waimakariri District Council "Long Term Plan 2024-2034" (25 June 2024) Waimakariri District Council www.waimakariri.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/164596/Final-LTP-2024-2034-Full-Documents-WEBSITE.pdf?v=0.11 at 46.
3. Simpson Grierson "Infrastructure Funding & Financing: a time for change" (27 March 2024) Simpson Grierson www.simpsongrierson.com/insights-news/legal-updates/infrastructure-funding-financing-a-time-for-change.
4. New Zealand Infrastructure Commission Te Waihanga "Taking care of tomorrow today: Asset management state of play" (November 2024) Te Waihanga te.waihanga.govt.nz/our-work/research-insights/taking-care-of-tomorrow-today.
5. The Treasury "Investing for New Zealand: Insights from 2015/16" (20 January 2017) The Treasury www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2016-12/ipannualreport-15-16.pdf at 18.

Authorship

This report has been prepared by Infrastructure New Zealand in partnership with Simpson Grierson. It has been prepared based on feedback from pan-industry engagement from private sector, public sector and iwi conducted by Infrastructure New Zealand and Simpson Grierson within Canterbury in 2025 and reports the key findings of that engagement.

Contacts

Infrastructure New Zealand

nick.leggett@infrastructure.org.nz

katie.bradford@infrastructure.org.nz

Simpson Grierson

catherine.shipton@simpsongrierson.com

edward.norman@simpsongrierson.com

The report is based on information provided to Infrastructure New Zealand and Simpson Grierson by other parties and information extracted from publicly available sources. The report is provided strictly on the basis that the information that has been provided or sourced is accurate, complete and adequate. The report does not contain or constitute legal advice and Infrastructure New Zealand and Simpson Grierson take no responsibility and disclaim all liability whatsoever for any loss or damage that any party may suffer resulting from any conclusions based on information used by Infrastructure New Zealand and Simpson Grierson or the findings presented in this report.