NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given of the Meeting of the Bluff Community Board to be held in the Bluff Municipal Chambers, Gore Street, Bluff on Monday 31 August 2026 at 7.00 PM

Mr R Fife (Chair)
Ms J Eruera
Mr F Murdoch
Ms H Simeon
Mr J Sutherland
Cr G M Dermody

MICHAEL DAY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Bluff Community Board - Public

31 August 2026 07:00 PM

Agenda Topic — Page

	Agenda Topic	Page
1.	Apologies	
2.	Declaration of Interest	
	a. Members are reminded of the need to stand aside from decision-making when a conflict arises between their role as an elected representative and any private or other external interest they might have.	
	b. Elected members are reminded to update their register of interests as soon as practicable, including amending the register at this meeting if necessary.	
3.	Public Forum	
	3.1 Bluff Motupohue Trust - David Swan	
4.	Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on 20 July 2026	3
5.	Bluff Action Sheet	8
	5.1 Appendix 1 - Bluff Action Sheet	11
6.	Financial Report for Bluff Community Board for the Year Ending 30 June 2026	15
7.	Report of the Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer	17
8.	Update on Head Start Proposal and Local Government Commission Process for Reorganisation	19
	8.1 One Southland Head Start Proposal	21
	8.2 Draft Feedback to the Local Government Commission on Shortlisted Options for Local Government Reorganisation in Southland	46
9.	Chairperson's Report - Verbal Update	

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BLUFF COMMUNITY BOARD, HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS AT 18 GORE STREET, BLUFF ON MONDAY 20 JULY 2026 AT 7.00 PM

Present:	Mr R Fife (Chair) Ms J Eruera Mr F Murdoch Mr J Sutherland Cr G Dermody
In Attendance:	Mr M Morris – Manager – Governance and Legal Mr J Shaw – Manager - Consenting, Environment and Infrastructure Ms R Suter – Manager – Strategy, Policy and Engagement Ms C Rain – Manager – Parks and Recreation Ms C Sullivan – Senior Governance Specialist Mr G Hayes – Communication Advisor Mr C Bowen - Manager - Strategic Asset Planning Mr J Sygrove – Consultant Planner – Rationale Planning Ms L Throne – Consultant Planner - Taylor Planning Mr L Beer – Bluff Promotions Ms T Topi – Great South Ms A Young – Great South Mrs N Allan – Manager – Bluff Service Centre Mrs D Fife – Bluff Service Centre

1. Apologies

Ms H Simeon

Moved Mr Sutherland, seconded Mr Murdoch that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil.

3. Public Forum

3.1 Update on Progress of Locomotive F150 Restoration - Lindsay Buckingham, Chairman and Project Manager Southern Steam Trust and Roger Beatty, Trustee.

A video was shown and a written report was circulated concerning the locomotive they were restoring. They were approximately half way through fundraising and when they secure all the funding, within 12 months their planned trips would be running. They were working with Kiwi Rail to get permission to use the Bluff railway line for private ventures.

In the verbal report it was stated that train drivers and train firemen would need to come down from the North Island due to Kiwi Rail rules.

The Chair thanked them for their presentation and wished them luck.

4. Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on Monday 8 June 2026

A6483224

Moved Ms Eruera, seconded Mr Sutherland that the Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on Monday 8 June 2026 be confirmed.

The question was asked whether the letter to NZTA from Chief Executive Michael Day had been written. It was confirmed that it had been and was waiting on the Chair to sign.

The LGNZ conference would be held in October this year in Rotorua. The Board would not be sending anyone.

The motion, now put, was **RESOLVED**.

5. Bluff Action Sheet

A6478417

Moved Mr Sutherland, seconded Ms Eruera that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Bluff Action Sheet" and notes the updates provided.

Mrs Carolyn Rain and Mr Chris Bowen spoke to the report.

The dates for the next three tour of inspections had been circulated to Board Members.

The mowing contract was now staying in house and not going out to external contractors to get better value for money.

It was explained that some actions were transferred to the Long-term Plan and they were being monitored. It was asked if those actions could be listed separately for the Board to be able to follow.

The Board raised the problem of water on the footpath near the Foveaux Dairy and 325 Gore Street. It was noted this was an ongoing issue and the Board would like information on what was happening with fixing the problem. Staff would follow up and report back to the Board.

Feedback on the J G Ward Reserve land sale was being complied.

Staff had approached South Port for information on the West End Jetty and when that was obtained they would go out to the community for their feedback.

One of the walking tracks on the Motupōhue Adventure Park still required work done to bring it up to standard. No dates yet on completion.

In response to a questions regarding the JG Ward Reserve, it was noted good feedback had been received on the proposed sale and that the money would go back into the area.

It was also asked to keep the rugby club in the loop regarding up and coming work at the rugby club, it was mentioned early in the report that Heritage NZ was involved.

The motion, now put, was **RESOLVED.**

6. Bluff Motupōhue Tourism Masterplan Implementation Update

A6523806

Ms Rhiannon Suter, Ms Tami Topi and Ms Amy Young spoke to the report.

The Board felt that the data report was very well done and interesting and that it could be applied to all aspects of the community and all groups interested could use the data for their planning. Also, data obtained through suitable websites could also be used.

The planning for the 'Taurapa stern post' was going well, with a feasibility study that would start in August. This would get Great South closer to the funding application stage.

The Motupōhue Bluff Story project was going well with a comprehensive audit done on all the tourist / information signage around the area.

The subject of the Co-ordinators role funding would be coming up in Great South's Long term Plan.

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Mr Murdoch and **RESOLVED** that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Bluff Motupōhue Tourism Masterplan Implementation Update".

2. Notes the Visitor Insights Data and Implementation Update provided by Great South.

3. Notes the recommendation from Great South that investment should be made to continue the data insight collection to support implementation of the Masterplan, either to the value of $6,288 for full year (Option 1) or $2,908 for summer months only (Option 2), noting that Great South does not have funding to cover the item.

4. Agrees to fund **Option 1** for 2026/2027 from the Bluff Community Board reserves allocation for projects.

Recommend to Council:

5. To work with Great South to continue to support the implementation of the Bluff Motupōhue Tourism Masterplan including the recommended coordination role and data investment as part of the Long-term Plan.

The motion, now put, was **RESOLVED.**

7. Introduction of the Invercargill District Spatial Plan Process

A6517441

Mr Jimmy Sygrove and Ms Lisa Throne spoke to the report and noted a workshop had been held earlier.

Moved Ms Eruera, seconded Mr Sutherland that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Introduction of the Invercargill District Spatial Plan Process".

2. Notes that a Community Board workshop was held with the Spatial Plan team prior to this meeting, at which the team:

    a. Sought feedback from the Bluff Community Board on the development of the Spatial Plan engagement process for the Bluff community.

    b. Facilitated the preliminary identification of issues and opportunities with the Community Board.

The team would work with the Board regularly on how to best engage the Bluff Community for feedback on the process.

The motion, now put, was **RESOLVED**.

8. Local Government Reorganisation – Headstart Proposal Process Update

A6524521

Ms Rhiannon Suter and Ms Clare Sullivan spoke to the report.

Moved Chair Fife, seconded Cr Dermody that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Local Government Reorganisation – Head Start Proposal Process Update".

Recommend to Council:

2. To consider the feedback from the Bluff Community Board as part of its decision making on the Head Start Proposal process being that the Bluff Community's voice be heard and considered, along with the continuation of a local or community Board to ensure Bluff made decisions for Bluff.

The motion, now put was **RESOLVED.**

9. Report of the Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer

A6534755

Mr Lindsay Beer spoke to the report.

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Mr Sutherland that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report “Report of the Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer”.

A lot of enquires had come in from schools around New Zealand and overseas for information regarding Bluff.

A request was made for Board Members to see the data from the hits on the Bluff Promotions website and Mr Beer would pass it on to the Board.

The motion, now put was **RESOLVED.**

10. Funding of the Bluff Community Board

A6510459

Mr Michael Morris spoke to the report.

Moved the Chair seconded Cr Dermody, that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report titled “Funding of the Bluff Community Board”

A workshop would be scheduled to go over all obligations and compliance rules as well as modelling various options for the Targeted rate, including the suggestion from Public forum earlier in the year and to develop place clear guidelines for the use of the money for the benefit of Bluff should there be a desire from the Board to open up a wider grant funding pool.

The motion, now put, was **RESOLVED.**

10. Chairperson's Report – Verbal Update

Moved Chair Fife, seconded Cr Dermody that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the “Chairperson's Report -Verbal Update”.

The Chair would be attending the Local Government Reorganisation Headstart meeting on Thursday.

The motion, now put, was **RESOLVED**.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 8.30 pm.

BLUFF ACTION SHEET

To:	Bluff Community Board
Meeting Date:	Monday 31 August 2026
From:	Infrastructure Services and Parks and Recreation
Approved:	Jonathan Shaw – Acting Group Manager – Infrastructure
Approved Date:	Wednesday 26 August 2026
Open Agenda:	Yes
Public Excluded Agenda:	No

Purpose and Summary

This report provides a high level of operational detail to the Bluff Community Board regarding infrastructure and community spaces and places.

Recommendations

That the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Bluff Action Sheet" and notes the updates provided.

Background

The Bluff Action Sheet was developed following joint inspections by the Bluff Community Board and Council staff. The action sheet updates the actions identified during these inspections. The last Bluff check-in was on 28 July 2026.

Where action items have been closed out, they are removed from the list "Appendix 1" and archived. Operational day-to-day issues are dealt with by creating an RFS (Request for Service). These will be dealt with accordingly in Council's RFS system and service levels.

New actions and latest updates are shown in red.

Progress Update

Requests for Service

July 2026

Department	Actioned	Being Investigated	Contractor Dispatched	Total Received
Building Maintenance				0
Drainage	4			4
Parks & Recreation	5			5
Refuse	10	1	1	12
Roading	5		4	9
Water	3			3
Total Received	**27**	**1**	**5**	**33**

Previous 12 months

Totals Received	**2025**							**2026**				
Department	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**
Building Maintenance	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	6
Drainage	0	2	3	3	3	0	1	0	2	0	1	3
Parks Department	11	5	2	7	7	11	10	0	0	0	1	0
Refuse	18	3	15	28	10	6	13	0	0	0	8	12
Roading	20	14	19	49	9	13	13	21	23	19	11	15
Water Services	9	4	2	8	8	3	5	2	0	0	4	2
Total Received	**58**	**28**	**41**	**96**	**38**	**34**	**43**	**23**	**26**	**20**	**28**	**38**

Roading – Waihōpai Alliance

The Waihōpai Alliance has undertaken regular maintenance in line with scheduled service delivery requirements. Last month, Operations Manager Allan Gillespie re-established regular engagement between the Bluff Community Board and operational staff from both Roading and Parks and Recreation. Discussions have included the transition of roadside mowing activities to Council's Parks and Recreation team and the review of Bluff mowing maps to ensure maintenance responsibilities are applied consistently. This is an operational adjustment to service delivery and will be monitored over the coming mowing season.

Parks and Recreation

In addition to business as usual work Parks and Recreation are looking at a scheme of works with Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust to clear/plant areas of historic gorse and broom behind Bluff Marae, and to plant out areas of lupin at Ocean Beach Reserve.

Next Steps

Actions from this report will continue within Council operational processes.

Attachments

1. Appendix 1 - Bluff Action Sheet (11122803).

APPENDIX 1
11122803

Bluff Inspection Action Sheet

Item numbers are numeric
135 Next New Item number

BCB Priority Key

High	1
Medium	2
Low	3
Business as usual	4

Item	Year	Responsibility Area	Issues/Projects	Actions	ICC Contact	Timeframe	Priority
				PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE			
3	2022	Project Management Office	Boat Ramp	14/04/2025 - Bracing methodology and pricing have been signed off. Fabrication of additional items has begun. Civil works programme is in production. Toilet block and fish processing station are in fabrication with delivery estimated for May. 20/05/2025 - Minor amendments are being made to the piles for the Exeloo facility to account for the ground conditions. Civil works to begin on the Eastern Jetty following the confirmation of pile placement. 10/07/2025 - Piles have been installed in the dinghy ramp for the Eastern Jetty bracing to be attached to. There have been some minor measurement changes resulting in an adjustment being made to the bracing. The adjustment has pushed the works out to the end of July. Pending handover/delivery in August. The Exeloo unit is going through consenting. Once consents are received installation will take place. 22/08/2025 - Report provided for the 1 September meeting. 13/11/2025 - Toilet block foundation is underway with installation of the toilet block and fish processing station commencing mid November. Minor defects are being completed on the Jetty works. Pending handover/delivery in December. 12/12/2025 - Minor defects underway. Memorial plaque installed. Toilet block and fish processing station in place awaiting water connection in January (emergency replacement underway by ESG). Signage to be installed in February. 13/02/2026 - Defects are now complete on the Jetty works. Handover has been moved until final completion of all aspects, work towards handover is still underway. Delays on the emergency replacement (ESG), works should begin the week of 16 February. Signage is with stakeholders for approval, completion and installation scheduled for the end of February/start of March. 19/03/2026 - Construction of the Bluff community boat ramp facility has been completed, with the public toilet and fish cleaning station now in place. Work is continuing to finalise the operational processes and maintenance arrangements to support the long-term use of the facility, with the fish cleaning station temporarily fenced during this period. 22/04/2026 - Final PMO report provided for the 8 June meeting. 26/08/2026 - The recent healh and safety investigation relating to access risks has been completed. Several follow-up actions are curently being scoped and costed prior to handover, including the repair of fencing. These actions require funding allocation and scheduling to ensure the asets meet the inended design requirements and operational expectations.		West Jetty final bracing Complete Toilet (February)	1
				STRATEGIC ASSET PLANNING			
85	2023	Strategic Asset Planning	Bluff Gateway Entrance and Highway sign - Lighting installation, surface water run-off improvements	04/03/2025 - Given NZTA are unable to fund this, next steps are to confirm a concept and the scope of the project (confirming lighting, landscaping, safety considerations) 03/06/2025 - The new lighting fixture for the Bluff sign has been designed and will be forwarded to NZTA for approval. This work is unbudgeted at this stage. 10/07/2025 - Lighting to be progressed in new financial year. 18/08/2025 - To be progressed as above. 24/11/2025 - Awaiting progress as above. 18/02/2026 - Examining options for funding, NZTA compliance needs to be addressed for lighting. 10/08/2026 - Currently no approval for funding for this action.	Chris Bowen	In Progress	2
109	2024	Strategic Asset Planning	No Stopping lines at Stirling Point - Ward Parade	No stopping lines previously at Stirling Point on Ward Parade. NZTA previously consulted, however no changes to bylaws were adopted. 12/07/2024 - Potentially needs new consultation. ICC following up on legal implications. 03/10/2024 - No-Stopping lines on Ward Parade to go out for public consultation. The parking bylaw will need to be amended once consultation is completed. Full process expected to take 6 months. 15/04/2026 - Anticipated consultation will take place third quarter of the calendar year subject to approval from the Infrastructure and Growth Committee. Consultation will be undertaken with other parking projects. 03/07/2026 - Public consultation scheduled for 14 September 2026 - 25 October 2026 as part of the ICC Parking Control Bylaw Review. 10/08/2026 - As above - Public consultation is still upcoming.	Grant Fisher	30-Jul-2024	1
132	2023	Strategic Asset Planning	Speed limit reduction between 100km / 50km zones	10/07/2025 - Concerns about the speed limit going from 100 to 50 km per hour. Vehicles, including trucks still going too fast after the 50 sign. Speed reduction requested entering Bluff, 70km from Ocean Beach. Speed limits are set by Waka Kotahi, a temporary speed limit can be requested. 28/08/2025 - Council is currently consulting on speed limit reviews as part of the GPS-Transport changes. As stated this requires NZTA approval. Staff to discuss the matter with NZTA. Note: The GPS-Transport does not support lowering speed limits in a general sense, but a staged reduction may be an exception. 22/01/2026 - Discussed with NZTA late last year. Further discussions required. 18/02/2026 - Further discussions with NZTA have been held. Noted GPS restrictions limit matters. Formal letter to be drafted by staff and approved by BCB by 31 March 2026. 04/03/2026 - Letter drafted for BCB to consider 02/04/2026 - Letter with Chair for signing. 19/05/2026 - NZTA representative invited to attend Bluff Community Board meeting. 29/06/2026 - Seeking support from the stakeholders and drafting a letter from the Chief Executive of ICC. The current Government directive, Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024, indicates a low priority for speed reductions not adjacent to school zones. The Land Transport Act 1988, details the process which must be undertaken. As this is a low priority, with limited traction within NZTA, time is spent gaining the required support from stakeholders and gaining statistics on driver safety compliance / issues.	Grant Fisher	In progress	3

APPENDIX 1
11122803

Bluff Inspection Action Sheet

BCB Priority Key

High	1
Medium	2
Low	3
Business as usual	4

Item numbers are numeric
135 Next New Item number

Item	Year	Responsibility Area	Issues/Projects	Actions	ICC Contact	Timeframe	Priority
				INFRASTRUCTURE OPERATIONS			
83	2023	Infrastructure Operations	Cycle track access issue north of over bridge - Bluff Highway	Cars using cycleway to access property. ICC to investigate erecting bollards to prevent vehicle access from Princes Road and north of railway overbridge on Bluff Highway. 11/07/2024 - Signage to be installed at end of Princes Road where road ends and shared path begins. 22/08/2025 - Bollard to be installed on south end where cycleway meets Princes Road. 22/01/2026 - Bollard installation delayed, but is planned. (No further complaints of vehicles using cycleway). 29/06/2026 - Bollards installation planned for July 2026. 10/08/2026 - Completed as described above - remove from action list.	Allan Gillespie	31-Jul-2026	3
100	2024	Infrastructure Operations	Slump in road - outside 86 Gore Street on SH1	01/02/2024 - Slump in roadway on Gore Street outside 86 Gore Street (SH1) 02/02/2024 - This slump was identified in Oct 2023 and passed onto the NZTA SH Maintenance contractor. They advised this needs to be discussed with NZTA. Awaiting feedback from NZTA. 30/05/2024 - Slump is within area with pavers, so is shared responsibility between ICC (surface) & NZTA (Base/sub-base). 22/01/2026 - Slump temporarily filled with asphalt. NZTA to be engaged to progress with final repairs. 19/05/2026 - Discussions underway with NZTA for joint repairs. 10/08/2026 - Confirmed this is on NZTA's list of works, but low in priority. Triaged as per Maintenance Intervention Guides	Allan Gillespie	31-Jul-2026	4
126	2024	Infrastructure Operations	Marine Parade - groundwater flowing over footpath.	09/12/2024 - Ground water is flowing over the footpath at various locations along Marine Parade. Particularly after wet weather. Is there opportunity to install strip drains to catch this water? What are the long term plans to address this issue. 14/04/2025 - Further wet weather assessment is required - followed by containment methodology. 22/10/2025 - Inspection on 7 August revealed 2 sections. First section where water is continuously flowing over footpath outside 30 Marine Parade, investigations underway for permanent solution to resolve. Second area identified at 96 Marine Parade where property drainage outflows into the berm instead of kerb and channel. Council to address this non-compliance with owner. 22/01/2026 - 30 Marine Parade - slot drain under consideration to catch ground water continuously flowing over the footpath at this location. 19/05/2026 - Investigations ongoing. 10/08/2026 - Investigations ongoing - no progress.	Allan Gillespie	TBC	1
127	2025	Infrastructure Operations	Shannon Street - bridge approach-footpath failure	17/12/2024 - Footpath subsidence identified and temporarily repaired by the Waihōpai Alliance in December 2024 10/03/2025- CCTV investigation of underground SW pipelines completed, and cavity identified under footpath 10/07/2025 - Subsidence has accelerated, with a new sink hole appearing on the footpath. Council, Contractors and Consulting Engineer representatives met on site to review. The cause of the subsoil erosion is suspected to be attributed to the stormwater main in the footpath, however after flooding and testing the pipes could not confirm this. The hole has since been filled and a temporary surface reinstated to make the footpath safe and usable. Further investigations continue, including potentially diverting the stormwater main. This site will be monitored closely for any further movement / subsidence. 2/08/2025 - Shannon Street bridge investigations/monitoring are still ongoing. Next steps are to relocate the stormwater, which will eliminate this from being the cause of the erosion. During these works there will be traffic delays/detours. This will allow further investigations to be undertaken for the cause of the settlement/erosion under the footpath. 22/01/2026 - Ongoing monitoring, no further movement on footpath. 17/02/2026 - Stormwater main planned for diversion in March/April. Further investigations to be undertaken at footpath/retaining wall/bridge approach.	Allan Gillespie	In Progress	1
130	2025	Infrastructure Operations	Bluff Mowing maps	15/05/2025 - BCB queried what berms meet the criteria for the council to mow and which don't. 16/05/2025 - Bluff mowing maps to be reviewed before the new mowing season starts. 22/08/2025 - Review in Progress. This has evolved into a wider review of mowing throughout Invercargill and Bluff, in a joint effort between Roading and Parks.anges. 19/05/2026 - Review meeting with BCB held 29 April 2026. Final plan showing changes to be sent through to Bluff Community Board for review. 29/06/2026 - Plans to be finalised and presented to the Bluff Community Board before the end of July. Ahead of the mowing season starting in September. 10/08/2026 - Bluff mowing maps have been reviewed and updated following a joint site inspection with the Bluff Community Board. The updated maps provide a consistent application of existing mowing responsibilities and assessment criteria. This reflects an operational adjustment associated with the internal delivery of roadside mowing by Parks and Recreation and will be monitored during the coming mowing season.	Allan Gillespie	31-Jul-2026	3

APPENDIX 1
11122803

Bluff Inspection Action Sheet

Item numbers are numeric
135 Next New Item number

BCB Priority Key
High 1
Medium 2
Low 3
Business as usual 4

Item	Year	Responsibility Area	Issues/Projects	Actions	ICC Contact	Timeframe	Priority
				PARKS AND RECREATION			
5a	2023	Parks and Recreation	General Land review	38 Suir Street, JG Ward Reserve, Part Bluff Hill Reserve, Bluff Camping Ground land parcels were endorsed by Community Wellbeing Committee for Council Officers to proceed with Public Notification with the community on potential alternative uses of these spaces. 5/4/2024 - Engagement with the community has been undertaken via the LTP process in March and feedback is currently being analysed. Feedback on LTP? Collation of feedback made available? August update - At the July Bluff Community Board Meeting, a paper was presented which detailed all submissions received for the Long-term Plan process. An agreement was reached that a separate working group would be formed to discuss in detail the options associated with each land parcel. 30/09/2024 - Land Disposal Workshop confirmed for the 14/10/2025. 24/1/2025 - JG Ward paper being prepared to take to BCB. March 2025 - JG Ward Paper planned to be delivered in May. 11/4/2025 - Still planned to deliver paper to BCB in May. 09/06/2025 - JG Ward and 38 Suir Street BCB paper has been approved to be discussed at the June BCB. Mokomoko Reserve was agreed at the Community Wellbeing Committee in May 2025. 08/07/2025 - JG Ward and 38 Suir Street paper was discussed at the June Bluff Community Board meeting. Recommendations were resolved at Council. A report will be prepared to present to Council to commence the disposal process. 07/08/2025 - Consultation on these two parcels of land will be presented to the new Council in November / December. This will contain the resolution that any revenue received will be reinvested within JG Ward Reserve. 14/11/2025 - Paper to be delivered at the December BCB to start Public Consultation. 16/01/2025 - Recent storm events have delayed the design of the reserve, which is required for consultation purposes. Expected date now February BCB. 17/02/2026 - Workshop with Council on 10 March 2026 will address JG Ward Reserve. 31/03/2026 - Workshop was supportive of proceeding with JG Ward and 38 Suir Street Proposal. 19/05/2026 - Planning work is under action. 29/06/2026 - 38 Suir Street and JG Ward Reserve are out for consultation 3 July - 7 August, following Council decision to proceed in July 2025, and all information required being ready to continue. 10/08/2026 - Consultation has closed, hearings and deliberations are being arranged for September and a report will be presented for final decisions following the consideration of submissions.	Caroline Rain - Parks and Recreation	Under Action - Consultation 3 July - 7 August 2026. Hearings and Deliberations are being arranged.	2
104	2024	Parks and Recreation	Foyle Street Reserve - seating / drainage repairs	01/01/2024 - Is there any opportunity to replace the shrubs along the banks of Foyle Street reserve with some form of terraces to accommodate seating to watch sporting activities? 5/4/2024 - Still investigating seating opportunity. 15/11/2024 - This is still in the investigation stage, very steep banking and will take some thinking on how this could be achieved. 07/08/2025 - Draft Sports Field Operational Plan (from Xyst) has been received and details that Foyle Street Reserve is high priority for council to undertake drainage repairs. It also notes the lighting condition at the reserve is in poor condition. A scope is drafted for an upgrade of this park and will need to be approved before the end of the calendar year. Seating was not identified in the report. 14/11/2025 - Scheduled to occur between January-March. 16/01/2025 - Tender process has been completed and the successful contractor has been selected. Initial start meeting with the contractor is being scheduled and onsite start time is to be confirmed in the next 4 weeks. 17/02/2026 - Set up meeting has been completed and start time for this work is expected to be August - post the rugby season. 31/03/2026 - Scheduled for after rugby season. 19/05/2026 - No changes. 29/06/2026 - Discussion has been made with Heritage NZ Properties and Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga around archaeological advice received, which is being discussed with contractors for the drainage plans. 10/08/2026 - On track for beginning September start date, subject to no outstanding Heritage requirement changes. Rugby Club has been informed.	RFS 410856	Being Investigated	4
125	2025	Parks and Recreation	Western Jetty at Foreshore Road Boat Ramp	March 2025 – Further discussion is required to understand the viability of repairing and maintaining two boat ramps and associated infrastructure within Bluff. 11/02/2025 - Gave update for costs to repair the Foreshore Road ramp/wharf and asked for their endorsement to place a bid for funds. This was not endorsed as they wish to undertake more due diligence discussion on the investment of two boat ramps. 09/06/2025 - Awaiting advice from Bluff Community Board on direction. 08/07/2025 - Awaiting direction from Bluff Community Board. 07/08/2025 - Please inform what is required to get direction from the Bluff Community Board 14/11/2025 - Does BCB want a specific paper on this topic. 16/01/2026 - Investment on this boat ramp and jetty required direction from the BCB. 17/02/2026 - This information is still with the Bluff Community Board - if more information is required to inform a decision please confirm. 08/04/2026 - Paper drafted to be considered at a future board meeting. 19/05/2026 - Paper is being presented at 8 June meeting. 29/06/2026 - Following up actions from report. 10/08/2026 - Seeking board clarificaton on engagement.	Caroline Rain	Being investigated	3

APPENDIX 1
11122803

Bluff Inspection Action Sheet

Item numbers are numeric
135 Next New Item number

BCB Priority Key

High	1
Medium	2
Low	3
Business as usual	4

Item	Year	Responsibility Area	Issues/Projects	Actions	ICC Contact	Timeframe	Priority
134	2026	Parks and Recreation	Rugby Park Carpark	February 2026 - Rugby club enquired if the carpark on Foyle St can be sealed with the pending Foyle St footpath renewal. 17/02/2026 - Parks have requested a price estimate for the works. Depending on cost could be a consideration. 31/03/2026 - Parks and Recreation are working closely with Infrastructure to understand associated costs with maintaining this car park. 19/05/2026 - No changes. 29/06/2026 - Footpath works are underway and due to be completed by 3 July. Planning of car park works to follow which would be anitipcated to happen in summer once planning is completed. 10/08/2026 - Quotes are being sought.	Caroline Rain	Footpath Under Action and Car Park Planning being investigated	3

Financial Report for Bluff Community Board for the Year Ending 30 June 2026

To:	Bluff Community Board
Meeting Date:	Monday 31 August 2026
From:	Kathleen Simmonds – Accounting Technician
Approved:	Patricia Christie – Group Manager – Finance and Assurance
Approval Date:	Wednesday 19 August 2026
Open Agenda:	Yes
Public Excluded Agenda:	No

Purpose and Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Board's financial report for the year ending 30 June 2026.

Recommendations

That the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the "Financial Report for Bluff Community Board for the Year Ending 30 June 2026".

2. Approves the transfer of $30,339 funds to the Bluff Community Board Net Debt account, bringing the balance to $282,207.50.

Financial Report

The Bluff Community Board has a surplus of $30,339 for the 2025/2026 financial year.

The Board received targeted rate revenue of $96,000 and Net Debt interest of $5,082. Total expenses were $71,000 against an Annual Plan of $86,000.

$38,000 spend under Grants and subsidies was contributed to:

- $12,000 to bursary recipients.
- $15,876 to Bluff Promotions.
- $10,000 to Bluff Maritime Museum.

$30,339 will be transferred to Net Debt account for future use by the Board.

The Bluff Community Board has an estimated Net Debt balance of $282,207.50 as at the end of the 2025/2026 financial year.

Bluff Community Board - Financial Report Year Ending 30 June 2026

Performance Report

	Actual ($,000)	Forecast	Plan
REVENUE			
Targeted rates	96	95	96
Finance Revenue	5	5	5
TOTAL REVENUE	101	101	101
EXPENSES			
Other Staff expenses	2	11	11
Administration expenses	-	1	1
Operational expenses	0	1	1
Grants & subsidies expenses	38	38	38
Elected reps & Mana Whenua expenses	31	31	35
TOTAL EXPENSES	71	81	86
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	30	20	16

Next Steps

Upon approval by the Board, staff will transfer the balance to the Bluff Community Board Net Debt account.

Attachments

Nil

REPORT OF THE BLUFF PUBLICITY / PROMOTIONS OFFICER

To:	Bluff Community Board
Meeting Date:	Monday 31 August 2026
From:	Lindsay Beer – Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer
Open Agenda:	Yes
Public Excluded Agenda:	No

Purpose and Summary

To update the Bluff Community Board on activities happening in Bluff.

Recommendations

That the Bluff Community Board receive the report "Report of the Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer".

Santa Parade / Christmas in The Bluff

I am currently putting together a funding application to the Community Wellbeing Fund for costs associated with the annual Bluff Promotions Santa Parade and the Christmas in The Bluff Gala Day with both events complementing each other.

Both are community events which provide a social benefit for Bluff residents while both events also draw many from outside of Bluff to the town for the day.

The events are scheduled to take place on Sunday 6 December.

Cruise Ships

I was recently asked by an Allied Media journalist (Southland Express and ODT) for my thoughts on the reduction in cruise ship numbers for the coming season. This was for a story they were compiling. My response was to highlight that this is not only an issue here but there are reasons for the reduction right around the country (as has been stated at the recent Cruise Hui's).

I also replied that we are grateful for any cruise ships that come to Bluff and will continue to advise the public / businesses of Bluff when we know there is a ship coming into our area and we will always endeavour to ensure our information is available for agents / ground handlers etc. I also pointed out that there are a lot of people in our area working very hard to encourage cruise visits and to make them as welcoming as possible.

There are 11 visits scheduled for this summer (seven Heritage Adventurer visits which basically load and unload passengers and four others – of which the first is on 16 December).

Summer Sounds and Community Garage Sale

Bluff Promotions have asked me to look at both these events.

With Summer Sounds we are looking at a different venue and perhaps a slightly different event template while a suitable date is being sought for the Garage Sale which does not clash with anything of significance around the province.

Great South Update

I also attended a Great South Update on several facets of their current projects during the month.

Coming Events

30 September to 3 October: Bluff Drama Club – Mayhem at The Manor

1 November to 7 November: SBS Bank Cycle Tour of Southland (Bluff Hill stage TBC)

6 December: Bluff Promotions Santa Parade and Christmas in The Bluff Gala Day

30 January: Coast 2 Toast

UPDATE ON HEAD START PROPOSAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION PROCESS FOR REORGANISATION

To:	Bluff Community Board
Meeting Date:	Monday 31 August 2026
From:	Clare Sullivan, Senior Governance Specialist
Approved:	Trudie Hurst – Acting Chief Executive
Approved Date:	Wednesday 26 August 2026
Open Agenda:	Yes
Public Excluded Agenda:	No

Purpose and Summary

This report provides the Bluff Community Board with an update on the Head Start Process and Local Government Commission proposal process.

Recommendations

That the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Update on Head Start Proposal and Local Government Commission Process for Reorganisation".

Background

There are two processes considering local government reorganisation concurrently running in Southland Head Start and the Local Government Commission proposal.

Head Start

On 7 August 2026 Council submitted a compliant Head Start proposal to the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport, for a unitary authority for the Southland Region. A copy of the proposal is attached. Since the submission of the proposal Council has been advised that the Gore District Council is now supporting the Local Government Commission (the Commission), process. Council's proposal will still be considered.

Local Government Commission Southland Reorganisation

The Commission, in its consideration of a proposal for reorganisation, identified two potential options for further investigation and modelling:

- One Southland-wide unitary council supported by council-wide local boards.
- Two unitary councils (an Invercargill unitary council and a Southland-Gore unitary council), each supported by council-wide local boards and a joint committee to oversee key regional functions.

The Commission has been engaging with communities in Southland to gain feedback. Council will consider draft feedback to the Commission at its meeting on 25 August 2026. The draft feedback letter is attached.

Members of the Bluff Community Board were encouraged to provide feedback via the survey form to the Commission. Feedback closed on 28 August 2026.

Next Steps

Council will await the outcome of the consideration of the Head Start Proposal by the Government and the feedback received by the Commission and information on the next phase of that process. Staff will continue to keep the Board informed and invite feedback where possible.

Attachments

1. One Southland Head Start Proposal (ID 10920794)

2. Draft Feedback to the Local Government Commission on Shortlisted Options for Local Government Reorganisation in Southland (ID 10790333)

A6536332

One Southland

Head Start proposal for a unitary authority for the Southland Region

Developed by Invercargill City Council, with the support of Gore District Council and with input from Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Environment Southland

August 2026

Draft Head Start Proposal Outline

This proposal, supported by Gore District Council, was developed with input from Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Environment Southland. It is for a Unitary Authority for the current Southland Regional Council boundary area, part of the Murihiku rohe, within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā.

All Territorial Local Authorities within the region would merge into a new entity and take on the functions of the Regional Council.

The proposed structure aligns to the regional planning boundaries and would support resilient economic development and catchment management. It supports effective management and use of our region's most important natural tāonga – our wai (water). New industries such as aquaculture and other opportunities require that we have sustainable, reliable and clean water from the Ōreti and our other river systems and that we are able to plan effectively to manage flooding, coastal and environmental protection.

The proposed governance structure would be a Council of between 12 – 16 Councillors elected from wards, which follow the freshwater management units and urban areas of Invercargill and Gore, with an option for one ward in the Mātaura, if preferred.

Local boards which align to communities of interest similar to those covered by existing Community Board arrangements are proposed to ensure democratic local voice. Local Boards would have decision making delegations for key local community facilities and services, with local plans determined by the Boards and funded by the local community.

To support efficiencies of scale, funding for infrastructure planning and delivery would be at network level, with considerable forecast improvements to outcomes, support for contractor market development and asset management improvements and efficiencies, benefiting not only Council but the wider economy.

It is forecast that $23 million[1] would be saved across the first six years of operation, an essential saving as our communities' struggle with cost of living.

To support ongoing regional development, we are proposing a range of funding mechanisms to enable Local Government to fund growth more effectively and reduce the pressure on ratepayers.

To support the deliverability of this proposal, there is the opportunity to leverage both the investment Council is making into scalable cost-effective corporate accommodation and IT systems transformation.

We recognise significant potential benefits of a Takiwā-wide centre of excellence which could provide scientific and technical services, alongside some back-office corporate functions. We would work to support a dispersed model which retained skills in the region. The transition approach would build on the skills and knowledge of our employees to retain and grow knowledge, while making it easier to attract talent and fill skills gap where we currently need to use more expensive consultants.

We look forward to working in partnership with Government, Iwi, our Local Government partners, and our community to make this transition a success.

---

[1] Environment Southland, The Southland Amalgamation Model, 2026

Southland's strength has always been in working together as a team and this proposal will ensure our economy and environment, our city and rural communities can thrive together. On behalf of Invercargill City Council, I commend this proposal to Ministers.

Mayor Tom Campbell
Invercargill City Council

Mayor Ben Bell
Gore District Council

Eligibility

This proposal is submitted on behalf of Invercargill City Council and Gore District Council, who resolved on 4 August to support this application. We understand that the Gore District Council intend to reconfirm this position on 11 August.

Southland District Council was invited to join this proposal but did not respond to this invitation, choosing to go another way; however, they contributed to its democratic structure through the Local Democracy Enhancement Working Party.

This proposal is for a Unitary Authority for the current Southland Regional Council boundary area, part of the Murihiku rohe, within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā. This represents two directly affected authorities and 67.7% of the population across the Southland region[2]. The proposal is that all Territorial Local Authorities within the region merge and take on the functions of the Regional Council.

The proposal has the support of the Regional Council.

It has been drafted on a collaborative basis by Invercargill City Council with input from Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Environment Southland.

The proposal is compliant.

Principles guiding this proposal

2

Gore District, vs Southland Region, Place and ethnic group summaries | Stats NZ

Invercargill City, vs Southland Region, Place and ethnic group summaries | Stats NZ

Invercargill City Council

- ✓ Strong united voice for Southland
- ✓ Fair representation to support local decision-making
- ✓ Resilient Southland
- ✓ Improved efficiency of delivery
- ✓ Affordability
- ✓ Strong local identity
- ✓ Environmental management
- ✓ Optimum financial outcomes.

Gore District Council

- ✓ The urban Invercargill areas has a maximum of 50% of the new Unitary Council. As an example, for a Council of 12, Invercargill City would have a maximum of 6 Councillors.
- ✓ The Mataura Ward has a minimum of 20% of the new Unitary Council. As an example, for a Council of 16, The Mataura ward would have a minimum of 3 Councillors. For a Council of 12 this would be 2.
- ✓ That partnering Councils enter discussions with Clutha District Council about inclusion of communities of interest in West Otago such as Tapanui and Clinton joining the combined entity
- ✓ Head Start partners reinvestigate the Southern Waters Joint Water Services CCO, placing all 3 water assets within the CCO during the setup of the combined entity, to achieve maximum economies of scale.
- ✓ Rates harmonisation is achieved over 10 years (not 3 years), as to not sharply impact rural ratepayers and in line with debt-ring fencing requirements.
- ✓ Gore District has a preference to remain in Southern Waters
- ✓ That existing roading funding being maintained at a level equivalent to the Financial Assistance Rate (FAR) of 61% currently received by Council, and not downgraded to that of the Southland District Council at 55%.
- ✓ Gore District Council retains its Penny per Unit Agreement
- ✓ Any historical and projected capital project debt ring-fenced to the host Council for a minimum of 10 years as to not impact the Gore District ratepayer base.
- ✓ Dissolve Great South and incorporate its functions into the new joint entity as an internal business function.
- ✓ Parks and Reserves and Roading services are brought in house for the new joint entity.
- ✓ That Gore District Roading quality matches that of Southland District within the first 5 years of establishment.
- ✓ That the legislative requirement to develop a Long-term plan for the 2027 – 2037 period is scrapped and replaced with Annual Plans until the new entity is stood up.
- ✓ That any representation reviews or work towards a regional (spatial) plan is halted until the new entity is stood up.

Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku

- ✓ Local government boundaries should align with the Ngāi Tahu takiwā boundary.
- ✓ River catchments should be the primary determinant of unitary council boundaries within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā.
- ✓ A joint Takiwā/ South Island "Centre of Expertise" entity should be established to provide shared back-office and specialist functions on behalf of new unitary councils.
- ✓ Future arrangements should incorporate genuine cooper-ation between councils and Papatipu Rūnanga.

Environment Southland

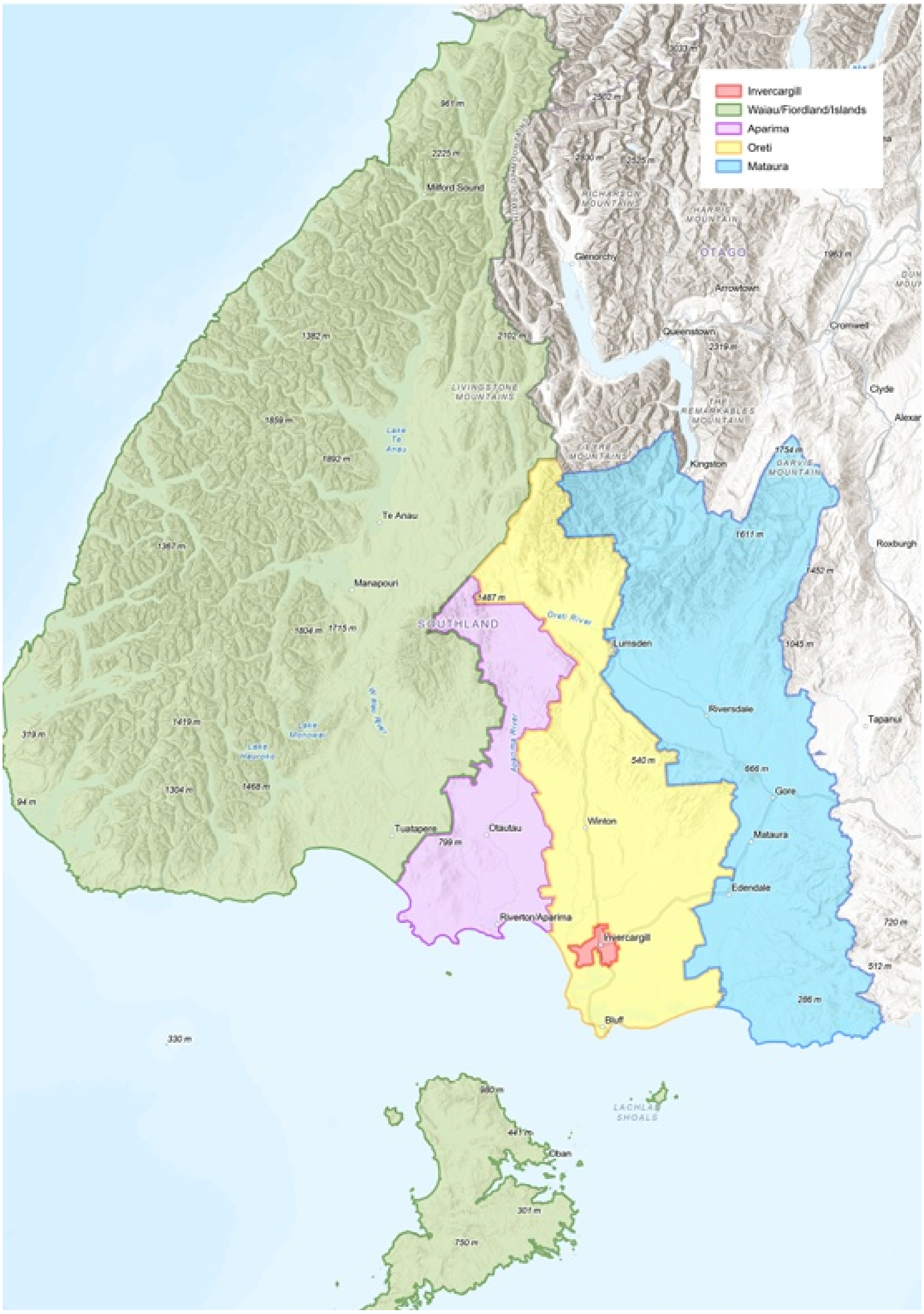
- ✓ Function first - structure should follow what each function needs in order to be delivered well.
- ✓ Catchment integrity - natural systems should not be fragmented by governance boundaries.
- ✓ Better outcomes, not just efficiencies - reform should improve delivery, resilience and environmental stewardship.
- ✓ Regional cohesion - future arrangements should support a strong regional voice and urban and rural Southland succeeding together.
- ✓ Strong local voice - communities need meaningful influence over local matters, with appropriate community representation.
- ✓ Efficiency and accountability - reform should reduce duplication and make better use of systems, people and capability.
- ✓ Enduring partnership - future arrangements should protect and strengthen relationships with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku; give effect to the intent and obligations arising from Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement 1997 and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998; and uphold existing Charter arrangements.
- ✓ Capability and continuity - specialist expertise, leadership, institutional knowledge and regional stewardship/kaitiakitanga understanding should be preserved and strengthened.
- ✓ Clear accountability - future arrangements should be explicit about who decides, who pays and how regulatory independence is protected.

Proposed structure and governance arrangements

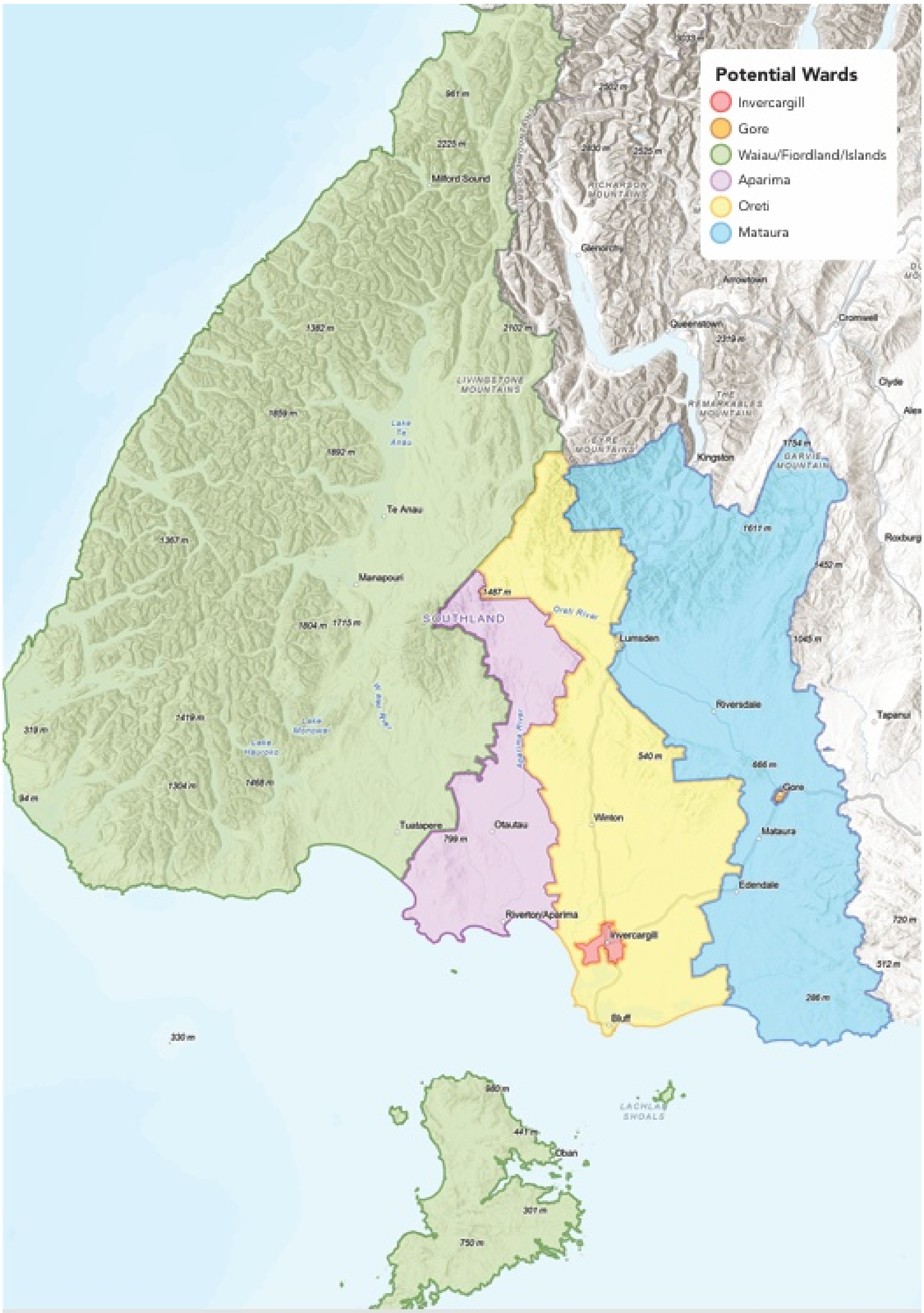
This proposal is for a Unitary Authority for the current Southland Regional Council boundary area, part of the Murihiku rohe, within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā. The proposal is that all Territorial Local Authorities within the region merge and take on the functions of the Regional Council, with the exception of where resource management functions are delegated by national legislation to some other structure. The area served would be a population of just over 100,000, of a size to realise meaningful efficiencies.

The following governance structure is proposed:

- Wards which follow the four major rivers and freshwater management unit boundaries and urban Invercargill and Gore, with an option for one ward in the Mātaura, if preferred.
- Local boards with delegated functions and funding capabilities for key communities of interest.
- Support for utilisation of citizen panels for relevant topics of interest.



Proposed Ward Boundary – Four river catchments and Invercargill



Proposed Ward Boundaries – Alternative option, four wards following river catchments, Invercargill, Gore.

Dependent on the number of councillors chosen both options would include the same proportion of representation for the Mātaura area (a minimum of 20%). The communities of interest (either Gore District Council or some other mechanism chosen by them) would determine the final option chosen).

There is a further option which recognises the communities of interest in areas such as Tapanui and Clinton and the relationships they have with the Gore District. This is a matter which could be discussed with Clutha District Council during the transition phase. Catchment integrity would be a priority.

Assessment Criteria: Supports the New Planning System

The proposal would support the new planning system by establishing a single Southland-wide unitary authority responsible for regional spatial planning, the natural environment framework, land use planning and implementation of the combined plan. This would avoid the governance and implementation complexity of multiple unitary authorities jointly preparing and implementing a regional combined plan.

A single unitary authority would allow environmental management, land use, infrastructure, natural hazards, freshwater, biodiversity, coastal management and transport planning to be considered together across Southland's major catchments and coastline. It would also support integrated catchment management and ki uta ki tai decision-making by keeping catchment and regional functions together, rather than splitting them across current territorial authority boundaries.

Plan implementation would be simpler, with one council responsible for administering the combined plan and one point of contact for resource users. Existing cross-regional transport planning arrangements with Otago would continue or be adapted as required.

Initial steps would include confirming interim governance for regional spatial planning, maintaining current planning and technical workstreams, retaining specialist planning, science, data, consenting and compliance capability, and agreeing how local input, catchment-level advice and iwi/Māori participation will feed into the combined plan. This would allow planning work to continue while the new authority is being designed, reducing the risk of disruption to the first generation of regional spatial and natural environment planning.

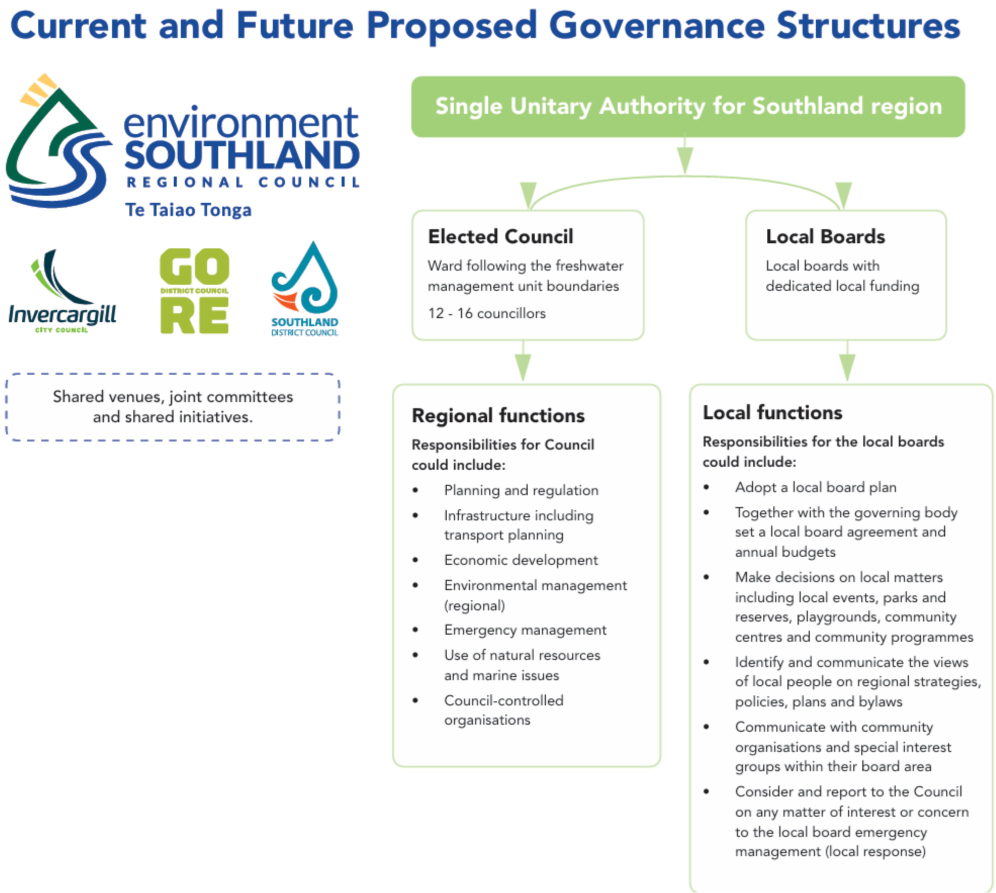
Trade-offs and risks

- Transition will need to be carefully managed because local government reorganisation and implementation of the new planning system will occur in parallel.
- Specialist planning, science, policy and regulatory capability will be under pressure nationally and will need to be retained through transition.
- Regulatory independence will need to be protected within a single organisation that may both own infrastructure and undertake regulatory functions.
- Local circumstances, community priorities and place-based issues will still need to be reflected within the combined planning framework, although local variation is likely to be more constrained under the proposed more standardised planning system.
- Any cost and efficiency benefits will need to be tested through detailed design, particularly while transition costs and capability pressures are being managed.

Still to be worked through

- Governance arrangements for regional spatial planning and implementation of the combined plan.
- How local boards, catchment-level groups and communities will feed into regional spatial planning, land use provisions and natural environment planning.
- Regulatory independence and decision-making arrangements within the unitary authority.
- Interfaces between the combined plan and transport, infrastructure, water services, building control and other planning functions.
- Whether Takiwā-scale shared services could support specialist functions where this would strengthen capability, reduce duplication and improve consistency while maintaining local decision-making and relationships.

Assessment Criteria: Simplifies Local Governance



The proposal will simplify local government by reducing complexity, reducing the number of Councils by three, removing three Joint Committees and simplifying governance arrangements for one shared Council Controlled Organisation, the Southland Regional Development Agency, as well as other joint arrangements. The new transition entity would determine the operational structure for delivery of economic development, noting Gore District Council's preference that this service be brought in house, which would be one of the options considered.

The current structure of Environment Southland and Invercargill City Council, Gore District Council and Southland District Council is:

- One Chair and three Mayors
- 46 Councillors
- 11 Community Boards across the 3 territorial local authorities comprising 66 members.

A total of 116 elected members across the 4 councils and community boards.

Our proposal is:

- A single unitary authority for the Southland region encompassing the area covered by the current Southland Regional Authority boundary.
- A Mayor elected at large across the region.

- 12 – 16 councillors elected from wards based on the four major rivers in Southland (Freshwater Management Units) Ōreti, Waiau, Aparima and Mātaura together with a ward for urban Invercargill (boundary may need refining). There is an alternative option for an urban Gore ward if preferred.
- An equal number of Councillors elected between Invercargill and the other five wards.
- Local boards, reflecting existing community board boundaries and communities of interest and providing a local voice and local decision-making.

A single unitary authority creates a single voice for Southland in central government, regional sector and cross-boundary issues. Maintaining catchment integrity supports both resource management and economic development outcomes by making the best use of regional resources.

The Southland region is a structure which is familiar to Southlanders and it would be clearer to understand who to contact for regulatory, planning infrastructure and community matters.

Some preliminary work indicates that 16 councillors, eight elected from urban Invercargill and eight elected from the remaining five wards, provides for the requirements in the Local Electoral Act 2001 of fair and effective representation of electors to be met.

There would not be a need for joint subcommittees. Council will be able to review its framework of committees and CCOs.

Trade-offs and Risks

The only significant trade-off for consideration in relation to simplifying Local Government is the lack of support from Southland District Council. Should the proposal proceed, this would need to be carefully managed through the transition process. There are minor potential impacts on neighbouring Councils in Otago which are discussed further below.

A related implementation risk is that the wider community may remain divided between a one-unitary model and a two-unitary model, particularly if some communities or councils continue to support a different structure. This should be acknowledged directly and managed through clear evidence about why regional functions and catchments are best kept whole, meaningful local board arrangements, transparent delegations and funding, continued engagement with affected communities and a transition process that builds confidence that local identity and local decision-making will not be lost.

Still to be worked through...

Following the submission of our outline proposal as part of the work Council intends to continue conversations with the southland region community about:
- the numbers of councillors and potential boundaries of wards from which they will be elected.
- the number and boundaries of Local Boards and number of members of each Local Board.

Assessment Criteria: Economies of Scale

High level financial modelling suggests the proposed amalgamation will provide value, with estimated savings of 3.4% to be realised from 2034 onwards over the current arrangements – representing an annual saving of $9.8 million from 2034 onwards. Total transition costs of $23.5 million have been forecasted, to be incurred starting from the 2028/2029 financial year. Transition costs are expected to be 'front-loaded' with a greater cost incurred in earlier year. As a result, the first projected year of break-even is 2033.

A financial model has been commissioned by Environment Southland with the results published publicly in June 2026. The model projects that there will be a saving of 8% across corporate overhead costs, representing total corporate overhead savings of $30.8 million through to 2034. The model additional predicts that there will be a saving of $15.7 million on core council services, representing an additional 2% saving across core services for the three existing territorial authorities.

Regional and Infrastructure Planning

The proposal supports regional planning, economic development, and land and public transport planning, as all these items are already coordinated or delivered for the region as a whole. Coordination costs for economic development, regional spatial and climate change planning will be reduced.

Combined procurement, integrated network management and improved ability to attract talent and invest in data are forecast to make improvements and efficiencies to asset management and investment outcomes. Southland has one of the largest roading networks in the country and as a result, asset management improvements will have a significant potential impact.

Catchments would remain whole under the proposal, the catchment management liaison committees sit within the regional boundary and it is proposed that these groups would continue unchanged.

Integration of functions

Territorial authorities and regional councils bring different but complementary strengths to a unitary model. Territorial authorities are often closest to local place-based services, housing, growth, infrastructure provision and community facilities, while regional councils hold specialist responsibilities for environmental stewardship, natural resource management, catchment management, environmental monitoring, flood resilience, biosecurity and regional-scale planning. Bringing these functions together within a single organisation creates an opportunity to better balance development, infrastructure, local services and environmental outcomes, provided the design protects both local voice and the specialist regional capability needed for effective environmental stewardship.

Efficient service delivery

A unitary authority serving a population of over 100,000 will be of a size of enable efficient delivery of services which are currently outsourced often at higher cost via contracts with third party suppliers. With increased scale, there is the potential to facilitate some activities to be managed in-house. This includes parks and reserves operations and roading planning and coordination, and some aspects of delivery, with the details to be determined during transition.

Detailed analysis needs to be completed if the proposal progresses and the work completed by the Local Government Commission may provide key areas to be considered.

Economic development is already delivered at a regional level, with some potential for some efficiencies through integrating this structure more closely with the unitary authority.

There are opportunities for innovation, particularly through explore the opportunity for scientific and technical staff to be housed within a Takiwā-wide council controlled advisory function. Council would support innovative flexible employment practices to support employees to live throughout the Takiwā, including Southland rather than being centralised.

Additional benefits

Regional economic development will be supported through enhanced and streamlined regulatory services and integrated catchment management. Growth is forecast to be supported under the model, if funding mechanisms can be aligned to ensure that Local Government is in the position to be able to make the appropriate infrastructure investment and provide the community facilities needed to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Rates

Any future amalgamation will require a full rating review to ensure that future rates continue to be levied in accordance with the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002. Significant differences exist in the Rating Policies of the existing local authorities.

Invercargill City Council sets general rates based upon a rate in the dollar on capital value, combined with a uniform annual general charge. Differentials are applied to different land use categories. Targeted rates are applied for the provision of community board services, the city-centre coordinator Rate, transportation, stormwater drainage, water and wastewater.

Southland District Council, while also applying a general rate in the dollar based upon capital value, and a uniform annual general charge, levies a significantly broader range of targeted rates to reflect the differing activities and levels of service provided across the wider Southland District. Such examples include targeted rates for community boards (urban, semi-urban and rural), roading, community facilities, rubbish bin collection and the Te Anau Airport Manapouri targeted rate.

Gore District Council also applies a wide range of targeted rates, although not to the same extent as Southland District Council.

Environment Southland also sets general rates based upon a rate in the dollar on capital value, combined with a Uniform General Charge, and has a number of targeted rates. As Environment Southland are rating across the district, land and capital values are calculated on equalised values. Equalisation is required because each of the other Councils revalue once per annum on a 3 year rotational basis. The equalisation value is provided to us by QV and reflects what values would be if all 3 Councils had QV revaluations done at the same time. Environment Southland's targeted rates are its Flood Infrastructure Investment rate (levied on the basis of the capital value of rateable land), River Management Rate (also levied on the capital value of rateable land), Rabbit Control Rate (set on land greater than 4 hectares in certain locations and levied per hectare), a separate Wairau Rating District scheme (levied on the capital value of land) and Land Drainage Rates (levied per scheme on a per hectare basis in some cases and on the capital value of land in others).

The ultimate rating structure would be designed to enable items delegated to Local Boards to be funded by the community of interest represented by the Board. This approach is intended to ensure efficient delivery of financial and planning functions while enabling local democratic mandate. Local Boards would have the flexibility to request additional funding to meet extraordinary circumstances.

An up to ten yearharmonisation phase would be utilised to reduce significant changes to rating impacts on particular communities, with the final term agreed by the transitional board, based on principles of equity to be agreed by the transition advisory group. It is expected that a greater impact may be observed in rural communities particularly in the Southland District and Gore District which currently pay a higher proportion of targeted rates and the length of time for the harmonisation will be agreed to mitigate this impact.

Debt management

It is proposed that the treasury function would be centrally managed through the unitary council and all CCOs. The increased size of the entity, along with the increased debt book and consolidated revenue would provide an opportunity to bring the treasury services in-house and offer efficiency savings on consultancy costs.

An amalgamated council will provide an opportunity for increased debt headroom to support a greater magnitude of capital expenditure and renewals. An increase in debt headroom will provide greater resilience in the event of a natural disaster or emergency, improving the debt profile of the organisation.

It is proposed that for the initial transitionary period, existing debts and the associated interest cost could be ringfenced to particular communities and/or projects with which the debt is associated. The servicing of interest expense could be levied through targeted rates based upon the source of origination of the debt. As noted, a transitionary period is suggested, based upon the estimated useful life of the associated asset. Following the expiration of this transitionary period, the relevant debt will be absorbed into the wider unitary council for funding purposes. Ten years is suggested as the period for debt harmonisation. Debt costs for local community assets within the remit of the local boards would remain funded locally.

Financial Impacts

The One Southland model is predicted to achieve annual operational savings of $9.8 million from 2034 onwards – equating to an annual saving of 3.4%. Cumulative savings to 2034 (taking into account amalgamation costs) are expected to be $23.0 million. These savings are expected to be achieved through an 8% saving in corporate overheads across all four local authorities and a 2% saving across core council services at the three existing territorial authorities.

It is assumed that the full capital programmes of all four current local authorities will continue, so no savings are expected to be realised in capital expenditure or depreciation. However, it is expected that over time that there will be savings to be realised from more efficient asset management and procurement.

The three territorial local authorities are all running an unbalanced budget for the 2026/2027 Financial Year. As a result, it can be assumed that there is an element of debt funding being applied to operational expenditure. Therefore, any forecast savings in operational expenditure will have a positive impact upon debt levels and subsequent interest expense.

It is proposed that the shareholding of all relevant Council Controlled Trading Organisations and subsidiaries remain within the four councils until a successor holding company is established. This will include but not limited to the following organisations:

- Invercargill City Holdings Limited
- Invercargill Airport Limited
- South Port New Zealand Limited
- Electricity Invercargill Limited (whilst not a CCO or CCTO, this entity is a subsidiary of Invercargill City Holdings Limited)
- The trading activities of Southland Regional Development Agency Limited (trading as Great South)

This approach would also apply to non-trading CCOs:

- Te Kupeka Tiaki Taoka Southern Regional Collections Trust
- Bluff Maritime Museum Trust
- Invercargill City Charitable Trust
- Milford Community Trust

It is worth noting that there are likely to be further potential savings from a Takiwā-wide "centre of expertise" model proposed by Ngāi Tahu. In addition, it is believed that the model likely under-represents the potential efficiencies which can be achieved from region-wide asset management and enhanced procurement practices, noting the further flow-on benefits to the wider market of a more skilled resilient contractor market.

The historic funding agreement for the electricity provision within the Gore urban area "the penny per unit" will continue, covering the same area as present.

Sources of efficiencies

There are opportunities to explore centralised services and efficiencies across the majority of Council activities.

At a high level the areas where efficiencies can be found are:

- Efficiencies in planning and procurement of infrastructure asset management which can be achieved through network level management and improved contract scale and management processes, with the strategic opportunity to build the resilience of the contractor market enhancing delivery and ability to service other commercial operations and industries new to the region.
- Shared head office facility for those areas already housed in Invercargill (Invercargill City Council, Environment Southland and Southland District Council) noting that Invercargill City Council has just entered into commercial arrangements for development of a scalable head office which will speed up this process and along with the maintenance of a potential satellite office in Gore.
- Information technology hardware, software and support, noting that Council's Enterprise Management technology change programme will enable an efficient on-boarding and harmonisation of software and systems processes as the Councils come together.
- Corporate services such as Finance, Human Resources, Training and Development, Legal, Information Services and other corporate departments, with opportunities to consider how some of these, along with technical and scientific services may be provided more efficiently at a Takiwā level.

- Streamlining of front facing services and processes involving residents, developers, customers of Councils.
- Potential revenue from sale of surplus assets.
- Activities which are currenting contracted to third parties, with scale and improved ability to attract talent creating potential to in-source these reducing consultant overhead.
- Support for a more efficient and enduring partnership relationship with Mana whenua than is possible through four separate agencies.
- Reduced audit fees and other corporate oversight overheads (for example internal audit functionality).

Activities which already are provided via a shared service model such as emergency management, regional development and solid waste may not create large savings but there will be some efficiencies in terms of time and resources needed to manage the joint committee, joint shareholding and other governance structures.

Over time there would be harmonisation of levels of service through the corporate planning process. Those communities which wished to have an enhanced level of service for community facilities and local services would have the ability to raise funds for these locally.

Areas which need to be reviewed and clarified as to whether there will be any efficiencies are:
- Governance – due to the geographic distance and need to support a range of local boards to provide for local voice
- A review of the Water in-house entities that ICC and SDC operation of which will be harmonised, which may include implementation of a CCO and to also include reconsideration of the benefits of the whole region joining the Southern Waters CCO, noting the option that waters services for the Gore area remains separate and delivered by Southern Waters, which is the preference of the Gore District Council.

Potentially, one Unitary Authority would provide a better workforce opportunity within the Local Government sector in Southland. With more career options, greater scale of role at a regional level and scope to bring functions back in house, this is a more sustainable model compared to the current situation of staff moving between entities to do the same job leaving gaps in other entities.

Trade-offs and risks

A unitary authority will achieve economies of scale which must be balanced by implementation of appropriate structures to maintain the local voice. The recommended structure of local boards will require appropriate resourcing through planning and governance support to enable them to function effectively. The recommended funding approach for Local Boards is intended to enable representation of local voice while still achieving economies of scale.

There are a number of skills shortages within the region which are expected to be eased through this process. This also provides the opportunity to enhance the local workforce so there is greater scale and opportunities to retain talent. Equally, due to shortages across the workforce nationally, it is likely to mean that in some areas efficiencies may be lower as a result of roles being unfilled or under-resourced.

Still to be worked through...

More accurate assessment of the time and cost to centralise Information Technology, shared services and asset management and corporate functions, along with more accurate forecasts for associated period of realised benefits. This is likely to have a significant impact given the forecast amounts involved.

- Detailed review of organisation charts, employment contract provisions and other financial factors in order to fully assess the benefits and potential savings associated with staff costs.
- Impact of talent management over a period of uncertainty.
- Impact of redundancies in Invercargill area.
- Details of harmonisation approach for rating and debt management across the region.
- Appropriate design and scope for the new entity's Holding Company.
- Identification of surplus assets and forecast revenue from disposal.
- Details of Local Boards delegations and funding requirements.

Assessment Criteria: Maintains Local Voice

Election of representatives

It is proposed that Councillors would be elected via wards. Local board members would be elected from local board areas, with a Councillor also in place from each ward. This would maintain consistency with how we elect representatives now, with the exception of elections for regional councils. Feedback from consultation supported that maintaining a local voice was critical especially in rural areas.

Representation for communities

Communities would be represented both by councillors from wards and local boards elected across the whole of the district. Local boards would ensure a strong local voice, representation and decision-making for communities of interest.

The proposal includes a structure of local boards across the whole of the Council area. It is envisaged that given the geographic spread of local communities and distances between them a larger number of local boards would be required than the number of wards proposed. There are nine community boards in the current Southland district council area and one each in Gore and Invercargill. Incorporating as many of the current community board areas in a new local board structure would give a sense of familiarity and enable continuity of relationships with groups and organisations on the area. There is the potential to refine this over time.

To assist in the relationship between the governing body and Local Boards Council would be seeking in legislation, the ability to appoint Councillors to the local boards. This is seen as critical in strengthening the relationship between the governing body and the Local Board and establishing and maintaining links between local communities in the board areas and the governing body.

Local Boards roles and powers are set through legislation with specific decision-making responsibilities to be reviewed by Council. This provides a structured governance framework which gives the community greater comfort that a local decision-making approach is stronger and has greater permanence than a system of Community Boards which can be reviewed and removed through the representation review. The roles and responsibilities of the governing body and local boards will be more clearly set out and easier to understand by the public.

Roles and responsibilities

As a starting point the proposed breakdown in responsibilities is proposed.

Responsibilities for Council could include:

- Planning and regulation, with decision making structures to support separation of regulatory functions.
- Infrastructure including transport planning.
- Infrastructure asset network management and delivery.
- Economic development.
- Environmental management (regional).
- Emergency management.
- Use of natural resources and marine issues.
- Council-controlled organisations.
- Risk and assurance, including overview of procurement.
- Service delivery, with a general principle of harmonised levels of service and consistent delivery mechanisms, noting the specific importance which Gore District Council places on this in the context of roading, with the ambition to achieve this within five years in comparison to the Southland District.

Responsibilities for the Local Boards could include:

- Adopt a Local Board plan.
- Together with the governing body set a Local Board agreement and annual budgets.
- Make decisions on local matters including local events, parks and reserves, playgrounds, community centres and community programmes.
- identify and communicate the views of local people on regional strategies, policies, plans and bylaws.
- communicate with community organisations and special interest groups within their Board area.
- consider and report to the Council on any matter of interest or concern to the Local Board.
- local response and emergency preparedness.

Iwi / Māori participation in decision making

Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku have helped shape this proposal.

The Council supports working collaboratively with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku through the detailed design phase to strengthen partnership arrangements within the future local government system. The reform process provides an opportunity to establish consistent and enduring partnership arrangements across any new authority structure. The detailed design phase will also identify whether broader iwi engagement is needed on matters of national significance. Any such engagement would be undertaken without predetermining or characterising iwi interests, rights, or statutory responsibilities. Council would work with Mana whenua in determining appropriate governance structures through the transition.

Trade-offs and risks

The most significant risk is that local communities feel that they do not have the most appropriate level of delegation for decisions. This has been the primary focus of community discussion and concern with a One Southland Unitary Authority Model.

The community has provided feedback on proposed areas of decision making as part of the Local Government Commission process. Feedback included in a survey conducted by the Local Government Commission indicated 41% of respondents thought that community services noted above should be decided upon in their local neighbourhood or town, with a further 20 % being delivered in their wider local area.

The proposed Local Board structure is designed to address this risk. The current Local Government Act 2001 provides for greater delegations to Local Boards than community boards which are more advisory in nature and delegations are at the behest of the Council. There is, of course, a trade-off that this structure comes with increased governance, planning and administration resources for each local area. It is intended to operate a harmonisation pathway to enable delegations to be refined over time as communities become used to the new structure to ensure efficiencies are achieved as modelled.

Still to be worked through...

- The number and boundaries of local boards and number of members of each Local Board.
- If the draft proposal is accepted, it is Council's intention to work with the other councils and communities to draw up the local board boundaries and discuss the number of representatives required and areas of local decision-making.
- Clarification of the roles and delegations for Local Boards.
- Details of rates harmonisation and funding arrangements for Local Boards.

Assessment Criteria: Deliverability

Implementation

Governance and oversight would need to be established for the transition phase.

Proposed Transition Governance Structure

Proposed Transition Board

To include

- 1 Mayor nominated by the Advisory Group to represent local government voice
- 1 additional Council elected representative from either rural/urban depending on Mayor appointment
- 1 Mana Whenua representative nominated by Ngai tahu ki murihiku
- 3 independent representatives with the following skills: legal, financial (mergers and acquisition) and local government governance.
- 1 MCERT DIA advisory

Advisory Joint Committee

- Mayor + 1 delegated Council member from each TLA recommended to be Chair of Regulatory Committee
- Regional Council Chair Papatipu Runaka representatives
- Risk and Assurance Independant Member
- Department of Internal Affairs member
- 1 MCERT DIA advisory

Transition Team

Staff from Council teams to include Governance, Planning, Finance, People and Culture and Information Services representatives

There will need to be clear direction from Government on the transition body's decision-making authority. It is noted that any independent members would be impacted by the current direction by Government to limit decision making for those members via the Local Government (Systems Improvements) Bill.

Underneath this transition governance structure would be key operational staff from each Council, seconded to analyse, investigate and bring to life the operations of the new Unitary Authority. They would report through to a central senior leader and would report to the transition board regularly with a detailed transition plan for adoption by August 2028. To maintain services, these staff would need to be funded so their roles can be back filled.

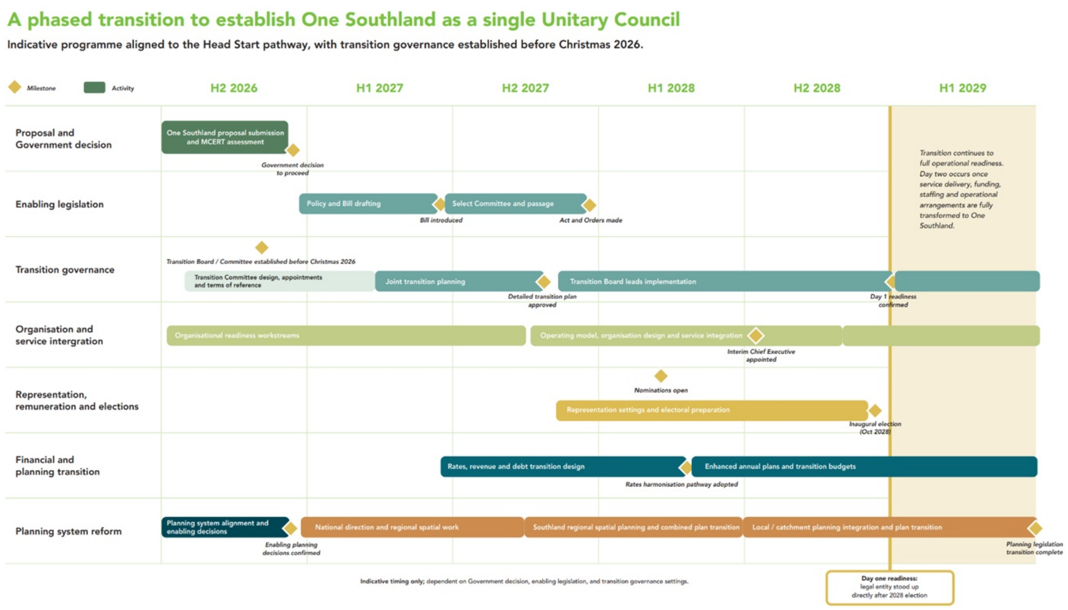
A dedicated service-continuity workstream would sit within this transition structure. Its role would be to protect core operational services, including flood warning, incident response, biosecurity and catchment operations.

Similar to the transition plans linked to Local Water Done Well, it is proposed that this transition plan would be completed before the 2028 Election cycle and mahi would continue post the election. It would be proposed the search for a Chief Executive to lead the new Unitary Authority would begin in May 2028 so they are established immediately post the election. During detailed design, there will be a need to review all current CE contracts to limit additional expenditure or contract issues.

Timing

The diagram below outlines the mahi that will need to run in parallel to enable the change for November 2028.

The timing to complete this mahi is ambitious and likely to require external funding support as noted below.



Trade-offs and risks

Contracting the transition period creates risks for system and process failure which could impact levels of service and realisation of long-term savings.

Careful management of the transition process will be required in order to maintain corporate and community knowledge and avoid embedding rural/ urban division.

There is significant risk of loss and challenges with attracting talent which may impact services.

Still to be worked through…

- Assessment of time and cost to centralise information technology.
- Talent management over a period of uncertainty.
- Redundancies in Invercargill area.
- Risk that Elected Members will create a governance issue if they cannot reduce services which are not economic i.e. halls and bridges, offices, libraries etc.

- Community resentment – the reality is there are a lot of uneconomic and inefficient activities that need to be removed, it is unlikely a new entity will want to allow this and it will continue to be a drain on ratepayers.
- Rating is varied across the Councils, the administration required to keep this all working.

Further, over the detailed design phase, the following opportunities exist:

- Some activities of Council could be identified as moving to one Authority in 2027 rather than wait.
- Head Office accommodation options due to an existing co-location project between ES and ICC.
- Standardisation of Governance processes and procedures.
- Alignment of Procurement and Information Technology functions, with an agreement of IT procurement in line with the harmonisation pathway benefitting from the ICC IT change programme.
- Enable a regional People team to manage FTE, contracts and salary spend with a temporary pause in recruitment during the transition phase.

Interactions with other Local Government programmes

Local Water Done Well

Southland District Council and Invercargill City Council have both opted to operate enhanced in-house services. Gore District Council has chosen to provide water services through Southern Waters Limited. The new unitary authority would need to determine a harmonisation pathway for management of water within the Invercargill and Southland Districts which have different operations based on the different urban network and rural dispersed system models. It would be a choice for the new entity and other successor organisations within the Otago area whether to make changes to the delivery of services within the current Gore District area, noting the preference of the Gore District Council to remain within the Southern Waters CCO and that the rest of the region joining this wider CCO will be considered during the transition phase.

City and Regional Deals

Southland has submitted a joint regional deal focused on housing, energy, workforce development transport and roading infrastructure. An outcome on this has not yet been received but all of these items could be delivered at a regional level by a new unitary authority. We would look to expand on this and look forward to exploring this further with Government following the proposal.

Proposals for Government support for Implementation

Transition advice and support

Provision of a DIA/ MCERT advisor for the Transitional Joint Committees for the process

Statutory relief

To reduce complexity and achieve value for the community it is proposed that the Government provide statutory relief to enable Councils to focus on implementing a successful transition. It is proposed that this include (for the period of the transition only):

- A pause to any further changes to Local Government and Resource management reform, other than that required to enable the transition, with a request for a lengthening of regional spatial planning timeframes to enable smaller communities, including Gore, to participate fully where there are resource constraints.
- Forego Representation Reviews separate to transition process.
- Forego audit for the Long-term plans, delaying audit for review of the new entity's transitional annual plan, with request that Government consider broader relief of Long-term planning requirements while maintaining the robust integrity of the planning process to support transition.
- Delay rates capping implementation until Year 3 of the new organisations Long-term plan allowing time for benchmarks to be set and approve transitional costs to be excluded from rates capping formula.

Funding

Transition

Funding to support back-filling of roles and for expert advice on matters such as rates harmonisation or asset management integration is requested.

System transition and staff restructuring are seen as significant activities which cannot be resourced based upon existing funding levels. Funding is requested to support the planning, mobilisation and fulfilment of these activities to an effective level that ensure that forecasted cost savings are realised.

Roading

It is important that the different needs for funding of roading across different areas is honoured through this process. The current FAR structure of 61% funding for the Gore district area, 55% for Southland District area and 51% for the Invercargill District area should be protected.

Host Region Benefit Framework

This proposal seeks to explore new funding mechanisms for the new unified council that better recognise the region's contribution to New Zealand's prosperity. These could form part of future region/ city deals.

Southland hosts nationally significant assets and industries that generate substantial national economic benefits, including some of New Zealand's most productive farmland, the Manapōuri hydroelectric scheme, Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, Tiwai Point aluminium smelter, as well as significant opportunities for future investment in renewable energy and hi-tech and the largest identified industrial land zone for development just south of Invercargill. While the benefits of these assets are shared nationally, many of the environmental, infrastructure and growth pressures are experienced locally and are currently funded largely through rates.

It is proposed that through the detailed design phase that the Government work with Southland to develop a Host Region Benefit Framework, enabling a proportion of the value generated by nationally significant infrastructure and destinations to be reinvested in the communities that host them. This could include mechanisms such as sharing a portion of Crown dividends from state-owned enterprises, allocating a share of tourism concession or visitor levy revenue, mineral extraction royalties, GST for new buildings, or establishing nationally consistent host community dividend arrangements for major new developments. Other options could include relief of GST on rates and distribution of a portion of RUC, FED and other relevant tax revenue for roading investment. Such an approach would recognise that regions enabling national prosperity should share fairly in the long-term benefits they help create.

Revenue generated through these mechanisms could be invested in priorities that strengthen both the region and New Zealand, including transport and community infrastructure, housing to support workforce growth, and economic diversification, flood resilience, freshwater and biodiversity restoration and climate adaptation. This is not about imposing additional burdens on investment, but about creating enduring partnerships that ensure nationally significant development delivers lasting benefits for the communities and environments that sustain it.

As New Zealand seeks to unlock economic growth through renewable energy, strategic infrastructure and export industries, Southland provides an opportunity to pilot a new model of regional fiscal empowerment. A unified council would provide the scale, capability and accountability needed to negotiate, administer and invest these funding streams strategically, ensuring that the benefits of nationally significant assets are shared more equitably while reducing long-term reliance on property rates.

Ngāi Tahu Partnership and Existing Iwi Relationship Arrangements

Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku have helped shape this proposal.

The Council supports working collaboratively with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku through the detailed design phase to strengthen partnership arrangements within the future local government system. The reform process provides an opportunity to establish consistent and enduring partnership arrangements across any new authority structure. The detailed design phase will also identify whether broader iwi engagement is needed on matters of national significance. Any such engagement would be undertaken without predetermining or characterising iwi interests, rights, or statutory responsibilities.

Through the detailed design stage Council will work with Papatipu Rūnaka to uphold Treaty obligations, existing Charter arrangements, and enduring partnership with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku.

Impact on Councils not included in the model

There are only minor impacts on Councils not included, primarily in the following areas:

- Clutha District Council – A negotiation would be opened as to whether there was support for communities of interest including Tapanui and Clinton to join this proposal.

- Central Otago, Clutha and Waitaki Councils in the Southern Waters Done Well Joint CCO, it is proposed that this water arrangement continue but that the future unitary authority may choose with partners to develop a CCO, bring waters in house or another arrangement to service the water services functions for the current Gore District.
- Councils for whom Invercargill City Council delivers services on behalf, it is proposed these services arrangements continue until such a time as the supplied Councils wish to amend the arrangement (Clutha Council).
- Shared strategic transport planning for the Southland-Otago region would continue governed by the successor organisations.
- The Te Roopu Taiao arrangement with the Otago Councils continue with the successor Councils in a similar form or another form preferred by Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku.

The proposal covers the whole region so it is not considered at this time that other Councils would join the arrangement, although of course further amalgamation remains a possibility.

Conditions

Gore District Council have reserved the right to exit the Head Start proposal upon the modelling completed by the Local Government Commission, especially in the eent where there is a net negative rating impact for Gore District ratepayers over the next ten years.

Invercargill City Council have noted that the submission of the outline proposal does not constitute approval of any final reorganisation proposal, and that Council reserves its position pending completion of detailed financial, representation, legal and community analysis.

Supporting Information

The following supported information is appended:
Letters of support
Environment Southland, The Southland Amalgamation Model, 2026

Contact information

For more information, please contact
Michael Day, Chief Executive
Invercargill City Council
Michael.day@icc.govt.nz

Invercargill
CITY COUNCIL

28 August 2026

Attn: Local Government Commission

Tēnā koutou Local Government Commissioners

Feedback on the two options for further investigation and modelling for Local Government reorganisation in Southland

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute the feedback of Invercargill City Council to the following options identified by the Commission:

- One Southland-wide unitary council, supported by council-wide local boards.

- Two unitary councils (an Invercargill unitary council and a Southland-Gore unitary council), each supported by council-wide local boards and a joint committee to oversee key regional functions.

Council discussed these options in detail on 23 July 2026, as part of the process preparing for the submission of a proposal as part of the Head Start process.

Council was unanimously in support of a One Southland-wide unitary model on that date. Further we agreed our preference for local boards over community boards, for between 12 – 16 councillors to be elected from wards, rather than at large. We noted that these wards should be based on Southland's freshwater management units, which outline the main river systems of Southland; as well as the main urban area of Invercargill, with the option that Gore may also have a separate urban ward.

Council chose this option on the basis that it aligned better with the Council principles developed for the Head Start process, which reflected those collected by the Local Government Commission at a Sotuhland-wide hui of Local Government representatives:

- Strong united voice for Southland
- Fair representation to support local decision-making
- Resilient Southland
- Improved efficiency of delivery
- Affordability
- Strong local identity
- Environmental management
- Optimum financial outcomes.

Te Hīnaki Civic Building • 101 Esk Street • Private Bag 90104 • Invercargill 9840 • New Zealand • TEL 03 211 1777

We particularly note that it is the belief of this Council that the one-unitary option better allows for a united voice for Southland, integrated catchment management and region-wide spatial planning, as well as optimum financial outcomes, baed on improved efficiency of delivery and affordability[1]. We believe the structure of local boards, with appropriate delegation and funding powers will enable local representatives to retain or have enhanced powers of decision making for their communities.

The option for two unitary Councils for Southland would also support local democratic voice. However, it is the view of our Council that the structure of joint committees which would be necessary to provide for region wide planning and integrated catchment would not be efficient or effective as a unified Council, and would create unnecessary risks to sustainable use of resources for development. Council places the utmost importance on the governance and management of the Ōreti catchment, given that the city relies on the healthy and resilient management of this area in order to support sustainable development and growth and resource availability for the city.

Initial financial modelling (as determined by financial modelling commissioned by Environment Southland) also suggests this model would provide lower potential economies of scale.

We attach the Council's Head Start proposal for One unitary Council for Southland, produced with input from Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Environment Southland as further background.

We look forward to the release of the findings of the Local Government Commission, including further financial analysis as part of this next phase of the process.

Tom Campbell
Mayor

Attached – Invercargill City Council Head Start proposal

[1] Based on the Southland amalgamation model produced by Environment Southland