



NOTICE OF MEETING

**Notice is hereby given of the Meeting of the
Invercargill City Council
to be held in the Council Chamber,
First Floor, Civic Theatre,
88 Tay Street, Invercargill on
Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 2.00 pm**

Mayor W S Clark
Cr A J Arnold
Cr R I D Bond
Cr P M Boyle
Cr S J Broad
Cr T Campbell
Cr A H Crackett
Cr G M Dermody
Cr P W Kett
Cr D J Ludlow
Cr I R Pottinger
Cr L F Soper
Cr B R Stewart

MICHAEL DAY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

1. 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.
2. 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

4. [Minutes of the Meeting of Council Held on 25 February 2025](#)

A5787714

To be moved:

That the minutes of Council held on 25 February 2025 be confirmed.

5. [Minutes of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee Meeting Held on 4 March 2025](#)

A5794577

To be moved:

That the minutes of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee meeting held on 4 March 2025 be received and recommendations to Council be confirmed.

Recommendations to Council

11. Government Private Share Recovery Policy – Public Transport

A5659572

2. Request staff work with NZTA to ensure the required private share levels meet the intentions of Government policy and are appropriate for a community service.
3. Agree to pursue advertising on bus shelters as an option.
4. Request staff implement:

Option 2 – Consider all income streams available to Council, other than direct Council funding, additional NZTA funding, including advertising as accepted by NZTA.

6. [Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council Held on 7 March 2025](#)

A5804804

To be moved:

That the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 7 March 2025 be confirmed.

7. [Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council Held on 11 March 2025](#)

A5810030

To be moved:

That the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 11 March 2025 be confirmed.

8. [Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting Held on 18 March 2025](#)

A5821895

To be moved:

That the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 18 March 2025 be received and recommendations to Council be confirmed.

Recommendations to Council

6. **2024/2025 Quarter Two Performance**

A5783520

5. Approves the budget adjustments outlined in the Schedule of changes to the plan (budget) in the Quarter Two.

7. **Financial Update at 31 January 2025**

A5794995

5. To approve the budget adjustments outlined in the "Financial Update as at 31 January 2025" report and note these budget adjustments have been used to form the base position of the Annual Plan 2025/2026 opening net debt position for consultation.

9. [Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council Held on 18 March 2025](#)

A5820999

To be moved:

That the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 18 March 2025 be confirmed.

10. [LGNZ - Local Electoral Reform - Draft Position Paper](#)

A5814916

10.1 [Appendix 1 - LGNZ - Local Electoral Reform Draft Position Paper - March 2025](#)

A5815495

11. [Major Late Item - Local Water Done Well – Commerce Commission Submission](#)

A5824035

11.1 [Appendix 1 - Invercargill City Council – Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure submission 26 March 2025](#)

A5825169

12. [Minor Late Item - Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting Held on 17 March 2025](#)

A5815445

To be moved:

That the minutes of the Bluff Community Board meeting held on 17 March 2025 be received.

13. Public Excluded Session

Moved, seconded that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting; namely,

- (a) Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of Council held on 25 February 2025
- (b) Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Extraordinary Council held on 7 March 2025
- (c) Receiving of minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2025
- (d) Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Extraordinary Council held on 18 March 2025
- (e) Minor Late Item - Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Bluff Community Board held on 17 March 2025

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
(a) Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of Council held on 25 February 2025	<p>Section 7(2)(b)(i) Protect information where the making available of the information would disclose a trade secret</p> <p>Section 7(2)(b)(ii) Protect information where the making available of the</p>	Section 48(1)(a) That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

- (b) Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Extraordinary Council held on 7 March 2025

Section 7(2)(a)

Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

Section 7(2)(f)(ii)

Maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such members, officers, employees, and persons from improper pressure or harassment

Section 7(2)(g)

Maintain legal professional privilege

- (c) Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 18 March 2025

Section 7(2)(a)

Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or

- disadvantage,
negotiations (including
commercial and
industrial negotiations)
- (d) Minutes of the
Public Excluded
Session of the
Extraordinary
Council held on
18 March 2025
- Section 7(2)(a)**
Protect the privacy of
natural persons,
including that of
deceased natural
persons
- Section 48(1)(a)**
That the public conduct of
this item would be likely to
result in the disclosure of
information for which good
reason for withholding
would exist under Section 7
- Section 7(2)(f)(ii)**
Maintain the effective
conduct of public
affairs through the
protection of such
members, officers,
employees, and
persons from improper
pressure or harassment
- Section 7(2)(g)**
Maintain legal
professional privilege
- (e) Minor Late Item -
Minutes of the
Public Excluded
Session of the
Bluff Community
Board held on 17
March 2025
- Section 7(2)(i)**
Enable any local
authority holding the
information to carry on,
without prejudice or
disadvantage,
negotiations (including
commercial and
industrial negotiations)
- Section 48(1)(a)**
That the public conduct of
this item would be likely to
result in the disclosure of
information for which good
reason for withholding
would exist under Section 7

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, FIRST FLOOR, CIVIC THEATRE,
88 TAY STREET, INVERCARGILL ON TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 2.00 PM**

Present: Mayor W S Clark
Cr A J Arnold
Cr R I D Bond
Cr P M Boyle
Cr S J Broad
Cr T Campbell
Cr A H Crackett (via Zoom arrived at 3.35 pm)
Cr G M Dermody
Cr D J Ludlow
Cr I R Pottinger
Cr L F Soper
Cr B R Stewart

In Attendance: Mr M Day – Chief Executive
Ms E Moogan – Group Manager – Infrastructure
Mrs P Christie – Group Manager – Finance and Assurance
Mrs T Hurst – Group Manager – Community Engagement and Corporate Services
Mr R Capil – Group Manager – Community Spaces and Places
Mr J Shaw – Group Manager - Consenting and Environment
Mr M Morris – Manager – Governance and Legal
Ms R Suter – Manager – Strategy and Policy
Ms A McDowell – Corporate Analyst
Mr R Keen – Manager – Three Waters Operations
Ms A Duncan – Manager Building and Planning
Mrs G Cavanagh – Manager Environmental Services
Mr J Botting – Manager - Financial Planning
Mr A Strahan – Transition Manager – 3 Waters Forum
Mr D Rodgers – Manager - Strategic Asset Planning
Mr R Hutton – Manager – Information Services
Ms L Knight – Manager – Strategic Communications
Miss K Braithwaite – Acting Team Leader Communications
Mrs L Williams – Team Leader - Executive Support

1. Apologies

Cr Kett, Rev Cook and Mrs Coote

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil.

3. Public Forum

3.1 Anderson Park Charitable Trust - Mrs Marion Miller and Mrs Lynn Grace

Mrs Miller noted that had a shared responsibility for Anderson Park and wanted to work with Council to ensure were successful. Mrs Miller read from a report she tabled and shared with councillors activities that had taken place and work being undertaken or planned, such as a new kitchen. She noted that she was asked frequently where donated furniture etc was being held and would request Council's support to get those chattels back in the house. She added that the reopening of Anderson House had been successful and wanted to continue and more successful in the future. Mrs Miller concluded by requesting support / partnership with Council to hire a co-ordinator to support the work needed.

A query was raised as to where the chattels were being held, it was noted staff would come back to Council.

A query was raised around heating, it was confirmed that had diesel heating and that it was expensive to run. Mrs Miller confirmed that heating was turned on prior to events but that the building was difficult to heat.

A query was raised around the chattels and family memorabilia and if the Trust had a full list, Mrs Miller confirmed that did have a record in the files.

Clarity was sought around the proposal for Council to support the role of a co-ordinator and if Council would be expected to pay, Mrs Miller advised that was not suggesting that Council pay, but would see working in partnership and added that it was difficult to get funding from funders to employ people. It was added that the Trust did not really have an income and little revenue.

A query was raised if the co-ordinator could be remote, it was confirmed that it could not be, it would be preferable to be in the building for security purposes. A further query was the cost and how long that support would be needed. It was suggested that would be around \$30,000. It was suggested that one of Council's funds may be able to support but not annually.

A query was raised if an assessment had been done around mildew etc, Mrs Miller noted there had not been and that there was no evidence of mildew. It was added that the building had been constructed using methods well before their time, and had minimal heat loss.

A query was raised around the percentage of time that the building was utilised, it was noted that did have some information and criteria around bookings. A further query was raised if would in the future be able to gather that information, it was confirmed would look at this.

A query was raised around the memorabilia and why it had not been returned, it was noted that would need to ask Council staff.

A query was raised around the ability to build revenue and if that would be possible, it was confirmed that believed would be able to grow revenue in the future.

A query was raised around timing and that it would be preferable to get the lease signed as soon as possible and with respect to the co-ordinator would like to work with someone around that.

A query was raised if Mash were using the kitchen, it was noted that generally used their catering vehicles and that sometimes did use the kitchen. Mrs Miller noted that other providers were also using the House. A further question was asked if the kitchen was a barrier, it was felt may not be too much of a barrier for Mash but a new kitchen would provide greater opportunities.

A query was raised around what appliances would be looking at, Mrs Miller noted that things like a dishwasher and something more than a domestic stove.

A query was raised around access to the building for the disabled, it was confirmed that there was a ramp that needed work and the toilets were not very accessible. Mrs Miller noted that needed to work with an architect, Council and Heritage New Zealand on accessibility.

The Chair thanked the speakers for attending the meeting.

4. Major Late Item

4.1 Acceptance of the Major Late Item - Corporate Accommodation Update

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the 'Major Late Item - Corporate Accommodation Update' be accepted.

The reason that the item was not in the agenda: The item was not ready at the time of the publication of the agenda.

The reason why the discussion of the item could not be delayed: Matters could be progressed in a timely manner.

Reason for public exclusion:

Section 7(2)(i) - Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

4.2 Acceptance of the Major Late Item - Fees and Charges – Bus Fares for Fees and Charges Schedule

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the 'Major Late Item - Fees and Charges – Bus Fares for Fees and Charges Schedule' be accepted.

The reason that the item was not in the agenda: The item was not ready at the time of the publication of the agenda.

The reason why the discussion of the item could not be delayed: Matters could be progressed in a timely manner.

4.3 Acceptance of the Major Late Item - Annual Plan Consultation – Finalisation of Water Service Delivery Plan Options

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the 'Major Late Item - Annual Plan Consultation – Finalisation of Water Service Delivery Plan Options' be accepted.

The reason that the item was not in the agenda: The item was not ready at the time of the publication of the agenda.

The reason why the discussion of the item could not be delayed: Matters could be progressed in a timely manner.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 28 January 2025

A5742699

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 28 January 2025 be confirmed.

6. Minutes of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 4 February 2025

A5757303

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 be received and the recommendation to Council be confirmed.

Recommendation to Council

11. Draft Permitted Liquid Tankered Waste Streams Policy

A5603900

3. That it adopts the Permitted Liquid Tankered Waste Stream Policy (A5608855)

7. Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on Monday 10 February 2025

A5765063

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Bluff Community Board held on Monday 10 February 2025 be received.

8. Minutes of the Community Wellbeing and Regulatory Committee Meeting Held on 11 February 2025

A5765548

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper that the Minutes of the Community Wellbeing and Regulatory Committee held on Tuesday 11 February 2025 be received and recommendations to Council be confirmed.

It was noted that one of the options around Urban Play needed to look at priorities.

Recommendation to Council:

7. Urban Play Options for Annual Plan Public Consultation

A5678794

2. Option 2 – Distributed Programme - \$4.956 million over four years (with options to seek external funding dependent on the project).
3. Approve staff conducting public engagement for the Urban Play Programme options as part of the Annual Plan consultation between 13 March – 13 April 2025.

8. Draft Play Strategy 2025

A5622212

3. That Council endorses the draft Play Strategy (Attachment 2) to be available for the public to comment on concurrent with the Annual Plan consultation from 13 March 2025 – 13 April 2025.

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

9. Minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting Held on 18 February 2025

A5776242

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Risk and Assurance Committee held on Tuesday 18 February 2025 be received and recommendations to Council be confirmed.

Recommendation to Council

5. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Update

A5746724

2. That it accepts the report as evidence of Invercargill City Council's management of workplace Health and Safety risks.

7. 2024 – 2034 Long-term Plan Audit Management Report

A5698985

4. Acknowledge the additional unbudgeted expenditure on Long-term Plan audit fees of \$25,918 and delegate to the Chair of Risk and Assurance in conjunction with the Group Manager Finance and Assurance to approve the final fee not exceeding \$25,918.

8. Tax Risk Governance Policy

A5753597

3. That the updated Tax Risk Governance Policy be adopted.

10. 2025/2026 Fees and Charges Schedule for Consultation

A5747183

Ms Rhiannon Suter spoke to the report and noted that there were some corrections and that recommendation 3 could now be removed.

Ms Suter noted that Council was required to consult on fees and charges and the report provided the full fees and charges for consultation and highlighted changes to fees and charges.

It was clarified this was what would go out to consultation.

It was queried why did not have default charges increase being the same as rates increase, it was noted that the fees and charges process started from a place of looking at the current fees and charges and that with water would see an increase and that many fees had changed to provide a baseline.

Mrs Christie noted that 5% was selected and was to do with inflation, and added that some had not been impacted by water. She added that needed to rebalance looking at more rates funded than fees.

It was queried that had been looking at more user pays and rates cross funding services. It was also queried at what point go out with 5% and when would look at more user pays.

A query was raised around pages 8 and 9 of the report and where community services cardholders sat within the current fare structure. It was added that this would be dealt with in the additional paper.

Also, with respect to the pools, clarification was sought around child participation and it was noted was seven to 18 years of age.

It was questioned if could propose a recommendation to move to rates percentage increase, Ms Suter noted that there were significant costs increases in water and that it was possible and would require significant rework before going to consultation and that could mean that higher than ceiling of payment for services. In addition, it was noted that many fees and charges were benchmarked and could impact participation, could have a perverse outcome.

A query was raised around participation correlation and age and that as children got older that did not participate to the same degree, it was noted that the analysis was done by the manager of that area. Mr Capil added that had requested that managers look at total revenue and that if fees increased what the impact on total revenue would be.

Note: Cr Arnold left at 2.49 pm.

It was noted that would be other factors that stop kids going swimming.

It was added that could look at doing no less than rates and that could be a way to achieve.

A query was raised if an extra 40 cents would create less participation. It was noted that analysis would need to be done.

Note: Cr Arnold returned at 2.54 pm.

It was queried if the participation rate was impacted by free entry for parents to accompany their children, it was confirmed that did impact and that was a factor and kept the participation rate high.

There was further discussion around the general ratepayer subsidising the user. An example was also raised of the impact on elderly housing and the need to think of the community and that needed to be thoughtful and that across the board would be too severe.

It was noted that cost of service meant that could not collect more fees than the cost of the service and also that Council had a revenue policy that looked at fees versus rates, it was added that reviewing this would take around six months.

It was also raised that could possibly negatively impact participation and that needed to look at that, as in turn that would impact revenue.

It was noted that the consultation document was due back to Council on 11 March and then out for consultation on 13 March and any significant work would impact that timeline.

It was noted that a submission could be made during the process around this change.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

1. Receives the report "2025/2026 Fees and Charges Schedule for Consultation".
2. Adopts the 2025/2026 Fees and Charges Schedule for consultation alongside the Annual Plan (A5781888).

Note: Mayor Clark and Cr Campbell voted against this motion.

11. 2025/2026 Annual Plan Budget Adjustments for Decision

A5753895

The Chair noted that did not agree with the process undertaken to date and did not agree with "chipping away" line by line to reduce costs and that would be strong in advocating for a 3.9% rate increase. The Chair added that "I will be opposed to it all, but I will chair and allow others to make decisions". He advised that he wanted to "signal for the record that I am opposed".

Ms Suter noted that there was a section that was in the Public Excluded section and would work through that when at that point.

The Chair noted that he was not comfortable talking about part of this in Public Excluded.

Ms Suter noted that this report dealt with the variances relating to the Annual Plan and that the consultation was looking at year two of the Annual Plan against the Long-term Plan and at a general level. She added that were also undertaking a number of other consultations concurrently with this.

A query was raised around the 14.63% being before any mitigations, it was confirmed that was correct.

It was queried that the increase imbedded in recommendation 6 and how would work through when do not agree with the rates increase. Mayor Clark felt that there was no tolerance in the community for the level of rates increase proposed and that would be vocal during the consultation process and would propose changes and looking at things like employee costs.

It was noted that did not want to be part of a process that ended with a 9.5% rate increase.

It was added that when went to the Public Excluded session would be able to provide a number to councillors.

It was questioned, would it be the assumption that the range would be between 9.5% and 14.63% - it was confirmed, yes. It was added that those not receiving 3 waters would have a lower rate increase.

It was noted that recommendations 1 to 6 were noting and raised regulatory requirements that could not change.

It was noted that need to look at solutions to get the rates increase down from the 9.5%.

Moved Mayor Clark, seconded Cr Soper that Council:

1. Receives the report "2025/2026 Annual Plan Budget Adjustments for Decision".
2. Notes the opening position for Year 2 of the Long-term Plan was 8.5% rates increase after 2.43% of rates smoothing.
3. Notes the required variances to the Long-term Plan as a result of economic environment changes, including inflation, insurance, interest rates and other adjustments (+0.84% rates impact).
4. Notes the required variances to the Long-term Plan as a result of regulatory changes connected to the Affordable Water Reform Programme (+2.64% rates impact).
5. Notes the required variance to the Long-term Plan as a result of regulatory change of mayoral and councillor salaries (+0.22% rates impact).

6. Notes the regulatory reform requirement to introduce ringfencing of Three Waters costs and following this requirement, resulting forecast rates increases for 2026/2027 before mitigations of 24.05% for three waters and 9.63% for non-waters (14.63% combined rates increase before mitigation).

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

Three Waters

Moved Mayor Clark, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

7. Notes the forecast increase of revenue from changes to three waters revenue as a result of increased water and sewerage fee increases to cover costs (-1.79%).

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Boyle and **RESOLVED** that Council:

8. Agrees to rephase three waters capital programme as outlined in this report (-2.16% Three Waters Rates Impact).

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Stewart that Council:

9. Agrees to use funding depreciation rates of 90% for sewerage, 90% for stormwater and 100% for water.

It was noted that had a network that worked well. It was noted that needed to implement this to continue being leading in this area. It was queried that if the system had gotten worse and if there was the need to move to the higher percentages, it was added that should revert to the LTP numbers.

It was noted this was part of a regulatory change and would be required to have 100% depreciation and still working through, if did not change would mean a large increase in the future. Work was continuing in this area.

It was queried if did not agree that would revert to the previous percentages.

It was added that this was the way central government was heading and that if did not move now would result in significant increases and needed to make the decision now and had no choice.

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

Note: Mayor Clark and Cr Campbell voted against this motion.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow that Council:

10. Agrees to reconfirm Long-term Plan rates smoothing for three waters for 2025/2026 noting the continuation of an unbalanced budget for 2025/2026 (0.36% rates impact).

A query was raised around rates smoothing and the actual details between rates smoothing and not. It was confirmed that it would defer income and that rates would

be high upfront and lower at the end of the LTP, water was lower and then going higher and now rating for peaks expected in the latter years of the LTP, and was less variable.

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

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that Council:

11. Notes the three waters rates increase for consultation of 20.46%.

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Boyle and **RESOLVED** that Council move into Public Excluded at 3.35 pm.

Note: Mayor Clark and Cr Campbell voted against this motion.

Note: The public session of the Council meeting reconvened at 5.30 pm.

Non-Three Waters

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

12. Notes the combined impact of organisational efficiencies for 2025/2026 of -5.03% rates impact, including 2.41% additional rates impact through the Annual Plan.

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that Council:

13. Agrees to rephrase the non-waters capital programme as outlined in this report (-0.99% rates impact).

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that Council:

14. Agrees to reconfirm the Long-term Plan smoothing approach for non-waters (-3.90% rates impact).

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that Council:

15. Agrees to rephase demolition of 69 Don Street by two years with minimal rates impact.

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

Moved Cr Campbell seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

16. Disagrees to undertake scoping work for an alternative use of 69 Don Street with \$50,000 additional operational expenditure (consultancy) in 2026/2027 (+0.10% non-waters rates impact).

It was queried the impact of this reduction in depreciation if agreed. It was confirmed this was around how would fund work and would not impact the current work programme. It was noted that it was felt that the 75% was a sweet spot and would do more modelling.

Moved Cr Arnold, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

17. Agrees to reduce depreciation funding for roading to 75% (-1.35% non-waters rates impact).

It was noted that this would mean would not rates fund for this next year and may slow down the capital programme.

Moved Cr Arnold, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that Council:

18. Agrees to pause rate funding for the elderly housing capital programme (-0.20% reduction).

It was noted that this was a reduction not a removal. A contestable fund was implemented and the reality was that the uptake had been low and so the idea was to match to the uptake.

Moved Cr Campbell, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that Council:

19. Agrees to reduce the funding for internal climate change activities (-0.15% reduction).

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

20. Notes the recommended approach to insurance from the Risk and Assurance Committee and the estimated associated saving of \$100,000 reducing the required increase for insurance from 1.53% increase to 1.40% increase (-0.13% rates impact).

It was noted that given only a pause for one year could see that would need to agree to this.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that Council:

21. Agrees to pause the Built Heritage Fund for 2025/2026 - \$200,000 saving (-0.39% non-waters rates impact).

It was noted that would likely see a reduction of \$200,000 for one year given the need to look for savings, it was added that there were sufficient funds for existing grants running over multiple years.

Moved Cr Boyle, seconded Cr Bond and **RESOLVED** that Council:

22. Agrees to reduce the Community Wellbeing Fund by \$200,000 from 2025/2026 to \$365,000 per annum (-0.39% non-waters rates impact).

It was noted that there was a budget error for the Sister City programme 2025/2026 and this was now being corrected and the decision was if wanted to pause.

It was noted not just about Council visits but also school visits and that there would be schools visiting and Council hosted them.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Campbell and **RESOLVED** that Council:

23. Agrees to pause the Sister Cities programme for 2025/2026 – no associated rates increase (-0.10% non-waters rates impact).

Note: Cr Ludlow voted against this motion.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

24. Notes the further impact on rates from decisions from the associated paper on contracts (-0.91% rates saving).

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

It was queried if this was the figure that would go out to consultation with and it was confirmed it was.

Note: Cr Crackett left the meeting at 5.56 pm.

A question was asked what the average rates were, it was confirmed around \$2,600 and that increase would be around \$5 per week.

Note: Cr Crackett returned at 6.00 pm.

A query was raised around how to ensure that Council was as efficient as possible and it was queried if that meant looking at staffing levels etc. It was noted that Council employed the Chief Executive to run Council. It was added that the role of councillors was to advocate for ratepayers.

It was added that needed to be clear that the 3 waters increases were imposed on Council by central government and ratepayers had a right to know that aspect.

It was added that employment costs were a direct result of Council's levels of service and that had to have that conversation, needed to quantify what were necessary services, libraries, cemeteries. It was added that if took 3 waters out would be at 3.67% and needed to go out with that message.

There was discussion around contractors and consultants and the need to deliver what was being promised and sometimes need to employ contractors as did not have the capacity or expertise and need to use the right tools. If reduce staff costs would then reduce levels of service, councillors role was around levels of service.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Mayor Clark and **RESOLVED** that Council:

25. Notes the resulting Non-Three Waters Rates Increase for consultation (3.67%) with the overall rates increase being 9.47%.

Note: Mayor Clark and Cr Campbell voted against this motion.

Consultation

It was noted this was not a budget impact, it was purely a consultation decision. Assurance was sought that this was made clear in the consultation document that no impact on rates. It was clarified that was in the budgets and this was no additional impact on rates.

It was queried why this was in the Annual Plan and that was not an essential project. It was felt that needed to give people an option around deferring.

It was clarified that through consultation Council were asking the community for their views and what they thought.

It was added that what staff were doing in terms of Play was exceptional, noting a recent event at Queens Park.

It was proposed to add a third option which was not to proceed.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper that Council:

26. Confirms the Urban Play Options for Consultation:

Option 1 Distributed Programme (**Preferred Option**) – Invest in play across Bluff, South Invercargill, the City Centre and North Invercargill.

Option 2 City Centre Programme - Keep the play investment in the city centre, likely with a focus on a play trail and activations as all the identified potential hub locations have limitations.

Option 3 – Not to proceed with an Urban Play option at this time.

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

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

27. Notes for urban play there is no additional impact on rates as no budget change is proposed from the Long-term Plan.

Note: Mayor Clark, Cr Bond and Cr Dermody voted against this motion.

12. Stormwater Rating Boundaries

A5732593

Ms Rhiannon Suter spoke to the report and noted that the report related to the rating policy and how to pay for stormwater. It was proposed to consult on the policy alongside the Annual Plan and added that had now received LIDAR mapping.

A query was raised what a stormwater drain system was, particularly in Ōtatara did not appear to be connected other than sandy soil and secondly if that was not a drain that went anywhere and if pumping into the drain were those people liable for a rate.

Ms Moogan noted that Ōtatara was a mix of Council and privately maintained drains. If discharging into a drain then believed should pay a targeted rate for that discharge.

A query was raised if no cost to Council then what would be recovering, it was the cost of ongoing maintenance even though it may be a lower cost to maintain.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that that Council:

1. Receives the report "Stormwater Rating Boundaries".
2. Adopts the Draft Rating Policy incorporating the updated Stormwater Boundary Map utilising new stormwater runoff drainage areas for consultation (A5780852).

13. Order of Candidates Names for the Local Government Triennial Elections 2025

A5746857

Mr Michael Morris spoke to the report and noted that Council could decide what order the candidates appear in the voting documents. Clarity was sought around random and pseudo.

Moved Cr Stewart, seconded Cr Boyle and **RESOLVED** that that Council:

1. Receives the report titled "Order of Candidates Names for the Local Government Triennial Elections 2025".
2. Resolves for the 2025 Triennial Elections and any subsequent By-Elections that the candidate names in the voting documents be ordered in:
 - c. random order.

14. Chief Executive Management Report

A5776145

A query was raised around when councillors would see reports on what the Chief Executive himself was working on. Mr Day confirmed that there were a number of avenues already using, such as Risk and Assurance and also in the CE committee meetings, Mr Day confirmed that he would look at other avenues to update councillors.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that that Council:

1. Receives the report "Chief Executive Management Report".

15. Major Late Item - Fees and Charges – Bus Fares for Fees and Charges Schedule

A5788471

Ms Rhiannon Suter spoke to the report and noted that there had been an update in information provided in an earlier paper. Ms Moogan noted this was an area where central government were making changes and that NZTA came back with a different interpretation and this provided the best information available at this time.

It was queried if central government dictated this, why consult, it was noted that government were not actually setting fares, they were requesting councils to put forward options, and added this was a lower increase and a better result.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that that Council.

1. Receives the report "Fees and Charges – Bus Fares for Fees and Charges Schedule".
2. Notes the correction received from NZTA as to the agreed option for bus fares.
3. Confirms the updated Bus Fares to be included in the 2025/2026 Fees and Charges Schedule for Consultation:
 - \$5.00 Cash Fare
 - \$4.00 Card Fare
 - \$4.00 Gold Card (peak times)
 - Free: Gold Card (off peak)
 - \$2.00 Community Services Card Fare
 - Free: Under 13 years old
4. Notes that based on this corrected information consultation on options was no longer recommended.
5. Delegate to the Group Manager Finance and Assurance to make any correction to errors and omissions to the Fees and Charges document.

16. Major Late Item - Annual Plan Consultation – Finalisation of Water Service Delivery Plan Options

A5785511

Ms Rhiannon Suter spoke to the report and noted that this report was confirming decisions made at an earlier meeting to go out to consultation and provided the recommended wording for consultation and sought direction for the third option.

A query was raised around differing options being reported by other councils, around the cost of CCO's. It was confirmed that the advice from Morrison Low was that this Council was in a unique position. It was added that there was no change in the advice provided by the consultants, it was a unique model provided for Invercargill City Council, this was purely looking at how the ratepayers would be impacted.

It was added that Council was required to have all the information available on how reached this and this was simply about the third option.

Ms Moogan noted that the current legislation only required consultation on two options, the new Bill would require consulting on three options and so it was tidier to comply with the new legislation.

A query was raised around option 5 and if that was only using Shared Services or if involved the Southern-wide councils, it was confirmed it was Southern-wide.

It was noted that the second option would be consulted on as a cheaper option but longer term would cost more.

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

1. Receives the report "Annual Plan Consultation – Finalisation of Water Service Delivery Plan Options".
2. Notes the resolution of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:
 - a. Option 2 – ICC in house with Structural Change as the preferred water service delivery model to take to public consultation (**Preferred**);
 - b. Option 4 – ICC Standalone CCO as the water service delivery model to take to public consultation;
 - c. Option 5 – Southland only WSE, with further work required on developing the option including harmonisation / deferred harmonisation.
3. Notes the updated information on the Southland Only Water Service Entity with both harmonised and deferred-harmonisation information presented (A5787339).
4. Notes that this paper includes the updated numbering and text description options for consultation.

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Cr Soper that Council:

5. Agrees the following third option for consultation:

Southland-wide Council Controlled Organisation – Phased introduction of a region wide price (deferred-harmonised pricing)- Average rates increase 2027 – 2034 5.21%.

It was noted that the second option would be consulted on as a cheaper option but longer term would cost more.

It was confirmed that would be struggling to get additional work from the consultants and that would need to be sure that wanted to progress.

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

17. Public Excluded Session

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- a. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of Council Meeting held on 28 January 2025
- b. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on 10 February 2025
- c. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Community Wellbeing and Regulatory Committee Meeting held on 11 February 2025
- d. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2025
- e. Annual Plan 2025/2026 Budget Adjustments Impacting Contracts for Consultation
- f. Great South 2025 – 2028 Draft Statement of Intent and Space Operations New Zealand Limited Statement of Intent
- g. Major Late Item – Corporate Accommodation Update

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
a. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of Council Meeting held on 28 January 2025	Section 7(2)(a) Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons Section 7(2)(i) Enable any local authority holding the	Section 48(1)(a) That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

- b. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on 10 February 2025

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

- c. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Community Wellbeing and Regulatory Committee Meeting held on 11 February 2025

Section 7(2)(h)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

- d. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2025

Section 7(2)(a)

Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

Section 7(2)(c)(ii)

Protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be

likely otherwise to
damage the public
interest

Section 7(2)(f)(ii)

Maintain the effective
conduct of public affairs
through the protection of
such members, officers,
employees, and persons
from improper pressure or
harassment

Section 7(2)(g)

Maintain legal
professional privilege

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local
authority holding the
information to carry on,
without prejudice or
disadvantage,
negotiations (including
commercial and
industrial negotiations)

- e. Annual Plan
2025/2026 Budget
Adjustments
Impacting Contracts
for Consultation

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local
authority holding the
information to carry on,
without prejudice or
disadvantage,
negotiations (including
commercial and
industrial negotiations)

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of
this item would be likely to
result in the disclosure of
information for which good
reason for withholding
would exist under Section 7

- f. Great South 2025 –
2028 Draft Statement
of Intent and Space
Operations New
Zealand Limited
Statement of Intent

Section 7(2)(b)(i)

Protect information
where the making
available of the
information would
disclose a trade secret

Section 7(2)(b)(i)

Protect information
where the making
available of the
information would be
likely unreasonably to
prejudice the

commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information

- g. Major Late Item –
Corporate
Accommodation
Update

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 7.45 pm.

MINUTES OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, FIRST FLOOR, CIVIC THEATRE, 88 TAY STREET, INVERCARGILL ON TUESDAY 4 MARCH 2025 AT 2.00 PM

Present:

- Cr G M Dermody (Chair)
- Mayor W S Clark
- Cr A J Arnold
- Cr R I D Bond
- Cr P M Boyle
- Cr S J Broad
- Cr T Campbell
- Cr A H Crackett
- Cr D J Ludlow
- Cr I R Pottinger
- Cr L F Soper
- Cr B R Stewart
- Mrs P Coote – Kaikaunihera Māori – Awarua

In Attendance:

- Mr M Day – Chief Executive
- Ms E Moogan – Group Manager – Infrastructure
- Mrs P Christie – Group Manager – Finance and Assurance
- Mrs T Hurst – Group Manager – Community Engagement and Corporate Services
- Mr R Capil – Group Manager – Community Spaces and Places
- Mr J Shaw – Group Manager - Consenting and Environment
- Mr M Morris – Manager – Governance and Legal
- Mr L Butcher – Programme Director
- Mr M Simpson – Contracts and Commercial Manager
- Mr D Rodgers – Manager – Strategic Asset Planning
- Ms L Knight – Manager – Strategic Communications
- Ms K Braithwaite – Acting Team Leader – Communications
- Mr M Butler – Digital and Visual Communications Advisor
- Ms M Sievwright – Senior Executive Support

1. Apologies

Cr P W Kett and Rev E Cook.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil.

3. Public Forum

3.1 Staunton Road Petition – Mr Nick McCleery

Mr McCleery said this was not the first time he had presented. He had also presented eight years ago with the same issue. A working party had been created at that time to discuss Staunton and Fowler Roads and how to go about issues such as asphaltting and infrastructure. There was more traffic on the roads creating dust issues. There was a concern that the residents did not know what was in the dust. No action had been undertaken in the eight years and more buildings were being built. He was looking to understand what action could be taken.

In response to a question regarding the background, it was noted staff were aware of the issue, along with a number of other roads around Invercargill. A list had been compiled of 20 roads which had been scored and put into a priority list for sealing. Staunton and Fowler were high when scored but given the unlikelihood of getting funding from NZTA, Council decided to not progress with sealing as part of this Long-term Plan.

In response to a question regarding milk tankers, it was noted there were no farms which required milk tankers.

In response to a question regarding the petition, it was noted once Council had received a petition, staff would prepare a report for Council, and this would include estimated costs on sealing.

In response to a question regarding development, it was noted that in the last 10 years there had been 10 new builds, including transportable homes. There was a parcel of 80 acres and a section of 150 acres with grazing land. It was in the flood zone but the expectation would not be to full seal and if agreement was reached there would be the expectation that homeowners would take the longer way into town rather than Council paying for the areas which would go under water in a flood. There were some interested in an owner / occupier subsidy but this was not unanimous. It was added that not expecting to just be given anything.

In response to a question regarding forming a working party to work with Council, it was noted this would be a good idea. The issue would be that because there were grazing blocks there would be contractors using the road.

In response to a question regarding the number of residents who had signed the petition, it was noted there was only one day to get the petition signed so out of 50 residents there were 32 signatures. It was added that no one approached had refused to sign.

The Chair thanked the submitter to attending the meeting.

3.2 Proposed Road Names – 28 Bainfield Road – Mr Carl Hamilton and Mr Shane Hamilton

Mr Carl Hamilton noted they were in the process of subdividing 28 Bainfield Road into 20 sections with the main access off Bainfield Road. Part of this subdivision process was to finalise street names and three suggestions were submitted. It was suggested Perry Lane was their preferred option and Mr Hamilton detailed the reason for this. Perry Lane was after Lieutenant Perry who served in Gallipoli and was killed in action. His wife

and two daughters lived in the Waikiwi area, he was named in Waikiwi School and Presbyterian Church memorials. He was well known in Southland as a sportsman and businessman. He had no known grave so this would be a lasting memory of him. It was also in line with the Poppy Places initiative around road naming.

In response to a question regarding whether any consideration had been given to what the land had been used for, the whakapapa of the area, as opposed to naming it after people, and it was confirmed that no it was not.

The Chair thanked the submitters for attending the meeting.

4. Major Late Item

4.1 Acceptance of the Major Late Item - Draft Regional Public Transport Plan for Consultation

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the 'Major Late Item - Draft Regional Public Transport Plan for Consultation' be accepted.

The reason that the item was not in the agenda: The item was not ready at the time of the publication of the agenda.

The reason why the discussion of the item could not be delayed: Matters could be progressed in a timely manner.

5. Minutes of the Waste Advisory Group (WasteNet) Meeting held on Monday 18 November 2024

A5642755

Moved Cr Stewart, seconded Cr Pottinger and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Waste Advisory Group (WasteNet) meeting held on Monday 18 November 2024 be received.

6. Minutes of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 4 February 2025

A5757303

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Infrastructure and Projects Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 be confirmed.

7. Temporary Road Closures – ANZAC DAY 2025

A5760726

Mr Doug Rodgers spoke to the report.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Bond and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report titled "Temporary Road Closures – ANZAC DAY 2025".
2. Resolves that the proposed event outlined in the report will not impede traffic unreasonably.
3. Approves the temporary road closures for Gala Street and Victoria Avenue on Friday 25 April 2025 as permitted under the Local Government Act 1974 (Section 342 and Schedule 10).

8. Proposed Right of Way Name – 60 Ōtatara Road

A5765387

Mrs Patricia Christie spoke to the report.

In response to a question regarding a policy for Te Reo alternatives, it was noted that staff were working with developers. There was no approved list of Te Reo names, and it was noted that the policy was due for review and would be considered.

In response to a question regarding Te Reo and that Mana Whenua would be consulted first, it was noted this would only be if Te Reo names had been chosen.

In response to the name 'Bushaven' and if there should be two 'h', it was noted this was how it was provided.

It was noted that agreement with Te Reo Māori, it was agreed Te Reo names would be based on the names provided and the area. It was noted that the development of the policy was not at this point yet.

Moved Cr Arnold, seconded Cr Pottinger and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report titled "Proposed Right of Way Name – 60 Ōtatara Road".
2. Approve the proposed Right of Way be named – Halligan Way and Bushaven Way.

9. Proposed Road Names – 28 Bainfield Road

A5765388

Mrs Patricia Christie spoke to the report.

It was noted that Blake's Nursery had ties to this land and was the closest related to this. The other options could be used anywhere else in the city.

It was said that the Poppy Places initiative should be encouraged and Perry Lane should be chosen.

Moved Cr Campbell, seconded Cr Crackett and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report titled "Proposed Road Names – 28 Bainfield Road".

2. Approve the proposed road being named Perry Lane.

10. WasteNet Recycling Bin Inspections and Enforcement Programme Reintroduction Update

A5790009

Mr Mark Simpson and Ms Fiona Walker spoke to the report.

In response to a question regarding bin inspections, it was noted there had been a few instances of verbal abuse and inspectors would be uniformed with body cameras.

In response to a question regarding glass, it was noted that this would not get a red tag as glass was meant to go in the recycle bin under our current mixed system.

In response to a question regarding inspectors, it was noted they were in contact with the drivers and drivers were looking to install new devices in their trucks to improve communication.

In response to a question regarding the red tag, it was noted that a letter was left and would be followed up. This was around education and not punishment.

Moved Cr Bond, seconded Cr Broad and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report "WasteNet Recycling Bin Inspections and Enforcement Programme Reintroduction Update",
2. Notes the WasteNet report "Recycling Bin Inspections and Enforcement Programme Reintroduction Update".
3. Notes the programme milestone of 31 March 2025 to reintroduce a three strike system.
4. Confirms if further updates on the programme are required to be presented the Committee.

11. Government Private Share Recovery Policy – Public Transport

A5659572

Mr Doug Rodgers spoke to the report.

In response to a question regarding funding sources, it was noted that the \$980,000 was an increase of 30%.

In response to a question regarding advertising in bus shelters, it was noted this would be the first target to be used and were looking at other income streams.

In response to a question regarding Council owning the buses, and using the buses as a charter to create revenue, it was noted that there were challenges with this.

In response to a question regarding revenue and pricing of advertising, and what safety measures would be in place for appropriate advertising, it was noted this would come under the Advertising Standards Authority.

In response to a question regarding recommendation 2, it was noted this was confirming staff would work with NZTA.

In response to a question regarding reducing the number of trips, it was noted this was an ongoing piece of work.

In response to a question regarding damage to bus shelters, it was noted this was a risk and advertising was usually behind plexiglass and the advertising could be targeted to the demographic in the area.

Moved Cr Stewart, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report "Government Private Share Recovery Policy – Public Transport".

Recommend to Council:

2. Request staff work with NZTA to ensure the required private share levels meet the intentions of Government policy and are appropriate for a community service.
3. Agree to pursue advertising on bus shelters as an option.
4. Request staff implement:

Option 2 – Consider all income streams available to Council, other than direct Council funding, additional NZTA funding, including advertising as accepted by NZTA.

12. Major Late Item - Draft Regional Public Transport Plan for Consultation

A5773331

Mr Doug Rodgers spoke to the report.

This Plan was up for review. The fares were wrong in the draft document due to the national changes just made, and would be changed before going to consultation. Everything else stayed relatively the same. A stakeholder workshop had already been held and good feedback had been received to inform the new Plan.

It was suggested that in some of the bigger cities did not have bus runs in certain parts of the city, and perhaps Invercargill could focus more on other areas and delete some runs.

In response to a question regarding the stakeholder group and if there were any providers in attendance, it was noted that GoBus attended. It was suggested that a

bespoke plan was required for consultation as there were areas of the city which did not need the transport system as much as other areas.

In response to a question regarding whether the consultation would target elderly, vulnerable citizens, it was noted that they would be engaged with.

Moved Cr Bond, seconded Cr Boyle and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report Major Late Item - Draft Regional Public Transport Plan for Consultation.
2. Adopts the Draft Regional Public Transport Plan for consultation alongside the Annual Plan.

13. Local Government (Water Services) Bill Submission

A5793179

It was noted that this submission was very well written and easily understood. Ms Moogan noted that there was a significant amount of work in preparing bylaws, plans and strategies in compliance with the legislation and was concerned with how much consultation with the community was required. Timings in relation to the Water Bill being anticipated to go live in August did create a logistical challenge, however industry bodies were working around this. It was highlighted to Council this did create an issue with legislation. A submission on the new Taumata Arowai wastewater standards would be available when the team had pulled the content together.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report titled 'Local Government (Water Services) Bill Submission.'

14. Strategic Capital Projects Report

A5767904

Mr Lee Butcher spoke to the report and noted there were a number of projects coming to an end.

In response to a question regarding the museum and Christchurch based iwi provider, it was noted this was getting closer and had taken a bit longer than anticipated.

The question was asked regarding the museum and the dashboard.

Note: Point of Order was called as this item was being addressed at the Risk and Assurance Committee meeting.

Cr Pottinger stated the dashboard was a point to raise concerns and there were time and cost implications. It was noted that the detail of this would be discussed at the Risk and Assurance meeting.

The question was asked what the time and cost implications were. It was noted that the Programme Director was to give the details at a high level but the detail would be discussed elsewhere. Financials were in amber as there were a few costs which were unexpected, however these were within the contingency.

The overall programme was being considered going forward as there were a number of projects which needed to be delivered and were now complete.

In relation to the Branxholme water main increased costs, it was noted there had been challenging ground conditions due to the weather and included a few services which staff were unaware of.

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Boyle and **RESOLVED** that the Infrastructure and Projects Committee:

1. Receives the report "Strategic Capital Projects Report".
2. Receives the "ICC PMO Programme Dashboard".
3. Notes the current status of the projects, including project risk assessment.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 3.28 pm.

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, FIRST FLOOR, CIVIC THEATRE, 88 TAY STREET, INVERCARGILL ON FRIDAY 7 MARCH 2025 AT 11.03 AM

Present: Cr T Campbell (Chair)
Cr A J Arnold
Cr R I D Bond
Cr S J Broad (via Zoom)
Cr A H Crackett
Cr G M Dermody
Cr D J Ludlow
Cr I R Pottinger
Cr L F Soper
Cr B R Stewart

In Attendance: Rev E Cook – Māngai – Waihōpai
Mr R Jackson – Chair, Risk and Assurance
Ms MJ Thomas - PRLaw
Ms T Hurst – Group Manager, Community Engagement and Corporate Services
Mrs L Williams – Team Leader - Executive Support

1. Apologies

Mayor Clark (on Council business), Cr Boyle, Cr Kett and Mrs Coote

Moved Cr Stewart, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil.

3. Public Excluded Session

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, with the exception of Mr Ross Jackson - the Chair of the Risk and Assurance Committee and Ms Mary-Jane Thomas - Solicitor, namely:

- a. To discuss the Requisition and letter received by all Councillors

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
a. To discuss the Requisition and letter received by all Councillors	<p>Section 7(2)(a) Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such members, officers, employees, and persons from improper pressure or harassment</p> <p>Section 7(2)(g) Maintain legal professional privilege</p>	<p>Section 48(1)(a) That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7</p>

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 1.08 pm.

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, FIRST FLOOR, CIVIC THEATRE, 88 TAY STREET, INVERCARGILL ON TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2025 AT 2.00 PM

Present: Mayor W S Clark
Cr A J Arnold – from 2.06 pm
Cr R I D Bond
Cr S J Broad
Cr T Campbell
Cr A H Crackett
Cr D J Ludlow
Cr I R Pottinger
Cr L F Soper
Cr B R Stewart

In Attendance: Rev E Cook – Māngai – Waihōpai
Mrs P Coote – Kaikaunihera Māori – Awarua
Mr M Day – Chief Executive
Ms E Moogan – Group Manager – Infrastructure
Mrs P Christie – Group Manager – Finance and Assurance
Mrs T Hurst – Group Manager – Community Engagement and Corporate Services
Mr D Rodgers – Strategic Asset Manager
Mr M Morris – Manager – Governance and Legal
Ms R Suter – Manager – Strategy and Policy
Ms L Knight – Manager – Strategic Communications
Mr M Butler – Digital and Communications Advisor
Mrs L Williams – Team Leader - Executive Support

1. Apologies

Cr P W Kett, Cr P M Boyle, Cr G M Dermody

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil.

3. Adoption of the Annual Plan 2025/2026 Consultation Document

A5802781

The Chair noted that he did not support the Annual Plan process and that was concerned that Councillors had not reviewed employee costs and that the paper signalled a 9.47% rates increase and that was high. He added that consultation was being done on that basis and that he did not want to impact organisations like ILT Stadium Southland, Great South or the Wachner Place Toilets.

He said that if the rises continued then would be looking at a nearly 20% increase and the costs to members of the community were high. He added that retailers and those in hospitality were struggling and so could not support. He advised that he would Chair the meeting but would vote against.

A query was raised around the paper and what paper was being referred to, it was confirmed it was the paper put up at this meeting. It was further queried how people on the breadline would benefit from the Museum. The Chair noted that the community wanted the museum and that had been fully consulted on.

Ms Rhiannon Suter spoke to the report and noted that all the items and options had been through previous Council and Committee meetings and this was to adopt the document itself ahead of consultation starting on Thursday 13 March 2025. She noted recommendation 6 and highlighted that that was to allow the matter to be dealt with by the appropriate Committee.

Mrs Christie noted that this document was the first step of the process and that it was complex, particularly around three waters.

Ms Hurst noted that under section 82 there was an obligation to consult and for members to have an open mind to the process and submissions received.

A query was raised if given someone had declared a position if they were then excluded, it was noted that a position had been voiced but had not indicated that had a closed mind to submitters views and that advice would need to be sought from Mr Morris.

Mr Morris advised that Mayor Clark had stated that he had a position and what he would like to see but had said nothing that indicated he had a closed mind and further that nothing had been said to date that would rule him out.

A query was raised around the advantages under the options for Three Waters delivery and felt that was misleading, it was noted that all options had been through the Committee but could be reworded. It was noted that staff would reword to reflect the information in the cost summary.

It was added that the wording had been received from the consultant. Mr Day noted that would reword to reflect the longer term cost impact.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Soper and **RESOLVED** that Council:

1. Receives the report "Adoption of the Annual Plan 2025/2026 Consultation Document".
2. Notes the consultation document has been put together reflecting the information and options adopted at the following meetings:
 - a. 11 February 2025 Community Wellbeing and Regulatory Committee – Draft Play Strategy.
 - b. 25 February 2025 Council meeting – Annual Plan Budget Items, Draft Fees and Charges Schedule, Water Service Delivery Options, Urban Play Options.

- c. 4 March 2025 Infrastructure and Projects Committee Meeting – Draft Regional Public Transport Plan.
3. Adopts the 2025-2026 Annual Plan Consultation Document (A5806702)
4. Notes consultation will take place between 13 March – 13 April with hearings planned for 29 April, with 30 April and 5 May reserved if required.
5. Delegate to the Group Manager – Finance and Assurance to make non-significant changes (e.g. to fix spelling errors) to the consultation document as required.
6. Delegate deliberations on the Water Service Delivery Options to the Infrastructure and Projects Committee with recommendations to be brought to the 27 May Council meeting.

Note: Mayor Clark voted against.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 2.16 pm

**MINUTES OF FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
FIRST FLOOR, CIVIC THEATRE, 88 TAY STREET, INVERCARGILL ON TUESDAY 18 MARCH
2025 AT 2.00 PM**

Present: Cr L F Soper (Chair)
Mayor W S Clark
Cr A J Arnold
Cr R I D Bond
Cr T Campbell
Cr G M Dermody
Cr D J Ludlow
Cr I R Pottinger
Rev E Cook – Māngai – Waihōpai

In Attendance: Mrs P Christie – Group Manager – Finance and Assurance
Mrs T Hurst – Group Manager – Community Engagement and
Corporate Services
Mr J Shaw – Group Manager - Consenting and Environment
Ms R Suter – Manager – Strategy and Policy
Ms A McDowell – Corporate Analyst
Mr J Botting – Manager – Financial Planning
Ms L Knight – Manager – Strategic Communications
Ms K Braithwaite – Digital and Communications Advisor
Ms M Sievwright – Senior Executive Support

1. Apologies

Cr P Kett, Mrs P Coote

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Rev Cook and **RESOLVED** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil.

3. Public Forum

Nil.

**4. Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting held on Tuesday
19 November 2024**

A5642095

Moved Cr Campbell, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 2024 be confirmed.

5. 2024/2025 Quarter Two Performance - Great South Update

A5768720

Ms Chami Abeysinghe and Ms Suzanne Hotton (Great South) took the meeting through a PowerPoint presentation which outlined what was achieved to date against their Statement of Intent for 2024/25. Some of the key outcomes included Data Insights Southland Hub (DISH) had been launched in November 2024; Aquaculture had moved to stage 2 which was to prepare a report from the stakeholder engagement; tourism marketing and increase in regional and business events.

Staff had integrated and repositioned themselves after the restructure from the previous year. The outcome was the work for the region was being undertaken.

In response to a question regarding carbon farming / forestry and if this was on non productive land, it was noted there was a portion of productive land that was being used but the full analysis would be reported on.

In response to a question regarding moving away from boilers to wood burners and electric, and where the electricity generation was coming from, it was noted there were several new propositions being considered, however with the energy stated, Great South were looking at future demand and speaking with current customers such as Tiwai. It was important these discussions needed to be region-wide and not just city-wide.

In response to a question around any areas of change from the previous report, it was noted things were the same.

In response to a question regard the Callaghan funding, and what percentage Invercargill had received, it was noted that the funding information was not available.

In response to a question regarding DISH, it was noted this was about monitoring and reporting back transparently.

In response to a question regarding the strategy for climate change and avoiding having two strategies, it was noted that engagement had happened with Environment Southland and working groups so this was a cohesive picture.

In response to a question regarding the impact on roading from logging trucks, and impact on infrastructure and community, it was noted that it was important to look at this cohesively. Anything which had already happened had been by private landowners and there was an urgent need to look at this and discussed with the Joint Shareholders.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Bond and **RESOLVED** that the Finance and Policy Committee:

1. Receives the report "2024/2025 Quarter Two Performance - Great South Update".
2. Receives the Great South report on Quarter Two Performance (A5768700).

6. 2024/2025 Quarter Two Performance

A5783520

Mrs Patricia Christie, Ms Rhiannon Suter and Mr Jaimee Botting spoke to the report.

It was noted that normal trends were being seen in this Quarter and were in a slightly better position.

In response to a question regarding the survey, and if there would be a mixture of in person and online responses, it was noted that the online survey was seeking feedback from users of the service, however it was agreed that on-site surveying was important and continued to happen, however this was dependent on budgets.

In response to a question regarding cashflow forecasting and duplication of \$1.2 million, it was noted that staff could not spend unless it was budgeted to be spent. There were a lot of controls in place, however some of this was reactive.

In response to a question regarding the hydroslide, it was noted the answer was not available at this time.

In response to a question regarding delaying the museum, it was noted this paper had been written as at December and further updates would be provided at the next meeting.

In response to a question regarding the approach of revisiting the budget as time went on, and retrospectively changing the budget, it was noted that staff kept the plan which did not change, however budget changes were made during the year.

Moved Rev Cook, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that the Finance and Policy Committee:

1. Receives the report "2024/2025 Quarter Two Performance (December 2024)".
2. Notes that 81 of 113 (72%) of the performance measures are either met or on track, 13 are being monitored (12%) and twelve (11%) will not be able to be met in 2024/2025. This compares to 68% in Quarter Two of the previous financial year and is no change to Quarter One this year.
3. Notes the performance report contains provisional results and these may change as more data is accumulated throughout the year.
4. Notes that seven of the 17 activities have a year-to-date net operating financial performance variance lower than budget by more than 5%. This compares to eight in Quarter One.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that the Finance and Policy Committee:

Recommend to Council:

5. Approves the budget adjustments outlined in the Schedule of changes to the plan (budget) in the Quarter Two.

7. Financial Update at 31 January 2025

A5794995

Mr Jaimee Botting and Mrs Patricia Christie spoke to the report.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that the Finance and Policy Committee:

1. Receives the report "Financial Update as at 31 January 2025".
2. Notes the current state of Council finances.
3. Notes the current net debt and treasury position.
4. Notes that it has reviewed the sensitive expenditure listing provided.

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Dermody and **RESOLVED** that the Finance and Policy Committee:

Recommend to Council:

5. To approve the budget adjustments outlined in the "Financial Update as at 31 January 2025" report and note these budget adjustments have been used to form the base position of the Annual Plan 2025/2026 opening net debt position for consultation.

8. Public Excluded Session

Moved Rev Cook, seconded Cr Campbell and **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

Note: Mayor Clark voted against this motion.

- a. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Finance and Projects Committee Meeting Held on 19 November 2024
- b. Financial Update – as at 31 January 2025

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
a. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Finance and Projects Committee	Section 7(2)(a) Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons	Section 48(1)(a) That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good

Meeting Held on 19
November 2024

Section 7(2)(h)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities

reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

b. Financial Update –
as at 31 January 2025

Section 7(2)(a)

Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons

Section 48(1)(a)

That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7

Section 7(2)(i)

Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 3.49 pm.

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, FIRST FLOOR, CIVIC THEATRE, 88 TAY STREET, INVERCARGILL ON TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2025 AT 4.00 PM

Present: Cr T Campbell (Chair)
Mayor W S Clark
Cr A J Arnold
Cr R I D Bond
Cr P M Boyle (via Zoom)
Cr S J Broad
Cr A H Crackett
Cr G M Dermody
Cr D J Ludlow
Cr L F Soper
Cr B R Stewart

In Attendance: Mr R Jackson – Chair Risk and Assurance (via Zoom)
Ms MJ Thomas - PRLaw
Ms T Hurst – Group Manager Community Engagement and Corporate Services
Mr M Morris – Manager Governance and Legal
Mrs L Williams – Team Leader – Governance and Executive Support

1. Apologies

Cr P Kett; Cr Pottinger, Rev Cook and Mrs Coote

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Ludlow and **RESOLVED** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest

It was noted that Mayor Clark had advised the Deputy Mayor that he had an interest and therefore Cr Campbell would Chair the meeting.

3. Public Excluded Session

Moved Cr Soper, seconded Cr Stewart and **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, with the exception of Mr Ross Jackson - the Chair of the Risk and Assurance Committee and Ms Mary-Jane Thomas - Solicitor, namely:

- a. Discuss Letter Received

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
a. Discuss letter received	<p>Section 7(2)(a) Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons</p> <p>Section 7(2)(f)(ii) Maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such members, officers, employees, and persons from improper pressure or harassment</p> <p>Section 7(2)(g) Maintain legal professional privilege</p>	<p>Section 48(1)(a) That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7</p>

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 5.17 pm.

LGNZ - LOCAL ELECTORAL REFORM - DRAFT POSITION PAPER

To:	Council
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 25 March 2025
From:	Michael Morris – Manager Governance and Legal, Deputy Electoral Officer
Approved:	Trudie Hurst - Group Manager - Community Engagement and Corporate Services
Approved Date:	Monday 10 March 2025
Open Agenda:	Yes
Public Excluded Agenda:	No

Purpose and Summary

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) has set up an Electoral Reform Working Group chaired by Mayor Nick Smith of Nelson.

A Draft Position Paper has been released and has invited feedback from councils.

The question for Council is, does it wish to make a submission.

The final report will be presented to the SuperLocal Conference in July 2025.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. Receives the report titled "LGNZ - Local Electoral Reform - Draft Position Paper".
2. Resolves to lodge a submission/ not lodge a submission.
3. If to lodge a submission - Delegate to Cr's and/or Mana Whenua Representative to provide feedback to staff in preparing the submission:

Cr X
Cr X
Cr X
4. Notes that the submission will be circulated to all Councillors before it is lodged as it is due before the April meeting of Council, but will be presented for confirmation at that meeting.

Background

LGNZ established a Committee to review Local Elections as there is a general trend nationally for low voter turnout.

The Committee developed an issues paper setting out a number of issues that it considered formed part of the reason for the low and falling voter turnout.

It has now developed a Draft Position Paper that sets out its initial thinking and proposed solutions to address the decline in voter turnout. The paper is attached as Attachment 1.

Issues and Options

Analysis

The Draft Position Paper sets out the LGNZ Committee's views on five issues they saw as were key to addressing the falling voter turnout. These are:

1. The public's understanding of local government and why it's important.
2. Understanding candidates and their policies.
3. Voting methods.
4. Administration and promotion of elections.
5. Four year terms.

As this is an LGNZ submission, appointing a panel of Councillors to provide feedback and direction to staff will assist in preparing the submission on the Position Paper and the five points.

The submission is due on 28 April 2025, which is before the April Council meeting (on 29 April). It is therefore proposed that while the final submission will still be presented to Council on 29 April, it will be pre-circulated to all Councillors before Mayor Clark signs it and it is lodged before the Easter break.

A Panel of interested Councillors is therefore suggested as the most effective way to ensure the submission is representative of Council's views on the paper and the five key topics.

Significance

Should the recommendations become law then it will be a matter of significance for the community and it could change many aspects of the Local Elections and our democracy in the City.

Community Views

This is a decision to lodge a submission or not to, to LGNZ an industry body, it is not legislation rather a platform for LGNZ to establish a position and promote change.

The Community will be engaged as a wider part of the reform should it become Government policy.

Implications and Risks

Strategic Consistency

This is a decision for Council to make to share its views on the LGNZ position.

Financial Implications

There are no implications in drafting a submission or not.

Legal Implications

No legal issues for the submission process noting this is to LGNZ and not Government.

Climate Change

No Climate change impacts on preparing or not a submission,

Risk

There is no risk in making submission, in not making a submission the risk is that LGNZ makes a decision to proceed or not with items that Council dos not agree with

Next Steps

If the decision is made to lodge a submission and a panel of Councillors is formed, staff will meet with the panel to discuss the position paper and prepare a submission to go to LGNZ.

Attachments

1. LGNZ - Local Electoral Reform Drafft Position Paper - March 2025 (A5815495).



Local electoral reform Draft position paper

// Local Government New Zealand's Electoral Reform Working Group

// March 2025



A5815495



From the Chair of the Working Group

Kia ora Mayors, Chairs, councils, communities and residents

This draft position paper is the next stage in our work to build a platform for reform to strengthen the democratic mandate local government has to represent communities across New Zealand. It reports on the 57 submissions we received on our issues paper, released in October 2024, the feedback we received at the 2024 LGNZ zone meetings and the rationale for these 20 proposals.

There are three main drivers for this work. Participation in local elections has declined significantly over the past three decades. A participation rate of less than half of eligible voters is an existential threat to local government.

Conducting local elections by post is becoming increasingly untenable as postal volumes collapse, the number of post boxes drops, and a growing number of residents do not use/have a letterbox. This decline in post has been further highlighted since we started our work with NZ Post proposing fewer outlets and less frequent mail services.

The decline in post is a consequence of most communications now being online but the risk of switching to e-voting has increased with the growth in hacking and online fraud. State-sanctioned cyberattacks by authoritarian regimes aimed at discrediting and undermining democracies also makes e-voting too risky. The problems are compounded by the decline in mainstream media, a growth in conspiracy theories and a more polarised electorate.

We have sought to address these challenges with bold, substantive reforms as well as more minor changes. We propose having local elections managed by the Electoral Commission along lines as similar as possible to parliamentary elections. In-person polling booth voting over two weeks, backed by the Electoral Commission's familiar nationwide voter participation campaign, offers the best opportunity to lift participation rates and ensure our voting system's integrity.

Other changes being proposed include improving civics education, supporting Local Democracy Reporting, establishing an annual Local Government Week, avoiding local elections during school holidays, improving information about candidates, making it easier for overseas voting, supporting candidates with disabilities and addressing anomalies in expenditure caps for Māori Ward candidates.

The importance of our work on a four-year term has increased with the introduction to parliament of a bill providing for a referendum on extending the parliamentary term to four years. We believe there is a strong case for alignment of council and parliamentary terms and for national and local elections to be evenly spaced with elections biennially.

We welcome further discussion on these draft proposals.

Nga mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Smith', is written over a light blue circular background.

Hon Dr Nick Smith

Mayor of Nelson | Te Koromatua o Whakatū
Chair, LGNZ Electoral Reform Working Group



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Purpose and timeframes for this work

The purpose of the working group

The National Council of Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) set up the Electoral Reform Working Group to drive LGNZ's advocacy work around strengthening local government's democratic mandate, with a particular focus on increasing participation in local body elections.

The working group's members are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| // Mayor Hon Dr Nick Smith , Nelson City (Chair) | // Professor Andrew Geddis , University of Otago |
| // Mayor Campbell Barry , Hutt City (Deputy Chair) | // Mayor Susan O'Regan , Waipā District |
| // Councillor Toni Boynton , Whakatāne District, Co-Chair Te Maruata | // Mayor Rehette Stoltz , Gisborne District |

The group can be contacted by emailing electoralreform@lgnz.co.nz

Timeframes

Following the Issues paper, the working group has produced this draft position paper. Submissions on these papers, alongside targeted engagement with key organisations, will inform the development of a final position paper.

The high-level timeline is:



Scope of this work

This paper sets out the working group's draft positions on the challenges and opportunities facing the local electoral system as set out in the issues paper. The working group is focused on effecting change, which means concentrating on factors that we can influence and that are likely to gain wide buy-in from local government.

Providing feedback on this paper

Consultation on this document closes at **9am on Monday 28 April 2025**. You can provide feedback using the feedback form available at <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/policy-advocacy/key-issues-for-councils/local-electoral-reform/> or by emailing electoralreform@lgnz.co.nz.



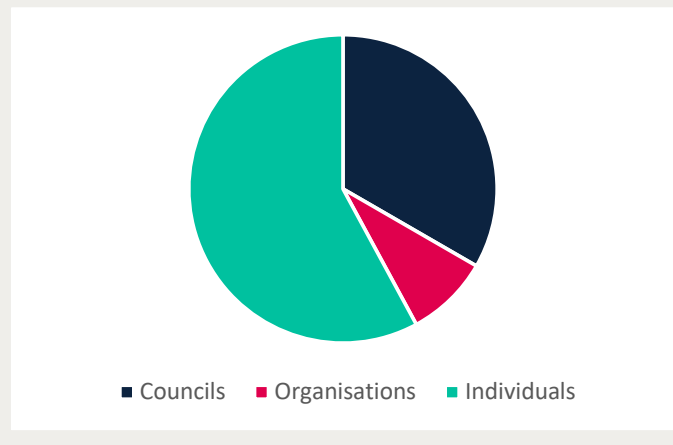
Submissions received on the issues paper

The issues paper received a total of 57 submissions. The majority of these (58%) were received from individual members of the public.

The councils who submitted represent 64% of the population of New Zealand.

The specific feedback on the issues paper is summarised in each of our five key issues. Submissions from councils and organisations identify submitters by name, while submissions from individuals or groups maintain their privacy.

Figure 1 Who submitted on the issues paper



A number of submitters welcomed this process and noted the importance of local government owning the solutions to the challenges of low participation in local elections.

“It is important that identified solutions to increasing participation in our council elections [come] from within local government rather than being decided and enforced from above.” Individual submission

List of submitters

The Electoral Reform Working Group thanks the following councils and organisations for their submissions:

Organisations: Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, Local Government Commission, New Zealand Post, Northern Action Group, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.

Councils: Ashburton District Council, Auckland Council, Central Hawke’s Bay District Council, Christchurch City Council, Far North District Council, Gisborne District Council, Hastings District Council, Hamilton City Council, Horowhenua District Council, Kāpiti District Council, Manawatū District Council, Napier City Council, Nelson City Council, Palmerston North City Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Rangitikei District Council, Tauranga City Council, Waipā District Council, and Whangarei District Council.



Background on participation in local elections

Voter turnout in local authority elections in New Zealand has been trending down for the past three decades. However, since 2007 (with the exception of the formation of Auckland Council in 2010), turnout has been stable at between 42 and 44%. This represents a fall in total turnout of approximately 14 percentage points since 1989.

Over the same period, turnout in parliamentary elections has fallen by 6.5 percentage points. The current gap between turnout for parliamentary elections and local authority elections is approximately 36 percentage points. This gap has grown by 3 percentage points since 1992.

Turnout varies significantly between councils, ranging in 2022 from under 30% to over 60%. Turnout tends to be higher in smaller and rural councils than larger and urban councils. Turnout is also higher in those councils where councillors represent a small number of residents.

When compared to similar countries, voter turnout in New Zealand councils is close to the middle. It's well below countries like Norway, Denmark, and Iceland, where local governments have traditionally had a greater role with more autonomy. However, turnout in local elections is declining even in those countries.

Figure 2 Voter turnout in national and local elections 1989-2023

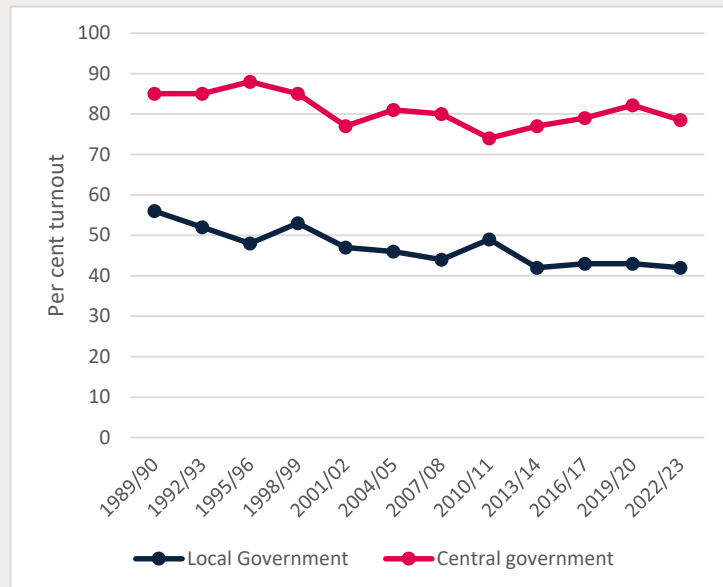


Figure 3 Turnout by council type

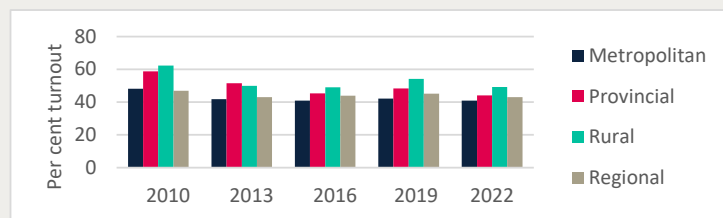
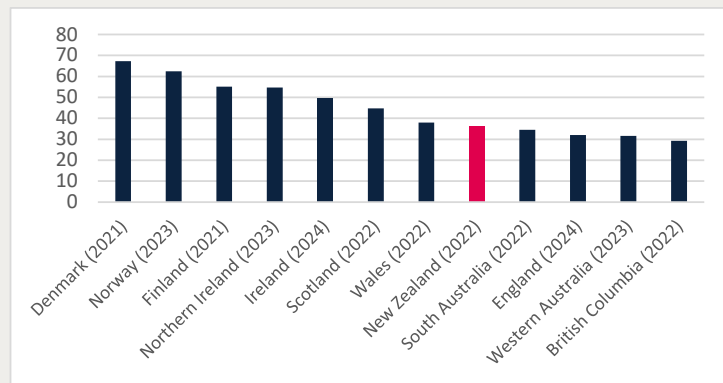


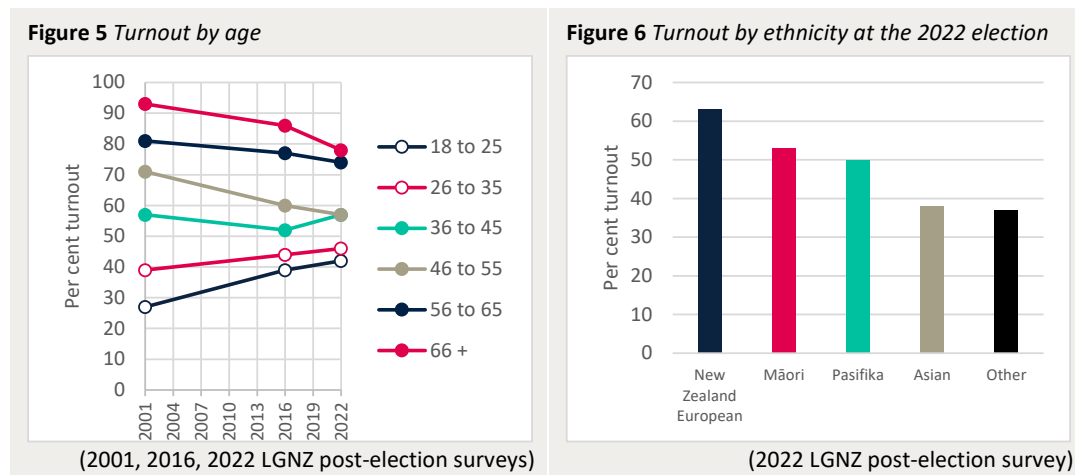
Figure 4 Turnout at last local elections





Who votes?

Post-election surveys suggest that voters in local elections are more likely to be: women than men; older or retired (although the proportion of voters under 45 is increasing while over 45 is gradually decreasing); from the South Island; have lived at the same address for 10 years or more. European or Pākehā are more likely to vote than those who identify as Māori, who are then more likely to vote than those who identify as Pasifika, with the lowest participation rate being people who identify as Asian.



Why people don't vote

The Horizon Research nationwide survey following the 2022 local elections found that the most common reasons for not voting were that people did not know enough about the candidates (31%) and their policies (26%) and could not work out who to vote for (22%). Another 11% of non-voters said that they did not vote because they did not receive voting papers.

Auckland Council's 2022 demographic study on turnout noted several possible causes of not voting:

- Perceived relevance of local government to everyday life
- Family and work commitments and an inability to pay attention to local politics in light of other life priorities
- Differences in the level of exposure to civics education
- Complexity of the local government system and voting process, along with differences in knowledge about local government across communities
- For some communities, a lack of identification with and ability to see one's identity reflected in the local governance system
- A distrust of and disengagement from the local government system, particularly amongst Māori
- The existence of a social norm of non-voting in some families, neighbourhoods and communities.



Issue 1: The public’s understanding of local government and why it’s important

The public’s lack of understanding of what councils do – and not seeing the work of councils as important – have been repeatedly identified as reasons why people don’t vote in local elections. Building understanding should increase engagement with and participation in local democracy, including voting in local elections. The rates system can mean ratepayers have greater engagement with councils, compared to other voters.

What do people say would increase turnout?

40% - more information about what councils do

32% - make it easier to engage with your council

(2022 LGNZ post-election survey)

Civics education is a key way to build understanding of councils’ work and value

Civics education is about learning your rights and duties as a citizen, including democratic processes and how you can interact with government and create change. Civics education objectives are built into the New Zealand Curriculum in Year 9 and 10 Social Studies. Schools have the flexibility to design their own curriculum within the national framework, including decisions about teaching civics and citizenship. In 2020, the Ministry of Education published a [Civics and Citizenship Education Teaching and Learning Guide](#) to support primary and secondary school teachers, but it is unclear how widely this resource is being used.

While the school curriculum is a key starting point for civics education, community-wide education is also important. This is particularly important for communities that have the lowest voting participation rates.

LGNZ and some councils deliver elements of civics education through initiatives that encourage young people to vote or engage with their local councils. One of these initiatives was [Ngā Pōti ā-Taiohi - Youth Voting 2022 programme](#), run by LGNZ as part of the VOTE 2022 campaign. Many councils also have youth councils, which also foster young people’s understanding of what local government does and why it is important.

Councils have an opportunity to better promote their role, work and value

Councils have many touch points with their communities. They also have a range of statutory requirements to inform communities about current and proposed work. This presents many opportunities for councils to demonstrate their value and promote their importance, at the same time as building wider understanding of local government.

Decline of local media

Changes to the media landscape, including fewer local media outlets, mean declining coverage of both the work councils do and council decision making. This affects communities’ ability to understand and engage in the work of councils.



What we heard from submitters on this issue

Civics education

Submitters were overwhelmingly in favour of improving the quality and reach of civics education, particularly as part of compulsory education. One submitter called for a more integrated approach:

“Language should be about active citizenship, rather than delivery of civics education. The phrase ‘civics education’ suggests a separate cost to councils rather than integrating community participation methods in everything we do.” Palmerston North City Council

This approach includes councils, particularly elected members, actively engaging with young people.

“Practical initiatives like mock council meetings, youth governance programmes, and partnerships with councils should be part of this effort.” Hastings District council

A couple of submitters raised concerns about mandatory civics education’s impact on teachers and schools:

“...there are a number of programmes that schools run currently around civics and elections, and we support those, but are mindful not to add to the curriculum load on teachers and schools and do not support this being mandated.” Tauranga City Council

The need for better resources to support the current curriculum was identified by several submitters. One submitter said there would be benefit from local government working with other organisations who already support central-government-focused elements of civics education.

Localism and the need to involve communities

Several submitters noted the current consultation requirements, particularly on key decisions like the long-term plan, were overly prescriptive and a barrier to genuine community engagement.

A few submitters raised the need for councils to adopt greater localism approaches that include communities more in decision-making, including devolving some functions or decisions to the community. A couple of councils pointed to work they were doing in this area.

The decline of local journalism

A number of submitters strongly agreed that the decline of local journalism needed to be addressed:

“Increased central government support for local media would be helpful, such as increasing and extending the local democracy reporting scheme.” Individual submission

Wider reform of local government

A number of submitters called for wider changes to local government’s role, responsibilities, the number of councils, representation arrangements for individual councils, and the respective roles of elected officials and the chief executive. As outlined in the issues paper, these points are outside the scope of this work, but will inform LGNZ’s engagement with upcoming and future reforms. For example, one submitter noted a need for greater transparency of council performance, which aligns with elements of the Government’s local government forward work programme.



Our draft position

Supporting and promoting active citizenship

The civics education that's part of compulsory education needs to better support an understanding of how local government works, what it does, and why it is important. While the curriculum currently enables this to be taught, practical steps need to be taken to strengthen and improve its delivery. In particular, resources that enable learners and their teachers to support civics education need to be higher quality and more accessible. The Department of Internal Affairs has a role in ensuring this, and should work with key partners to develop, distribute and maintain practical resources that support practical learning.

There is a need to better support civics education for people outside compulsory education. There are many organisations supporting target demographics such as new migrants, and Māori. Better quality and more accessible resources would also benefit them.

In order for civics education to be effective, councils need to keep providing engaging real opportunities for young people to participate and be heard in order to promote active citizenship.

Draft recommendation 1: The Local Government Act 2002 should be amended to require the Secretary for Local Government to support public understanding of how local government works and how it impacts people's lives.

Draft recommendation 2: Councils should expand on their work to engage with schools to demonstrate how local government works, including how young people can be involved and expand on opportunities for young people to participate and be heard in decisions that affect them.

How councils communicate their value

Every day, councils engage with communities on a wide range of issues. These interactions present opportunities to communicate councils' wider value to communities. While all councils take some advantage of this, more could be done.

The Local Government Act's current processes for engagement and accountability, particularly the Part 6 requirements around the Long-term Plan and significant decisions, are prescriptive and cumbersome, which presents a barrier to good-quality engagement that meets the unique needs and preferences of communities. The Government's work on performance reporting presents an opportunity to improve this aspect of the Local Government Act.



If communities see themselves more in councils' decisions, they are more likely to appreciate councils' value. This approach also aligns with localism, and many councils employ localism approaches in the ways they engage with communities, such as with participatory decision making. Some of these approaches, and examples of councils employing them, are described in LGNZ's Localism: A practical guide (<https://www.localism.nz/localism-guide/>).

A national focal point could support and amplify local work to communicate the value councils offer communities.

Draft recommendation 3: Central government should work with local government to reform Local Government Act requirements on how councils plan and engage to ensure this achieves best-practice engagement with and accountability to communities.

Draft recommendation 4: Councils should fully capitalise on all their current processes to communicate what they do and its value, and expand their use of localism approaches so that communities see themselves in the decisions made.

Draft recommendation 5: LGNZ, together with the Minister of Local Government, the Department of Internal Affairs and councils should create an annual Local Government Week where councils showcase what they do, where their investment goes, and why local government matters.

Addressing the decline of local media

The traditional model of journalism is caving under pressure. Print advertising has shifted online and away from mainstream media businesses, gutting revenue. This has driven decline in local media, which presents a threat to local democracy. While central government funding is no panacea, investment in the Local Democracy Reporting scheme has ensured those communities receive local government news.

Draft recommendation 6: The Government should retain the Local Democracy Reporting scheme, and improve on it by:

- Extending coverage to areas where commercial media companies no longer cover local government; and
- Committing to a three-year funding cycle to attract and retain capable staff and unlock private co-investment.



Issue 2: Understanding candidates and their policies

Voters receive very little information to help them get to know candidates and understand their policy positions. The Report of the Justice Committee on the Inquiry into the 2022 Local Elections referred to three post-election surveys that identified the lack of sufficient information about candidates as a main reason for not voting.

What do people say would increase turnout?

- 37% - more information about candidates
- 32% - require candidates to include policy positions in profile statements
- 19% - more events to get to know the candidates

(2022 LGNZ post-election survey)

Candidate information provided to voters

Currently the primary mechanism for providing candidate information is through *candidate profile statements*, which are distributed in a booklet with voting papers. With a maximum of 150 words and few requirements around content, it's challenging for candidate profile statements to provide sufficient information for voters to make informed decisions. Statements are often bland and tend to focus on the background and experience of the candidate with little detail about their policy platform. To bridge this gap, various websites have profiled candidates and enabled comparison of their policy positions.

Other ways to convey information about candidates and their political positions include: direct promotion by candidates and/or their tickets (where these exist) through pamphlets, billboards, and advertisements; public meetings organised by candidates, councils, or third parties such as business associations or residents groups; and reporting by media organisations.

The role of media and other organisations

How voters get their information is changing in tandem with the shift away from traditional media towards digital and social media. We're also seeing a decline in the presence and size of local media, and less private funding for 'public good' journalism, meaning less in-depth media coverage of local government in general and local elections.

Civic organisations (such as Rotary, Grey Power, business associations and resident associations) have previously played an important role in local democracy, through holding 'meet the candidate' events, which provide a setting for local citizens to discuss policy issues. However, both the membership and reach of many civic organisations is declining, resulting in fewer third-party-hosted 'meet the candidate' events.

The role of candidate campaigning and candidate knowledge

Candidate's campaigns play a role in helping voters understand who candidates are and what they stand for. If candidates are well informed about the role of elected members and key issues facing their council, they are more likely to develop informed perspectives on a range of policy areas – and to communicate those positions to voters.



What we heard from submitters on this issue

Information on candidates and what they stand for

A number of submitters noted it can be hard to decide who to vote for because it can be hard to find out what candidates stand for. There was strong support from many submitters for voters getting more information about candidates' positions and views.

"... we see merit in a consistent approach to the provision of candidate information such as via a centralised digital platform. We also see merit in such a platform being provided by an independent public body to ensure that neutrality is maintained and to enhance trust in the platform." The Local Government Commission

Most submitters supported a single central website, although some councils expressed a preference for information being hosted on the relevant council's website. Some submitters wanted more candidate information provided to voters in a range of languages. One submitter felt that there should be penalties for candidates who supply false or misleading information as part of their biography and any position statements.

Some submitters supported expanding opportunities for voters to engage with candidates.

"The local council then needs to support local engagement, making sure there are sufficient opportunities for the public to meet the candidates." Individual submission

Support for candidates

A couple of submitters raised the possibility of candidates receiving some public funding for promotional activity. One submitter said disabled candidates should receive the same kind of support that disabled central government candidates receive, to address barriers to standing.

The role of political affiliations in local government

A few submitters raised concerns about people who were members of central government political parties either standing for local election or not being clear about their party affiliation. These submitters felt local elected members should make decisions based on local needs and preferences without wider ideological bias, and that central government parties should not influence local decision making. Conversely, a couple of submitters felt that wider use of party-political endorsement would make it easier to understand what candidates stood for.

Pre-election training for candidates

The majority of submitters who commented on pre-election training for candidates were strongly in favour of its expansion and pointed to councils already doing good work in this space. A couple of submitters were in favour of making such training compulsory.

"So many candidates stand with great promises of 'If elected I will...' No one person can do anything and they inherit the LTP and are captured by the legal constructs that set the 'rules of the game.' There should be an almost compulsory boot camp before you can stand for election." Individual submission



Our draft position

Information on candidates

Voters need to be provided with better information on who is standing for election, what they stand for, and what they hope to achieve if elected. There are challenges in moderating such information while maintaining neutrality, so outside of current prohibitions on objectionable or defamatory language it should be the role of voters, supported by media and public interest organisations, to test these statements.

Neutral third parties, such as policy.nz, have played an important role in supplying candidate information to voters. However, it can be challenging to obtain candidate contact information, photographs, and biographies from electoral officers, and this challenge should be resolved. Protecting the privacy of candidate contact information is understandable given recent safety concerns for candidates, but should not prevent this information from being shared with reputable organisations for a clear election related purpose.

While a political endorsement may help voters understand a candidate's views, candidates should not be required to state current or previous political affiliations.

Draft recommendation 7: The administrator of local elections should be required by the Local Electoral Act to provide and maintain a website (directly or by contracting to a third party) that would give every candidate the opportunity to provide (as part of the nomination process):

- A 150-word biography (as per the current candidate booklet);
- Answers to four or five standard questions on policy views and priorities (with a 500-word limit across all answers). These questions could be set by a neutral body such as the Electoral Commission or in primary legislation; and
- Links to candidate websites.

It would be useful if this website allowed for candidates to also provide a short video statement. A suggested maximum length is three minutes, and the video should be subtitled so it is accessible for hearing-impaired people.

Submissions from candidates should not be moderated, with the exception of objectionable or defamatory statements.

Draft recommendation 8: As a transition step to recommendation 7:

- For elections before the introduction website council electoral officers should be encouraged to provide candidate-supplied information to neutral third-party websites for the purposes of supporting better understanding of candidates; and
- The Local Electoral Act should retain provision for the printed booklet with a 150-word candidate statement, with the need for this being reviewed after two elections after the introductions of the website.



Decline of civic organisations and local media

The implications of local-media decline have been covered earlier in this paper under issue one.

In-person or online 'meet the candidate' events help voters understand more about candidates. While some organisations organise these events to promote a specific viewpoint, politically neutral events are preferable if the objective is informed decision making by voters. The decline of neutral events needs to be addressed.

Draft recommendation 9: Councils should continue, or give consideration to, supporting 'meet the candidate' events, either by directly running them or by funding politically neutral organisations to do so.

Candidate knowledge

Candidates who understand the office they are standing for can better communicate their positions on key issues and what they would achieve if elected. Training for candidates shouldn't be compulsory, as it is in some places overseas, but it should be much more accessible and utilised by candidates. Councils and organisations like Local Government New Zealand offer training, resources, and information sessions before elections.

Supporting candidates

Disabled candidates can face barriers to standing in local elections, and this should be addressed by central government in the same way as for central government elections.

There should not be state funding of candidates in local elections. However, local democracy in New Zealand would benefit from more private and philanthropic support for candidates from underrepresented groups. Initiatives like this exist in overseas democracies.

Candidates in Māori wards and constituencies face specific challenges from candidate spending limits based on population that do not take into account geographic area. A Māori ward or constituency could cover the area of several general wards or constituencies. Campaigning to dispersed populations is more expensive, effectively giving these candidates a lower effective spending limit than general ward or constituency candidates.

Draft recommendation 10: The Government should extend the Election Access Fund to candidates for local elections to address barriers faced by disabled people who want to stand.

Draft recommendation 11: Government should address the anomaly faced by candidates in Māori wards and constituencies by reviewing part 5, subpart 2, of the Local Electoral Act, which concerns candidate expenditure limits.



Issue 3: Voting methods

Currently, the Local Electoral Act 2001 allows local authorities to use one or more voting methods. It lists postal voting, booth voting and electronic voting. This is subject to the method being explicitly allowed for in regulations: currently the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 only enables postal voting, booth voting, or a combination. All local elections have been conducted by postal voting since 1995.

Postal voting is becoming unviable as a voting method

The Cabinet Paper on the Government response to the Inquiry on the 2022 Local Elections stated, “*Postal voting is becoming increasingly untenable for local elections*” and noted further work should be done to ensure future local elections can be delivered.

To counter the reduction in post boxes, many councils now provide drop-off points for completed voting papers at supermarkets, malls and libraries. This is a short-term solution given the continuing decline of post.

There are significant security concerns with online voting

While online voting is often suggested as a viable alternative to postal voting for local government, all trial attempts since the mid-1990s have been unsuccessful, largely due to security or cost issues.

The Electoral Commission provided this perspective to the working group:

“The search for online voting solutions that are robust, cost effective and that meet internationally accepted standards around security and voter verification continues and has not reached a point where the move could be taken without putting trust and confidence in the electoral system at risk.”

Figure 7 Number of NZ Post boxes 2010-2023

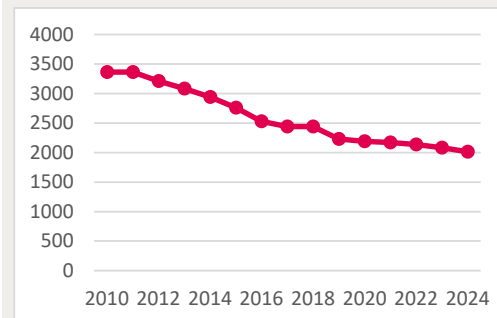
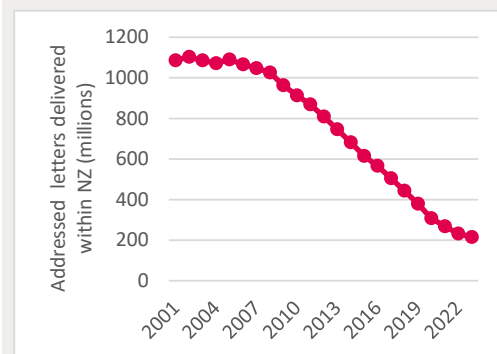


Figure 8 NZ Post mail volumes 2001-2023





What we heard from submitters on this issue

Preferred voting methods

The challenge of postal system decline and its impact on postal voting was acknowledged by many.

"...it's the decline in mail volumes that has had the biggest impact on our postal system and the challenges we now face. However, NZ Post will continue to ensure excellent service in the delivery of the elections process for local authorities..." NZ Post

The majority of submitters agreed that there was a need to shift away from postal voting.

"The Council considers that the postal voting method ... is not an enduring, or reliable way, to conduct local elections. It is essential that alternative or additional methods of voting in local elections are put in place for future elections." Christchurch City Council

Several submitters disagreed that there were significant risks posed by online voting, or that these prevented its use at this time. Several submissions called for another online voting trial.

"There is no value in deferring the introduction of online voting. Since its use as the dominant future voting system is unavoidable, work should proceed NOW to make it as suitable and effective as possible. Early trials and, if possible, testing and application against the 2025 Local or 2026 National elections should be a priority (even if only for those who volunteer to use the system)." The Northern Action Group Incorporated

Consistency

The majority of submitters who expressed a view supported having national consistency of voting methods.

"...voting method(s) should be nationally consistent – for the ease of voters, and to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. They should also follow, to the extent possible, Central Government election processes, to avoid confusion." Waipā District Council

Cost

There were several submissions concerned that alternatives to postal voting were more expensive.

"...the consequences of having a broader range of voting methods is increased cost, complexity and need for resources, and options should be explored around how this could be paid for, including possible central government support" Ashburton District Council

Accessibility

One submitter raised the need to make sure any future method of voting could accommodate everyone.

"The Ministry suggests the following methods continue to be supported and promoted for local elections: ... Phone dictation voting – currently available in national elections for blind and vision-impaired voters and voters who have a physical disability that prevents them from marking the voting paper independently and in secret... Delivery and collection of voting papers as currently supported for national elections on application." The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha



Our draft position

Future method of voting

Given the challenges with the postal system, local elections should switch to a different voting method in the short-to-medium term (i.e. at the 2028 or 2031 elections). This method should be nationally consistent.

Given the significant concerns about online voting, local elections should instead use in-person voting. This should be as close an experience as possible to parliamentary elections. There should be a two-week timeframe in which to vote with polling booths in venues where people frequently visit like supermarkets and malls. There should also be a simpler system of voting from overseas, and appropriate accommodations for disabled voters.

This will be more expensive than postal voting. How this should be addressed is detailed in issue 4.

Draft recommendation 12: Move to a nationally consistent system of in-person voting for all local elections that is as similar as possible to parliamentary elections over a two-week timeframe in which to vote, with polling booths in venues where people frequently visit. Preferably by the 2028 local elections or the 2031 local elections at the latest.

Short-term improvements

In 2025, councils should continue their important work to support participation, particularly by investing appropriately in promoting standing and voting, and in offering alternative drop-off points like 'orange bins' at supermarkets and drive-through drop-off points. 86% of voters used council alternatives to post boxes in the 2024 Tauranga City Council elections. The government, through the Department of Internal Affairs, previously contributed financially to these initiatives.

If the 2028 elections do not shift away from postal voting, then there should be legislative changes that make it easier for people to vote from overseas, and to have voting papers reissued if they do not arrive.

Draft recommendation 13: Until a change in voting system is made, councils should continue to expand availability of alternative ballot drop-off points such as 'orange bins' at supermarkets and drive-through drop-off points, and government should be encouraged to contribute to this financially.

Draft recommendation 14: If we do not shift away from postal voting in 2028, then the Local Electoral Act should be amended to enable overseas voters to use the same electronic voting approach as central government elections, and make it easier for voters to have voting papers reissued if they do not arrive.



Issue 4: Administration and promotion of elections

Local authorities are responsible for administering local elections in their areas. Administration includes conducting elections, preparing voting papers, counting votes, assessing special votes, and responding to information requests from candidates and the public.

Most councils outsource all or part of this role to private election service providers like Independent Election Services and Electionz.com. This can include outsourcing the role of electoral officer under the Local Electoral Act 2021. In the 2022 local elections, 70 of the 78 councils did this. While the remaining councils appointed a staff member to act as electoral officer, most contracted a private company to administer some aspects of the election.

The Local Government Act 2002 was amended in 2009 to explicitly make council chief executives responsible to their councils for promoting elections. This role involves “facilitating and fostering representative and substantial elector participation in elections and polls” *s42(2)(da) Local Government Act 2002*. Councils tend to have two stages to their promotion activity: encouraging people to stand as candidates; and encouraging people to vote. The Electoral Commission also undertakes a nationwide enrolment campaign ahead of local elections.

Investment in promoting local elections, of about 50 cents per elector, is significantly less than investment by the Electoral Commission in promoting national elections at about \$4 per elector. In general elections, political parties also invest significantly in promotion. The parties inside the current parliament declared promotion expenses of over \$15m for the 2023 election. This includes public funding of \$3.5m through the broadcasting allocation. Individual candidates declared a further \$3.45m of local expenditure. While local elections in larger cities, particularly when competitive, can see high levels of declared expenditure, local elections generally see significantly lower campaign spending by candidates.

The Justice Committee, in its [Inquiry into the 2022 Local Elections](#), recommended the Government consider making the Electoral Commission responsible for administering local elections. It suggested that (at a minimum) the Electoral Commission should be responsible for: oversight of local elections; regulation of election service providers; and management of complaint procedures. The Government agreed to consider this but has indicated it would be a long-term project that would take place only when work programme priorities allow.



What we heard from submitters on this issue

Who should administer elections

A few councils noted that the use of contractors can be more effective and efficient than councils directly delivering elections.

"If the administration of elections continues to lie with local councils, Auckland Council has found that the current arrangements work well. The administration of the election processes that are set out in legislation is outsourced to an experienced provider... Permanent staff with full-time responsibilities do not have the capacity to run an election every three years in addition to undertaking normal responsibilities. It is preferable to contract a provider with reputation and experience than recruit additional new staff every three years. Furthermore, the two providers have invested in equipment, including commercial grade optical scanners and computer systems."
Auckland Council

A large number of submitters supported the Electoral Commission taking over administering and promoting local elections. This would include using their existing branding as seen in central government elections.

"...the Electoral Commission is best placed to run both general and local elections, and recommends that it do so. This would include use of the Orange Man and Pup for local election advertising, which are established recognisable election brands in New Zealand." Nelson City Council

Who should promote elections

A large number of submitters also supported promoting elections sitting with the Electoral Commission, but also noted the need for councils to support this work.

"...The Electoral Commission should take the lead in promoting local elections, as its neutrality and expertise make it the most trusted entity to drive voter engagement... This does not diminish the role of councils in promoting elections. Councils are essential partners in the process, providing local knowledge and logistical support. However, councils cannot be the primary drivers of election promotion, as their inherently political nature (with elected members often running for re-election) can confuse voters and erode trust in the neutrality of the process." Hastings District Council

Local representation arrangements

One submitter suggested that the current arrangements for representation arrangements should end, and the Representation Commission should instead decide on representation arrangements for both local and central government.



Our draft position

Who is responsible

The Electoral Commission should administer and promote local elections. This would enable consistent investment across communities and use of the same branding to promote voting in both central and local elections (the 'orange man'). This would also benefit central government elections because the Commission would run elections more frequently, enabling their staff to have more recent experience delivering elections.

To support delivery of this new role, the Electoral Commission Board would need to be required to collectively possess appropriate skills, understanding and experience. At the same time, the Independent Electoral Review's recommendation that the Minister of Justice should be required to ensure that the board collectively has skills, experience and expertise in te Tiriti/the Treaty, te ao Māori, and tikanga Māori should be implemented in order to improve Māori electoral participation.

The Electoral Commission should also be required in legislation to consult with councils on significant decisions and as part of key processes. Determining councils' representation arrangements should remain locally decided, with the Local Government Commission retaining its oversight role.

Draft recommendation 15: The Government should amend the Electoral Act and Local Electoral Act to put the Electoral Commission in charge of administering and promoting local elections. This new role should come with the following requirements:

- At least one member of the board of the Electoral Commission should possess knowledge and experience of local government and local elections;
- The board should expand to at least five members; and (like similar appointments) Local Government New Zealand should be consulted by the Minister prior to this appointment;
- The Electoral Commission should be required to engage with councils on key decisions and processes on the running of local elections; and
- Local elections should utilise the same branding as central government elections, including the 'orange man'.

How should this be funded

It would be unrealistic to expect central government to fund local elections. This new role for the Electoral Commission should be funded by a levy on councils that recovers a proportion of the costs. This levy should be set in a transparent way that includes engagement with councils, and early enough so the levies can be considered at the appropriate time in the annual plan process. Given the national importance of thriving democratic institutions, and some communities' lack of ability to pay, central government should also invest in the running of local elections.

Draft recommendation 16: Funding for the Electoral Commission's new role should be covered in part by central government and in part by imposing a levy on councils. This levy should be set by Cabinet via secondary legislation and require consultation with local government.



Issue 5: Four-year terms (including transition and implementation)

There is no optimum term length. Term length is a balancing act between maximising the productive period between elections that enables councils to deliver on agreed plans, and elections acting as a regular accountability mechanism for elected members. Having a large overlap in productive windows between central government and local government can foster greater collaboration and increase joint delivery. It also decreases the impact of changes in direction after elections at either level.

New Zealand’s three-year term for local government is short by international standards.

The Panel for the Review into the Future for Local Government recommended a move to a four-year term for local government as this would “improve members’ abilities to make decisions for the long term by providing a longer window to get things done.” LGNZ members agreed with the report’s recommendation and called for the local government term to shift to four years from the 2025 elections. This echoed a remit adopted at LGNZ’s 2020 AGM.

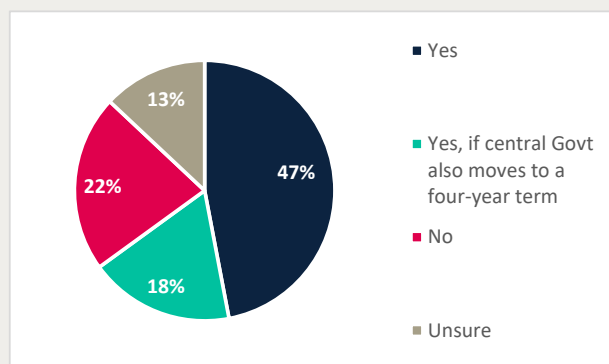
The longstanding practice for constitutional change would suggest a move to four-year terms requires broad support from the community and across parliament. LGNZ commissioned a poll testing public support for four-year terms in August 2024. This poll by Curia Market Research of 1,000 New Zealand adults aged 18+ found that 47% supported four-year terms, but 65% would support them if central government also had a four-year term.

Parliament, in early March 2025, voted 117 to 6 in favour of the first reading of the Term of Parliament (Enabling 4-year Term) Legislation Amendment Bill. The government has not committed in supporting this bill beyond the select committee process. This presents an opportunity to move to a four-year term for both central and local government.

Local government term lengths for a selection of countries, states or provinces

Three years	New Zealand
Four years	Australia, United Kingdom, Canada (most provinces and territories), Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, Netherlands, Spain, United States (many states including New York, California, and Pennsylvania), Japan, South Korea
Five years	Ireland, Germany (all states except Bayern), Italy, Austria
Six years	Germany (Bayern), France

Figure 9 Public views on four-year terms for New Zealand councils





What we heard from submitters on this issue

Four-year term

While there were a small number of submissions opposed to four-year terms for local government, the majority of submitters were in favour.

“The council supports a four-year term in parallel to a similar change to the Parliamentary term and put to the public by referendum. Election campaigns can be a distraction in the final year of the term. A longer term could promote more innovative and strategic thinking, lengthen horizons on decisions, and encourage more use of deliberative democracy mechanisms. There would also be cost and time savings from less frequent elections and the potential to mitigate voter fatigue.”
Auckland Council

Relative timing of local and central elections

A few submissions were in favour of combining central and local elections, primarily to benefit from the higher turnout of central elections. However an equal number of submissions opposed this, mostly due to concern that local issues would be crowded out. Most submissions favoured elections being spaced equally (two years apart), although there was also strong support for one year apart followed by a three-year space.

“...local elections at the midpoint avoids voter fatigue during general elections while ensuring regular opportunities for citizens to engage with the democratic process... Holding local elections independently of parliamentary elections allows local issues to take centre stage, ensuring they are not overshadowed by national campaigns... A consistent midpoint election cycle creates predictability ... encouraging higher turnout.” Individual submission

Changes to timing

A majority favoured shifting the timing of major processes to a four or eight-year cycle.

“If adopted, Long-term Plans should also be adjusted to follow a four-year cycle, with an eight-year horizon instead of ten. This would allow for the deferral of Long-term Plans in unforeseen situations (such as major weather events or emergencies), while ensuring the plans remain relevant for the future.” Manawatū District Council

Enhanced accountability

A number of submitters expressed the view that the range of current accountability measures, particularly the Minister’s powers to assist and intervene, were sufficient and did not need to change as part of a four-year term. A couple of submitters expressed support for recall elections although others opposed this.

There was support from several submitters for enhancing codes of conduct.

“Strengthening codes of conduct and instituting more apparent consequences for breaches could also be an important accountability measure. By ensuring that council members adhere to a defined set of ethical and professional standards, councils would foster greater trust and transparency with their communities.” Gisborne District Council



Our draft position

Local Government and Central Government should move to four-year electoral terms, and the upcoming referendum should cover both. Such a significant constitutional change should be decided by electors. If both parliament and local government don't make this change in parallel then their elections would be out of sync. This means excluding local government from a shift to four-year parliamentary terms would be destabilising and confusing.

Relative timings of central and local elections

When moving to four-year terms for both central and local government, the respective elections should be spaced evenly (i.e. local and central elections should be two years apart from each other). This gives people an understandable pattern of elections, and spaces the elections so the Electoral Commission has time to deliver both.

However, spacing elections a year apart followed by a three-year gap also has merit, given this maximises the productive period local and central governments have to work together.

Elections in the same year or at the same time would create administrative challenges (especially if the Electoral Commission was responsible for both). This would also risk important local issues being overshadowed by national ones.

Currently the maximum term of Parliament is set by the Constitution Act 1986 at three years from the day fixed for the return of the writs issued for the last election. This means central elections are at most about 3 years and two months apart; however, elections can be called at any time before this deadline. Early or snap elections would cause central and local elections to temporarily come out of alignment, and it could take many parliamentary terms before this timing would be reestablished. This challenge should be addressed by the legislation that implements a four-year term for central government.

Local elections are currently on fixed dates set in the Local Electoral Act. This should continue, but the date should be adjusted slightly for the 2028 elections and beyond to ensure the voting period avoids school holidays.

The transition to a four-year term for local government should start in 2028. Having one or two three-year terms for local government after 2028 may be required to achieve the desired spacing of local and central elections.

Draft recommendation 17: Local government and central government should move to a four-year term with elections spaced two years apart.

Draft recommendation 18: Section 10 of the Local Electoral Act should be amended so that the fixed election day avoids school holidays.



Relative timings of key policy processes and decisions

As part of the transition to a four-year term, key planning and accountability processes should move from a three-year cycle to a four-year cycle. This would mean, withstanding wider changes to the present system, a Long-term Plan would be developed every four years, with another annual plan being required in year four. Representation reviews should be required at least every eight years.

The Land-Transport Management Act poses challenges in terms of the relative timings of key decisions and documents. This could be partially addressed by a four-year term with even spacing. However, this challenge should be specifically examined as part of implementing and transitioning to four-year terms for local and central government.

Draft recommendation 19: Local government legislation should be amended as part of a transition to four-year terms to move key planning, accountability, and representation processes from a three-year cycle to a four-year cycle. These include the Long-term Plan, Regional Land Transport Plans, Regional Public Transport Plans, and Representation Reviews.

Enhanced accountability

A move to four-year terms should come with enhanced accountability because the key accountability measure of elections will apply less frequently.

Individual elected members accountability generally sits with the Code of Conduct. The current Code of Conduct process has a limited number of sanctions, and applying these sanctions often requires the support of a majority of elected members.

Further, currently code of conduct processes are often used inappropriately or for conflict that could be better addressed by a range of interventions before they escalate. Conflict or code of conduct issues should be triaged and while several organisations provide support in managing challenges, there would be significant benefits from a more formally established dispute resolution service. This service would support professional standards, provide alternative resolution pathways and early intervention to avoid escalation where possible. These are the hallmarks of modern conflict resolution systems where issues should be resolved as close to the source of the conflict as possible.

Where however, an issue does require escalation, the Code of Conduct process should be strengthened by introducing stronger penalties for significant breaches. While councils would retain a role around resolving and addressing most code of conduct complaints, investigations and application of penalties for significant breaches should sit independently from the council and the Government. Given its expertise and composition (which could be strengthened if need be to meet this extended brief), this role should be fulfilled by the Local Government Commission. This would be similar to the power of the Auditor-General to prosecute elected members for breaches of the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968, which, if successful, automatically removes them from office. Alongside this, members can also be removed from office by ceasing to be registered or able to be registered as an elector, or convicted of an offence punishable by a term of imprisonment of two years or more. Removal of an elected member from office is a significant sanction and should have a high bar applied, with appropriate due process, and subject to strong checks.



Improving elected member performance would also pre-empt the need for a Code of Conduct process which would be a better outcome. This can be achieved through elected member training and support, and embedding a set of professional standards.

The current powers of the Minister to assist and intervene are not relevant here because they relate to councils as a whole rather than individual elected members, so act as a different accountability mechanism from elections. Recall elections are not supported. These can be very expensive, disruptive and, where they are in place, tend to be highly politicised, which would negatively impact how elected members carry out their roles.

Draft recommendation 20: The Local Government Act should be amended to strengthen the Code of Conduct process by:

- Empowering the Local Government Commission to investigate complaints relating to significant breaches;
- Implementing increased penalties for breaches, including suspension or fines, and empowering the Local Government Commission to apply these when it determines a significant breach by an elected member, with the penalty being proportionate to the breach and based on principles in the legislation;
- The Local Government Commission should also have the power to remove a member of local government for serious breaches. This recommendation must be made by unanimously by the members of the Local Government Commission and endorsed by the Minister of Local Government, with no resulting prohibition from standing in a by-election or any subsequent election; and
- Central government should invest in an independent dispute resolution service for local elected members to triage issues, and where possible pre-empt costly escalation.



Draft recommendations

Issue 1: The public's understanding of local government and why it's important

1. The Local Government Act 2002 should be amended to require the Secretary for Local Government to support public understanding of how local government works and how it impacts people's lives.
2. Councils should expand on their work to engage with schools to demonstrate how local government works, including how young people can be involved and expand on opportunities for young people to participate and be heard in decisions that affect them.
3. Central government should work with local government to reform Local Government Act requirements on how councils plan and engage to ensure this achieves best-practice engagement with and accountability to communities.
4. Councils should fully capitalise on all their current processes to communicate what they do and its value, and expand their use of localism approaches so that communities see themselves in the decisions made.
5. LGNZ, together with the Minister of Local Government, the Department of Internal Affairs and councils should create an annual Local Government Week where councils showcase what they do, where their investment goes, and why local government matters.
6. The Government should retain the Local Democracy Reporting scheme, and improve on it by:
 - Extending coverage to areas where commercial media companies no longer cover local government; and
 - Committing to a three-year funding cycle to attract and retain capable staff and unlock private co-investment.

Issue 2: Understanding candidates and their policies

7. The administrator of local elections should be required by the Local Electoral Act to provide and maintain a website (directly or by contracting to a third party) that would give every candidate the opportunity to provide (as part of the nomination process):
 - A 150-word biography (as per the current candidate booklet);
 - Answers to four or five standard questions on policy views and priorities (with a 500-word limit across all answers). These questions could be set by a neutral body such as the Electoral Commission or in primary legislation; and
 - Links to candidate websites.

It would be useful if this website allowed for candidates to also provide a short video statement. A suggested maximum length is three minutes, and the video should be subtitled so it is accessible for hearing-impaired people.



Submissions from candidates should not be moderated, with the exception of objectional or defamatory statements.

8. As a transition step to recommendation 7:
 - For elections before the introduction website council electoral officers should be encouraged to provide candidate-supplied information to neutral third-party websites for the purposes of supporting better understanding of candidates; and
 - The Local Electoral Act should retain provision for the printed booklet with a 150-word candidate statement, with the need for this being reviewed after two elections after the introductions of the website.
9. Councils should continue, or give consideration to, supporting 'meet the candidate' events, either by directly running them or by funding politically neutral organisations to do so.
10. The Government should extend the Election Access Fund to candidates for local elections to address barriers faced by disabled people who want to stand.
11. Government should address the anomaly faced by candidates in Māori wards and constituencies by reviewing part 5, subpart 2, of the Local Electoral Act, which concerns candidate expenditure limits.

Issue 3: Voting methods

12. Move to a nationally consistent system of in-person voting for all local elections that is as similar as possible to parliamentary elections over a two-week timeframe in which to vote, with polling booths in venues where people frequently visit. Preferably by the 2028 local elections or the 2031 local elections at the latest.
13. Until a change in voting system is made, councils should continue to expand availability of alternative ballot drop-off points such as 'orange bins' at supermarkets and drive-through drop-off points, and government should be encouraged to contribute to this financially.
14. If we do not shift away from postal voting in 2028, then the Local Electoral Act should be amended to enable overseas voters to use the same electronic voting approach as central government elections, and make it easier for voters to have voting papers reissued if they do not arrive.

Issue 4: Administration and promotion of elections

15. The Government should amend the Electoral Act and Local Electoral Act to put the Electoral Commission in charge of administering and promoting local elections. This new role should come with the following requirements:
 - At least one member of the board of the Electoral Commission should possess knowledge and experience of local government and local elections;



- The board should expand to at least five members; and (like similar appointments) Local Government New Zealand should be consulted by the Minister prior to this appointment;
 - The Electoral Commission should be required to engage with councils on key decisions and processes on the running of local elections; and
 - Local elections should utilise the same branding as central government elections, including the 'orange man'.
16. Funding for the Electoral Commission's new role should be covered in part by central government and in part by imposing a levy on councils. This levy should be set by Cabinet via secondary legislation and require consultation with local government.

Issue 5: Four-year terms (including transition and implementation)

17. Local government and central government should move to a four-year term with elections spaced two years apart.
18. Section 10 of the Local Electoral Act should be amended so that the fixed election day avoids school holidays.
19. Local government legislation should be amended as part of a transition to four-year terms to move key planning, accountability, and representation processes from a three-year cycle to a four-year cycle. These include the Long-term Plan, Regional Land Transport Plans, Regional Public Transport Plans, and Representation Reviews.
20. The Local Government Act should be amended to strengthen the Code of Conduct process by:
- Empowering the Local Government Commission to investigate complaints relating to significant breaches;
 - Implementing increased penalties for breaches, including suspension or fines, and empowering the Local Government Commission to apply these when it determines a significant breach by an elected member, with the penalty being proportionate to the breach and based on principles in the legislation;
 - The Local Government Commission should also have the power to remove a member of local government for serious breaches. This recommendation must be made unanimously by the members of the Local Government Commission and endorsed by the Minister of Local Government, with no resulting prohibition from standing in a by-election or any subsequent election;
 - and Central government should invest in an independent dispute resolution service for local elected members to triage issues, and where possible pre-empt costly escalation.

LOCAL WATER DONE WELL – COMMERCE COMMISSION SUBMISSION

To: Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday 25 March 2025

From: Jaimee Botting – Manager Financial Planning

Approved: Erin Moogan - Group Manager - Infrastructure Services

Approved Date: Friday 21 March 2025

Open Agenda: Yes

Public Excluded Agenda: No

Purpose and Summary

This paper provides a summary of ICC's submission on the Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure discussion paper 12 February 2025, and notes the next steps associated delivery of Local Water Done Well, within Invercargill City Council.

Recommendations

That the Council:

1. Receive the report 'Local Water Done Well – Commerce Commission Submission.'
2. Approve the attached submission to enable lodgement to the Commerce Commission by 26 March 2025

Background

Under Local Water Done Well, Water Service Providers will need to operate more like commercial independent utility businesses, much like telecommunications or electricity utilities. They will be structured and operated differently, and they will be directly accountable to customers and regulators.

The New Zealand Government has indicated the Commerce Commission will be the economic regulator for water services under the Government's Local Water Done Well (LWDW) regime. The Commerce Commission plan to use their experience in successfully regulating other sectors and international best practice in water regulation to develop an effective regulatory regime tailored for Aotearoa New Zealand.

They intend to design a regime that is flexible and proportionate, in line with councils' different needs and situations. This will provide the clarity and stability local government water service providers need to make the best investment decisions.

Their focus will first be on Information Disclosure (ID). They will require water service providers to publish robust information about the planning, investment, and performance of their water and wastewater services. The Government will require the Commission to set ID requirements within six months of the enactment of Bill 3 of the Local Government Water Services legislation.

The first discussion papers released focuses on the Commissions views on what stakeholders might want to see from information to better understand the services, how to make the ID regime cost effective and how the information will be supplied to the Commission.

Once the Local Government Water Services (LGWS) Bill ("Bill 3") is enacted by Government, further discussion papers will be released detailing the ID requirements. ID requirements under "Bill 3" are expected to come into force from July 2026 for all suppliers but is dependent on when Bill 3 is enacted.

Issues

The key points identified in ICC's submission are detailed as follows –

- **Costs associated with ID** – ICC welcomes focus on minimising where possible the significant costs of providing ID, especially in the initial years by considering what information prepares and publishes already. Significant costs will still be required going forward as the ID is developed and assurances required.
- **Clear guidance on ID** – When the detailed requirements are released, that the Commission provide clear guidance and communications throughout the implementation process.
- **Timing of ID implementation** – The Commerce Commission is required to set ID requirements within six months of the enactment of Bill 3 of the Local Government Water Services legislation and the ID comes into force July 2026. ICC supports the initial scaling back of requirements to what Council currently reports for the first two year due to significant workload in the first two years of the legislation coming into force.
- **Assurance requirements** – If certification is required, where a territorial authority is providing water services directly, it would need to be clearly defined who is appropriate to provide the certification like a nominated councillor or the Chief Executive of the territorial authority. Consideration needs to be given to who is making this assurance as it needs to demonstrate that both management and governance are aligned and take responsibility for the service performance.
- ICC would also like investigated decoupling audits assurance activities from the public audit act to allow greater competition and the potential for cost savings, especially for financial management.
- **Valuation method of Assets** – Within the Technical paper on Accounting Basis for Regulatory Reporting, it speaks of transition for valuing assets from Operating Capability Maintenance (OCM) method which uses a replacement cost value basis and is the method we currently use, to a Financial Capital Maintenance (FCM) method that uses historical cost value basis (assets are value at cost incurred at time of purchase with inflation indexed revaluations). Transition to the historical cost value basis method (FCM) would take considerable resource and costs to change across to. The financial impact is unknown at this time so we agree to the approach mentioned in paragraph 15 of the technical paper to remain with current practices (OCM) and look at transition to FCM at some point in the future.

Next Steps

- Assess future Commerce Commission discussion papers and compile a submission as they come available
- Assess the recently released Water Authority Wastewater Standards and compile a submission by 24 April.
- Hearings for LWDW options consulted on with the Annual Plan 2025/2026 on 29-30 April 2025.

Reference

Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure, discussion paper:
https://comcom.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/364415/Economic-Regulation-of-Water-Services-Information-Disclosure-Discussion-Paper-February-2025.pdf

Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure, factsheet:
https://comcom.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/364417/Economic-Regulation-of-Water-Services-Information-Disclosure-Factsheet-February-2025.pdf

Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure, Technical Working Paper on the Accounting Basis for Regulatory Reporting:
https://comcom.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/364418/Economic-Regulation-of-Water-Services-Information-Disclosure-Technical-Working-Paper-on-the-Accounting-Basis-for-Regulatory-Reporting-February-2025.pdf

Attachments

1. Invercargill City Council – Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure submission 26 March 2025 (A5825169).



12 FEBRUARY 2025

Economic Regulation of Water Services - Information Disclosure

Discussion Paper – Feedback Prompt Form



A5825169

Purpose of this template

1. This template provides details on how to provide feedback on this paper. It also provides details on confidentiality considerations.

Submissions

2. We are seeking your feedback on our views raised in this paper. The feedback you provide will be used to support us in developing any foundational information disclosure requirements. Our work will be carried out with a view to the longer-term information disclosure regime.
3. While we will accept a range of formats, our preference is for submitters to answer feedback prompts in this template.
4. Responses can be emailed to wai@comcom.govt.nz with 'Feedback on Economic Regulation of Water Services – Information Disclosure - Discussion Paper' in the subject line.
5. To ensure your feedback can be considered, please provide this to us by **4PM, WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2025**.

Confidentiality

6. We intend to publish your feedback on our website to ensure our process is transparent. However, we understand that it is important to parties that confidential, commercially sensitive, or personal information (confidential information) is not disclosed, as disclosure could cause harm to the provider of the information or a third party.
7. Where your feedback includes confidential information, we request that you provide us with a confidential and a public version. We propose publishing the public versions of your feedback on our website. We note that responsibility for ensuring that confidential information is not included in a public version rests on the party providing the feedback.
8. Where confidential information is included in feedback:
 - 8.1 the information should be clearly marked and highlighted in yellow; and
 - 8.2 both confidential and public versions of feedback should be provided by the due date.

9. All information we receive is subject to the principle of availability under the Official Information Act 1982 (**OIA**). There are several reasons that the Commerce Commission may withhold information requested under the OIA from disclosure. This includes, most relevantly, where:
- 9.1 release would unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the supplier or subject of the information;
 - 9.2 withholding the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons; and
 - 9.3 we received the information under an obligation of confidence, and if we were to make that information available it would prejudice the supply of similar information to us (by any person) where it is in the public interest that such information continues to be supplied to us.
10. We will not disclose any confidential or commercially sensitive information in a media statement, public report, or in response to a request, unless there is a countervailing public interest in doing so in a particular case. Such cases are likely to be rare and would be discussed with you in advance of any publication.

Feedback form

11. **Table 1** provides the full list of our feedback prompts for you to complete. If you are providing any further feedback, please reference the relevant paragraph or chapter number in your response.

Table 1 Full list of our feedback prompts

Questions on Water - Foundational information disclosure – Discussion paper	
1	<p>What are the top two or three things you want to understand about water service providers’ performance in the short term (in the context of the purpose of information disclosure (ID) outlined in Chapter 1 of the discussion paper)?</p> <p>ICC would like to understand more about non disclosure penalties, what they would be, how they would be applied, etc.</p>
2	<p>Are there any additional performance questions (Table 2.1 in the Discussion Paper) that you believe should be added and why?</p> <p>ICC are comfortable with the general focus performance questions listed in Table 2.1</p>
3	<p>Are we missing any types of information (Table 2.2 in the Discussion Paper) that you think are needed to answer the performance questions we have posed and why?</p> <p>ICC are comfortable with the list provided in Table 2.2 in the discussion paper. There would need to be clear definitions of each type of information when setting the ID. For example, what constitutes as a complaint or what is included in each financial category.</p> <p>Clarification would also be required on whether the information is reported as an overall all water services combined data or as each water service separately. For example financial performance and pricing.</p> <p>Some of the information types listed may be restricted in what can be supplied and will need to be further developed over time. For example Southland regional climate change data is currently still being developed by the Regional Council and may not be available for use for a couple of years.</p>
4	<p>Are there any areas that you think are the most important to ensure comparable information between providers?</p> <p>Most water service providers will be very different to each other influenced by various factors. Information which can be used to compare between providers needs to give a fair representation of the performance and not distorted by characteristics of each provider.</p> <p>Local economic factors would need to be considered. For example average wage levels vary throughout the country so average costs may not be comparable.</p> <p>Population serviced, growth and geographical features will also influence comparability. For example comparing a large metro based provider against a multi rural district based provider will have different characteristics. Similarly, flat low pressure networks will have very different operating costs to hilly, high pressure networks.</p>
5	<p>Is there anything else we should be doing to help keep down the costs of the ID regime?</p>

Water Service Providers will incur significant cost in providing ID and therefore any cost savings and efficiencies are welcomed.

ICC trusts that when preparing the draft ID determination that the Commerce Commission will consider how this information is already prepared and reported (or will be prepared and reported under the Local Government (Water Services) Bill) so that unnecessary duplication of information is avoided.

As set out in response to feedback question 11, ICC also supports scaling back of ID requirements during the initial implementation phase of the water services legislation. This will enable water service providers to better focus their resources during this implementation phase and ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place first before ID requirements fully take effect.

ICC supports tailoring ID requirements based on a water service providers' different needs and situations (as set out in paragraph 3.8).

ICC notes the proposal to evolve any ID requirements over time and to continue to make improvements (paragraph 3.15) and supports starting by requiring disclosure of information that water service providers already collect (paragraph 3.16). Minor changes are welcomed to ensure that the regime is workable and fit for purpose. However, continue change year after year would be discouraged. If change is necessary, it would be preferred to happen in a 3-year cycle with plenty of time for planning for implementation.

Any change imposes significant additional costs and needs to be strategically planned out. ICC strongly supports consultation on a draft of any ID determination. ICC seeks that Water Service Providers are given sufficient time to review and properly understand the draft determination and provide their views and consideration is given to what other requirements Water Service Providers are needing to meet during the consultation period when determining the appropriate consultation timeframe. This will be essential if the regime is to be implemented properly and effectively. Time spent during the preparation of the determination will reduce the need for change moving forward and therefore save time and cost.

ICC also seeks that the Commission provide clear guidance and communications throughout the implementation process. The Commission has been holding workshops in recent years which we understand to have been well received by the industry, as well as issuing guidance about the rules and requirements the Commission is planning to impose. Given the newness of the regime, and the differences between Water Service Providers, ICC seeks that the Commission produces a clear reasons paper that explains how the regime will work for every different provider (rather than just a blanket explanation of how the regime will apply).

Methodologies for measuring and reporting, for example, customer satisfaction will be useful. If the Commissioner deems this information to be important, a standard way of measuring and reporting this will also be important.

ICC has considered the Technical Working Paper on the Accounting Basis for Regulatory Reporting and supports the approach of continuing with the Operating Capability Maintenance (OCM) accounting approach. The OCM approach works well for ICC as Invercargill is not deemed a growth city therefore the focus is on maintaining the capacity of the networks at current appropriate levels. However we recognise that as water

<p>service providers are required to operate more like commercial independent utility businesses, a change to the FCM approach may be appropriate to align with other commercial businesses.</p> <p>A change from an OCM to a FCM approach would take a considerably resource and significant additional cost to change across to. This would include IT system changes (restructure to asset register) and assurance costs (audit / other) which would be required to pass onto users/ratepayers. Transitioning to FCM has an unknown impact on costs until the “deemed” historical value is determined and may also push additional costs onto ratepayers/users if the change took place all at once. If a change to FCM is required, a clear transition path will need to be set up including when the change over is and how to change the cost value over from cost replacement to deemed historical for existing assets. ICC would agree with paragraph 15 of the Technical paper to remain with current practices and the look at transition to FCM at some point in the future.</p>	
6	<p>What do you think are the key differences between providers and how could providers be grouped based on these differences?</p>
<p>Population Density, Discharge Environment (coastal is often simpler), growth region, high tourist region, heavy industry, earthquake zone are all things that factor into a networks complexity.</p>	
7	<p>Are there any other ways you think we should engage with the water sector to get technical input?</p>
<p>ICC would prefer to have a direct contact person that has a focus on our own water service. This would allow a better relationship to be established throughout and post the process of implementing the ID regime. Specific customised knowledge to the Water service provider situation and consulting availability with this person will improve the effectiveness and delivery of the processes to deliver the Information required.</p> <p>ICC would also support individual workshops with key staff of each Council to discuss technical inputs. This would allow any unique factors for information required that may be specific to each area to be discussed.</p>	
8	<p>Is there anything else we should do to minimise the impact on providers of working in a complex regulatory environment?</p>
<p>ICC supports the engagement with other regulators referred to in paragraph 3.12. That engagement should also occur with Water Service Providers. It should also be ongoing with regulators to ensure that consideration is given to how ongoing change in the regulatory environment will be managed with respect to ID.</p>	
9	<p>What do you think are the most important obligations from other agencies for us to take into account when developing an ID regime?</p>
<p>The Commerce Commission will not be the only regulator the Water service provider will be dealing with. Taumata Arowai and the local regional council will also have regulatory requirements the Water Service Provider will need to follow.</p>	

	The ID regime needs to be consistent between all parties involved to minimise overlapping information requirements or different interpretations. This could incur additional costs to provide if they are not inline with each other.
10	What are the characteristics of information that you think are most important to the success of an ID regime?
	ICC agrees with the list provided in table 3.1. Information needs to be clear and understandable for stakeholders to use without adding unwarranted extra costs to produce.

<p>11</p>	<p>Do you see any issues with our proposed timing or is there anything else we should align with?</p>
	<p>ICC supports the scaling back of requirements for the first two years while water service providers are implementing the requirements of the Local Government (Water Services) Bill for the first time. Water Service Providers have a significant workload in the first two years of the legislation coming into force including setting up the agreed Water Service Provider model and ringfencing costs separate from other Council activities. This initial implementation phase will be resource heavy and lead-in time will be required to implement the changes required to meet the legislative requirements, establish appropriate systems and processes and prepare the information required to meet ID requirements. Advance notice of any requirements together with clear guidance before the requirements take effect will be critical.</p> <p>During this time Water Service Providers will need to prepare a Water Services Development Plan, Water Services Strategy, Water Services Annual Budget and Annual Report. These documents will ensure that there is transparency during this initial phase of implementation. As a territorial authority, ICC will also be subject to the requirements of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).</p> <p>Following an appropriate lead-in period, ICC supports the potential reporting cycle for ID requirements set out in Table 3.3 as this would align with reporting dates set under the Water Services legislation.</p> <p>Any delays in enactment of Bill 3, setting the ID requirements or not clearly communicating processes or guidance to reporting will contribute to pressure on the Water service provider ID delivery and could compromise quality of data and incur additional costs.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Do you have any views on assurance requirements and what type of assurance should apply to the different types of information?</p>
	<p>Any assurance requirements should align with the requirements in the Local Government (Water Services) Bill and other regulatory requirements.</p> <p>If certification is required, where a territorial authority is providing water services directly, it would need to be clearly defined who is appropriate to provide the certification like a nominated councillor or the Chief Executive of the territorial authority. For example, the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act requires that the Chief Executive provide certification of the information that informs a Water Services Delivery Plan. Consideration needs to be given to who is making this assurance as it needs to demonstrate that both management and governance are aligned and take responsibility for the service performance.</p> <p>ICC would also like investigated decoupling audits assurance activities from the public audit act to allow greater competition and the potential for cost savings, especially for financial management.</p>

13	Are there approaches other than Excel templates that you think would better support the publication of ID data?
	ICC is comfortable in using excel templates for data. ICC would like to suggest a future option could be using an online portal to submit and view data.
14	What types of information do you think might be useful for the ID regime but best kept confidential?
	ICC would like consideration to be given to the confidentiality of any staff/public names and details that may be required by the ID regime as well as any commercial contract details that may need to be withheld from public until it is appropriate to release.

**MINUTES OF BLUFF COMMUNITY BOARD, HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS
AT 18 GORE STREET, BLUFF ON MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr R Fife (Chair)
Mr S Graham – arrived at 7.02 pm
Ms T Stockwell
Mr J Sutherland
Ms T Topi
Cr G M Dermody
Mrs P Coote (Advisory member)

In Attendance: Cr B Stewart
Ms T Hurst - Group Manager- Community Engagement and Corporate Services
Mr J Shaw – Group Manager – Consenting and Environment (via zoom)
Mr D Rodgers - Manager - Strategic Asset Planning
Ms C Rain – Manager – Parks and Recreation
Mr M Morris – Manager – Governance and Legal
Ms R Suter – Manager – Strategy and Policy
Mr M Keil - Manager - Infrastructure Operations
Ms L Knight – Manager – Communications and Marketing
Mr A Gillespie - Senior Engineering - Operations
Ms G Weaver - Senior Communications Advisor (via Zoom)
Ms A Young - Great South
Ms A Habgood - Environment South
Mr L Beer – Bluff Promotions
Mrs N Allan – Manager – Bluff Service Centre
Mrs D Fife – Assistant Manager Bluff Service Centre

1. Apologies

Nil

2. Declaration of Interest

Nil

3. Public Forum

Nil.

4. Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on Monday 10 February 2025

A5765063

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Ms Topi that the Minutes of the Bluff Community Board Meeting held on Monday 10 February 2025 be confirmed.

Matters arising from previous meeting:

It was queried if the inspection had been done by Powernet done on the power poles situated in the middle of Marine Parade. It was advised that it was not known and Mr Fife would follow up with Powernet.

The Board advised that they would like consideration given to locating one of the double toilets allocated to the Bluff Service Centre instead installed closer to the playground. Mr Gillespie confirmed that he had yet to follow up but would do so.

It was asked if there had been an update around the West End Jetty, it was confirmed that there had not been, the Chair would follow this up.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

5. Annual Plan -Verbal Update

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

1. Receives the "Annual Plan -Verbal Update".

Ms Rhiannon Suter provided the verbal update and noted that the annual plan consultation had started and an engagement hui was been finalised at Sold Café on 3 April 2025 from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. An invitation would be sent to the Board Members.

Part of the plan was to put the toilet beside the Service Centre on hold and Bluff was also included in the Urban Play strategy, so there could be interest from residents of Bluff.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

6. Bluff Tourism Masterplan Review

A5803328

Ms Rhiannon Suter and Ms Amie Young from Great South spoke to the report.

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Ms Stockwell and **RESOLVED** that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Received the report "Bluff Tourism Masterplan Review".
2. Received the proposal on the approach to the review from Great South (A5810759).

3. Notes the background to the proposal and alternative options for preparing for the next Long-term Plan.
4. **Agreed** to proceed with the Bluff Motupōhue Tourism Masterplan review in line with Great South's proposed approach.

It was also noted that any future consultation needed to involve all stakeholders.

7. Report of the Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer

A5810145

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

1. Receives the "Report of the Bluff Publicity / Promotions Officer".

Mr Lindsay Beer spoke to the report and noted that Bluff Promotions would be expanding on the Matariki event first held last year at the Oyster Festival site.

A discussion was held concerning the Bluff Hill Grunt. The new proposal to use the road could take the participation of non-competitive people out and be more appealing to athletes. It was asked if the mountain bike tracks on Bluff Hill could be incorporated into an event, bypassing the Department of Conservation (DoC) land and the issue of not being able to obtain consent. Mr Beer would investigate further the possibility of staging an event using the mountain bike tracks.

DoC had not been approached by the Board about the delay in obtaining permission to use their land, Mr Fife would follow up with an email.

Some members of the Board were concerned with the Bluff Promotions Facebook page and their reluctance in promoting local business. Mr Beer was unaware of this and would take the Board's concerns back to Bluff Promotions.

Another issue was the annual subscription and the lack of background information that came with the invoice and what this money was used for. Mr Beer advised he would also take this back to Bluff Promotions.

Mr Beer would also be joining the Bluff Oyster Festival Committee in the lead up to the Festival and would keep the Board up to date with progress. Mr Beer would also be working with other organisations to keep the Board up to date with up and coming events.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

8. Financial Report for Bluff Community Board for The Period Ending 31 December 2024

A5807063M

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

1. Receives the report "Financial Report for Bluff Community Board for The Period Ending 31 December 2024".

The grants and subsidies had been in place for a very long time and the Board felt that it was time to have a list of recipients and have a review.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

9. 72 Barrow Street, Bluff Disposal

A5783568

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

1. Receives the report "72 Barrow Street, Bluff Disposal".

Mr Keil spoke to the report and advised that the property was going to the market on Friday (21 March 2025) and would be up for tender.

It was asked what would happen to the money from the sale. It would depend on the original purchase or bequest of the property and the terms and conditions that came with the purchase/bequest. For example, if the property was obtained from Parks then the money would go back to Parks.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

10. Communications for Bluff Community Board

A5813542

Moved Mr Graham, seconded Ms Topi that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives and notes the report "Communications for Bluff Community Board".
2. Provides feedback on other options and ideas for Communications.

Ms Lisa Knight spoke to the report and noted that the newsletter was side lined due to the pandemic and staff changes. Facebook had been the platform that had been used to keep the community up to date with issues relevant to Bluff. The Board felt there were members of the community that did not use Facebook and they would still like to be kept up to date with a hard copy. There was a new publication called Love Bluff and this would be available from the Bluff Service Centre.

There was a discussion concerning the content of the Facebook page and it was felt it needed to be revamped with updates from board members and links to items of interest. It was advised that Ms Weaver would be the contact for the board members.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

11. Climate Change Regional Framework for Action – Update

A5777194

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

1. Receives the report "Climate Change Regional Framework for Action –Update".
2. Provides feedback on the Regional Framework for Action (A5444587).

Mr Shaw introduced the report and Ms Suter and Ms Habgood spoke to the report.

It was advised that the Board would like more consultation regarding the report. A stakeholders meeting needed to be held in the community to discuss what the report required in early April.

A concern from the discussion was around the out of date Emergency Management Southland Community Response Plan. Ms Hurst joined the table and confirmed she had just sent an email to Ms Aly Curd, Emergency Management Southland, to co-ordinate a meeting with the Board and interested parties to update the response plan.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

12. Bluff Action Sheet

A5766692

Moved Mr Graham , seconded Mr Sutherland and **RESOLVED** that the Bluff Community Board:

1. Receives the report "Bluff Action Sheet".

Mr Matt Keil; Ms Caroline Rain and Mr Allan Gillespie spoke to various aspects of the action sheet. With respect to the sump on the Shannon Street footpath, it was confirmed that South Port had been informed of the problem and there was a possibility that a detour would be put in place if the sump worsened or when repairs started.

Mr Gillespie would take the following concerns back to the contractors, the mounds of road chips left after the road reseal had been causing problems with the length of time they had been left before removal, it was queried if these could be removed.

People walking on Marine Parade due to the overgrown vegetation - a clean-up before winter needed to be done. Weeds on the cycle way also needed to be dealt with.

Another question was raised regarding who was responsible for the spillage of woodchips and bark off trucks going to South Port especially along Blackwater Street. For maintenance sweeping the Invercargill City Council was responsible for sweeping the state highway from Blackwater Street to the turn off to the port. The big spills were charged back to the truck company. It was also the responsibility of the driver to ensure that his truck was swept before he leaves South Port. The Chair would contact South

Port regarding the issue as the companies the drivers work for were contractors to South Port.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

12. Chairperson's Report -Verbal Update

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

1. Receives the "Chairperson's Report -Verbal Update"

The Chair noted that he had been invited to visit the HMS Canterbury when it was in port recently.

The Chair advised that he would like an action table attached to the minutes from the meeting stating who was responsible for following up any queries or actions from the meeting.

The motion now put was **RESOLVED.**

13. Public Excluded Session

Moved Cr Dermody, seconded Mr Sutherland and **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- a. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Bluff Community Board Meeting Held on 10 February 2025

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
a. Minutes of the Public Excluded Session of the Bluff Community Board Meeting Held on 10 February 2025	Section 7(2)(i) Enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)	Section 48(1)(a) That the public conduct of this item would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under Section 7.

There been no further business, the meeting finished at 8.45 pm.