SOUTHLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Rohe Pōtae o Murihiku

Agenda

Southland District Council

Wednesday, 18 March 2026, 10am
Council Chamber, Level 2, 20 Don Street, Invercargill

Mayor	Rob Scott
Deputy mayor	Christine Menzies
Councillors	Jaspreet Boparai
	Don Byars
	Phil Dobson
	Paul Duffy
	Sarah Greaney
	Julie Keast
	Tom O'Brien
	Brian Somerville
	Jon Spraggon
	Michael Weusten
	Matt Wilson

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What is important to us?

Our strategic framework is a big picture of what Council is planning to achieve for our communities in the next three years.

Council vision

Together, with our people, for our future. It's our Southland!

Council mission

Working together for a better Southland.

Our focus is

Strategic priorities

Connected and resilient communities - we collaboratively engage with our partners and communities, along with investing in agile and sustainable practices, to support a vibrant and thriving Southland.

Ease of doing business - we transform the customer experience through partnership, technology and continuous improvement.

Providing equity - we enable all residents to be able to access the same services and tools as part of a fair society.

Robust infrastructure - we deliver innovative and sustainable community focused infrastructure and facilities for the future

Thinking strategically and innovatively - we look for solutions outside of the norm and are not afraid to do something that we have not done before, and we think long-term about the solutions we are providing, while having the flexibility and agility to change direction as necessary.

Our goals for the LTP 2024-2034 are

Outcomes

Social - communities that are connected and have an affordable and attractive lifestyle.

Cultural - communities with a sense of belonging for all.

Environmental - communities committed to the protection of our land and water.

Economic - communities with the infrastructure to grow.

1 Opening

The Mayor will open the meeting with a Karakia Timatanga.

2 Apologies

At the close of the agenda no apologies had been received.

3 Leave of absence

At the close of the agenda no requests for leave of absence had been received.

4 Conflict of interest

Councillors are reminded of the need to be vigilant to stand aside from decision-making when a conflict arises between their role as a councillor and any private or other external interest they might have.

5 Additional agenda items

Any additions to the agenda must be approved by resolution with an explanation as to why they cannot be delayed until a future meeting.

6 Confirmation of minutes

There are no minutes for confirmation.

7 Public participation

Requests to speak should be made by midday of the day before the meeting. Further information is available on www.southlanddc.govt.nz or phoning 0800 732 732.

8 Reports

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9.1 Appointment of members to the Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy Allocation Subcommittee 81

10 Closure

The Mayor will close the meeting.

Summary of reports

	Report Name	Purpose	Report Type	Page
8.1	Adoption of Local Alcohol Policy 2026	This report provides the final Local Alcohol Policy 2026 for Council to agree public notification, adoption, and operative dates.	Decision	9
8.2	Update on Local Government Commission reorganisation investigation process	This report provides an update on the Local Government Commission's process for the investigation of reorganisation of the local government structure in Southland.	Information	21
8.3	Better off Fund - project update	To provide councillors with an update of where the Better Off Funding projects are at currently.	Information	45
8.4	Offer to gift Orepuki water tanks property to Council.	The purpose of the report is to consider a request from the Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade to gift to Council the property at Orepuki, containing the three firefighting water storage tanks.	Decision	49
8.5	Local Governance Statement 2025-2028	The purpose of this report is for Council to adopt its Local Governance Statement for the 2025-2028 triennium.	Decision	55

Adoption of Local Alcohol Policy 2026

Record no: R/26/3/102724
Author: Ana Bremer, Senior policy analyst
Approved by: Vibhuti Chopra, Group manager strategy and partnerships
Report type: Decision

Purpose

1 This report provides the final Local Alcohol Policy 2026 for Council to agree public notification, adoption, and operative dates.

Staff recommendations

That Council:

a) notes the information contained in the report.

b) notes that the matter or decision in this report is assessed as significant based on Council's Significance and Engagement Policy and that public consultation has been undertaken.

c) determines that it has complied with the decision-making provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 to the extent necessary in relation to this decision; and in accordance with Section 79 of the act determines that it does not require further information, further assessment of options or further analysis of costs and benefits or advantages and disadvantages prior to making a decision on this matter.

d) receives the final Local Alcohol Policy 2026, and resolves:

   i) public notification of the Local Alcohol Policy will take place on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 March 2026

   ii) adoption of the policy will take place 30 days post-public notification, on Monday 27 April 2026

   iii) the operative date of the policy will be the same as the adoption date, being Monday 27 April 2026.

e) resolves that in adopting the Local Alcohol Policy 2026, the Combined Local Alcohol Policy 2015 is revoked.

Executive summary

2 Staff have undertaken a review of the Local Alcohol Policy (LAP). At a meeting on 27 August 2025, Council endorsed a draft policy, for public consultation. Submissions were accepted between 3 November 2025 and 12 December 2025.

3 At a meeting on 28 January 2026, Councillors received the submissions and heard two submitters who wished to speak. Key areas of feedback received in submissions were summarised in the Hearings information and submissions summary report.

4 Council deliberated the proposed changes to the draft LAP at a meeting on 4 March 2026. The agreed recommendations have been reflected in the final policy, included as attachment A.

5 The final Local Alcohol Policy 2026 for Southland District Council is presented for adoption, following a public notification period.

Context

6 The existing Combined Local Alcohol Policy includes policy statements for both Invercargill City Council (ICC) and Southland District Council (SDC).

7 ICC and SDC staff took an issue based approach to the review process. Staff also considered the inclusion of Gore District Council (GDC) in the LAP.

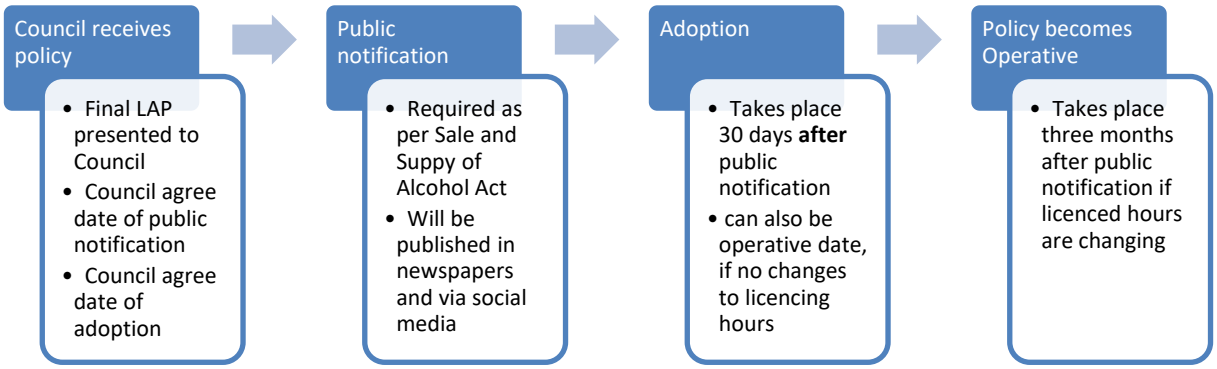
8 Based on the issues presented, Council agreed to develop the new LAP on an individual basis (i.e. the new LAP would not be combined with ICC and GDC).

9 ICC are holding hearings and deliberations on 18 March 2026, with the remainder of the process to follow over April.

Discussion

Process for adoption

10 The flowchart below shows the process for adoption of a LAP:



11 Public notification will take place on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 March. These dates are part of Southland District Council's regular fortnightly schedule of advertising and will not incur additional cost.

12 Adoption of the policy will take place 30 days after public notification. The recommended date of Monday 27 April is 31 days post-public notification, to avoid adoption falling on a weekend and ensure notification of the adoption can take place on a standard business day.

13 As licensing hours have not changed, the three month period between public notification and the policy being operative does not apply. The operative date is recommended to be the same as the adoption date.

14 Staff do not intend to return to Council at the adoption/operative date.

Options

15 The following reasonably practicable options have been identified and assessed in this report:

Option 1 – Adopt the Local Alcohol Policy 2026

Option 2 – Do not Adopt the Local Alcohol Policy 2026 and propose a different option

Recommended option:

Option 1 – Adopt the Local Alcohol Policy 2026

Advantages	Disadvantages
• incorporates feedback from the community and public health and reflects recommended changes to be consistent with the legislation • gives clear and updated expectations for licensees, agencies, and the District Licensing Committee • reduces ambiguity caused by relying on an older combined LAP with outdated statements • supports consistent interpretation and decision-making in licence applications • applies only to Southland District. Future reviews will no longer require negotiating shared approaches with ICC or GDC and Council has full control over timing, scope, and priorities.	• Council may be challenged on retaining status quo licensing hours as a missed opportunity to reduce harm • even though the 2012 Act no longer allows appeals to ARLA on provisional LAPs, other forms of challenge remain possible (e.g., judicial review).

Option 2 – Do not adopt the Local Alcohol Policy 2026 and propose a different option

Advantages	Disadvantages
• there are no clear advantages for not adopting the policy.	• leaving the 2015 LAP in place increases the risk of inconsistency or weakened regulatory decision-making • recommended changes, public health advice, and submissions from the public would not be reflected which may impact Council's credibility in future consultation • ICC will adopt their own LAP, meaning the combined LAP would need to be amended to remove ICC-related statements • staff will need to continue reviewing, rewriting, and re-consulting on the policy, delaying closure on a process already completed and redistributing staff time away from other work.

Legal considerations

16 The Local Alcohol Policy is consistent with the provisions under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012.

17 As of 2023, there is no option to appeal a 'provisional' Local Alcohol Policy to the Alcohol Regulatory and Licensing Authority (ARLA) in the 30 days between public notification and adoption.

Strategic alignment

18 The Local Alcohol Policy 2026 applies to licensing in Southland District only and is no longer a combined policy with Invercargill City Council.

Financial considerations

19 There is no additional cost impact from adoption of this policy.

Significance assessment

20 Adoption of the Local Alcohol Policy 2026 is assessed as significant. This is the final step in the review of the policy, which was assessed overall as being a significant review. Council completed consultation (via the special consultative procedure) and engaged with legislatively required entities and the wider community. No further consultation is required.

Level	Likelihood of engagement
Some importance or administrative	Council is not likely to carry out any engagement.
Moderate importance	Council may choose whether it carries out engagement, which may be targeted to directly affected individuals or groups.
Significant	Council will engage with directly affected individuals and groups and wider community engagement is likely, unless there are reasons under policy not to.
Critical	Council will engage with directly affected individuals and groups and wider community engagement is highly likely, unless there are reasons under policy not to.

Community views

21 Community views have been sought through the review process (via the special consultative procedure) and feedback from submissions, hearings, and deliberations has been incorporated into the updated Local Alcohol Policy 2026.

Climate change considerations

22 There are no climate change considerations for this matter.

Risk and mitigations

23 In adopting its own Local Alcohol Policy 2026, the statements related to SDC in the combined LAP will no longer be operative. This does not impact the use of the policy by ICC until they adopt their own LAP.

24 If Council do not adopt the Local Alcohol Policy 2026, the existing Local Alcohol Policy will remain operative in respect of the policy statements relative to Southland District, until a new policy is adopted.

Next steps

25 Public notification of the Local Alcohol Policy will take place on Thursday 26 March and Friday 27 March 2026.

26 Adoption of the policy will take place on Monday 27 April 2026. The operative date will also take place on Monday 27 April. Notification of adoption and the policy becoming operative will be provided on Monday 27 April through Council's media channels.

Attachments

A Local Alcohol Policy 2026 - for approval March 18 2026 ⇩

Local Alcohol Policy 2026

Group Responsible:	**Environmental Health**
Date Approved:	**27 April 2026**
Date Operative:	**27 April 2026**
Next Review date:	**27 April 2030**
File No:	r/ / /

Introduction

A Local Alcohol Policy (LAP) enables local authorities to make a meaningful contribution towards addressing issues associated with the sale, supply or consumption of alcohol.

This Local Alcohol Policy (the policy) has been developed in recognition of the significant harm that the excessive consumption of alcohol has in our communities.

The policy is in line with the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 (the Act), to ensure that alcohol is sold and supplied in a safe and responsible manner and to ensure that the harm arising in individuals and communities, because of alcohol consumption, is minimised.

The policy aims to inform the decisions of the District Licensing Committee (the Committee) on alcohol licences for the sale of alcohol within the Southland District boundaries (the LAP district).

The policy will provide direction as to whether alcohol licences shall be granted and what licence conditions could be imposed.

Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to set out the Council's policy positions on the following licensing matters, pursuant to section 77(1) of the Act:

- maximum trading hours
- location of licensed premises by reference to proximity to premises or facilities of a particular kind or kinds
- whether further licences (or licences of a particular kind or kinds) should be issued for premises in the district or any stated part of the district.

Scope

Through the LAP, the Committee can:

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- limit the **location** of licensed premises in particular areas or near certain types of facilities, such as specific neighbourhoods or near schools or churches
- limit the **density** of licensed premises by specifying whether new licences or types of licences should be issued in a particular area
- impose **conditions** on groups of licences, such as a 'one way door' condition that would allow patrons to leave premises but not to enter or re-enter after a certain time
- recommend **discretionary conditions** for licences
- provide for the maximum trading hours of on, off and club licences.

Definitions

Alcohol	Means a substance that is or contains a fermented, distilled or spirituous liquor; and at 20°C is found on analysis to contain 1.15% or more ethanol by volume; or that is a frozen liquid, or a mixture of a frozen liquid and another substance or substances; and is alcohol when completely thawed to 20°C; or that, whatever its form, is found on analysis to contain 1.15% or more ethanol by weight in a form that can be assimilated by people
Cellar door	Includes tasting rooms at a brewery or distillery. It excludes the sale of alcohol not brewed, distilled or made by that licence holder.
Club	Means a body that is a body corporate having its objective (or as one of its objects) participating in or promoting a sport or other recreational activity, otherwise than for gain; or is a body corporate whose object is not (or none of whose objects is) gain; or holds permanent club charter
CPTED principles	Means *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* and are set out in the Health Promotion Agency publications *Safer Bars and Restaurants – A guide to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)* and *Safer Bottle Stores - A Guide to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)*
Entertainment venue (includes centre)	Means a venue that is used to provide entertainment. The entertainment may be arranged and organised by the owner/operator of the venue and features some or all the following: • a reasonable cover charge would apply – to be included in all advertising of any entertainment event • live entertainment would be provided on a regular, frequent and ongoing basis (live entertainment is entertainment by way of live performers, including bands, solo artists, live DJs, comedians) • a stage, dance floor or similar area would be available for entertainers and/or patrons to use • the design of the premises including the size of the bar will be required to be consistent with the nature of the principal form of entertainment.

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Function centre	Means a centre that is used to host events/gatherings or occasions regardless of whether the centre has its own licence or is linked to another licensed venue
Higher risk periods	Means a period where either the number of patrons is likely to exceed a specified number, or the type of event is assessed to be of greater risk. These higher risk periods will be determined by the committees on a case-by-case basis
Host responsibility	Means a policy and/or a plan designed to reduce the abuse of alcohol by creating and promoting a safe drinking environment
Intoxicated	Means observably affected by alcohol, other drugs, or other substances (or a combination of two or all those things) to such a degree that two or more of the following are evident: • appearance is affected • behaviour is impaired • coordination is impaired • speech is impaired.
LAP district	Means the territorial district of Southland District Council
Licence	Means a licence issued under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 that is in force; and in relation to any licensed premises means the licence issued for them (or, in the case of premises that two or more licences have been issued for, any of those licences
Sensitive premises	Means any school, childcare facility, preschool or other facility providing for the education or care of children, or any place of religious gathering or assembly, or any residential activity including a dwelling or apartment, or any community facility, or health facilities and rehabilitation treatment centres, and any marae or fale pasifika within 50 metres of the address with or applying for the licence.
Significant change in style	Includes any increase in the risk level to a premise (for example going from a restaurant to a night club/bar) and/or where the nature of the operation is likely to change
Trading hours	Means the hours a business may be licensed to be open to sell or supply alcohol

Principles

Identifying the problem

Alcohol misuse is a social problem and public health problem with significant implications for the social and economic well-being of people in the LAP district.

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A minority of the alcohol sold is consumed in licensed premises or at licensed events, where there is supervision, control and host responsibility. A majority of alcohol is consumed in situations where there may be little control or supervision.

It is a priority to reduce the harm caused by alcohol misuse

Alcohol misuse is a serious social problem and public health problem. Council will recognise and address alcohol misuse through their policies and through the way they deliver services to the people in the LAP district. Council can also address alcohol misuse through their responsibilities under the Act.

The policy is a way people in the region can address alcohol misuse.

Providing a safe drinking environment

It is important that there are safe environments for the responsible sale, supply and consumption of alcohol.

Through this policy, Council will:

- place significant emphasis on host responsibility, particularly in assessing applications and imposing conditions of approval
- encourage organisers of an event or special occasion to properly plan for it, if alcohol is to be available.

Policy

Trading hours

The following shall be the maximum trading hours for the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol (within the context of alcohol licences) on licensed premises within the LAP district:

On-licences – bars, taverns, hotels, entertainment venues and Class 1 restaurants

- earliest opening time 8:00 am on any day
- latest closing time 3:00 am the following day

On-licences – class 2 and class 3 restaurants, including BYO restaurants

- earliest opening time 8:00 am on any day
- latest closing time 1:00 am the following day.

On-licences – other

Applications for licences will need to justify the hours requested in terms of the purpose of the function or event. Including but not limited to:

- function centres
- theatres

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- boats and lodges in Milford Sound
- caterers
- cellar doors

Off-licences – this includes dedicated 'bottle store' outlets and 'across the bar' sales, and supermarkets or convenience stores

- earliest opening time 7:00 am on any day
- latest closing time 11:00 pm the same day.

Club licences

Applications for club licences will need to justify the hours requested based on the activity of the club.

- earliest opening time 8:00 am on any day
- latest closing time 3:00 am the following day

Special licences

Applications for special licences will need to justify the hours requested in terms of the purpose of the function or event.

All above provisions are subject to sections 47, 47A and 48 of the Act, which relate to the sale and supply of alcohol on ANZAC Day morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Christmas Day.

Sensitive premises

When Council receives an application for a proposed on, off or club licence or a renewal where the application pertains to a significant change in the style or operation of the business (not including special licence applications), evidence of consultation with all applicable sensitive premises shall be provided with the application, if the licensed premises is within 50 metres of the boundary of a sensitive premise.

Sensitive premises are:

- any school, childcare facility, preschool or other facility providing for the education or care of children
- any place of religious gathering or assembly
- any residential activity – dwelling or apartment
- any community facility
- any health facilities and rehabilitation treatment centres
- Marae, Fale Pasifika

In relation to providing evidence of consultation with a tenanted property, the applicant will have to provide evidence that they consulted with both landowners and tenants.

Evidence of consultation will not be required where resource consent has been granted under the Resource Management Act 1991. Evidence of consultation will also not be required where the application

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is for a new licence due to a change in ownership of the premises, provided the licence type and scope of the new licence are the same as the existing licence for the premises.

This requirement is to ensure that neighbouring properties are aware of the possibility that a licensed premise may be established nearby or that an existing licensed premise may have its licence renewed or altered. This requirement also ensures the occupants, owners or other parties related to a sensitive premise have an opportunity to voice any concerns, and for the applicants to respond to these.

Discretionary conditions

The act enables the committees to issue a licence subject to discretionary conditions that are consistent with the act. In terms of promoting responsible sale and supply, conditions that might be imposed include, but are not limited to:

- premises layout and design
  - design and layout requirements
  - minimum seating requirements
- staffing
  - training requirements for staff
  - management requirements in relation to staff (eg number of staff, duty managers)
  - prescribed ratio of security staff to patrons
  - uniform requirements (eg high visibility vests for security staff)
  - certified manager to be on duty at club-licensed premises, excluding chartered clubs, when alcohol is being sold or supplied during higher risk periods that are determined by the committees.
- host responsibility
  - queue management
  - provision of food
  - management of an event in such a way as to reduce abuse of alcohol
  - availability of transport home for patrons
  - display of safe drinking messages/material
  - any other matter that can encourage responsible alcohol sales, supply and consumption
- amenity and good order
  - cleaning the outside of the premises and immediate environs
  - use of CCTV
  - signage and advertising
- management of incidents
  - licensee to keep a register of incidents
  - mandatory notification to Police of violent incidents
- utilising CPTED principles
- for special licences, the Committee may impose restrictions on the use of glass containers.

The committees can impose such conditions they deem to be appropriate, from the list.

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The process for setting discretionary conditions aims to encourage a good working relationship between Council and industry providers. The discretionary conditions also help promote the purposes of the act.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed four-yearly to ensure it is up to date, relevant and meets legal requirements.

At the review stage, information relating to alcohol related harm for the area will be gathered.

The following information will be sought:

- monitoring reports of premises and events, and the conditions imposed on licences (from Council's licensing inspectors)
- statistics of hospital admissions of alcohol-related harm incidents and associated costs that relate to the LAP district (from the NPHS Te Waipounamu/Te Whatu Ora Health NZ)
- monitoring statistics of education outcomes and an outline of community issues (from NPHS Te Waipounamu/Te Whatu Ora Health NZ)
- statistics on alcohol related crime in the region's communities, as well as controlled purchase operations (from the New Zealand Police).

Related Documents

Southland District Council intend to maintain and enforce existing alcohol and alcohol ban areas established under a bylaw or bylaws promulgated under the Local Government Act 2002.

Other related documents include:

- Southland District Council Alcohol Control Bylaw
- Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012
- Local Government Act 2002

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Update on Local Government Commission reorganisation investigation process

Record no: R/26/3/102704
Author: Ana Bremer, Senior policy analyst
Approved by: Vibhuti Chopra, Group manager strategy and partnerships
Report type: Information

Purpose

1 This report provides an update on the Local Government Commission's process for the investigation of reorganisation of the local government structure in Southland.

Staff recommendations

That Council:

a) notes the information contained in the report.

Executive summary

2 On 21 February 2025, Southland District Council lodged a local government reorganisation initiative with the Local Government Commission under section 24(1)(c) and (f) of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act), seeking two unitary authorities for Southland.

3 On 7 July 2025 the Commission agreed to undertake a reorganisation investigation in relation to the Southland District Council reorganisation initiative.

4 On 16 October 2025 the Commission confirmed the process it will follow to investigate possible changes to local government in Southland. The process document was confirmed after consultation with Environment Southland, Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council, and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, (representing Papatipu Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu).

5 On 19 February 2026 the Commission amended the process for its investigation into the reorganisation of local government in Southland. The amended process altered the investigation timeline, extending the investigation by two months.

6 The Commission is now in Phase 1 of its investigation, which is focused on scoping the issues and opportunities a reorganisation might address.

Context

7 The objectives of phase 1 are:

- issues definition
- identification of opportunities, constraints or exclusions of investigation
- consideration of criteria for assessing information
- understand community aspirations and priorities for local government in Southland.

8 The Commission will meet the objectives through:

- In person meetings and ongoing, iterative engagement with councils and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga
- Initial engagement with key stakeholders and wider community. Engagement opportunities may include in-person, virtual, and other opportunities to engage.

9 The Commission has appointed Martin Jenkins to assist with specific aspects of the Southland local government reorganisation investigation. They will primarily be working on:

- developing assessment criteria for the Local Government Act Schedule 3, clause 10 objectives, which the Commission must consider when assessing potential reorganisation models; and
- any required modelling of options for phase 2 of the investigation.

10 Community engagement has begun, with the Commission publishing a survey on Wednesday 4 March, on the Local Government Commission website. Southland District Council has shared this link online and via Antenno.

11 Online community engagement sessions were held on Thursday 5 March (10.30am - 11.30am, 12.30pm - 1.30pm), and Monday 9 March (1.00pm - 2.00pm, and 4.00pm - 5.00pm). Council shared these meeting times as soon as possible, although the notice period regarding dates and times was very short, before the first meetings were held.

12 The following table details the in person community engagement opportunities across Southland that will be held by the Commission. The Local Government Commission link to the information has been shared through SDC online channels. https://www.lgc.govt.nz/our-work/local-government-reorganisation/have-your-say-on-southlands-future/

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Tuatapere	Waiau Town and Country Club	Wednesday 18 March	6:30pm - 8:00pm
Riverton	Riverton RSA	Thursday 19 March	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Bluff	Bluff RSA	Thursday 19 March	6:00pm – 7:30pm
Stewart Island Rakiura	South Sea Hotel	Friday 20 March	10:30am – 11:30am
	The Pavillion	Friday 20 March	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Gore	Otamatea Room, James Cumming Community Centre	Monday 23 March	5:30pm – 7:00pm
Mataura	Mataura Community Centre	Tuesday 24 March	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Tokanui	Tokanui Memorial Hall	Tuesday 24 March	6:00pm – 7:30pm
Invercargill	Invercargill Public Library	Wednesday 25 March	1:00pm – 3:00pm
Winton	RSA Hall	Wednesday 25 March	6:00pm – 7:30pm
Te Anau	Te Anau Library	Thursday 26 March	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Lumsden	Lumsden Memorial Hall	Thursday 26 March	5:30pm – 7:00pm

13 A meeting of elected members across the four councils will be held online on Monday 30 March. The purpose of this meeting is a workshop being facilitated by Martin Jenkins.

14 LGC have provided the following information with regard to the workshop –

Purpose of the workshop

The workshop will help shape a draft framework that the Commission can use to assess and compare options for future organising arrangements in Southland. We want to ensure the assessment criteria reflect what matters for Southland communities, and insights from elected representatives are an important part of this.

Attendance and preparation

To create space for focused and constructive discussion, we ask each council to nominate up to three elected representatives and one official to attend the online workshop.

Ahead of the session, attendees will receive the draft framework and a short set of guiding questions. Attendees can use these materials to guide discussions with other elected members so you can come ready to reflect what matters most to the people you and your fellow councillors represent.

15 Previously LGC had extended the invitation to all elected members.

16 LGC have informed that the workshop will not involve selecting or discussing reorganisation options.

Next steps

17 Once the Commission have concluded Phase 1, a report setting out its findings on the objectives will be provided, including whether reorganisation is the right approach for Southland. This is expected to occur after April.

Attachments

A Final LGC investigation process document - February 2026 ⇩

Local Government Commission
Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

Local Government Commission – Amended Investigation Process

February 2026

Local Government Commission
Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

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Purpose of document

1. This document sets out the process the Local Government Commission (the Commission) intends to follow in its investigation into reorganisation of local government in Southland (the investigation). It has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the LGA).

2. This document reflects feedback on the draft process received from:
   - Environment Southland, Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council; and
   - Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga.

What is in this document?

3. This document sets out how the Commission intends to undertake the investigation, including:[1]
   - The matters to be investigated
   - The affected area and the local authorities affected by the investigation
   - The procedure and timetable for the investigation
   - Each affected iwi or hapū, and how and when they will be given an opportunity to engage with the investigation
   - The key stakeholders, and how and when they will be given an opportunity to engage with the investigation
   - How and when members of the public will be consulted on the investigation and any proposed recommendations or reorganisation plans that may result
   - Any other matter the Commission considers relevant.

4. The Commission has considered reorganisation investigation principles in developing this draft process.[2] These principles are set out in full in Appendix A.

5. The Commission can amend this process document at any time during the investigation.[3] Any amendments will be publicly notified.

[1] LGA, schedule 3, clause 7(2)
[2] LGA, schedule 3, clause 7(3)
[3] LGA, schedule 3, clause 7(5)

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Why investigate reorganisation in Southland now?

6. In February 2025 the Commission received a reorganisation initiative (the initiative) from Southland District Council, proposing the reorganisation of local government in Southland.

7. The Commission engaged with Environment Southland, Gore District Council, Invercargill City Council and Southland District Council,[4] and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku.

8. The Commission considered all feedback received,[5] and on 7 July 2025 agreed to undertake an investigation. A copy of the Commission's decision is available on the Commission's website.

Acknowledging change in the local government sector

9. The Commission acknowledges that the investigation is occurring against the backdrop of extensive local government legislative reform. A high-level list of current or pending legislative reform as at October 2025 is included as Appendix B. The Commission also acknowledges the upcoming local elections taking place in October 2025.

10. The Commission will monitor the progress of legislative reform and, if necessary, report on how legislative change affects the investigation.

11. The Commission also acknowledges on-going statutory council activities that will continue throughout the investigation. These include (but are not limited to):

    - Preparation of Council Annual Plans 2026 (if required)
    - Preparation of Council Long Term Plans 2027-2037
    - Invercargill City Council's representation review ahead of the 2028 election
    - Preparation for water services delivery models ahead of 1 July 2027
    - Potential changes to council work programmes in anticipation of Resource Management Act reforms.

12. The Commission's statutory obligation is to complete its investigation within the notified timeline. However, where possible the Commission will avoid in-depth engagement on the investigation overlapping with statutory consultation periods on the above matters.

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[4] As required by LGA, schedule 3, clause 5(2)

[5] Feedback was considered against the criteria set out in the LGA, schedule 3, clause 6

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Investigation procedure and timetable

13. The proposed investigation procedure and timetable are set out in the table below.

14. Throughout the investigation process and any resulting reorganisation, the Commission will provide updates and copies of key documents on its website. Any required public notifications will also be via the Commission's website.

Estimated date	Investigation step
Oct-Nov 2025	Commission publicly notifies final investigation process
Nov 2025 – Apr 2026	**Investigation phase 1 – Scoping exercise** Objectives: • Issues definition • Identification of opportunities, constraints or exclusions of investigation • Consideration of criteria for assessing information • Understand community aspirations and priorities for local government in Southland Will include: • In-person meetings and ongoing, iterative engagement with councils and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga • Initial engagement with key stakeholders and wider community. Engagement opportunities may include in-person, virtual, and other opportunities to engage • At the end of phase 1, a Commission report setting out its findings on the objectives • If required, early close of investigation
May-Oct 2026	**Investigation phase 2 – deep dive investigation** Objectives: • Detailed understanding of issues as defined in scoping exercise • Detailed understanding of communities of interest • Detailed understanding of impact of potential options for Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga • In-depth analysis of options against legislative factors (Appendix E)

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	Will include: • Ongoing, iterative engagement with councils and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga • In-depth engagement with key stakeholders and wider community. Engagement may include in-person, virtual and other opportunities to engage • Cost-benefit analysis of potential reorganisation options, alongside the other legislative factors relating to reorganisation (Appendix E) • At the end of phase 2, a Commission report setting out its findings on the objectives. This may include the release of a draft reorganisation plan (triggering the commencement of phase 3 and associated consultation period) • If required, early close of investigation
Nov 2026 – Apr 2027	**Investigation phase 3 – draft reorganisation plan (if required)** Objectives: • Draft reorganisation plan released • Formal consultation process Will include: • Commission explanation of contents of draft reorganisation plan[6] • Formal submissions period • Meetings and/or hearings, with in-person and virtual options • If required, early close of investigation
May – Oct 2027	• Close of investigation • Final reorganisation plan (if required) • Poll of electors held, if required (to be held approximately 3 months after notice is given to the electoral officer) • Next steps are set out below

[6] LGA, Schedule 3, clause 14

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Matters to be investigated

15. The investigation is focused on identifying the structure that will best promote good local government in Southland, by enabling and facilitating improvements to local governance.[7]

What might reorganisation look like?

16. The Commission acknowledges that the initiative seeks two unitary authorities for Southland. It also acknowledges feedback received from Southland Councils and Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, which included a focus on identifying options for efficient and effective local government in Southland. Some feedback specified a preference for a single unitary authority for Southland.

17. The Commission is starting the investigation without a particular structure of local government in mind. Instead, it will consider a broad range of matters relating to local governance in Southland. This will include a deep dive into the responsibilities, duties, powers and functions of each council, alongside wide-ranging community engagement.

18. Matters to be considered include (but are not limited to):
    - Financial management and council-specific financial issues
    - Rating policies
    - Governance and risk management
    - Infrastructure planning and service delivery
    - Asset and activity management
    - Planning and regulatory frameworks
    - Resource and environmental management
    - Emergency management
    - Relationships with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga
    - Opportunities for Māori to contribute to council decision-making processes
    - Identification of communities of interest across the region, and appropriate representation arrangements
    - Cross-boundary shared services and council-controlled organisations

[7] This is the over-arching purpose of local government reorganisation, as set out in section 24AA of the LGA.

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19. Outcomes open to the Commission include the potential union or disestablishment of current local authorities and the potential establishment of new local authorities. A full list of potential outcomes is included in Appendix C.[8] The Commission can also consider whether to include a system of communities and community boards in any outcome.[9]

Who is affected by the investigation?

Affected areas

20. An affected area means an area affected, or potentially affected, by one or more of the matters to be investigated.[10] For this investigation, the affected areas include all land, coastal waters and any associated infrastructure within the Southland region.

21. If it becomes apparent during the investigation that areas beyond Southland should be considered affected areas, this process document will be amended accordingly and publicly notified.

Affected local authorities

22. An affected local authority is one whose district or region contains an affected area.[11] The affected local authorities for this investigation are:

- Environment Southland
- Gore District Council
- Invercargill City Council
- Southland District Council

23. Neighbouring councils, including Clutha District Council, Central Otago District Council, Queenstown-Lakes District Council and Otago Regional Council are considered key stakeholders. If it becomes apparent during the investigation that any additional councils should be considered affected local authorities, this process document will be amended accordingly and publicly notified.

[8] As set out in section 24 of the LGA
[9] LGA, schedule 3, clause 19
[10] LGA, schedule 3, clause 2
[11] LGA, section 5

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Engagement with affected local authorities

24. The Commission will work constructively, and in an open and transparent manner, with affected local authorities throughout the investigation. The primary role of councils through the investigation will be providing information to the Commission. It is expected that affected local authorities engage willingly with the investigation and provide information to the Commission where required.[12]

25. The Commission's engagement with affected local authorities may need to take different forms over the course of the investigation. The Commission acknowledges affected local authorities' preference for engagement to be in person (kanohi ki te kanohi). In-person engagements will be prioritised early in the scoping exercise and throughout the investigation where possible. Additional engagements may be held virtually, or through the provision of written feedback where required and/or appropriate. Engagement is expected to be on-going, with iterative opportunities for input.

26. Engagement activities may include both individual opportunities for input, or on a collective basis with all councils participating along with Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Papatipu Rūnanga. Where appropriate, this may include using existing forums such as the Southland Mayoral or Chief Executive Forums for engagement, along with other established groups such as Te Rōpū Taiao.

27. Where possible, the Commission intends to avoid engagement overlapping with local authority consultation activities. While it may not be possible to avoid all individual council community engagements, the Commission will endeavour to avoid in-depth community engagement relating to the investigation overlapping with:

    - Consultation on Council Annual Plans (where required) – April/May 2026
    - Consultation on Council Long Term Plans – April/May 2027
    - Consultation on Invercargill City Council's initial representation review proposal (around mid-2027 – timetable to be provided by Invercargill City Council)

28. The Commission may request to utilise affected local authorities' websites and existing communications channels to help provide information about and support public awareness and understanding of the investigation.

[12] LGA, schedule 3, clause 8

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Affected iwi and hapū

29. An affected iwi or hapū is an iwi or hapū with interests within the affected area.[13] The entire Southland region is within the rohe of Ngāi Tahu. The Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 recognise the status of Papatipu Rūnanga as kaitiaki and mana whenua of the natural resources within their takiwā boundaries.

30. Papatipu Rūnanga within the rohe of Murihiku are:
    - Te Rūnanga o Awarua
    - Hokonui Rūnanga
    - Te Rūnanga o Oraka Aparima
    - Waihōpai Rūnanga

31. During the investigation, if any additional areas or local authorities are considered to be affected, the Commission will confirm with Ngāi Tahu whether any additional Papatipu Rūnanga should be considered affected hapū.

Engagement with affected iwi and hapū

32. Te Ao Mārama Incorporated is authorised to represent the four Murihiku Papatipu Rūnanga in Resource Management Act and Local Government Act matters. The Commission will work with Te Ao Mārama Incorporated throughout the investigation to facilitate engagement with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga in each phase of the investigation.

33. There are two strands to the Commission's engagement with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga, which may overlap throughout the investigation. These are:
    - To understand the aspirations and expectations of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga in relation to how local government is structured and operated in Southland;
    - To understand the effect that potential models of local government may have on the relationship of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tāpu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga, or with local authorities.[14]

[13] LGA, schedule 3, clause 2

[14] LGA, schedule 3, clause 7(4)(b)

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34. The Commission acknowledges Te Ao Mārama Incorporated's preference for an iterative and adaptive approach to the investigation. The Commission will prioritise kanohi ki te kanohi engagement with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga throughout the investigation, complementing existing Te Ao Mārama Incorporated meeting schedules where possible. Additional forms of engagement, such as virtual meetings or written feedback may be utilised where appropriate. Engagement is expected to be on-going, with iterative opportunities for input.

35. Engagement activities may include specific opportunities for input by Te Ao Mārama Incorporated, on behalf of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku and Papatipu Rūnanga, or collective engagement alongside councils. Where appropriate, this may include using existing forums such as Te Rōpū Taiao for engagement.

Engagement - key stakeholders and community

36. The investigation addresses local governance in the entire Southland region – a matter that touches on all aspects of daily life for residents in Southland. It is appropriate that the Commission's engagement be wide-ranging and in-depth.

37. Key stakeholders have been identified from different sectors of the Southland community, including (but not limited to):
    - Government/Local government entities
    - Māori entities
    - Business sector
    - Rural/environmental sector
    - Community sector
    - Education sector

38. An indicative table of key stakeholders is included at Appendix D. The Commission may identify and engage with additional key stakeholders at any time during the investigation.

39. The Commission acknowledges that a 'one-size-fits-all' community engagement approach will not be appropriate for an investigation of this scale. The Commission acknowledges the preference for engagement with key stakeholders and the community to be in-person (kanohi ki to kanohi) where possible. Where in-person engagement is not possible, a variety of different engagement approaches will be used throughout the investigation.

40. Engagement approaches used throughout the investigation may include (but are not limited to):
    - In person engagement, such as community meetings, meetings with key stakeholders (individually or in groups), focus groups/workshops/drop-in sessions, presence at community events, and in-person formal hearings;

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- Virtual engagements, such as online information sessions/webinars/drop-in sessions, the provision of recorded information, and virtual formal hearings
- Written or other forms of feedback, such as media releases, online/phone surveys, letter drops, and formal written submissions.

41. Where possible, the Commission intends to avoid engagement overlapping with constraints on the Southland community calendar. The proposed investigation phases have accounted for times when sectors of the Southland community may be focused on other matter such as:
    - Tītī season – end-March to end-May
    - Duck season opening weekend – May
    - Moving Day - June
    - Lambing/calving season – August-September
    - Sileage/mowing – October-November

Completion of investigation and next steps

42. Throughout the investigation the Commission may issue reports or make recommendations to any of the councils on any matter relating to the investigation.[15]

43. The Commission will publicly notify the completion of its investigation. The Commission may complete its investigation:
    - At the end of the investigation process; or
    - At an earlier point, if it becomes evident that continuation of the investigation process is no longer feasible.

44. Reasons for completion of the investigation prior to the end of the investigation process include (but are not limited to):
    - The Commission receiving sufficient information and evidence to support adoption of a reorganisation plan at an earlier stage;
    - The Commission's investigation establishing that the current local government arrangements best promote good local government in Southland;
    - The Commission having evidence of widespread community opposition to alternative local government arrangements, such that polling on a reorganisation plan would be likely to fail;
    - Significant changes to the parameters of the investigation that indicate that continuation is not feasible.

[15] LGA, schedule 3, clause 9

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45. The Commission may adopt a reorganisation plan at any time during, or at the completion of the investigation. In doing so, the Commission must consider the objectives and factors set out in Appendix E.[16]

46. A poll of electors will be held if the investigation results in a reorganisation plan providing for:[17]
    - The union of districts or regions
    - The constitution of a new district or region, or new local authority
    - The abolition of a district or region, or dissolution of a local authority
    - The assumption by a territorial authority of the powers of a regional council as a unitary authority

47. If a poll is held and more than 50% of votes cast support the reorganisation plan:
    - an Order in Council will be made to give effect to the reorganisation plan;
    - A transition body will be established;

48. The Commission, with assistance from the transition body, will develop a reorganisation implementation scheme, setting out in detail how the reorganisation will be implemented. Next steps include:
    - An Order in Council to give effect to the reorganisation implementation scheme;
    - The transition body undertaking the steps set out in the reorganisation implementation scheme.

[16] LGA, schedule 3, clauses 10 and 12(2)
[17] LGA, schedule 3, clause 23

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Appendix A: Reorganisation Investigation Principles

In determining its investigation process and in undertaking its investigation, the Commission must have regard to the following principles (clause 7(3), Schedule 3, LGA):

(a) Early information should be available to the public and stakeholders about the issues to be investigated, the process to be followed, and the opportunities for public input; and

(b) The process should be in proportion to the scale, scope, and potential impact of the identified issues and of any reorganisation plan that may result from the investigation; and

(c) The process should recognise the relevant evidence and information that the Commission already holds; and

(d) The process should recognise and reflect the nature and extent of the interests of affected iwi or hapū in the outcome of the investigation; and

(e) The process should provide persons, entities, and organisations who wish to have their views on the subject matter of the investigation considered by the Commission with a reasonable opportunity to present those views to the Commission; and

(f) The extent and nature of public and stakeholder engagement should –

  (i) Reflect the degree of public interest (including of each affected iwi or hapū) in the issues and in any reorganisation plan that may result from the investigation; and

  (ii) Reflect the importance of –

    (A) Stakeholder input; and

    (B) Community engagement; and

    (C) Public acceptance of the process and the potential outcome; and

  (iii) Appropriately balance the costs and benefits of different processes

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Appendix B: Local government legislative reform

This draft process has been developed under the LGA, current as of August 2025.

Local government legislative reforms that are either underway or signalled for the near future as of October 2025 include (but are not limited to):

- Local Government (Systems Improvement) Bill – Select Committee stage
- Development Levy System – Bill indicated for introduction late 2025
- Infrastructure Funding and Financing – Bill indicated for introduction late 2025
- Resource Management – Bill indicated for introduction late 2025
- Emergency Management Bill – Bill indicated for introduction during the current term of Parliament
- Reform relating to council rates setting – Cabinet paper indicated late 2025

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Appendix C: Potential reorganisation outcomes

Local government reorganisation may provide for 1 or more of the following matters (section 24, LGA):

(a) The union of districts or regions

(b) The constitution of a new district or region, including the constitution of a new local authority for that district or region

(c) The abolition of a district or region, including the dissolution or abolition of the local authority for that district or region

(d) The alteration of the boundaries of any district or region

(e) The transfer from one local authority to another of –

  i. A responsibility, duty, or power conferred by an enactment; or

  ii. A discretionary function

(f) The assumption by a territorial authority of the responsibilities, duties, and powers of a regional council as a unitary authority

(g) The performance and exercise by a local authority of both-

  i. The responsibilities, duties and powers of a regional council in respect of a region; and

  ii. The responsibilities, duties, and powers of a territorial authority in respect of a district that constitutes a part only of that region

(h) The establishment of 1 or more joint committees and the delegation of responsibilities, duties, and powers to those committees

(i) The establishment of a local board area, including the establishment of a local board for that area;

(j) In relation to a local board, other than a local board established under the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009,-

  i. The means by which the chairperson is elected; and

  ii. Whether the local board my include appointed members

(k) The abolition of a local board area

(l) The alteration of the boundaries of a local board area

(m) The union of 2 or more local board areas.

Appendix D: Indicative list of key stakeholders

The Commission may identify and engage with additional key stakeholders throughout the investigation.

Government / Local Government Entities	
Ardlussa Community Board	NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
Bluff Community Board	Northern Community Board
Central Otago District Council	Officers of each council
Clutha District Council	Ōraka Aparima Community Board
Department of Conservation	Ōreti Community Board
Department of Internal Affairs	Otago Regional Council
Elected members of each council	Queenstown-Lakes District Council
Emergency Management Southland	Southland Chief Executives Forum
Environment Southland	Southland District Council
Fiordland Community Board	Southland Mayoral Forum
Fire and Emergency NZ Southland	Southland Members of Parliament
Gore District Council	Stewart Island/Rakiura Community Board
Gore Health	Te Puni Kōkiri
Great South (Southland Regional Development Agency)	Te Whatu Ora Health NZ
Hato Hone St John South Island Region	Tuatapere Te Waewae Community Board
Invercargill City Council	Waihōpai Toetoe Community Board
Invercargill City Holding Company	Wallace Takitimu Community Board
Lifeline Utilities Group	WasteNet Southland
Mataura Community Board	Water entities/CCOs (once established)
Ministry of Social Development	Well South – Southern Primary Health Network
New Zealand Police (Southern Police District)	

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Māori Entities	
Hokonui Rūnanga	Te Rūnanga o Awarua
Ngā Hau e Wha Marae (māta waka)	Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku	Te Rūnanga o Oraka Aparima
Te Ao Mārama Incorporated	Te Tomarangi Marae (māta waka)
Te Rōpū Taiao	Waihōpai Rūnanga

Business Sector	
Affco NZ (Southland)	Mataura Valley Milk
Alliance Group	Meridian Energy
AML Limited	Mercury Energy (Kaiwera Wind Farm)
Balance	New Zealand Aluminium Smelter
Beef+Lamb	Niagara Sawmilling Company
Blue Sky Meats	Open Country
Calder Stewart	Powernet
Civil Contractors New Zealand – Southland branch	Prime Range Meats
COIN South	Queenstown Airport Corporation Limited
Contact Energy	Ravensdown
Daiken Southland	Real NZ
Dairy NZ	Road Transport Association – Southland
Distinction Hotel Group	Silver Fern Farms
ENGAGE Southland	Skeggs
Fiordland Business Chamber	Southland-based tourism industry
Fonterra	Southland Business Chamber

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Fortuna	Southland Disability Enterprises Limited
HW Richardson Group	Southport
IFS Growth	South Wood Export
Invercargill Airport Limited	Talley's NZ (Southland)
Invercargill Licensing Trust	Triflor NZ
Mataura Licensing Trust	Tuatapere Promotions

Rural / Environment Sector	
Aparima Community Environment (ACE) catchment group	Predator Free Rakiura
Aquaculture Pathway Network (Great South)	Reforest Southland
Bluff Hill/Motupohue Environment Trust	Rural Contractors NZ
Catchment Liaison Committees	Rural Support Trust
Federated Farmers Southland	Rural Women New Zealand – Lower South Island
Fiordland Marine Guardians	Southland Rural Support Trust
Forest and Bird Southland	South Coast Environment Society
Groundswell	Southland Conservation Board
Guardians of Lakes Manapouri, Monowai and Te Anau	Southland Fish and Game
Livestrands	Stewart Island/Rakiura Community & Environment Trust
NZ Young Farmers – Otago/Southland	Thriving Southland (37 catchment groups)
Otatara Landcare Group	Waiau River Working Group
Pest Busters (Riverton)	Weed Busters (Manapouri)

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Community Sector	
AA (Automobile Association) Southland	Pacific Island Advisory Charitable Trust
Active Southland	South Alive
Age Concern Southland	Southland Community Housing Group
Arts Murihiku	Southland Community Law
Arts Working Group	Southland Foundation
Citizens Advice Bureau Invercargill	Southland Interagency Forum
Colac Bay Progress League	Southland Lions Clubs
Combined Disability Network	Southland Multicultural Council
Community Trust South	Southland Museum Trusts
Connected Murihiku	Southland places of worship
Disabilities Resource Centre Southland	Southland Rotary Clubs
Fiordland Community House	Southland sporting groups
Grey Power Southland	Southland Women's Refuges
IC2 Trust	The Number 10 Southland Youth One Stop Shop
Invercargill Friendship Group (U3A)	The Ratepayers Association
Koha Kai	Total Mobility Group
Migrant Settlement Network	Waikaia Progress League
Murihiku Kai	Youth Network

Education Sector	
Murihiku Regeneration	Southland schools
Southland Institute of Technology	Te Rourou, One Aotearoa Foundation - Murihiku
Southland Principals Association	

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Appendix E: Objectives and factors to consider for reorganisation plan

In assessing options for reorganisation, the Commission must consider how best to achieve:[18]

(a) Better fulfilment of the purpose of local government as specified in section 10; and

(b) Productivity improvements within the affected local authorities; and

(c) Efficiencies and cost savings; and

(d) Assurance that any local authority established or changed has the resources necessary to enable it to effectively perform or exercise its responsibilities, duties and powers; and

(e) Effective responses to the opportunities, needs and circumstances of the affected areas; and

(f) Enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of local government services; and

(g) Better support for the ability of local and regional economies to develop and prosper; and

(h) Enhanced ability of local government to meet the changing needs of communities for governance and services into the future; and

(i) Effective provision for any co-governance and co-management arrangements that are established by legislation (including Treaty of Waitangi claim settlement legislation) and that are between local authorities and iwi or Māori organisations.

Before adopting a reorganisation plan, the Commission must consider:[19]

(a) The scale of the potential benefits of the proposed changes in terms of the objectives set out in clause 10 and the likelihood of those benefits being realised; and

(b) The financial, disruption, and opportunity costs of implementing the proposed changes at the proposed time; and

(c) The risks and consequences of not implementing the proposed changes at the proposed time; and

(d) Existing communities of interest and the extent to which the proposed changes will maintain linkages between communities (including iwi and hapū) and sites and resources of significance to them; and

(e) The degree and distribution of demonstrable public support for the proposed changes within communities in the affected area; and

(f) The degree and distribution of any public opposition to the proposed changes within communities in the affected areas.

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[18] LGA, schedule 3, clause 10

[19] LGA, schedule 3, clause 12(2)

Better off Fund - project update

Record no: R/26/1/3228
Author: Simon Moran, Strategic project lead
Approved by: Vibhuti Chopra, Group manager strategy and partnerships
Report type: Information

Purpose

1 To provide councillors with an update of where the Better Off Funding projects are at currently.

Staff recommendations

That Council:

a) notes the information contained in the report.

Context

2 In 2022 Council had 28 projects approved by the Department of Internal Affairs. That Better Off Funding programme must be completed by June 2027. So far Council and community groups have:

- 14 projects completed
- 12 projects in progress
- 2 projects that have not been started.

Next steps

3 Continue to make progress claims for projects and complete all projects within the required timeframes.

Attachments

A Project status sheet ⇩

Better Off Projects

COMPLETED	COMMENTS	BUDGET	CLAIMED
Athol tennis courts	The community board asked that the remaining funding of $2,690 be transferred to the Garston BBQ project. This has been approved by the DIA.	$31,000	$28,310
Baird-Hewat / Doctors' Square	The community board asked that the remaining funding of $34,020 be transferred to the Wyndham camping ground project.	$150,000	$115,980
Balfour basketball half court		$20,000	$20,000
Balfour Festive Lights		$12,000	$12,000
Butterfields Beach walking track		$300,000	$300,000
Footpath improvements in Waihōpai Toetoe		$100,000	$100,000
Lumsden playground and skate park upgrade		$100,000	$100,000
Mokoreta Redan Hall		$40,000	$40,000
Mossburn tennis court resurface	The linking track has been completed and a claim can be made.	$38,000	$0
Ohai Nightcaps old railway line walking track	The community board asked that the remaining funding of $2,761 be transferred toward the McGregor Park pump track construction costs. This has been approved by the DIA.	$11,500	$8,739
Te Anau and Manapouri open spaces improvements		$360,000	$360,000
Tokanui skate park		$30,000	$30,000
Waikaia forest trails mountain bike trail		$200,000	$200,000
Waikaia Investigation project		$11,500	$11,500
		$1,404,000	**$1,326,529**

IN PROGRESS	COMMENTS	Est. Completion	BUDGET	CLAIMED
Engagement – LWDW and Growing Southland towns	Local Water Done Well (LWDW) engagement has been undertaken along with Growing Southland Townships engagement. The first progress claim for $68,742 is being prepared.	28 February 2026	$150,000	$0
Growing Southland Townships …	Stewart Island Rakiura and the Riverton Aparima community boards were the first to be engaged for this project. It is now rolling out to the other townships theat were prioritised at the beginning of this work.	20 December 2026	$1,000,000	$256,114
Gwen Baker reserve playground	This is a wider Wallacetown recreation project. The first progress claim for $62,051 is being prepared.	20 December 2026	$257,000	$0
McGregor Park masterplan	The community board asked that the remaining funding of $2,762 along the residula $2,761 from the Ohai Nightcaps with be transferred toward the McGregor Park pump track construction costs.	31 March 2026	$11,500	$8,738
Ōreti Community Halls	The Dipton, Ryal Bush, and Winton Memorial hall improvements have been completed. The Winton RSA hall improvements are the outstanding part of this project. The first progress claim for $155,951 is being prepared.	30 September 2026	$230,000	$0
Ōtautau camping ground	Work is well underway. The second progress claim for $75,235 is being prepared.	31 May 2026	$275,000	$46,253
Project delivery of the Community Board BOF projects	Originally planned to be a two year project it is now expected to be completed over three financial years.	30 June 2026	$300,000	$286,704
Riversdale tennis court resurface	This is in progress as only $19,000 has actually been spent to date. We have however, received the full $30,000 because it was one of the nominated 10% advance funded projects. The club are raising the additional funds required and expect to complete the work this financial year.	30 April 2026	$30,000	$30,000
Southland public toilets	The remaining funding was expected to be used on the Tuatapere Main Rd toilet replacement project, however, we are aware that there are currently discussions about the toilet programme for the next financial	28 February 2027	$337,500	$80,000

	year. The funding that has already been spent was used for the Slope Point toilet.			
Taramea Bay development plan / Colac Bay	The remaining funding has been used to pay for extra concrete at the Colac Bay steps and will be used on play equipment for Taramea Bay development.	31 March 2026	$345,000	$330,280
Tuatapere Railway Station	The local railway heritage trust has been progressing well with this project and is on track to finish this project. The second progress claim for $157,000 is being prepared.	20 December 2026	$310,000	$50,618
Wyndham camping ground feasibility study	The community board asked that the remaining funding of $34,020 from the Doctors' Square project be transferred to this project to contribute to making some actions from the feasibility study happen.	15 April 2026	$50,000	$50,000
			$3,296,000	**$1,138,707**

NOT STARTED	COMMENTS	Est. Completion	BUDGET	CLAIMED
Garston BBQ and reserve improvements	The community board asked that the remaining funding from the Athol tennis court project of $2,690 be transferred to the Garston BBQ project. A project change request has been sought to increase the budget accordingly to $52,690.	20 December 2026	$50,000	$0
Lumsden museum	The community board agreed to move the focus of this project from planning with some implementation works to actually getting some more display infrastructure in place. We have however, received the full $50,000 already because it was one of the nominated 10% advance funded projects.	30 June 2027	$50,000	$50,000
			$100,000	**$50,000**
		TOTAL	**$4,800,000**	**$2,515,239**

Offer to gift Orepuki water tanks property to Council.

Record no: R/26/2/101317
Author: Kevin McNaught, Manager property services
Approved by: Sam Marshall, Group manager customer and community wellbeing
Report type: Decision

Purpose

1 The purpose of the report is to consider a request from the Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade to gift to Council the property at Orepuki, containing the three firefighting water storage tanks.

Staff recommendations

That Council:

a) notes the information contained in the report.

b) notes that the matter or decision in this report is assessed as some importance based on Council's Significance and Engagement Policy . On this basis no community engagement other than receiving the recommendation of the Tuatapere Te Waewae Community Board is recommended.

c) determines that it has complied with the decision-making provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 to the extent necessary in relation to this decision; and in accordance with Section 79 of the act determines that it does not require further information, further assessment of options or further analysis of costs and benefits or advantages and disadvantages prior to making a decision on this matter.

d) determines to accept the gift of land from the Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade being the property at 35 Oldham Street Orepuki being Lot 2 DP 12425 contained in Record of Title SL9C/667

e) delegates to the chief executive the authority to execute any agreements or other documentation required to achieve the transfer of ownership of the property.

Executive summary

2 The property at 35 Oldham Street Orepuki is owned by the Orepuki Fire Brigade Social Club Incorporated. The Brigade has recently written to Council (attachment A) offering to gift the land to Council.

3 The decision to accept the offer or not rests with Council, this property will, if taken over by Council, fall within the definition of a local property under the responsibility of the Tuatapere Te Waewae Community Board. The Board at its meeting on 9 March 2026 recommended that Council accept the offer.

Context

4 The property at 35 Oldham Street Orepuki is owned by the Orepuki Fire Brigade Social Club Incorporated and primarily used as the site for the three water storage tanks for firefighting properties.

5 This property was initially on the same land as the fire station on the north side of Dover Street but was separated when Dover Street was formed and declared road.

6 As it is the intention of the owner Society not to reincorporate under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, they would like to have this property transferred to the community via council ownership prior to the Society becoming unregistered in early April 2026.

Discussion

7 The discussion is primarily whether the offer should be accepted or not, noting the points set out in the letter.

8 Some of these points can be discussed at a later date after transfer i.e. fencing, and points like the tanks staying in their current location, as well as the supply of water, could be dealt with as a transfer condition, but we can initially raise these with the Society as we progress through the stages of transfer given the tight timeframes we are working to.

9 A point to note, is that subsequent information supplied, is that the tanks and the pipework connecting them are all new, replacing the old tanks that were leaking.

Options

10 The following reasonably practicable options have been identified and assessed in this report:

Option 1 – Accept the gift of the land as offered

Option 2 – Decline the gift of the land as offered

Option 3 – Accept the gift of the land as offered and negotiate the terms of the gift

Recommended option:

11 Option 3 - Accept the gift of the land as offered and negotiate the terms of the gift

Option 1 – Accept the gift as offered

Advantages	Disadvantages
• allows the property and tanks to remain in community ownership.	• some of the conditions or the methodology suggested may not be acceptable to Council like: - proposed fencing - proposed covenant - water supply - funding.

Option 2 – Decline the gift of land as offered

Advantages	Disadvantages
• non identified.	• community may lose ownership of these water tanks should the title be transferred to another person or entity.

Option 3 – Accept the gift of the land as offered and negotiate the terms of the gift.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• allows the property and tanks to remain in community ownership • allows the issues raised in the conditions attached to the offer to be worked through potentially being implemented in a different way or after transfer.	• no disadvantages identified, as the obligations of all the parties will be better understood and agreed.

Legal considerations

12 No legal considerations are identified at this point in regards to the property transfer, as this is a standard process, albeit on very tight timelines.

13 The driver for the offer, however, is the potential implications for the property, should the ownership not be addressed prior to the Society being removed from the register, given its intention not to reincorporate in accordance with the Incorporated Societies Act 2022.

Strategic alignment

Strategic direction

14 In terms of Council's strategic priorities as set out on page 11 of the Long Term Plan, specifically resilient communities, equity of service and robust infrastructure are applicable to this proposal.

15 The Tuatapere Te Waewae Community Board Plan 2021 – 2024 sets out its vision "…is a vibrant, thriving and supportive community ….". The ability to have this reservoir of water available for the community for firefighting, is an integral part of retaining this type of community asset and benefit in Orepuki.

Policy and plan consistency

16 No issue of inconsistency identified at this point.

Financial considerations

17 Three financial considerations:

- the first, is the ongoing ground maintenance which is already partly covered by Council through the ground mowing. There may be some small additional ground maintenance costs, but this can be further discussed with the Society as they have offered to do some planting etc.
- all legal costs to be covered by Council, but as this is to be a local property these are to be funded by the Community Board. These will be legal fees for an agreement and title transfer anticipated to be around $1500 to $2000 depending on the complexity of the documents. The board in recommending the acceptance of the gift, agreed to cover these costs out of its budgets.
- the third is the overall responsibility for the land and tanks, but given the tanks and connections are new, this is unlikely to cost in the immediate future.

Significance assessment

18 The significance has been assessed as some importance/administrative slightly ahead of moderate importance.

19 In this particular case, there is not seen to be any additional benefit from engagement over and above the position of the community board.

Level	Likelihood of engagement
Some importance or administrative	Council is not likely to carry out any engagement.
Moderate importance	Council may choose whether it carries out engagement, which may be targeted to directly affected individuals or groups.
Significant	Council will engage with directly affected individuals and groups and wider community engagement is likely, unless there are reasons under policy not to.
Critical	Council will engage with directly affected individuals and groups and wider community engagement is highly likely, unless there are reasons under policy not to.

Community views

20 The Tuatapere Te Waewae Community Board at a meeting on 9 March 2026 recommended that Council accept the offer of the gift.

Climate change considerations

21 Not considered to be applicable in regard to this proposal.

Risk and mitigations

22 The two key risks are considered to be financial and reputational.

23 Financial – two sub parts, being ongoing ground maintenance and infrastructure. Ground maintenance is considered to be minimal as Council already mows the area. The tanks and connections are all new, so no costs are anticipated in the forseeable future.

24 Reputational – the risk could be large if Council declined the offer, and the property and tanks are potentially or actually lost to the community, given they would be dealt with as part of the Societies winding up. Council accepting the offer - the reputational risk to Council is seen as being low.

Next steps

25 Discuss the conditions with the Fire Brigade, enter into a contract agreement and complete settlement.

Attachments

A Letter of request from Orepuki Fire Brigade to gift water tanks property to Council ⇩
B Map of Land offered to be gifted ⇩

Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade

Gavin Paterson, CFO
477 Pahia Wakapatu Road
Pahia No 1 RD
Riverton 9881

Phone: 0276817617
Email: gbpaterson@outlook.co.nz

24 February 2026

Kevin McNaught
C/- Southland District Council
PO Box 903
Invercargill

Dear Kevin

I am writing this letter in regards to our phone conversation and discussions with Ann Horrell and the Tuatapere and surrounding districts Community Board regarding the section at 35 Oldham Street, Orepuki.

This land is currently owned by Orepuki Fire Brigade Social Club Incorporated, as at the 1st of April 2026, this entity will be de-registered and it is our intention to gift the land to the community by that date.

Currently there are 3 fire fighting tanks on the land, these tanks were purchased after a community effort to fundraise for the tanks led by the Orepuki Volunteer fire brigade. It is our intention to fence the area around the tanks and do some beautification of the area with a mural, plantings etc – this is to be paid for with the remainder of our fundraising money. The tanks are filled with water from the well on the FENZ land where the fire station is located and we will continue to be responsible for keeping them full for fire fighting purposes in our community.

Our intentions are as follows:

- Gift the land to the community via the Southland District Council - 35 Oldham Street, Orepuki, Lot 2 DP 12425, CT SL9C/667
- An easement to be added to the title in regards to the tanks staying in their current location and being accessible and available for fire fighting purposes.
- Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade and FENZ will continue to be responsible for providing water to the fire fighting tanks and maintaining the area around the tanks.
- SDC currently mow the lawns so there will be no added expense involved with upkeep on the councils part.
- Any legal costs are to be covered by SDC for the transfer and any other expenses that may be incurred.
- Our deadline to complete this transaction is the 31st March 2026.

We appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you very soon to get this underway.

Regards

Gavin Paterson

CFO - Orepuki Volunteer Fire Brigade

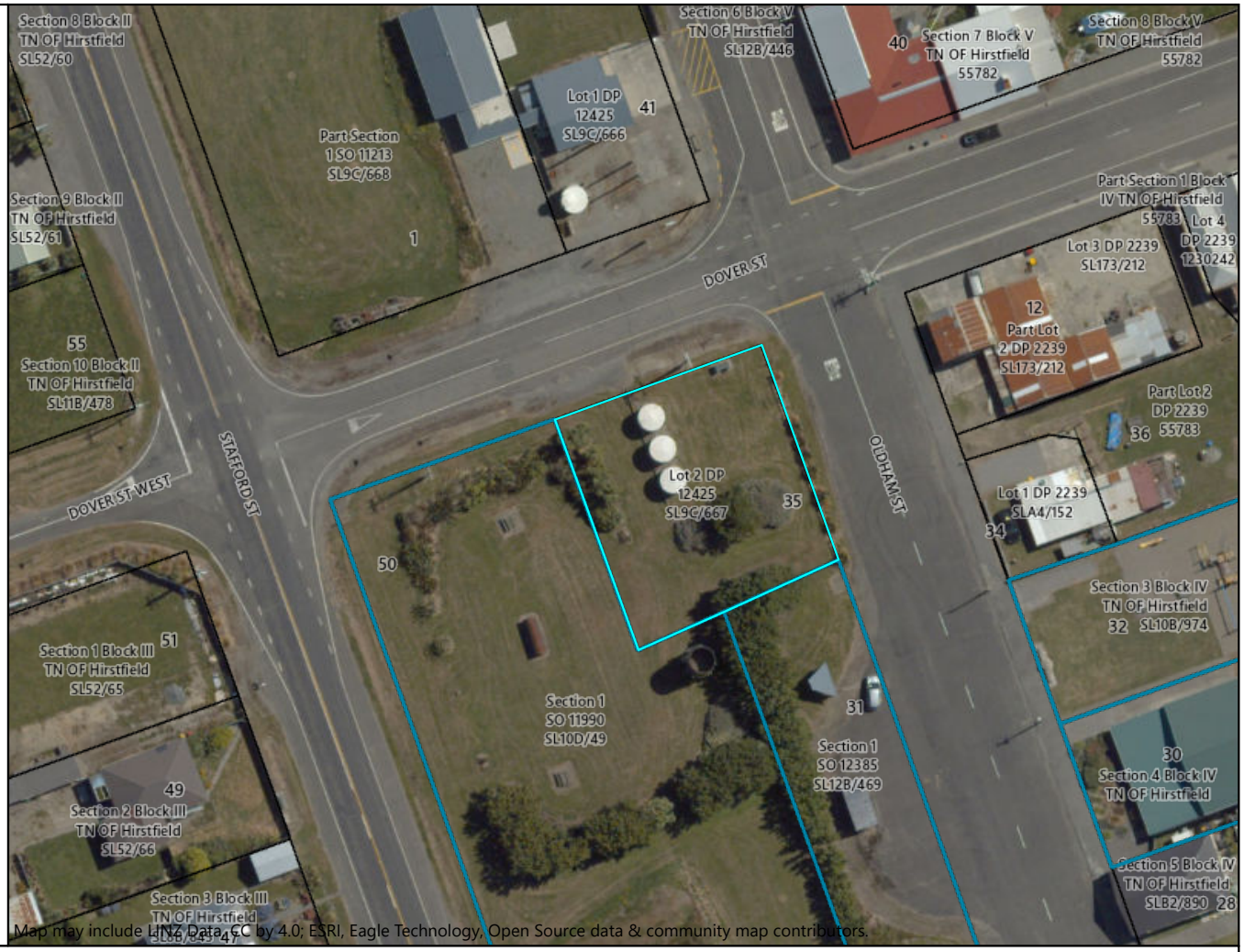
SOUTHLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Legend

Council owned property

Pathway Property - outline only

New Zealand Imagery



Map may include LINZ Data, CC by 4.0; ESRI, Eagle Technology, Open Source data & community map contributors.

Local Maps

0 — 40 Metres

0 — 0.035 Kilometres

N

Scale: 1:767 at A4

Date prepared: 03/03/2026

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Local Governance Statement 2025-2028

Record no: R/26/3/102765
Author: Michal Gray, Democracy advisor
Approved by: Vibhuti Chopra, Group manager strategy and partnerships
Report type: Decision

Purpose

1 The purpose of this report is for Council to adopt its Local Governance Statement for the 2025-2028 triennium.

Staff recommendations

That the Council:

a) notes the information contained in the report.

b) notes that the matter or decision in this report is assessed as some importance based on Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. On this basis engagement will not be undertaken.

c) determines that it has complied with the decision-making provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 to the extent necessary in relation to this decision; and in accordance with Section 79 of the act determines that it does not require further information, further assessment of options or further analysis of costs and benefits or advantages and disadvantages prior to making a decision on this matter.

d) adopts the Local Governance Statement for the 2025-2028 triennium.

e) delegates authority to the chief executive to update the Local Governance Statement during the triennium as appropriate to ensure it is current and correct.

Executive summary

2 Council is required under section 40 of the Local Government Act 2002 to adopt its Local Governance Statement within six months of a triennial election.

3 The Local Governance Statement contained in Attachment A aligns with Council's current structure, personnel, systems and processes.

4 Staff recommend that Council delegate authority to the chief executive to update its Local Governance Statement during the triennium as appropriate to ensure it remains current and accurate.

Context

5 The Local Governance Statement is a collection of information about how Council engages with its community, how decisions are made and how citizens can influence these processes. It is a public document that Council is required to adopt within six months of the triennial election.

6 Section 40 of the LGA requires that the following information be included in the Local Governance Statement:

- the functions, responsibilities, and activities of the local authority
- any local legislation that confers powers on the local authority
- the bylaws of the local authority, including for each bylaw, its title, a general description of it, when it was made, and, if applicable, the date of its last review under section 158 or 159
- the electoral system and the opportunity to change it
- representation arrangements, including the option of establishing Māori wards or constituencies, and the opportunity to change them
- members' roles and conduct (with specific reference to the applicable statutory requirements and code of conduct)
- governance structures and processes, membership, and delegations
- meeting processes (with specific reference to the applicable provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and standing orders)
- consultation policies
- policies for liaising with, and memoranda or agreements with, Māori
- the management structure and the relationship between management and elected members
- the remuneration and employment policy, if adopted
- equal employment opportunities policy
- key approved planning and policy documents and the process for their development and review
- systems for public access to it and its elected members
- processes for requests for official information.

7 Section 40(3) of the LGA requires a local authority to update its governance statement during the triennium as it considers appropriate.

Discussion

8 Staff have reviewed and updated the previous Local Governance Statement to ensure that it aligns with Council's current structure, personnel, systems and processes.

9 Staff suggest that Council delegate authority to the chief executive to update its Local Governance Statement during the triennium as appropriate to ensure it is current and accurate.

10 The adoption of the Local Governance Statement does not bring about any changes within Council - it is a statement outlining what is already in place.

Options

11 The following reasonably practicable options have been identified and assessed in this report:

Option 1 - adopt the Local Governance Statement

Option 2 - not adopt the Local Governance Statement.

Recommended option:

12 Staff recommend that Council adopt the Local Governance Statement.

Option 1 – adopt the Local Governance Statement

Advantages	Disadvantages
• compliance with the Local Government Act 2002 • provides updated information about Council to the public	• no disadvantages

Option 2 – not adopt the Local Governance Statement

Advantages	Disadvantages
• no advantages	• is contrary to the requirements of the Local Government Act. • the public would not be provided updated information about Council

Legal considerations

13 Section 40 of the Local Government Act requires that Council adopt and make publicly available its local governance statement within six months of a triennial election.

14 Council's delegation manual outlines that Council retains the responsibility to adopt the local Governance Statement.

Strategic alignment

Strategic direction

15 The Local Governance Statement is an administrative document that includes information on the strategic arrangement of Council.

Policy and plan consistency

16 There are no known policy inconsistencies in the local governance statement.

Financial considerations

17 There are no financial considerations relating to this decision.

Significance assessment

18 Staff have assessed this decision as being of some importance because it is procedural/administrative. No changes are being approved in adopting the local governance statement, the statement outlines what is already in place.

Level	Likelihood of engagement
Some importance or administrative	Council is not likely to carry out any engagement.
Moderate importance	Council may choose whether it carries out engagement, which may be targeted to directly affected individuals or groups.
Significant	Council will engage with directly affected individuals and groups and wider community engagement is likely, unless there are reasons under policy not to.
Critical	Council will engage with directly affected individuals and groups and wider community engagement is highly likely, unless there are reasons under policy not to.

Community views

19 This is an administrative matter to meet a legal requirement and engagement is not required.

Climate change considerations

20 There are no climate change considerations relevant to this matter.

Risk and mitigations

21 There are no significant risks in relation to this matter.

Next steps

22 The Local Governance Statement will be made available on Council's website.

23 The chief executive will update the Local Governance Statement during the triennium as appropriate to ensure it is current and correct.

Attachments

A Local Governance Statement 2025-2028 ⇩

SOUTHLAND
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Draft Southland District Council

Local Governance Statement for the 2025-2028 triennium

Southland District Council
Te Rohe Pōtae o Murihiku

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Document Revision

Date	Amendment	Amended by	Approved by	Approval date

Introduction

Southland District Council's Local Governance Statement provides information on how Council works. It outlines how Council makes decisions and how it involves the community in decision making.

The Local Governance Statement is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2002 and includes the following broad categories of information:

- functions, responsibilities, and activities of the council
- electoral arrangements
- governance structures and processes
- the way elected members make decisions and relate to each other
- the management structure and key policies of the council.

Functions, responsibilities and activities of Council

The purpose of Council, as outlined in the Local Government Act, is to enable democratic local decision-making by, and on behalf of communities and to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the District. In addition, the purpose of Council is to meet the current and future needs of community for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.

In meeting its purpose, Council has a variety of responsibilities including:

- planning the district's strategic direction alongside local communities as part of developing the long term plan
- facilitating solutions to local issues and needs
- advocacy on behalf of the local community with central government, other local authorities and agencies
- providing prudent stewardship and the efficient and effective use of resources within the district in a sustainable way
- risk management
- management of local infrastructure including network infrastructure (eg roads, wastewater disposal, water, stormwater) and community infrastructure (eg libraries, reserves and recreational facilities)
- administering various legal and regulatory requirements
- ensuring the integrity of management control systems
- informing and reporting to communities, ratepayers and residents.

Council develops a Long Term Plan every three years that sets the long term direction for Council. It provides a forecast of the activities that are expected to be delivered in the next three years and projections for those in following years. There is more information about our Long Term Plan on Council's website.

Local legislation that confers powers on Council

In addition to the legislation that applies to all local authorities, Council is bound by the following local legislation Acts that apply specifically to it:

- Southland Land Drainage Act 1935
- Southland District Council (Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy) Empowering Act 2012
- Southland Flood Relief Committee Empowering Act 1980

The electoral system and representation arrangements

The electoral system

The Local Electoral Act 2001 controls the conduct of local elections. There are two Electoral Systems used for electing local government organisations – First Past the Post (FPP) and Single Transferable Vote (STV). Council currently operates its elections under the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system. Electors vote by indicating their preferred candidate(s) and the candidates who receive the most votes are declared elected.

Under the Local Electoral Act 2001, Council can resolve to change the electoral system to be used at the next two elections, conduct a binding poll on the question, or electors can demand a binding poll.

Once changed, an electoral system must be used for at least the next two triennial Council elections.

No change was made to Council's electoral system for the 2025 elections, the system will be reviewed again in 2026 for the 2028 elections.

Representation arrangements and the role of the community boards

Southland District Council has

- a mayor (elected at large)
- 12 councillors elected from five wards:
    - Mararoa Waimea Ward - three councillors
    - Stewart Island Rakiura Ward - one councillor
    - Waiau Aparima Ward - three councillors
    - Ōreti Ward - three councillors
    - Waihōpai Toetoe Ward - two councillors
- nine community boards
    - Ardlussa Community Board
    - Fiordland Community Board
    - Northern Community Board
    - Ōraka Aparima Community Board
    - Ōreti Community Board
    - Stewart Island/Rakiura Community Board
    - Tuatapere Te Waewae Community Board
    - Waihōpai Toetoe Community Board
    - Wallace Takitimu Community Board.

The Ōreti and the Waihōpai Toetoe Community Boards have seven members elected plus one councillor appointed from Council from the ward in which the board is situated. The other seven community boards have six members elected plus one councillor appointed by Council from the ward in which the board is situated.

The community boards are constituted under section 49 of the Local Government Act, and section 52 sets out the role of community boards.

Key functions of the community boards include:

- promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of local communities
- monitoring the overall well-being of local communities

- providing leadership to local communities on the strategic issues and opportunities that they face
- developing relationships and communicating with key community organisations, special interest groups, residents and businesses within the community
- as part of the long term plan or annual plan process, preparing a submission to Council on the proposed levels of service, income and expenditure within the community of interest
- as part of the long term plan or annual plan process, outlining the relative priorities for the delivery of District services and levels of service within the board area.

Council has a practice of decentralising responsibilities as necessary to provide an effective means of ensuring local input into decision-making. The delegated powers given to community boards by Council encourages decision-making at the local level. In exercising delegations, community boards must act within the policies, standards or resolutions adopted by Council.

Each community board elects its own chairperson at its first meeting after the triennial election.

Changing representation arrangements

Council is required to review its representation arrangements at least once every six years and to follow the procedure set out in the Local Electoral Act 2001 when conducting the review.

Reviews must consider the following:

- the number of elected members
- whether councillors should be elected district wide or by wards or whether there should be a mix
- he boundaries and names of wards and the number of members that will represent each ward
- whether or not to have separate wards for electors on the Māori roll
- whether to have community boards and if so how many, their boundaries and membership and whether to subdivide a community for electoral purposes.

Council reviewed its representation arrangements in 2024 and minor changes were made to the boundaries of some wards and community boards. There were also spelling corrections made to include macrons in the names of the Ōreti Ward and Community Board, the Waihōpai Toetoe Ward and Community Board and the Ōraka Aparima Community Board.

Māori wards

The Local Electoral Act 2001 gives Council the ability to establish separate wards for Māori electors. Council may resolve to create separate Māori wards or conduct a poll on the matter or the community may demand a poll. The demand for a poll can be initiated by a petition signed by 5% of electors within the District.

Council has made no resolution on Māori wards which means there are no Māori wards in the Southland District. This question can be considered again in 2026.

The reorganisation process

The Local Government Act 2002 sets out procedures that must be followed during proposals to:

- make changes to the boundaries of the District
- create a new District
- create a Unitary Authority, a territorial authority which also has the responsibilities, duties and powers of a regional council
- transfer a particular function or functions to another council.

A reorganisation application to the Local Government Commission may be made by any person, body or group, including the local authority or the Minister of Local Government. Before supporting a reorganisation application, the Local Government Commission must be satisfied that there is demonstrable community support in the district of each affected territorial authority. The commission also has to be satisfied that the reorganisation will promote good local government. Where, by petition, 10% or more of affected electors with the district request a poll of electors, the poll may determine the final outcome.

Further information on these requirements can be found in the Local Government Act 2002 (in particular Schedule 3). The Local Government Commission has also prepared guidelines on procedures for local government reorganisation.

In July 2025 the Local Government Commission agreed to undertake a reorganisation investigation in response to a request from Southland District Council seeking reorganisation of local government in Southland Region into two unitary authorities.

Following consultation with affected local authorities, iwi and hapū, the Local Government Commission confirmed in October 2025 a three stage investigation process which will include:

- scoping between November 2025 and March 2026
- Deep Dive Investigation between March 2026 and August 2026
- draft Reorganisation Plan between September 2026 and February 2027.

Final investigation closure steps, depending on the outcome of the investigation, will then follow between March and August 2027.

Elected members' roles and conduct

The mayor and the councillors of Council have the following roles:

- setting the policy direction of Council
- monitoring the performance of Council
- law-making (bylaws) and overseeing compliance with the relevant Acts of Parliament
- determining expenditure and funding requirements of Council through the LTP and Annual Plan processes
- representing the interests of the District (on election all members must make a declaration that they will perform their duties faithfully and impartially, and according to their best skill and judgement in the best interests of the District)
- employing the chief executive (under the Local Government Act the local authority employs the chief executive, who in turn employs all other staff on its behalf).

Mayor

The mayor is elected by the District as a whole and, as one of the elected members, shares the same responsibilities as other members of Council. In addition, the mayor has the following roles:

- presiding member at Council meetings - the mayor is responsible for ensuring the orderly conduct of business during meetings (as determined in Standing Orders)
- leading the development of Council's plans (including the LTP and the Annual Plan), policies and budgets for consideration by Council
- advocating on behalf of the community - this role may involve promoting the community and representing its interests
- ensuring Council is effective in its governance role and in providing leadership and a vision for the organisation

- providing leadership and feedback to other elected members on teamwork and chairing committees.

Deputy mayor

The deputy mayor exercises the same roles as other councillors. In addition, if the mayor is absent or incapacitated, or if the office of mayor is vacant, then the deputy mayor must perform all of the responsibilities and duties and may exercise the powers of the mayor (as summarised above). The deputy mayor may be removed from office by resolution of Council.

Elected members' statutory requirements

Elected members have specific obligations as to their conduct in the following legislation:

- Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002, which includes obligations to act as a good employer and to abide by the current Code of Conduct and Standing Orders
- The Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 which regulates the conduct of elected members in situations where there is, or could be, a conflict of interest between their duties as an elected member and their financial interests (either direct or indirect)
- The Secret Commissions Act 1910, which prohibits elected members from accepting gifts or rewards which could be seen to sway them to perform their duties in a particular way
- The Crimes Act 1961 regarding the acceptance of gifts for acting in a certain way and the use of official information for private profit
- The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 is of importance for the roles and conduct of elected members where a chair has the responsibility to maintain order at meetings. All elected members should accept a personal responsibility to maintain acceptable standards of address and debate.

Elected members code of conduct

All elected members are required to adhere to Council's adopted Code of Conduct. The code sets out Council's understanding and expectations of how the mayor and councillors will relate to one another, to staff, to the media and to the general public in the course of their duties. It also covers disclosure of information that is received by or is in the possession of elected members and contains details of the sanctions that Council may impose if an individual breaches the code.

Governance structure and processes

Council

Council has 12 councillors elected in five wards and a mayor who is elected by the District at large.

Mayor: Rob Scott	Mayoral: 0800 732 732 Mobile: 021 609 567 Email: Rob.Scott@southlanddc.govt.nz
Deputy Mayor: Christine Menzies	Mobile: 027 950 2760 Email: Christine.Menzies@southlanddc.govt.nz

Councillors: **Mararoa Waimea Ward**: Sarah Greaney	Mobile: 027 222 6634 Email: Sarah.Greaney@southlanddc.govt.nz
Tom O'Brien	Mobile: 027 406 7334 Email: Tom.Obrien@southlanddc.govt.nz
Matt Wilson	Mobile 027 817 0033 Email: Matt.Wilson@southlanddc.govt.nz
Stewart Island Jon Spraggon	Mobile: 027 248 2522 Email: Jon.Spraggon@southlanddc.govt.nz
Waiau Aparima Ward: Don Byars	Mobile: 027 488 8858 Email: Don.Byars@southlanddc.govt.nz
Jaspreet Boparai	Mobile: 027 287 0478 Email: Jaspreet.Boparai@southlanddc.govt.nz
Michael Weusten	Mobile: 027 230 9418 Email Michael.Weusten@southlanddc.govt.nz
Ōreti Ward: Christine Menzies	Mobile: 027 950 2760 Email: Christine.Menzies@southlanddc.govt.nz
Philip Dobson	Mobile: 027 329 4623 Email: Phil.Dobson@southlanddc.govt.nz
Brian Somerville	Mobile: 027 704 5287 Email: Brian.Somerville@southlanddc.govt.nz
Waihōpai Toetoe Ward: Julie Keast	Mobile: 027 220 6404 Email: Julie.Keast@southlanddc.govt.nz
Paul Duffy	Mobile: 027 288 5865 Email: Paul.Duffy@southlanddc.govt.nz

Council committees and subcommittees

Council reviews its committee structure after each triennial election. Following the 2025 elections Council established the following committees. The terms of reference of each committee can be found in Council's Manual of Delegations which can be found on Council's website.

Finance and Assurance Committee

Responsible for ensuring that Council has appropriate financial, risk management and internal control systems in place.

The members are:

- Bruce Robertson (Chair)
- Mayor Rob Scott (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Don Byars

- Cr Sarah Greaney
- Cr Tom O'Brien
- Cr Julie Keast
- Cr Matt Wilson
- Cr Jaspreet Boparai
- Cr Phil Dobson
- Cr Michael Weusten
- Cr Christine Menzies
- Cr Brian Sommerville
- Cr Paul Duffy
- Cr Jon Spraggon

Executive Committee

Responsible for overseeing the employment of the chief executive, code of conduct issues and any urgent matters.

The members are:

- Mayor Rob Scott (Chair)
- Cr Christine Menzies – Deputy Mayor
- Bruce Robertson - Chair of the Finance and Assurance Committee -

Ohai Railway Fund Committee

Responsible for considering applications to the Ohai Railway Fund to provide grants for the benefit of the residents of the former Ohai Railway Board Area.

Council appointees:

- Mayor Rob Scott
- Cr Jaspreet Boparai
- Cr Michael Weusten

Community appointees:

- Alanna Barrett
- Shane Robertson
- Kevin Dixon (Chair)
- Kevin Curtin

District Licensing Committee

Responsible for ensuring that functions as set out in s.187 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 are undertaken. These include deciding on applications for new and renewed licences and managers certificates, regardless of whether they are contested, temporary authorities and temporary licences, variation of licences and most enforcement action for special licences.

The members are:

- Cr Paul Duffy (Chair)
- Cr Jaspreet Boparai (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Tom O'Brien
- Cr Brian Somerville

Riverton Harbour Subcommittee

Key responsibilities include managing harbour assets, managing endowment land that has been vested with Council and making various recommendations.

The members are:

- Cr Michael Weusten
- Nic White (Chair)
- Hayley Nelson
- Ian Coard
- Emma Gould
- Muriel Johnstone

Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy Allocation Subcommittee

The Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy Allocation Subcommittee is responsible for making allocations from the Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy Fund and setting strategic objectives to act as the basis for assessing applications for funding.

The members are:

- Cr Christine Menzies (Chairperson)
- Cr Jon Spraggon
- Bruce Robertson - Chair of Finance and Assurance Committee

The following will be updated after the appointments are made at the meeting on 18 March.

- *Aaron Conner*
- _____ *(community representative)*
- _____ *(a member to represent iwi)*
- *Paul Norris*
- *Lyndon Cleaver*
- *Bill Moffatt*

Te Anau Basin Water Supply Subcommittee

Responsible for the overall governance of the Te Anau Basin water supply scheme.

The members are:

- Andrew Taberner (Chair)
- Grant Bolger
- Shane Buchanan
- Craig Horrell
- Jason Robson
- Luke Wright
- Luke Thomas

Joint committees of Council

Civil Defence Emergency Management Group

Council appointees: Mayor Rob Scott, Cr Christine Menzies as alternate

Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is a joint committee with the other local authorities in the region and is required by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The purpose of the group is to identify the hazards and risks to be managed by the group and the Civil Defence Emergency Management measures deemed necessary to manage those hazards and risks.

WasteNet (Waste Advisory Group)

Council appointees: Mayor Rob Scott, Cr Christine Menzies

WasteNet has been developed to oversee waste management in Southland. Delegations include making decisions and recommendations to allow WasteNet to carry out the functions and responsibilities for each of their WasteNet Councils.

Southland Regional Transport Committee

Council appointees: Cr Christine Menzies Mayor Rob Scott as alternate

This joint committee is established by Environment Southland under the Land Transport Act 2005. The purpose of the committee is to develop and oversea regional land transport plans in Southland. The members are representatives from the region's councils plus the New Zealand Transport Authority.

Great South Joint Shareholder Committee

Council appointee: Mayor Rob Scott

The functions of the joint committee include appointing the directors of Great South, appointing the chief executive officer and reviewing the performance of Great South.

Council controlled organisations

A council controlled organisation (CCOs) is an organisation that Council (by itself or jointly with other local authorities) controls 50% or more of the voting rights or appoints 50% or more of the directors. A council controlled trading organisation (CCTO) is a CCO that operates a trading undertaking for the purpose of making a profit. Council has two CCOs, Great South and Milford Community Trust, and one CCTO, Space Operations New Zealand Ltd.

Great South

Great South is Southland's regional development agency delivering a wide range of initiatives, services and events to promote and grow the region alongside Southland communities. Great South is jointly funded by four shareholder councils - Southland District Council, Invercargill City Council, Gore District Council and Environment Southland. Great South owns a subsidiary, Space Operations New Zealand Limited which is a council controlled trading organisation.

Milford Community Trust

The purpose of the Milford Community Trust is to manage and carry out services and undertake leadership, planning and advocacy for the general benefit of the Milford community. Councillor Sarah Greaney has been appointed for the 2025-2028 triennium as trustee of the Trust.

Space Operations New Zealand Limited

Space Operations New Zealand Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Great South and is a council controlled trading organisation. Space Operations New Zealand delivers sustainable innovative services to the global space market. The primary business lines are hosting customer-owned satellite ground stations, leasing its own ground stations to customers, installing and maintaining customer ground stations and providing technical and logistics support services for these products and services.

Appointments to external organisations

Council and the community boards have made various appointments of elected members to external organisations. Some of these appointments were required by the organisation's founding documents and some were requested by the organisation.

Organisation	Appointee
Around the Mountain Cycle Trail Trust	Cr Matt Wilson
Citizens Advice Bureau Invercargill	Cr Julie Keast
Creative Communities Assessment Committee	Cr Michael Weusten Cr Don Byars
Gore and Districts Community Counselling Centre Inc.	Cr Julie Keast
Pioneer Women's Memorial Trust	Cr Julie Keast
Predator Free Rakiura Engagement and Advisory Group	Mike Douglass (Emma Simpson-Boyce as an alternate)
Riverton Heritage and Tourist Centre Trust	Neil Linscott
Southland Indoor Leisure Centre Charitable Trust	Cr Phil Dobson
Southland Medical Foundation	Mayor Rob Scott
Southland Regional Heritage Building and Preservation Trust	Cr Paul Duffy
Te Roopu Taiao	Mayor Rob Scott (Cr Christine Menzies as alternate)
Tuatapere Amenities Trust	Cr Jaspreet Boparai Anne Horrell
Waiau Working Party	Cr Don Byars Nick Robertson
Whakamana te Waituna Trust	Cr Julie Keast
Taramea (Howell's Point) Management Committee	Neil Linscott, Cr Don Byars Cr Michael Weusten,

Meeting requirements and processes

The legal requirements for conducting Council, community board and committee meetings are provided for in the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

Members of the public are entitled and are welcome to attend all public meetings of Council and its committees. In certain circumstances, as defined in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public may be excluded from certain parts of a meeting.

Although meetings are open to the public, members of the public do not have speaking rights other than at the "public forum" session available at the beginning of Council and community board meetings. Up to the first half hour of these meetings is set aside for members of the public to raise issues of concern.

An updated schedule of meetings for the following month is published in newspapers (Southland Express and Gore Ensign) circulating within the district. Details of meetings, agendas and minutes are also available on Council's website.

During meetings the mayor, councillors and community board members must follow standing orders. These are a set of procedures for conducting meetings agreed upon by Council. The application of standing orders can be suspended at any meeting by a vote of 75% of the members present. A copy of the standing orders can be viewed on Council's website.

Council and committee meetings are live-streamed, and the recording is available following the meeting.

Management structure

Chief executive officer

The Local Government Act 2002 requires Council to employ a chief executive officer whose responsibilities are to employ other staff on behalf of Council, implement Council decisions and provide advice to Council. Under the Local Government Act the chief executive is the only person who may lawfully give instructions to a staff member. Any complaint about individual staff members should therefore be directed to the chief executive, rather than the mayor or councillors.

Chief executive	
Cameron McIntosh	0800 732 732 cameron.mcintosh@southlanddc.govt.nz

The responsibilities of the chief executive are:

- implementing the decisions of Council
- providing advice to Council and community boards
- ensuring that all responsibilities, duties and powers delegated to the chief executive or to any person employed by the chief executive, or imposed or conferred by any act, regulation or bylaw are properly performed or exercised
- managing the activities of Council effectively and efficiently
- maintaining systems to enable effective planning and accurate reporting of the financial and service performance of Council
- providing leadership for the staff of Council
- employing staff (including negotiation of the terms of employment for the staff).

Executive leadership team

The executive leadership team is made up of six group managers and the chief executive officer. Together they review all general organisation issues and provide a link between Council and the staff.

The group managers are:

Group manager infrastructure and capital delivery	
Fran Mikulicic	0800 732 732 fran.mikulicic@southlanddc.govt.nz
Responsible for:	Water and waste, transport, project delivery, commercial infrastructure, health and safety.

Group manager regulatory services	
Adrian Humphries	0800 732 732

Group manager regulatory services	
	adrian.humphries@southlanddc.govt.nz
Responsible for:	Building solutions, environmental management and planning, resource management planning and consents, monitoring and compliance.

Group manager finance and assurance	
Anne Robson	0800 732 732 anne.robson@southlanddc.govt.nz
Responsible for:	Financial controller, development coordinator, information services, risk, business partners, customer and continuous improvement.

Group manager people and culture manager	
Joanne Davidson	0800 732 732 joanne.davidson@southlanddc.govt.nz
Responsible for:	People and culture, wellbeing, organisational development, executive assistants.

Group manager strategy and partnerships	
Vibhuti Chopra	0800 732 732 vibhuti.chopra@southlanddc.govt.nz
Responsible for:	Communications and engagement, strategic projects, strategy and policy, governance, customer relationships.

Group manager customer and community well-being	
Sam Marshall	0800 732 732 sam.marshall@southlanddc.govt.nz
Responsible for:	Community leadership, customer delivery, community facilities, property services.

Consultation with Māori

Council recognises Ngāi Tahu as the tāngata whenua within the Murihiku Southland District.

Council values highly its relationship with Ngāi Tahu within Murihiku Southland. Council, together with the other local authorities in the Southland region (Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council and Gore District Council) have entered into a Charter of Understanding with Te Ao Mārama Incorporated. Te Ao Mārama Incorporated is an agency approved by Ngāi Tahu to act as iwi liaison matters and supporting papatipu rūnanga in Murihiku Southland under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 2002.

The 'Charter of Understanding' provides:

- the basis for the relationship between the four councils and the papatipu rūnanga in Murihiku Southland to assist in developing the capacity of Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes
- a foundation for consultation on a wide range of local government issues

- for the recognition and willingness of Te Ao Mārama Inc to assist all councils in consultation with all 'ngā matawaka' living in Murihiku (ngā matawaka being Māori living in Murihiku Southland who are not Ngāi Tahu).

Key planning documents and the process for their development and review

Council has adopted and approved a number of key planning documents to assist it in fulfilling the purpose of local government, performing its role as a local authority and exercising the powers, responsibilities and duties conferred on it.

The long term plan

The Long Term Plan (LTP) is Council's 10 year plan which provides an opportunity for Council to take a long term view of our activities, and their impact on the District and on present and future communities.

It includes the outcomes Council is aiming to achieve, the financial framework Council will operate within and an overview of Council's future plans for its activities over the next ten years, including:

- the levels of service it will provide
- how the Council will measure its performance
- the costs of providing each activity, and
- where revenue will be sourced for each activity.

The LTP is reviewed every three years and at that time, Council looks for input from the residents, ratepayers and other stakeholders in the district. This is required by section 93 of the Local Government Act 2002 and is audited by Audit New Zealand.

Council's 2024-2034 Long Term Plan can be found on Council's website.

The Annual Plan

The Annual Plan is a one year snapshot of the Council's programme for the year ahead.

The first year of the LTP always represents the Annual Plan for that year. Annual Plans produced between LTP reviews (Year 2 and 3 of the LTP) update information for this year with more recent information. These plans are based on the relevant year of the LTP (i.e. Year 2 or Year 3), and outline that years' work programme, identify variations and amendments from the LTP and detail financial matters, including the Council's budget and sources of funding.

The Annual Plan is required by section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002.

The Annual Plan can be found on Council's website.

Annual Report

The Annual Report outlines Council's actual performance against what was planned. This includes reporting on the achievements in the work programme, performance measures and financial targets. Reports are for each financial year (i.e. 1 July to 30 June). The report must be completed within four months of the end of the financial year (i.e. by 31 October). The Annual Report is required by section 98 of the Local Government Act 2002 and is audited by Audit New Zealand.

The Annual Report can be found on Council's website.

The Community board plans

Each of the nine community boards have a community board plan. These plans encourage community-led development at a local level and identify a shared vision and outcomes.

The community board plans can be found on Council's website.

The District Plan

The Southland District Plan (the District Plan) was prepared in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991.

The District Plan sets a framework for development and the management of the natural and physical resources in the District. This plan is prepared and reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991.

The District Plan can be found on Council's website.

Other planning and policy documents

In addition to the documents outlined above, Council maintains a range of other strategy documents, plans and policies. Policies are documents that outline set out Council's position on specific matters or give effect to legislative requirements.

Council develops its policies, plans, strategies and bylaws plans through consultation with relevant stakeholders where required, and they are formally approved by Council.

Policies and plans are reviewed periodically, either when required by legislation, in line with review timeframes, specified in the document or in Council's policy review schedule, or in response to a specific request from Council.

Further information on Council's plans and policies can be found on Council's website.

Bylaws

Bylaws are rules created by a local authority specifically for the regulation of its area of responsibility and for the benefit of the community as a whole. Below is a list of Council's bylaws and further information can be found on Council's website. Where no review date is provided, the relevant bylaw is yet to be reviewed under sections 158 or 159 of the Local Government Act since adoption.

Alcohol Control Bylaw 2022
Adopted 30 November 2022, the purpose of this bylaw is to address the problem of crime and disorder caused or made worse by the consumption of alcohol in public places. To achieve this, the bylaw prohibits the consumption and possession of alcohol in specified public places in Southland District.
Ashton Flats Roading Bylaw 2016
Adopted on 1 October 2016, this bylaw regulates vehicle access to Ashton Flats Road to help prevent damage to the road and the surrounding Eyre Mountains Conservation Park.
Cemetery Bylaw 2016
Adopted on 7 September 2016, this bylaw regulates the use of, and permitted activities undertaken at, cemeteries within the District in accordance with the Burial and Cremation Act 1964.
Dog Control Bylaw 2025

Adopted on 10 September 2025, this bylaw establishes responsibilities of dog owners to regulate and control dogs within the District in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996.
Freedom Camping Bylaw 2015
Adopted on 9 December 2015, this bylaw regulates freedom camping within Southland District in order to protect specified areas, the health and safety of people who access those specified areas and access to those specified areas and in accordance with the Freedom Camping Act 2011.
Keeping of Animals Poultry and Bees Bylaw
Adopted on 29 September 2020, this bylaw regulates the keeping of cats and other domesticated animals (excluding dogs) within Southland District for the purpose of minimising associated nuisance and maintaining public health and safety.
Roading Bylaw 2008 (Revision 3-2024)
Adopted on 30 April 2008 and last reviewed on 11 December 2024, this bylaw regulates activities that are of a nuisance to the general public in use of or within the roading environment, this bylaw focusses on stock on roads, parking restrictions, one-way roads, vehicular accessways, and heavy traffic prohibitions within Southland District.
Stewart Island Rakiura Visitor Levy Bylaw (Revision 2, 2022)
Adopted on 12 December 2012 and last reviewed on 3 February 2022, this bylaw is established in accordance with the Southland District Council (Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy) Empowering Act 2012. The bylaw sets, and establishes mechanisms to collect, levies from passengers travelling to Stewart Island/Rakiura, in order to better provide services, facilities, and amenities for those persons while they are on the Island.
Stormwater Drainage Bylaw 2017
Adopted on 13 December 2017, this bylaw enables Council to manage and protect stormwater drainage by regulating connections, hazardous substances, discharges, building and works on/near infrastructure, as well as specifying conditions of a stormwater connection.
Trade Waste Bylaw 2018
Adopted on 18 June 2018, this bylaw enables Council to regulate and manage all trade waste that is discharged into Council's sewerage system.
Trading in Public Places Bylaw 2023
Adopted on 13 December 2023, this bylaw regulates trading, including mobile trading and alfresco dining, in all public places under the control of Southland District Council including roads, footpaths, and berms, parks, reserves, and open spaces. It also regulates the placement of signs or objects on footpaths and berms.
Wastewater Drainage Bylaw 2017
Adopted on 13 December 2017, the bylaw enables Council to manage and protect wastewater drainage by controlling connections, hazardous substances, discharges, building and works on/near infrastructure, as well as specifying conditions of a wastewater connection
Water Supply Bylaw 2017
Adopted on 13 December 2017, this bylaw enables Council to manage and protect the water supply by controlling connections, potential contamination, and works undertaken on/near infrastructure as well as specifying conditions of supply.

Consultation

Southland District Council, like other territorial authorities in New Zealand, is principally directed by the consultation principles and requirements that need to be followed when making certain decisions set out within the Local Government Act. Other legislation can also alter the consultation requirements for other decisions.

Significance and Engagement Policy

As required under the Local Government Act, Council has a 'Significance and Engagement Policy' which details how it will decide what is significant in terms of decision-making when the community would have an opportunity to contribute to decision-making and how they would do so.

Council's Significance and Engagement Policy was last updated in 2024 and is available on its website.

Special Consultative Procedure

Section 83 of the Local Government Act sets out the requirements for consultation under Special Consultative Procedure. Council must consult on various plans, bylaws and policies using what is called the Special Consultative Procedure (SCP) in relation to:

- the Long Term Plan (or any LTP amendment)
- making, amending or revoking Policies and Bylaws when the level of significance of the decision requires its use
- where other legislation may require it, such as the Building Act 2004 and Gambling Act 2003.

The SCP requires that Council prepare a formal statement of proposal (and a summary of that proposal if it is necessary to facilitate understanding). Where the consultation relates to the adoption of a plan, policy, bylaw or other similar document, a copy of the draft document must be included in the statement of proposal, which along with any summary prepared, must be adopted at a Council meeting. Once adopted the statement must be made as widely available as is reasonably practical for consultation.

SCP requires a minimum consultation period of at least one month, where people are able to make a submission. People can provide their views in writing and may also present these views in spoken form, which typically involves being heard by Council in a public meeting. Council will then deliberate on the matter in public (unless there is a reason to hear the matter in 'public excluded' under LGOIMA). Council are then likely to make a decision on the matter, and staff will inform submitters about the outcome of the process.

Council may also decide to use the special consultative procedure, in other circumstances where if it has a matter it wants to consult on widely/thoroughly, or if the level of significance identified in accordance with the Significance and Engagement Policy indicates that this approach to consultation is necessary.

Other consultation

All consultation carried out by Council with the community must give effect to the principles of consultation under section 82 of the Local Government Act. When council consults but is not required to consult following the SCP, it may do so in accordance with the requirements of section 82A.

This may include consultation such as on an Annual Plan, reviews of financial policies and proposals to establish a Council Controlled Organisation. Although consultation is not always required, Council may consult on other policies, plans or issues as it deems necessary as per its Significance and Engagement Policy. Consultation processes vary depending on outcome sought, geographic scope, and community interest.

Council has long been committed to public involvement and engagement in the administration of the District. An extensive network of representation exists. The administration and provision of local services and responsibilities has been decentralised as necessary thereby allowing an effective means of ensuring local input into decision-making. The range of delegations to community boards contributes to local decisions being made on local issues.

Consultation and engagement are often required on issues where there are no statutory processes or timeframes in legislation. Engagement is tailored to the complexity of an issue and its potential for controversy.

In exercising its discretion, Council has regard to the nature and significance of the decision and the extent to which Council is already aware of the views of the affected public.

Requests for official information

Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) any person may request information from Council.

The purpose of the LGOIMA is to promote democracy and transparency in local government. It covers information held by Council and meetings of public bodies, including those not open to the public.

There two types of requests for official information:

- LGOIMA requests
- Privacy requests.

Any person or group can request information held by Council under the LGOIMA.

Privacy requests for personal information are governed by the Privacy Act 2020 and enable any person to request, view and correct any personal information held about them.

How to make an official information request

The quickest way to submit a request is through Council's website, but requests can be made in writing or by contacting customer services at any Council office.

Council staff will acknowledge requests as soon as possible after being received. Council is required to respond within 20 working days. If the request is granted the information will be provided as soon as practicable.

Requesters will be informed as soon as possible if:

- we cannot respond within 20 working days,
- we need more information, or clarification about the request, or
- the information is held by another organisation, requiring the request to be transferred.

Remuneration policy

Council has a range of up-to-date employment policies and practices and strives to be a good employer with consistent and transparent remuneration policies. Council also offers a number of staff benefits in addition to remuneration.

Council uses at least two external reputable providers to benchmark staff remuneration against current market data. People are rewarded by progression through the remuneration range based on Council's performance development system. All salaries are reviewed annually.

Equal employment opportunities

Council is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunities, which underpins all people-related practices, including the recruitment, employment, training, and promotion of staff.

Contacting Council

Council's principal office is located in Invercargill.

Physical address:	15 Forth Street, Invercargill, 9810
Post:	PO Box 903, Invercargill, 9840
Phone:	0800 732 732
Email:	sdc@southlanddc.govt.nz
Website:	http://www.southlanddc.govt.nz
Office open hours:	9am – 5pm Monday – Friday

Council has district offices in Lumsden, Otautau, Riverton, Stewart Island Rakiura, Te Anau, Winton and Wyndham. The locations, hours and contact details of those offices can be found on Council's website here.

The Mayor, councillors and community board members are the elected representatives of their respective communities and they welcome contact from the residents they represent. Contact details for the elected members can be found on Council's website here.

Exclusion of the public: Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

Recommendation

That the public be excluded from the following part(s) of the proceedings of this meeting.

9.1 Appointment of members to the Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy Allocation Subcommittee

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
Appointment of members to the Stewart Island/Rakiura Visitor Levy Allocation Subcommittee	s7(2)(a) - the withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of a deceased person.	That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding exists.