

Council Meeting

Public Business Agenda

A Council meeting
will be held in the Council Chamber,
29 Bowler Avenue, Gore
on Tuesday 18 March 2025
commencing at 4:00pm

Our vision:

*To provide an environment that allows people to enjoy the lifestyle
and culture of their choice*

Health and safety – emergency procedures

Toilets – The toilets are located in the corridor near reception.

Evacuation - Should there be an evacuation, please exit the chambers via the main door, then through the office front doors to the assembly point at the front of the building, near the road.

Earthquake - Drop, cover and hold. Once the shaking has stopped, evacuate through the chamber's main door, then through the office front doors to the assembly point near the road.

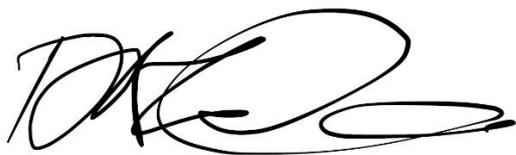
Phones - Please turn your mobile device to silent mode.

Recording - These proceedings are being live-streamed and will be available to share or download from the Council's YouTube channel. You consent to being filmed for public viewing by remaining in the meeting.

Attendees

Members	Mayor (Chairperson)	B Bell
	Deputy Mayor (Deputy Chairperson)	K Hovell
	Councillors	G Dickson
		A Fraser
		J Gardyne
		S MacDonell
		R McKenzie
		P McPhail
		R McPhail
		N Phillips
		B Reid
		J Stringer
Staff	Chief Executive	D Lascelles
	General Manager (GM) Corporate	L Straith
	General Manager (GM) Critical Services	J Domigan
	Governance - minutes	S Jones

Agenda confirmed by:



D Lascelles
Chief Executive

Recommendations contained in reports are ***not*** to be construed ***as Council decisions***.
Refer to the Council minutes for ***resolutions***.

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- 1. Welcome / Karakia**
- 2. Apologies / Leave of Absences**
- 3. Public Forum**
- 4. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**
- 5. Confirmation of Agenda**

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Confirmation of Minutes – Council meeting held on Tuesday 18 February 2025

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Gore District Council, held in the Council Chambers, civic administration building, 29 Bowler Avenue, Gore, on Tuesday 18 February 2025, at 4.00pm.

Present His Worship the Mayor (Mr B R Bell), Crs Dickson, Fraser, Gardyne, Hovell, McKenzie, MacDonell, P McPhail, R McPhail, Phillips, Reid and Stringer (via Teams).

In attendance The Chief Executive (Ms Debbie Lascelles), General Manager Corporate Services (Ms Lornae Straith), General Manager Critical Services (Mr Jason Domigan), Governance Manager (Susan Jones), Digital Communications Officer (Ms Libby McKinnel), 3 Waters Operations Manager, Governance and Corporate Support Manager (Mrs Amanda Drew), Strategy and Policy Advisor (Mr Leon Michell), Regulatory Manager (Mrs Frances Shepherd), Mataura Community Board Chairperson (Mrs Nicky Coats), Mr Michael Garbett (legal advisor, Anderson Lloyd), Mr Matt Heale (Planning Consultant, The Property Group) and eight members of the public in the gallery.

1. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SC0487)

Cr Hovell declared a conflict of interest in the public forum presentation and the item relating to a request to pause the District Plan. Cr Dickson confirmed she would also vacate the table. Cr Hovell said when the District Plan presentation was made several months ago it dealt with matters of principle at the hearings and both he and Cr Dickson had removed themselves from the meeting. The issues being considered at this meeting dealt with process which did not impinge on evidence and they would remain in the room but would not take part in the discussion. They were available for questions if necessary.

Crs Dickson and Hovell vacated the table.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – PROPOSAL TO PAUSE THE PROPOSED GORE DISTRICT PLAN (SC0487)

Mr Mark Walker was in attendance and addressed the Council. He had made a submission to the Proposed District Plan. He had previously found the Council proactive in encouraging developments from Daiken, Mataura Valley Milk (MVM) and

Bupa. MVM had been one of the biggest recent developments in the district. Having the review of the District Plan potentially stop in his view, would signal to potential investors that the Council was closed for business and development would be pushed into other regions. He had met with the previous Mayor and Chief Executive about rezoning his property. They had encouraged him to work in with the District Plan review. With potential delays now he did not feel that was acceptable. The conclusion of the District Plan review was critical to ensure continued investment in the area.

His Worship thanked Mr Walker for his presentation.

Crs Dickson and Hovell returned to the table.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr MacDonell, seconded by Cr Phillips , **THAT** the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Gore District Council, held on Tuesday 17 December 2024, as presented, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a true and complete record.

4. MATAURA COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING MINUTES (SC3535)

A copy of the minutes of the Mataura Community Board meeting held on Monday 27 January 2025 had been circulated with the agenda.

Clause 3 – Tulloch Park progress update (SC 1570)

The Council *noted* the word “paid” should have read “laid” on the last line of the first page of the minutes.

Cr Phillips acknowledged the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Manager for obtaining funding to enable the splash pad project to proceed.

Cr MacDonell referred to the deficit for the project. Cr Phillips said it was up to the Manager and the Council to find the remaining funding at this stage. Cr MacDonell understood the project was being completed without any Council funding being required. His Worship said there was a contingency in the budget but the Board had been looking for alternative funding sources to cover the balance.

Clause 5 – Coster Park campervan dump station update (SC0613)

Cr Hovell was concerned at the length of the hose at the campervan dump station, being 300mm and questioned if it was an error. His Worship said it was correct. The Chairperson added the hose had been installed and was working well.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Fraser, seconded by Cr MacDonell, THAT the Council receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Mataura Community Board, held on Monday 27 January 2025.

2025/01

5. CREATIVE COMMUNITIES MEETING (SC3946)

A copy of the minutes of the Creative Communities Assessment Committee meeting held on Monday 10 February 2025 had been circulated with the agenda.

His Worship thanked the Councillors and staff who supported the Assessment Committee.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr MacDonell, seconded by Cr Reid, THAT the Council receive and note the minutes of the Creative Communities Assessment Committee meeting, held on Monday 20 February 2025.

2025/02

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

A report had been received from the senior Finance Manager together with a copy of the management accounts to 31 December 2024.

The Council had recorded a \$179k deficit as at 31 December 2024 which was favourable compared to a budgeted deficit of \$1.005 million. The key drivers were the financial contributions received for the library redevelopment project and the second stage of the Kaiwera wind farm. There were a number of other variances within the revenue and expenditure categories – some favourable and some unfavourable items of smaller value.

Cr MacDonell noted the \$708k financial contribution from the wind farm had been invested in a term deposit. He would have preferred to have paid off a loan. Was that possible? The General Manager said the Council's policy was very clear and any development contribution was to be invested for 12 months before making a decision on what the funds may be used for. Cr Hovell said the Council's policy was even more prescriptive about how the funds may be used which included paying off debt, being used towards new facilities or for areas that the development had impacted on which, in this case, was the whole District. Cr Reid acknowledged the substantial benefit the MVM financial contribution had made to the new library project and the community as a result.

Cr Dickson noted there was more funding from penalties on rates. Was it because some people were behind paying their rates? The General Manager said it was the

time of the year when penalties were applied for the previous year. Some ratepayers had rate arrears dating back to 2020 and staff were working through processes to recover those now.

In response to Cr Dickson, the General Manager said there had not been a noticeable increase in people who were behind with their rates payments as highlighted in an aged debtors report to the February meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr MacDonell, seconded by Cr Dickson, THAT the Council receive and note the management accounts to 31 December 2024.

2025/03

7. REPORT ON REQUEST TO PAUSE THE PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN (SC0487)

A comprehensive report had been received from the Chief Executive providing details to the Council on the advantages and disadvantages associated with a written request received in December seeking that the Council pause the proposed District Plan (PDP) process.

The District Plan was a critical document for local government because it enabled development in the right places, while also protecting the District's environment and natural features for future generations. Considerable time, effort and financial resources had gone into the review of the District Plan.

To date there had been a range of public consultation processes to develop the PDP. The current public hearings process involved more than 158 submitters from the community and across many business and government entities with interests in infrastructure and developments in the district. As a part of the current PDP process, all submitters points on each of the PDP rules and other provisions were considered and decided upon in order to create a district specific plan, designed to support development over the next 10-15 years. The Council level PDP process was now 95% complete, and decisions were expected to be issued before August 2025.

The Council had taken legal and planning advice on the matters raised in the pause request, which confirmed that under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), the Council had an obligation to ensure all decisions on the PDP were issued by 31 August 2025. If the requirement was not met, the Council must request an extension from the Minister for the Environment and give reasons for any delay beyond this date.

The current and upcoming resource management (RM) reforms would not significantly disrupt the PDP, and in fact there would only be minimal changes required to the PDP over the next 2-5 years in response to the anticipated legislative change.

A detailed review of the RM reforms against potential changes to the PDP rules had been conducted by the Council's consultants. It confirmed no changes were expected to the vast majority of the 46 chapters of the PDP, and only minimal change anticipated for six chapters over the next 1-2 years. RM reforms that had already been enacted or which were operative had already been factored into the current PDP process. The extent of change was well within what had already been seen in the resource management sector during the past 3-5 years.

The majority of the key RM reforms under way and still in the pipeline were directed to matters managed by Regional Councils, not District Councils. They did not address housing issues in larger urban areas. The expected changes to regional management of water and discharge management would appear to be the "red tape" matters that the Prime Minister had referred to at the recent community meeting in Gore that had been raised in the pause request.

As a part of the reforms, it was clear that a combined regional approach to planning would need to be adopted in the next five years. With that in mind, it would be significantly to the Council's advantage to have a recently developed District Plan in place before that occurred. It would better enable the Council to ensure it was properly provided for when feeding into a regional plan approach with the Invercargill City and Southland District Councils and Environment Southland. Conversely, if the current operative District Plan, which was significantly dated and no longer provided appropriate direction for the district, remained in place, then the Council may find itself significantly disadvantaged in those negotiations and subsequent plan development process.

The report also covered the new District Plan being overdue, the process that had been followed to date, an overview of national planning standards for District Plans, PDP hearings to date, the Council's obligations under the RMA, testing whether RM reforms called for a pause, the nine month timeframe of the proposed pause, positive growth outcomes expected from the new District Plan, additional financial costs of the PDP process due to pause, legal effect of certain rules, complexity of resource consent processes during the pause period and the logistics of implementing a pause and a partial pause.

Three options had been presented for consideration together with advantages and disadvantages of each:

1. Decline to progress the pause request so that the PDP process could continue;
2. Grant the pause request and make decisions to defer the PDP hearings and related PDP steps for a period of nine months (thereby pausing the whole PDP process for nine months); and
3. Grant the pause request in relation to the remaining two topics that had not yet begun being heard and make decisions to defer the PDP hearings on those topics

for a period of nine months (thereby pausing the inclusion of those topics in the PDP decisions version to be issued before 31 August 2025 for nine months).

The report noted there had been no material advantages identified that could be gained by pausing the process.

The Council had received approximately 117 signatories to a letter requesting the Council to consider a pause. Of those, 7% of the signatories were submitters who had engaged in the District Plan process to date. Due to the significance of the decision, staff sought comment from all of the District Plan submitters.

The following information had been circulated with the agenda:

- Legal advice from Anderson Lloyd on the Council's obligations under the LGA and RMA.
- Analysis of RM reform topics relative to PDP chapters.
- Overview of completed and scheduled PDP hearings.
- Cost/benefit analysis of pause request.
- Summary of feedback from submitters directly involved in the PDP process.
- Copies of feedback received from submitters directly involved in the PDP process.
- Examples from other comparable other District Plans.
- Public consultation and other public processes followed for the PDP.
- Summary of RM reforms.

Crs Dickson and Hovell departed the table and did not take any part in discussion about this item.

Mr Michael Garbett, Anderson Lloyd and Mr Matt Heale, The Property Group were in attendance at the meeting to assist the Council with its deliberations.

His Worship acknowledged former Cr Bret Highsted and Federated Farmers who had written to the Council. It took time and resources to bring their views forward. He also thanked those people who wrote further submissions about the request to pause, particularly over the Christmas period. There had been a huge amount of work completed to date. The other point to note was the Proposed District Plan was not more onerous or restrictive than other places in New Zealand. He acknowledged everyone who had been involved and said the Council had listened. There had been a lot of work put in since the request to pause had been received.

The Chief Executive spoke to the report and said it was a technical one. There was a very prescriptive process to deal with a District Plan. The Council needed to ensure the impartiality of the process that had to be followed. She drew the Council's attention to RMA issues that were difficult for members of the community to deal with. Significant effort had been made to obtain comment from the submitters. The process

had not finished yet. Even after a Proposed District Plan had been approved, chapters can and should be reviewed to ensure they were fit for purpose.

Mr Garbett referred to his advice on the issues that had been circulated to the Council. He highlighted the framing up of what the Council had been asked to decide. He had analysed the risks and there was no clear advantage in pausing the process for nine months. The touted gain from Federated Farmers was to enable the Government changes to take effect. In 2026, the Government intended to review the RMA which would provide an extensive consultation period. It was his assessment that the Council would be in a far better position to have a current District Plan to feed into the proposed regional plan process being proposed by the Government. To pause the process would cause a lot of legal issues for the Council including the requirement to have decisions released by the end of August 2025. Failure to do so would necessitate the Council having to apply to the Minister of Environment seeking an extension of time for making decisions on the notified plan beyond the current statutory deadline of 31 August 2025.

Mr Garbett said the plan that had been notified as draft and the submissions and evidence went into the process that the Hearing Panel made decisions on. Once the Panel made its decision, the Plan was updated at that point and that formed the basis of the Proposed Plan. There were a number of changes that the staff had worked through with submitters that had been agreed on and provided to the Panel for decision. The Council was in a hiatus period at the moment. It was his clear advice that the Council not pause the Plan but decline to pause.

Cr Fraser referred to point 15 in Anderson Lloyd's advice which would remain as a provision. Mr Garbett confirmed anything that had provision now remained until the Hearings Panel had made its decision.

Cr Reid said as it stood, the Council had a duty to enact the resource management law it was currently working under. Mr Garbett said the Council had duties under the current RMA as outlined in his advice. It had no legal obligation to give legal effect to press releases from the Government. The Council had to remain compliant with the current legislation. In response to Cr Reid, Mr Garbett said the risks were outlined in his advice and any costs would be incurred by the ratepayers.

Cr Gardyne asked what happened if there was a pause on two chapters. Mr Garbett said if the Council was to pause the remaining two chapters that had not been heard he would strongly recommend not to influence the Hearings Panel. Planners had outlined a degree of disentanglement and those hearings yet to be heard would be in limbo with the rest of the plan being determined. It was not straight forward and better than pausing the entire Plan, but it would be a poor second best. The Chief Executive said there would be significant cost – an estimated \$100-200k, if two

chapters were not progressed. Cr R McPhail said if there was a pause, some of the parties involved could ask the Council for a contribution towards costs.

Cr Gardyne said if the Government made changes to the RMA and there needed to be a variation to the Proposed District Plan, how long and how much would that cost? Mr Heale said it was very hard to predict as the basis of any changes were unknown. He could not provide a firm answer. The Council could promulgate a plan change later if there was a legislative change that came through, but until a new Policy Statement or environment standard was known, it was impossible to predict what the costs may be with any changes.

Cr P McPhail asked for the process to be explained if the Council decided not to pause, the submissions were finished and the Plan was presented to the Council and it was still not happy with it. Mr Garbett said on the assumption there was no pause, then the Hearings Panel continued its hearings and heard all submissions and then delivered its decisions. Once decisions had been made, any submitter had the opportunity to appeal to the Environment Court which was normal in a process like this. The parties then participated in mediation and if that failed the Court made a decision. After that, the Plan came back to the Council for a final decision. By that stage, it was really a ceremonial adoption by the Council of a fully operative District Plan. Cr P McPhail said the Commissioners were working on behalf of the Council and it could not say go back to the start. Mr Garbett said that was correct, but the Council had the legal ability to vary any part of the plan through a new public process.

Cr Reid moved THAT the Council:

- a) receive and note the *Report on request to pause the proposed District Plan*; and**
- b) decline the request to pause the proposed District Plan on the basis that the request is not consistent with the Council's statutory and regulatory obligations.**

The motion was seconded by Cr Fraser.

Cr Reid thought there were so many issues for people who wanted to go ahead with business changes and developments that would benefit the community. She said it would be a bad move to pause. There would be a general election next year and the Council could not foresee what changes may be introduced before then.

Cr Stringer departed the meeting at 4.40pm

Cr McKenzie said the process had been almost finished and he was supportive of it continuing. His Worship shared the public's concerns about proposed changes to the RMA. The constant flip flop of change for ratepayers was not lost on the Council.

Central Government needed to come together and create an acceptable RMA. With 95% of the Council's process done, he felt it needed to be continued.

Cr R McPhail said the Council had to look at the request received. He thought it appropriate to get the advice it had. He appreciated the work done by staff and thought there had been light shed on a number of issues raised. Cr Fraser had been supportive of pausing the process when the request had first been received. The subsequent information received from the Chief Executive and Anderson Lloyd had opened his eyes. The Council needed to stop listening to Government Ministers who talked about red tape. He was pleased to see National and Labour were proposing a joint approach for some issues. He acknowledged the work of the Hearings Panel and said the Council had absolute trust in its members. He expected there might be a judicial review, but fully supported continuing with the process.

Cr MacDonell had thought about disentangling some chapters but there would be a significant cost. He agreed with Cr Fraser that the process should continue. Cr Gardyne preferred option 3 to pause the two chapters still to be heard. He had spent a lot of time on District Plan Committees and Councillors had little say. Rural people had had very little say on those two chapters. He was disappointed and would like to see the chapters paused. A number of submitters had spent considerable sums of money. He had faith in the Commissioners to make good decisions and he hoped they would not be swayed. Cr P McPhail had also supported option 3, but had come to the conclusion that the Panel needed to finish its process and see what the final document stated. Cr Phillips was happy with the detailed analysis provided. He thought it would be unfair and unjust for the Council to pause. If the Council did halt, there would be costs for the ratepayers.

The motion was put and it was carried.

Cr Gardyne voted against the motion and asked for his vote to be recorded.

2025/04

Crs Dickson and Hovell returned to the table at 4.50pm. Mr Garbett and Mr Heale departed the meeting at 4.50pm.

8. 2025 GORE DISTRICT ELECTION – ORDER OF CANDIDATE NAMES ON VOTING DOCUMENTS (SC4005)

A report had been received from the Deputy Electoral Officer detailing the options for the order that candidate names would appear on voting documents for the 2025 elections. The Local Elections Regulations 2001 allowed each Council to resolve the order of candidate names on the voting documents. It provided three options for ordering candidate names on voting papers – alphabetical order, pseudo-random and

random order. Random order had been used at the 2022 elections. It randomised the order of names on each voting document using specialised software.

Cr Hovell asked what the least cost option was. The Deputy Electoral Officer did not have the cost to hand. The pseudo random option was slightly more expensive.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Reid, seconded by Cr R McPhail, THAT the Council:

- a) **receive and note the *2025 Gore District Council Election – Order of Candidate Names on Voting Documents report*; and**
- b) **determine that the candidate names for the 2025 triennial Gore District Council election, including any subsequent by-elections up to 14 October 2028, be in random order.**

2025/05

9. LOCAL WATER DONE WELL – OTAGO SOUTHLAND JOINT GROUP OF COUNCILS (SC4085)

Mr Andrew Strahan, Project Manager and Ms Alice Balme from Wynn Williams, lawyers, attended the meeting via Teams from 4.54pm.

A joint report had been received from the Chief Executives of the Central Otago, Clutha, Waitaki and Gore District Councils advising that the Water Services Preliminary Arrangements Act 2024 set out the new requirements for water services delivery in New Zealand. The Local Government (Water Services) Bill had been introduced into Parliament and would likely set the enduring framework for water delivery if it was passed into law later this year. The report presented a summary of progress to develop a Joint Water Services Organisation by the Central Otago, Clutha, Gore and Waitaki District Councils (the Group of Councils). It also summarised the overall approach and plan to develop the options, consult with the community, secure required Council approvals and prepare a Council approved Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) to the Minister of Local Government by 3 September 2025. The report made recommendations in relation to consultation under the Water Services Preliminary Arrangements Act 2024. To support the work, a Commitment Agreement template had been developed by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) for Councils to modify and adopt as they worked to develop and establish a Joint Operation Organisation for Water Services. The Commitment Agreement template had been populated to meet the requirements of the Group of Councils and had been circulated with the agenda.

The Mayors and Chief Executives of the Group of Councils were engaged and a project team had been formed to investigate and define what a joint CCO would look like and how it compared against the other practicable options, such as leaving water services in house or setting up a standalone Council Controlled Organisation (CCO).

Details of the consultation and decision making required and options associated with the decisions sought by the report had been outlined for consideration. The costs for the Group of Councils joint project, including community consultation and approach to apportionment were detailed in the Commitment Agreement. Project costs to develop, consult on and submit a Water Services Delivery Plan for a joint Water Services CCO were estimated to be \$540k and would be equally apportioned between the Councils. The Commitment Agreement provided for individual Councils to exit the Agreement. They would be liable for, and only liable for costs incurred, committed or budgeted (but unpaid) costs that could not be avoided by the remaining Councils.

Legal implications, climate change impacts and next steps with an expected timeline had also been included in the report.

His Worship advised there was a meeting with the Minister of Local Government on Wednesday 19 February. It was felt rural Councils were being shut out of the overall water services proposal.

The Chief Executive clarified what the Council was being asked to do. If the Council decided to go down the Local Government Act (LGA) route, it would still need to meet the requirements of the water services legislation.

Cr Fraser appreciated the report and asked where the Southland District Council was given it was talking about amalgamation. His Worship said Invercargill City, Southland District and Queenstown Lakes District Councils had all been invited to join the Group of Councils but preferred to stand alone. Cr Fraser asked if another Council could be added in easily. His Worship said they could be added in. However, the further along the process the Group went meant that any new Council would not be able to relitigate previous decisions. There had to be some flexibility to an extent. The Chief Executive said the financial modelling had been done on the basis of the four Councils involved and any additional member meant that it would have to be recalculated. The Group wanted to avoid rejigging work if it could.

Cr P McPhail asked about the budget. The Chief Executive said there was transition funding available to the Council from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) that had not yet been drawn down. It would be used. Cr Gardyne clarified it was about \$140k? Cr Hovell asked in terms of the agreement, an executive group was to be established. He asked if there was any benefit in appointing the Council's representative at the meeting. His Worship suggested appointing a Councillor and he thought either Cr Gardyne as Chair of the Assets and Infrastructure Committee or Cr Phillips. There would be quite a lot of time required. Cr Hovell said the Council had a responsibility to ratepayers and although the changes were being imposed by the Government, if the Council got to a certain point in the process and the economic benefits did not stack up what happened? The Chief Executive said there would be a decision required at the March meeting when the financials would be available and the Council had to make a decision to stay in or opt out. If, after looking at the financials, the Council

decided it was not a prudent decision to remain in the joint Group, it would need to opt out and go alone. She added the Otago-Southland group was the only one currently formed in the South Island. His Worship said the numbers kept changing because of delays from the DIA and the standards. The Chief Executive added the DIA was happy to review the Group's financials.

Cr Dickson said there was a huge implication for the community financially. Would there be an opportunity for them to be aware of the costs? The Chief Executive said consultation would be undertaken on a similar basis to the Long Term Plan.

Cr R McPhail clarified the costs were quartered, but once set up, it would be population based. The Chief Executive said the Mayors had agreed to equal shares between the Councils involved. Cr R McPhail said there were no disadvantages with the consultation process. He asked if there was nothing that could haunt the Council? The Chief Executive said the consultation process proposed was a little easier than the LGA route. Cr R McPhail said the process had not yet been tested but it would obviously be set up for it to be easy to facilitate. The Chief Executive said it was more intuitive and efficient.

Cr Fraser said there were other members who may be suitable for the Council representative. He suggested Cr P McPhail. Cr P McPhail thanked Cr Fraser, but declined.

Cr R McPhail suggested Cr Phillips had shown great passion with water services and would be a good person to represent the Council on the panel.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Fraser, seconded by Cr Gardyne, THAT the Council receive and note *Local Water Done Well - Otago Southland Joint Group of Councils*,

- a) agree to enter into the Otago Southland Joint Group of Councils Commitment Agreement;**
- b) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to sign the Otago Southland Joint Group of Councils Commitment Agreement as set out in *Attachment 1* on behalf of Gore District Council;**
- c) accept that the Council relies on the alternative requirements for decision-making and consultation set out in sections 61 and 64 of the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 in accordance with section 58(a)(i); and**
- d) appoint Cr Phillips as its representative on the Council's Executive Group.**

2025/06

Cr Phillips thanked the Council for its support and said he would do his utmost. He thanked those involved for the report presented.

His Worship acknowledged and congratulated Cr Phillips on being awarded the King’s Service Medal in the New Year’s honours list.

RESOLVED on the motion of His Worship, seconded by Cr MacDonell, **THAT** the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

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	Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of the resolution
<p>4.1 Confirmation of the minutes of the public excluded Council meeting held on Tuesday 17 December 2024.</p>		<p>The public conduct of this part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which there is good reason for it being withheld. Section 48(1)(a)</p>
<p>5.1 Draft 2025-2034 Long Term Plan Consultation Document</p>	<p>This report is CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with section 46A (8) and 46A (9) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, being a report that the Chief Executive of the Gore District Council reasonably expects will be discussed with the public excluded. To enable the Council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities – Section 7 (2)(h)); and</p> <p>To maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members or officers or employees of any local</p>	<p>The public conduct of this part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which there is good reason for it being withheld. Section 48(1)(a)</p>

	authority in the course of their duty – Section 7(2)(f)(i))	
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This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public.

AND THAT those in attendance be permitted to remain at the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 5.12pm

6.2 Confirmation of Minutes – Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2025

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, held in the Council Chambers, civic administration building, 29 Bowler Avenue, Gore, on Tuesday 11 February 2025, at 4.08pm.

Present His Worship the Mayor (Mr Ben Bell), Cr MacDonell (Chairman), Crs Gardyne, P McPhail, R McPhail, Reid, Stringer (via Teams) and independent member, Mr Michael Chamberlain.

In attendance Crs Hovell, McKenzie and Phillips were in attendance, together with Crs Dickson and Fraser (from 4.38pm), the Chief Executive (Ms Debbie Lascelles), General Manager Corporate Support (Ms Lornae Straith), General Manager Critical Services (Mr Jason Domigan), Governance Manager (Susan Jones), Strategy and Policy Advisor (Mr Leon Mitchell), People and Culture Partner (Mr Prince Manral), Governance and Corporate Support Manager (Mrs Amanda Drew), senior Communications Officer (Ms Bonnie Mager) and four members of the public in the gallery.

1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No specific conflicts of interest were declared. Cr R McPhail advised he was a member of the Gore RSA Executive Committee with a potential conflict with clause 6.1 – proposal to roll over the TAB Venue and Class 4 Gambling policies.

2. QUARTERLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024 (SC3948)

A memo had been received from the General Manager Corporate Support together with a quarterly treasury report as at 31 December 2024, prepared by Bancorp. The report had been circulated with the agenda.

In the three months to 31 December 2024, the Council had refinanced \$8.5m short term (commercial paper) borrowing. The Council's total borrowing at 31 December 2024 was \$55.1m. The Council's cost of funds (inclusive of the bank line fee) as at 31 December 2024 was 4.04%. This was down from 4.77% as at 31 December 2023.

The Council had very little headroom until the debt ceiling was reached. It would be mitigated by the Council decision in December 2024 to obtain a credit rating to extend the debt limit.

Mr O'Connor was in attendance via Teams and provided an update. He advised long term interest rates had bottomed out and the markets had factored in a Trump win in

the United States. After that election, there had been some fluctuation in interest rates. In New Zealand, the GDP data had been released in December, which was worse than expected. Since Christmas, the inflation data remained unchanged at 2.2%. He thought it fair to say the country still had at least six months of relatively difficult economic trading conditions. Some Councils in the North Island had reported an increase in rates arrears by more than 30%. An improved economic outlook was expected in the second half of the year. The Official Cash Rate was expected to reduce further at the next review.

Mr O'Connor said the amount of fixed rate cover had been increased and his focus over the next few months was to build on it. The cost of funds was forecast to fall to about 3.3%.

Mr Chamberlain asked at what point in time would the Council be able to lock in a 4% yield. Mr O'Connor thought for swaps starting in three months time, for a period of 3 years, the rate was 3.55% which would equate to a total cost of funds at around 4%. Quite a lot of debt could be locked in. Mr Chamberlain said given everything that was currently going on in the United States, there would have to be a high probability of interest rates going up which would likely mean an increase in interest rates in New Zealand. Mr O'Connor was not sure. New Zealand was at a slightly different stage in the interest rate cycle. Mr Chamberlain said the important thing was to use the Council's position in the cycle to lock in a low interest rate. Cr Gardyne said the LGFA borrowing rates were 4.07% out to May 2028 which gave three years at just over 4%. Mr O'Connor said to take advantage of that, the Council needed to have more debt. The Council would get the same result using interest rate swaps.

His Worship asked with the movement towards water CCOs and the proposal to borrow for a longer period of time through the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA), did he foresee the LGFA rates changing? Mr O'Connor said Councils could borrow out to 2037 using the LGFA. That would not change with CCOs. The LGFA had invested bonds but not many Councils had taken advantage of them.

Mr Chamberlain said the report noted the Council would get a credit rating. He asked what the process was and the timeframe. The General Manager Corporate Support said Bancorp had been engaged to assist. The timeframe was to have the rating in place by 30 June 2025 as it was a key assumption in the Long Term Plan (LTP). Mr O'Connor said the process would usually take 2-3 months but it would be in place by 30 June. Mr Chamberlain asked what the cost was to obtain the rating and the cost to maintain it going forward. Mr O'Connor was not able to disclose the figures in a public meeting. His Worship said it had been discussed at a Council meeting so the information could be provided to Mr Chamberlain.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Michael Chamberlain, seconded by Cr Reid, THAT the Committee receive and note the Quarterly Treasury Management report as at 31 December 2024.

Mr O'Connor departed the meeting at 4.32pm

3. AGED DEBT PROFILE OVERVIEW (SC3700)

A report from the Management Accountant had been received that provided an update of the current aged debt profile.

As at 31 December, there were two debtors with overdue balances of more than \$5k and outstanding for 90+ days, totalling \$126,879. The Council's aged receivables for the month of December totalled \$749,416.

As at 31 December, there were outstanding rates arrears of \$529,803 which was 1.70% of the total rates balance. The total amount of outstanding rates arrears that DMC was managing totalled \$526,600.

A dashboard detailing a summary of the Council's aged debtors as at 31 December 2024 had been circulated with the agenda.

Cr Gardyne asked about the debtor that was now in liquidation. The General Manager Corporate Support said paperwork had been received to file with the liquidator by the end of February. She was not hopeful of receiving the full amount. Cr Reid referred to the rates rebate scheme and asked if there had been an increase uptake. The General Manager did not have the numbers at hand but staff had received more interest in the scheme.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr P McPhail, seconded by Michael Chamberlain, THAT the Committee receive and note the aged debtors report.

4. GORE AND MATAURA DWQAR SUMMARY 2024 (SC4095)

A report had been received from the 3 Waters Operations Manager informing the Committee on end of year water compliance. Under the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQAR), the Council was required to report against some of the rules at the end of each calendar year.

During 2024, the Council had employed a second Compliance Officer to assist with the increasing workload that was required to meet the new regulations. The position had been anticipated and budgeted for as part of the 2021-2031 LTP. It also meant the

Council had the opportunity to start on some work that had been waiting in the background. In the summary report, it showed that the network rules for both Gore and Mataura had been met with no non-compliance days reported.

The Hilbre Avenue treatment plant did not meet the compliance rules for Protozoal as it did not have a barrier installed. The Mataura River crossing project, to have one water treatment plant supplying all of Gore residents, which was planned to be completed before the end of 2025, would rectify that.

The Mataura water treatment plant had had a successful year with two non-compliant days reported. That was due to elevated turbidity and at the time, the cable to show the UV dose had not been connected to prove there was a barrier in place. That had since been resolved. No issues had been reported for East Gore. All of the issues discussed in the report had previously been referred to the Committee as they occurred.

Cr Reid asked about the new analytical reporting and whether it was still on budget and on time. The Manager advised it was. Cr Reid asked if the Council engaged in any drug testing of the water supply. The Manager said no, but it did with the waste water, from time to time.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Michael Chamberlain, seconded by His Worship, THAT the Committee receive and note the Gore and Mataura Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQAR) summary for 2024.

Crs Dickson and Fraser now attended the meeting from 4.48pm.

5. AUDIT AND RISK DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME (SC3639)

A draft work programme had been circulated with the agenda by the General Manager Corporate Support. The programme provided an outline of the reports that were anticipated to be reported to the Committee throughout the year. A high-level status update for areas where there was no report on the meeting agenda had also been included.

Mr Chamberlain asked about policies and noted there were two on the agenda to be discussed. Did the Council have a register of policies for review and when they were due? He would like to see a register of policies and risks on the work plan for consideration on a regular basis. The General Manager said the Council now had a Strategy and Policy Advisor who was working through the policies and they would be brought forward. Mr Chamberlain asked to see the register on a regular basis and would it be the next meeting? The General Manager confirmed it would. Mr Chamberlain clarified it was the actual register he was seeking.

His Worship said originally the register was being dealt with by the Policy and Regulatory Committee but with changes in staff it had taken a lot longer than expected. He preferred policies to be handled by the Policy Committee but those with a higher risk profile were dealt with by the Audit and Risk Committee. Mr Chamberlain referred to the risk register and to make sure there was one that was maintained. It was about ensuring there was a process in place to ensure they were updated. He referred to issues such as the Long Term Plan (LTP) which did not seem to come before the Audit and Risk Committee until near the very end of the process and the Committee did not have the opportunity to ensure it was robust and solid. He asked how the LTP could be included on the work programme. The General Manager said the LTP was a Council wide document and often the timing did not allow it to be considered by Audit and Risk. It generally went to the full Council. Mr Chamberlain said his concern was the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee included consideration of the LTP and it had a responsibility to ask questions but it was not being given that opportunity. His Worship said the Council needed to think about how independent Committee members were informed. The LTP was a Council wide document but he acknowledged that Mr Chamberlain may not be as informed as the Council was. He thought there could be changes made. Mr Chamberlain had always viewed one of the biggest risks the Council had was rates increases on a regular basis and at an unsustainable level to the community. That was a risk to the Council. He wondered if it was appropriate for management to undertake analysis so that the Committee could understand the risks. His Worship said when developing an LTP there were affordability scales. The General Manager added the financial strategy dictated how the Council could operate over the period of the LTP. It was draft at the moment and would be presented to the Council in due course. His Worship said it would only be when the strategy was nearing a breach that Audit and Risk would be involved with mitigating it. Mr Chamberlain said if the Committee only got involved near breach, it was not doing its job. To him, there were a couple of risks the Council faced with rates increasing that the community could not afford to pay and the reputational risk. His Worship said a good insight was the aged debtors report, which had been considered earlier in the meeting, and did not show any concerns about people being unable to pay their rates.

Mr Chamberlain would also like to see key dates included on the work plan and having them reported on at each meeting. For example, financial statements and ensuring that management was doing what needed to be done. The General Manager said staff prioritised their time. Reports took resources and the timing of meetings did not always align. Mr Chamberlain was after key dates that represented risks. Failing to complete financial statements represented a risk. Did the Council have statutory timeframes for building consents? He was not sure they needed to be included and presumably management would provide a report if they were. His Worship agreed and suggested including some dates especially relating to the LTP. Timing of Audit and Risk meetings may not always align with the work programme. Mr Chamberlain would

prefer to have it sorted out. He added it was not helpful to have meeting dates changed at the last minute.

Cr R McPhail queried the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and the recent update from Environment Southland about flood data etc. He recalled it was to be reviewed in May. Had that been taken into consideration? The General Manager Critical Services said the BCP was currently being reviewed. It was not just about flood management but about any risk or potential shutdown in the organisation. It would be reviewed on a regular basis and would be considered in May.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Reid, seconded by Cr P McPhail, THAT the Committee receive and note the draft work programme.

6. LGOIMA REQUESTS – JULY 2024 TO JANUARY 2025 (SC4009)

A report on the number of Local Government Official Information Act (LGOIMA) requests received since 1 July had been provided to the Committee. A total of 47 requests had been processed since the beginning of the 2024-25 financial year. Three requests required additional time due to the substantial collation of information, third party involvement and legal reviews. There were currently six active requests due for response before 28 February. These had been detailed in the report. The General Manager Corporate Support advised one ratepayer had lodged 11 separate requests.

Cr Hovell understood under the Local Government Act (LGA), the Council had the ability to charge. Had there been any charge made for LGOIMA requests? The General Manager said there had been a major request that had been charged. Charging was now being considered more often as some requests took a lot of time.

Mr Chamberlain referred to an outstanding request relating to unelected members of which he was one and understood it had been responded to.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Michael Chamberlain, seconded by Cr Gardyne, THAT the Committee receive and note the LGOIMA request report – July 2024-January 2025.

7. PROPOSAL TO ROLL OVER THE TAB VENUE AND CLASS 4 GAMBLING POLICIES (SC0110)

A report had been received from the Strategy and Policy Advisor advising of the need to roll-over the existing TAB Venue and Class 4 Gambling policies. Both policies were due for review in August 2024. Rolling over the existing and unchanged policies would not trigger the special consultative procedure requirement which meant Council staff would not be undertaking as many consultations in the first half of 2025 which was already prioritised for the Long Term Plan and bylaw consultations. The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) had confirmed that a proposal to roll-over the policies with

the intention to review formally later in 2025, would ensure the Council remained compliant with the DIA's requirement to have a current policy. Two options had been included in the report – roll over the existing policies, or undertake a full review of the policies now. Staff recommended rolling over the existing policies.

Cr Hovell asked when the last monitoring report had been completed on the policy. The General Manager said the relevant staff were not in the building. It would be checked and advised to him.

Mr Chamberlain said fundamentally there was nothing wrong with the policy so he considered it appropriate to roll it over and review it in the next three years. He wondered if clause b) of the recommendation was relevant. It might be better to formally review the policy in one or two years time. He proposed clause b) be removed.

The Advisor said the policy had been reviewed but had not been put forward for decision as it needed to be consulted on. The intention was to put it on hold until after the LTP and it would not be an issue to undertake the consultation then. In response to Mr Chamberlain, the Advisor said there were a number of wording changes and legislative updates to ensure it was compliant and put out for consultation.

Cr Hovell said the monitoring report was an important part of the review. The risk to people in the community from gambling was of concern to him and he believed there needed to be a policy that was up to date and reflected the Council's attitude to gambling in the community.

Mr Chamberlain agreed a review later in the year should be in context with the outcome of the monitoring.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of His Worship, seconded by Cr R McPhail, THAT the Committee:

- a) receive and note the proposal to roll over the TAB Venue and Class 4 Gambling policies;**
- b) approve the Chief Executive to review and suggest amendments to the TAB Venue and Class 4 Gambling policies in late 2025; and**
- c) recommends to the Council the roll-over of the existing and unchanged TAB Venue and Class 4 Gambling policies.**

Mr Chamberlain moved as an amendment, THAT clause b) – *approve the Chief Executive to review and suggest amendments to the TAB Venue and Class 4 Gambling policies in late 2025* - be removed, with any subsequent review of the

current policy to include the outcome of the monitoring report as required by the policy.

The amendment was seconded by Cr P McPhail.

The General Manager Critical Services advised the DIA collated information from gaming venues around the country. The monitoring information required needed to be processed and put into a format that could be considered by the Council and the community.

The amendment was put and it was carried. The amendment then became the recommendation, was put and it was carried.

8. PROPOSAL TO ADOPT AN UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT CONDUCT POLICY (SC0111)

A report had been received from the Strategy and Policy Advisor advising of the need for a consistent approach for managing any Council staff interactions with customers who had higher demands on Council resources, or whose actions presented a physical or emotional risk to Council staff.

There had recently been a number of instances that could cause physical or emotional harm, ranging from threats of violence towards staff, down to repeated and increasingly hostile emails and social media interactions that could be interpreted as cyber stalking or cyber bullying. These were examples of behaviour of customers towards Council staff which had become unreasonable, vexatious or abusive and could have a disproportionate and unreasonable impact on staff, services, time or resources. To date, staff were navigating their response to the behaviour on a case by case basis, typically only escalating incidents that were perceived as being in the high risk category. The Council needed a clear policy outlining how it would take action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably impacted on the organisation, its staff or ability to allocate resources fairly across all the complaints it received.

The Council frequently received complaints and Local Government Official Information and Meeting Act (LGOIMA) requests. The vast majority of complaints or information requests were addressed satisfactorily.

There were a very small minority of complainants who made numerous complaints and regularly sought information requests. At times, that conduct placed stress and strain on Council resources. When this occurred, the complainant's conduct went beyond being reasonable, to being unreasonable. The Council's existing process for managing everyday customer complaints was not appropriate for managing unreasonable customer behaviour.

A formalised process to manage unreasonable complainant conduct was in line with best practice guidance produced by the Office of the Ombudsman in New Zealand and Australia. This position also aligned with a legal opinion obtained by Auckland Council in 2013 that the Council was not only empowered to adopt such a policy but, given the seriousness of the issue, was obligated to do so.

Three options had been included in the report – status quo, adopt the policy and procedures or adopt the policy without the procedures. Staff preferred option two.

Cr Hovell expected the policy was something that staff would work to and it was presented for noting by the Committee.

Mr Chamberlain said looking at it from a risk perspective, it represented significant risk from a reputational point of view with the community. The policy as drafted, came across as putting Council staff in a position as the prosecutor, judge and jury. He thought that was unhealthy and had a risk of making situations that were awkward even more so, and inflammatory. He encouraged the Council to revisit the policy and look to shorten it. He thought most members of the public would struggle to understand and work through it. It was complex and long-winded. He suggested it should be in plain English and have procedures separated from the policy. He agreed it was more of an internal policy. He believed the content had the ability to impact adversely on the Council's reputation.

Cr P McPhail agreed with Mr Chamberlain. He asked who decided when an issue happened what the reaction should be and was it referred to a senior staff member? He thought it was convoluted.

The General Manager Corporate Support said the finer details of the procedures were still being worked through but the policy had been put in front of the Committee to inform it of the repeated behaviours being experienced by staff from members of the community. Cr R McPhail thought there needed to be support for the staff. A lot of the people making vexatious complaints knew their rights but did not know their obligations. There was a right of appeal if necessary. He thought it was important to have something in place to deal with the issues being faced. Cr Reid agreed and said the staff had been subject to vexatious behaviour. She asked if there were enough security cameras in place and were they fit for purpose. His Worship asked that security cameras not be discussed in public meeting.

Mr Chamberlain said the policy had been designed for recidivist offenders but that was not what it said. He encouraged management to go through the policy and ensure it targeted what the intention was. With the Ombudsman, the Council was not the Supreme Court, but it was the prosecutor, judge and jury. In response to His Worship, Mr Chamberlain said the policy needed to be very clear and targeted to protect Council staff from poor behaviour, particularly when the behaviour was either physical

or mental. A one-off situation from someone getting angry should not result in them being banned. The way the policy was worded in some references, if someone did one bad thing that impacted on a staff member, they would be banned. The General Manager said there had been incidents where staff had been threatened and members of the public had to step in. The offending person had been trespassed and the Police were involved. She emphasised a decision would not be made by one person and each incident would be assessed on a case by case basis. Mr Chamberlain said if that was the intention, that might work but he believed the public would read it quite differently.

His Worship recommended THAT the Committee receive and note the proposal to adopt an Unreasonable Complainant Conduct policy;

- a) approve the Chief Executive to make any amendments to the policy, as suggested by the Audit and Risk Committee, prior to it going to the Council; and**
- b) recommend to the Council the adoption of the Unreasonable Complainant Conduct policy.**

The recommendation was seconded by Cr R McPhail.

His Worship echoed the comments of Crs McPhail and Reid about the increased amount of flak staff received. He had seen how patient staff had been. He wanted to make it clear to the public that the policy was not some sort of gagging order or restriction of free speech. It absolutely was not. It was when situations became abusive and repetitive that staff needed to be protected. They should not have to put up with repeated abuse from the public.

Mr Chamberlain said as it stood, he would vote against the recommendation. If it was changed to require the Chief Executive to make any amendments and if the comments made at the meeting were taken into account he would be satisfied. His view was the policy needed to be revised.

Mr Chamberlain moved as an amendment, THAT the Committee receive and note the proposal to adopt an Unreasonable Complainant Conduct policy;

- a) require the Chief Executive to make any amendments to the policy, as suggested by the Audit and Risk Committee, prior to it going to the Council; and**
- b) recommend to the Council the adoption of the Unreasonable Complainant Conduct policy.**

The amendment was seconded by Cr Gardyne.

His Worship was struggling to see the difference in changing “approve” to “require” and if Mr Chamberlain was satisfied seeing the policy before it went to the Council. Mr Chamberlain did not believe the Audit and Risk Committee needed to approve the policy. He accepted there needed to be a policy, but ultimately it was up to management to determine it. The policy as drafted needed to have greater protection for the public than it had and state its intention which it did not. He was happy if did not come back to the Committee as he had confidence in management to get the policy right.

The amendment was put and it was carried. The amendment became the recommendation, was put and it was carried.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr MacDonell, seconded by Cr Gardyne **THAT** the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

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:

<i>General subject of each matter to be considered</i>	<i>Reason for passing this resolution</i>	<i>Ground(s) under Section 48(1) for the passing of the resolution</i>
<p>1. Update on the recommendations made by Deloitte as part of the audit of the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2024.</p>	<p>1. To maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to members or officers or employees of any local authority in the course of their duty (s 7(2)(fi)); and</p> <p>2. To maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such members, officers, employees, and persons from improper pressure or harassment (s 7(2)(fii)).</p> <p>3. To prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage. (s7(2)(j)).</p>	<p>The public conduct of this part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which there is good reason for it being withheld. Section 48(1)(a)</p>

AND THAT those in attendance be permitted to remain at the meeting.

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public.

The meeting concluded at 5.28pm

6.3 Confirmation of Minutes – Assets and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4 March 2025

Minutes of a meeting of the Assets and Infrastructure Committee, held in the Council Chambers, civic administration building, 29 Bowler Avenue, Gore, on Tuesday 4 March 2025, at 4.00pm.

Present His Worship the Mayor (Mr B R Bell), Cr Gardyne (Chairperson), Crs Fraser, MacDonell, McKenzie, P McPhail, Phillips, Stringer and independent member, Mr David Prentice (via Teams).

In attendance The Chief Executive (Ms Debbie Lascelles), General Manager Critical Services (Mr Jason Domigan), General Manager Corporate Support (Ms Lornae Straith), Governance Manager (Susan Jones), Roading Asset Manager (Mr Murray Hasler), 3 Waters Consultant (Mr Matthew Bayliss, Pattle Delamore Partners), 3 Waters Operations Manager (Mr Aaron Green), Governance and Corporate Support Manager (Mrs Amanda Drew), senior Communications Officer (Ms Bonnie Mager), Sustainability and Waste Project Officer (Mr Craig Sinclair) and the Director of WasteNet (Ms Fiona Walker) and five members of the public in the gallery.

1. 3 WATERS CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE REPORT (SC3446/SC2770/SC2771)

A report had been received from the 3 Waters Asset and Capital Projects Manager informing the Committee on the status of key 3 Waters capital projects. Updates on the following capital projects had been included in the agenda:

- Gore and Mataura wastewater consent renewal project;
- Mataura River crossing project; and
- Hilbre Avenue site development project.

Gore and Mataura wastewater consent renewal project

Mr Bayliss said the national water standards had been released the previous week and were out for consultation.

Cr P McPhail asked how much change was proposed in the standards and what track should the Council take? What was the cost if any changes were required?

The General Manager Critical Services said in terms of quantifying what the standards may mean, it was important to remember the standards were a proposal and there was still reliance on the Water Services Bill that needed to be enacted. The process initially was for staff to understand the standards and what they may potentially mean

for the Council from an implementation point of view. A conversation may need to be had with Environment Southland to gain an understanding with the resource consent applications and what steps the Council should take.

Cr P McPhail asked if there was a risk to the Council if the affected parties did not agree with any changes. The General Manager said possibly, but it depended where the standards landed. The purpose of the standards was to set an acceptable level of discharge. The Council would probably need to have discussions with some of the key stakeholders.

Cr Phillips hoped the standards may save the Council money and make the process easier. The report that was tabled in March 2024 stated there was no certainty about the performance measures. Cr Gardyne asked how close the Council was to the standards? Mr Bayliss said an initial assessment had been undertaken and it appeared Mataura would already meet the standards. Gore would require an upgrade on a similar scale to what had been proposed in the consent application. Waikaka had not been looked at but the standards were targeted at ensuring smaller schemes did not have to undergo significant upgrades.

His Worship asked if there was a timeframe for a report back to the Council on the standards. The General Manager hoped to have something for the next Council meeting. Quantifying costs was a little more difficult. Not having to upgrade Mataura would be a saving.

Mataura River crossing project

Mr Bayliss said a detailed construction programme had been developed and site works would be commenced in the not too distant future. Actual drilling works were expected to commence around July-August and to have the entire project completed by the end of the year.

Cr Fraser understood the Council had to be close to being finished by 31 December. Was the Council at risk of being in trouble if the project was not completed by then? Mr Bayliss said Taumata Arowai initially set the deadline and the project was on track to meet it. While the completion date had been pushed out, with having everything locked in with the construction, he was confident the drilling work would be completed within the timeframe. He was also confident the interconnecting pipeline would also be completed within the timeframe. If staff became concerned about not meeting the deadline, there would be a conversation with Taumata Arowai and as long as there was good progress being made, he was confident that there would be some flexibility. The 3 Waters Operations Manager added he was in regular contact with Taumata Arowai and it was happy with the timeline. Cr Gardyne noted the drilling work would be undertaken in the winter months. Mr Bayliss said Hadlee and Brunton had allowed for an extensive gravel pad to be built up on the river to provide a good working area which should mitigate any issues with working conditions.

In response to Cr Phillips, Mr Bayliss said there had been a lot of Geotech work undertaken and there was potential for the conditions to vary from the sides of the river to under it. It was something to be aware of and be able to deal with it.

In response to Cr MacDonell, Mr Bayliss said following the Council's decision to proceed with the drilling, Beca had started updating the design of the interconnecting pipework. A tender to the market would be released shortly and a contractor engaged for the works to follow the drilling component.

In response to Mr Prentice, Mr Bayliss said an extensive risk assessment had been undertaken including cost control and which party the various risks sat with. Mr Prentice asked for a copy of the detailed risk register with the agreed allocation of cost. Mr Bayliss said Hadlee and Brunton was cautious about publicly sharing it but he would send it to Mr Prentice.

Hilbre Avenue site development project

Cr Gardyne asked if water could not be supplied from East Gore. Was the extra storage required? Mr Bayliss said Beca had originally done some initial design work and a 2,000m³ reservoir had been proposed. A minimum of 24 hours storage would be desirable at peak demand. Any future growth would require additional storage requirements. The other factor was the cost of the reservoir was generally proportional and did not necessarily increase depending on tank size.

In response to Cr Stringer, Mr Bayliss said the existing reservoir capacity was 1,000m³. Cr Phillips said the cost to undertake the project was estimated at between \$5-6 million. He was concerned at the increasing costs. If there needed to be a continuous supply of water while the development work was being undertaken, he could not understand why a reservoir could not be installed in the lower area of the site and use it as a buffer for future development. He would prefer to go back to square one. The tower was to be demolished and the community had not yet been consulted. The 3 Waters Operations Manager said there was a plan to have 30,000 litre tanks on site while the on-site work was being undertaken. Cr P McPhail asked why 30,000 litre tanks could not be installed permanently. Cr Gardyne thought it was common to have tank farms. Mr Bayliss said it was common to a certain volume, but 2,000m² equated to 66 30,000 litre tanks. He pointed out a large portion of the project cost was demolition, removal of asbestos and changes to the pipework. The cost of \$5-6 million may seem a reasonably generous budget and he was hopeful it would come in lower than that. He suggested the Council progress to where it had reasonable certainty around the budget particularly around demolition and asbestos removal and compare the cost of a reservoir and tanks. Even having 30 tanks on site and the associated pipework would not be optimal. The existing reservoir would need to be demolished at some point and it would compromise the site layout trying to squeeze things in. Cr Gardyne said there was room for another reservoir at East Gore. Mr Bayliss said the new treatment plant had been built where the second reservoir had been proposed

to go. From a network resilience perspective, the Council would be better to have a second reservoir at the Hilbre Avenue site.

Cr Phillips was concerned at the cost. An estimate of \$5-6 million was without the demolition of the tower. He asked for some good analysis to be undertaken. The General Manager said the 3 Waters Capital Projects and Asset Manager had done some work in consultation with some of the contractors and that was potentially part of their costs and incorporated into the project. He reiterated that staff understood the cost implications and were working to ensure the best outcome. The costs were high level and once more detailed work had been completed, they would be refined.

Cr McKenzie was not aware the Council was going to spend so much money on tanks. Cr Gardyne said it had been part of previous discussions.

Cr Reid attended the meeting from 4.45pm

Cr Gardyne suggested the project may potentially fall into the 2027 financial year when there may possibly be a CCO. The Chief Executive said until there was some certainty with 3 Waters, whatever implementation plans there were for water services the Council needed to ensure there was an appropriate transition for whatever projects were underway and that would have to be taken into account. She thought the staff needed to present a business case with options so the Council could make an informed decision.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr P McPhail, seconded by Cr MacDonell, THAT the Committee receive and note the 3 Waters capital projects update report and attachments.

2. 3 WATERS LEVELS OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE MEASURES UPDATE

A quarterly report on the 3 Waters levels of service had been received from the 3 Waters Operations Manager. Overall, the Council was meeting its performance measures that were set in the Long Term Plan. The only ongoing issue was around the respond to stormwater flooding which had been identified in the first quarter reporting to the Committee in November 2024. There had been no additional issues since that report.

His Worship commented he had received good feedback from the public with recent responses from the 3 Waters staff. Cr Phillips added he had also had good feedback following the recent fire brigades waterway challenge held in Matura.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of His Worship, seconded by Cr Stringer, THAT the Committee receive and note the Levels of Service performance measures update.

3. MAJOR CAPITAL ROADING WORKS PROGRESS REPORT – FEBRUARY 2025 (SC2398)

A report had been received from the Roading Asset Manager providing an update, at mid-financial year, on progress with the most significant roading capital works activities programmed and budgeted within the Gore District for the 2024-25 year. Progress was tracking well. The status of those activities at the end of January 2025 was reported as follows:

- Rural maintenance metalling – ahead of programme.
- Rural drainage renewals – on target.
- Reseals – yet to start. Due for completion by end of March. Preparations complete.
- Bridges – single bridge renewal programmed complete. Component replacements progressing.

Details on progress for rural maintenance metalling, rural drainage renewals, reseals and bridges had been included in the report. A copy of a map showing progress with the metalling programme and a list of reseal sites had been circulated with the agenda.

Cr Fraser asked what checks and balances were in place with gravelling rural roads. The Manager said there were two types of re-metalling work. One was programmed where the whole road was completed on a four year cycle. The second was spot metalling where there were bare spots for various reasons. Cr P McPhail referred to the drainage comments and was concerned at the delay in the contractor accessing dump sites for excavated spoil. He had visited a number of rural roads and a lot had grass growing on them. The Manager said there was a limited budget for the work. The highest priority was given to sealed roads to ensure they remained sealed.

Cr R McPhail attended the meeting from 4.55pm

In response to Cr Stringer, the Manager said there would be health and safety issues with a farmer using a digger to remove spoil from the roadside, but staff could not monitor everyone. The General Manager preferred that residents not take road maintenance into their own hands. The Council had secured additional funding for road drainage and staff would continue to push the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) for additional funding of road projects. The staff had to be allowed to programme the work as best they could and be as efficient as possible. If residents identified issues, they were encouraged to lodge customer service requests.

The Manager said the same funding also covered the replacement of defective culverts. With the frequency of higher intensity rain events, it had brought to a head issues with a number of culverts particularly in rural areas where the capacity of

culverts were too small. The Council had had to replace a number of culverts with larger and more complicated culverts which had depleted the drainage funds.

Cr Phillips would like to see a report about progress with the single bridge renewal programme, particularly with a reduction in available funding. The Manager said the replacement of a bridge on Otama Valley Road had exhausted available funds to the extent of not being able to fully replace another bridge in the current financial year. The Council had expressed a wish to renew a single bridge each year. Any surplus funds from the current financial year would be applied to next year's programme. Staff were looking to use alternative means of providing longer-term structural components of bridges and possible divestment.

His Worship acknowledged the progress being made on the roading capex work programme which was a very good result.

Crs Hovell and Dickson now attended the meeting from 5.07pm

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Fraser, seconded by Cr Phillips, THAT the Committee receive and note the report.

4. WASTE MINIMISATION ACT REVIEW – LETTER OF SUPPORT (SC0708)

A report had been received from the General Manager Critical Services that provided an opportunity to review the request from industry body, WasteMINZ to seek a review of the Waste Minimisation Act with full consultation. In April 2024, Minister for the Environment, Penny Simmonds, indicated the Government's intention to review the Waste Minimisation Act (WMA). Since then, a partial review had been undertaken.

In November 2022, the then Government agreed to five policies to improve household recycling:

- standardising the materials collected in household recycling;
- introducing a Council household recycling service to all urban areas;
- introducing a Council household food scraps service to all urban areas;
- data reporting for private household recycling providers; and
- a performance standard for household recycling and food scraps diversion.

Of the five policies, only standard materials for household recycling had come into effect. The Government had agreed that the other four policies would no longer proceed. The Government would continue to support Councils to introduce recycling and food scraps collections through the Waste Minimisation Fund.

Industry body, WasteMINZ had indicated significant concern with the lack of consultation and participation of the local government sector in the review. WasteMINZ was seeking letters of support from Councils for the Government to

proceed with a full review of the WMA with a transparent and consultative process involving all stakeholders and for a commitment of making no changes to the WMA or waste levy settings outside of the review process. A copy of the draft letter from WasteMINZ had been circulated with the agenda.

His Worship was miffed as to why it would be beneficial to support the review request. Point 10 in the report stated the main changes were of minimal impact. He questioned whether the Council needed to be involved. He thought the letter was quite direct. The General Manager said staff would have been remiss by not presenting the request to the Committee. Cr Fraser had no problem sending the letter.

Cr Fraser recommended THAT the Committee:

- a) receive the report “Waste Minimisation Act Review letter of support”;**
- b) note the proposed draft letter provided by WasteMINZ; and**
- c) recommend to the Council that the Mayor sends the proposed letter of support for a review of the Waste Minimisation Act, with any noted changes.**

Cr McPhail concurred. The Council needed to get behind the request.

The recommendation was seconded by Cr P McPhail.

His Worship said the letter asked for a full review of the WMA which would lead to more consultation and ultimately more rigor when there were reviews of other Acts such as Water Services. He said the point being made was that Councils should have been consulted and if it was successful, it would mean more work.

The recommendation was put and it was carried.

The meeting concluded at 5.15pm

7. Reports for Information

7.1 Presentation from Great South

The Chief Executive of Great South, Ms Chami Abeysinghe will be in attendance to present an update on the latest activities of Great South.

7.2 Mataura Community Board meeting minutes

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Susan Jones
Author title:	Governance Manager
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Tuesday, 11 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To provide the Council with a copy of the minutes of a Mataura Community Board meeting held on Monday 10 March 2025.
2. To recommend that the Council receive the minutes.

Recommendation

3. That the Council:
 - a) receive and note the minutes of the meeting, with the exception of item 6 (resignation of member) of the Mataura Community Board held on Monday 10 March 2025. Item 6 is subject to a separate report on the agenda under clause 8.1.

Attachment

Minutes of the meeting of the Mataura Community Board held on 10 March 2025.

Minutes of a meeting of the Mataura Community Board, held at the Mataura Elderly Citizens Centre, McQueen Avenue, Mataura, on Monday 10 March 2025, at 5.30pm.

Present Nicky Coats (Chairperson), Cr Phillips, Laurel Turnbull, Darren Matahiki and Steven Dixon.

In attendance His Worship the Mayor (Mr Ben Bell, from 5.52pm), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Keith McRobie), Roading Asset Manager (Mr Murray Hasler), Governance Manager (Susan Jones), Principal Roading Engineer (Mr Henri van Zyl), Corporate and Governance Manager (Mrs Amanda Drew), Facilities Administration Officer (Mr Neil Mair), Gemma O'Neill, Places and Spaces Lead, Active Southland (item 2 only), Steve Gear, General Manager Active Young People, Active Southland (item 2 only).

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Steven Dixon, seconded by Laurel Turnbull, THAT the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Mataura Community Board held on Monday 27 January 2025, as circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairperson as a true and complete record.

2. PRESENTATION FROM ACTIVE SOUTHLAND (SC3749)

Mrs Gemma O'Neill, Places and Spaces Lead and Steve Gear, General Manager Active Young People with Active Southland, were in attendance and provided an update on the organisation's intent on working with the Mataura community in the future. In 2023, consultation with the community had revealed a number of opportunities, some of which had been taken up by community organisations. Sport New Zealand, as part of its 2024-2028 Strategy would have increasing focus on supporting priority geographic communities to have equitable access to physical activity that contributed to not only their own wellbeing, but that of the community. Like all Regional Sports Trusts in New Zealand, Active Southland would be taking a strengths based, evidence led approach to supporting individuals and support groups in the community. It would be a partnership.

L Turnbull asked what Active Southland offered for the older community. There was no pool and some could not afford to travel to Gore to swim. She said the seniors in the community were missing out. Mr Gear agreed and said while Active Southland had traditionally been focused more on young people, the strategy did encourage a focus on the whole community. L Turnbull added the Community Centre had been built several years ago, but the Council charged too much that people could not afford to hire it. Mr Gear said there was a lot of strength and knowledge in the community amongst the senior members.

In response to the Chairperson, Mrs O'Neill said there was a Health Coach who worked across the Gore Medical Centre and Gore Health practices. The organisation was able to send staff to communities to help out with opportunities that may be identified.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Laurel Turnbull, seconded by Darren Matahiki, THAT the Board receive and note the report.

The Active Southland representatives departed the meeting at 5.45pm

3. TULLOCH PARK UPDATE (SC1570)

The Parks and Recreation Manager advised contractors were working to have the splash pad project completed by 19 March. It was hoped to have the official opening on 29 March. Eastern Southland Basketball was going to run a mini tournament on the day.

The contractors were connecting water and wastewater services on 12 March. Three seats from the Streets Alive project would be installed on the grass area. In terms of the opening event, the Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa funding received from Active Southland would cover the basketball tournament with basketballs and drink bottles to be given away. Food was not covered but perhaps a BBQ could be provided.

The Chairperson had been in touch with the National Public Health Service and it could provide Smokefree branded gazebos etc to use on the day. The organisation was keen to be involved. Representatives from the Y could also be involved.

The Chairperson asked about sunshade options. The Manager said there was no current budget for sunshade. Something permanent could be a significant cost. The one at Queen's Park was vandalised often. He thought it may cost about \$5-10k for suitable sunshade and there would need to be further investigation about options. There would be a security camera installed.

The Roading Asset Manager suggested there may be an opportunity for corporate sponsorship for sunshade.

His Worship now attended the meeting from 5.52pm.

Discussion ensued about potential local sponsors who could be approached to gauge interest in funding sunshade.

Cr Phillips acknowledged the work of the Parks staff for the work they completed at Tulloch Park in advance of the national Fire Brigade event held recently. The Park had been presented in an excellent condition. The Parks Manager said the Facilities

Administration Officer had also been involved. His Worship also acknowledged the work put into the splash pad project to date. It would be a great asset.

4. COSTER PARK CAMPERVAN DUMP STATION (SC0613)

The Parks and Recreation Manager advised the cost of shrub planting and a post and wire sheep fence around the dump station could be met from the Parks operations budget. The cost would be under \$1,000.

An image of the finished plantings and fence was tabled at the meeting. Camellias had been suggested.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Steven Dixon, seconded by Laurel Turnbull, THAT the suggestions of the Parks and Recreation Manager be progressed, noting the cost of a post and wire fence and plantings around the dump station would be met from the parks operations budget.

The Roading Asset Manager tabled an image of a sign to be installed to ensure trucks and trailers did not park near the dump station. Because the parking area was unsealed, there would be no markings. It was proposed to have a ten metre strip parallel to the river to enable vehicles to manoeuvre around the parking area. D Matahiki did not think there was enough room. The Manager said while the signage was not enforceable, he suggested trialling his proposal and if that did not work well, then perhaps a couple more signs would be required. In response to L Turnbull, he was in discussions with NZTA about the position of the signage on Bridge Street. He acknowledged the existing sign was difficult to see coming over the bridge. L Turnbull said there was a tree obscuring it. The Manager said options were being discussed with NZTA. The Chairperson asked if it would be better directing people down McQueen Avenue. The Manager agreed that was another option for discussion. The Facilities Officer said Senior Citizens used the parking area on Fridays and they would need to be consulted. The Chairperson noted the dump station was being well used.

5. ENTRANCE SIGNS (SC2696)

The Parks and Recreation Manager provided an update to the Board on its request for the trees to be removed from the northern entrance sign area. Images for the proposed plantings were tabled at the meeting. He expected the work to be completed within three months.

6. RESIGNATION OF MEMBER (SC3537)

A report had been received from the Governance Manager advising that the resignation of Colleen Lieshout as a member of the Maitara Community Board had been received on 23 February 2025. The resignation took immediate effect.

Section 117 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 outlined the process in the event of an extraordinary vacancy arising in a community board. If a vacancy occurred 12 months or less before the next triennial general election, the Board was required to determine by resolution that the vacancy would be filled by the appointment by the Board of a person who was qualified to be elected as a member, or that the vacancy was not to be filled.

The first unsuccessful candidate at the 2022 election for the Maitara Community board was Constance Waihape. The Board could determine to appoint Ms Waihape, subject to her agreement. There were four scheduled Board meetings remaining until the 2025 elections.

S Dixon said Colleen had done a lot of work for the Board. The Chairperson added she was still an active member of the community and was happy to help if needed.

Steven Dixon recommended THAT the Board

- a) receive and acknowledge with regret the resignation of Colleen Lieshout with effect from 23 February 2025; and**
- b) note that due to the next Local Government elections being less than 12 months away, in accordance with section 117 (3)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, that the vacancy not be filled.**

The recommendation was seconded by Darren Matahiki.

D Matahiki asked what the protocol in filling the vacancy. His Worship advised the Board's recommendation would need to be approved by the Council, approach the person and get their agreement. They would then need to be sworn in which may not happen until July or August.

His Worship said he thought the Board could struggle to get someone on board for about two months. Cr Phillips thought the Board would be remiss not to approach the highest unsuccessful candidate.

Laurel Turnbull moved as amendment THAT the Board

- a) receive and acknowledge with regret the resignation of Colleen Lieshout with effect from 23 February 2025; and**
- b) that in accordance with section 117 (3)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, that the highest unsuccessful candidate from the 2022 Maitara Community Board**

elections, Ms Constance Waihape, be appointed to fill the vacancy, subject to her agreement.

The amendment was seconded by Nicky Coats.

The amendment was put and it was carried. It then became the recommendation, was put and it was carried.

Cr Phillips thanked the 3 Waters staff for the work done on the water treatment plant. It had secured the future of the supply for Mataura and had been an excellent job completed.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 28 April 2025, at 5.30pm

The meeting concluded at 6.34pm

7.3 Management Accounts to 31 January 2025

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Michelle Nicholls
Author title:	Senior Finance Manager
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support/Chief Financial Officer
Report date:	Thursday, 6 March 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council on the financial performance of the Council for the seven months to 31 January 2025.

Recommendation

2. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the management accounts to 31 January 2025.

Executive Summary

3. The Council has recorded a \$531k deficit as at 31 January 2025. This is favourable (\$917k) compared to a budgeted deficit of \$1.448 million. The key drivers being the financial contributions received for the library redevelopment project and the second stage of the Kaiwera wind farm.
4. There are a number of other variances within the revenue and expenditure categories some favourable and unfavourable items of smaller value.

Context

5. The detail discussed in this report is to keep the committee informed and up to date with the financial performance of the Council through the provision of monthly management accounts.

Discussion

6. The management accounts to the 31 January 2025 contain the Council's overall position, and cost centres that have material variances that require an explanation.

References

Annual Plan 2024/25 (<https://www.goredc.govt.nz/council/official-documents/annual-plan>)

Annual Report 2023/24 (<https://www.goredc.govt.nz/council/official-documents/annual-report>)

Attachment

Management Accounts to 31 January 2025

**Gore District Council
Management Accounts to 31 January 2025**

**Statement of Income and Expenditure
For the 7 Months Ended 31 January 2025**

	Actuals \$000	Current Budget \$000	Variance \$000	Fav/ Unfav	Annual Current Budget \$000	% of Annual Budget
Income						
Rates	15,832	15,844	(12)	U	27,161	58%
Subsidies and grants	3,125	3,260	(135)	U	5,589	56%
Fees and charges	2,862	2,725	137	F	4,580	62%
Investment income	269	155	114	F	265	102%
Other income	1,094	124	970	F	212	516%
Internal overheads	6,150	6,136	14	F	10,519	58%
Income total	29,332	28,244	1,088	F	48,326	61%
Expenditure						
Employee costs	5,867	5,978	111	F	9,712	60%
Finance costs	1,643	1,462	(181)	U	2,506	66%
Depreciation	5,519	5,392	(127)	U	9,243	60%
Other expenses	10,684	10,724	40	F	18,513	58%
Internal overheads	6,150	6,136	(14)	U	10,519	58%
Expenditure total	29,863	29,692	(171)	U	50,493	59%
Surplus (deficit)	(531)	(1,448)	917	F	(2,167)	25%

Commentary on significant variances

Income

Subsidies and grants

Subsidies and grants are unfavourable \$135k. The key driver for the unfavourable variance in Roding (\$501k) is a timing difference and will come back as Roding's programme of work is completed over the coming months. The variance in Roding is partially offset by a favourable variance in Parks and Reserves due to the receipt of Better Off funding to cover capital expenditure on the redevelopment of Tulloch Park (\$324k). This project had been budgeted in the Council's 2021-2031 Long Term Plan to be scoped in the 2022/23 financial year.

Fees and charges

Fees and charges are favourable \$137k. This favourable variance is mainly due to higher than budgeted trade waste charges (\$82k) and transfer station charges (\$49k).

Other income

Other income is favourable by \$970k mainly due to financial contributions received. The final contribution from Mataura Valley Milk of \$196k was received for the library redevelopment project. A financial contribution of \$708k was also received for the Kaiwera Downs wind farm. In line with the Council's policy on Financial Contributions, this has been invested in a term deposit for 12 months to allow the Council time to consider what it should be allocated to.

Expenditure

Employee costs

Employee costs are favourable by \$111k. The favourable balance is attributed to a number of vacancies across the Council.

Finance costs (interest expense)

Finance costs are higher than budget by \$181k. The treasury advice received has indicated that interest rates have reached their current peak and should be starting to come back down.

**Income and Expenditure by Department
For the 7 Months Ended 31 January 2025**

Department	Income						Expenditure						Totals				
	Current			Fav / Unfav	Annual	% of	Current			Fav / Unfav	Annual	% of	Current			Annual	
	Actuals	Budget	Variance		Budget	Annual	Actuals	Budget	Variance		Budget	Annual	Actuals	Budget	Variance	Fav / Unfav	Budget
\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	
3 Waters	6,201	6,138	63	F	10,541	59%	6,591	6,831	240	F	11,643	57%	(390)	(693)	303	F	(1,102)
Aquatic Services and Stadiums	1,444	1,429	15	F	2,449	59%	1,507	1,505	(2)	U	2,526	60%	(63)	(76)	13	F	(77)
Arts and Heritage	621	606	15	F	1,039	60%	680	627	(53)	U	1,050	65%	(59)	(21)	(38)	U	(11)
Corporate and IT	4,673	4,522	151	F	7,752	60%	4,481	4,558	77	F	7,752	58%	192	(36)	228	F	-
Libraries	759	753	6	F	1,291	59%	842	788	(54)	U	1,318	64%	(83)	(35)	(48)	U	(27)
Parks and Reserves	3,460	3,154	306	F	5,406	64%	3,185	3,249	64	F	5,498	58%	275	(95)	370	F	(92)
Property	1,380	1,519	(139)	U	2,601	53%	1,422	1,567	145	F	2,672	53%	(42)	(48)	6	F	(71)
Regulatory	3,149	2,252	897	F	3,749	84%	3,589	2,910	(679)	U	4,924	73%	(440)	(658)	218	F	(1,175)
Roading	4,332	4,802	(470)	U	8,231	53%	4,596	4,587	(9)	U	7,845	59%	(264)	215	(479)	U	386
Solid Waste	2,161	2,011	150	F	3,447	63%	1,980	2,011	31	F	3,447	57%	181	-	181	F	-
Other	1,152	1,058	94	F	1,820	63%	990	1,059	69	F	1,818	54%	162	(1)	163	F	2
Total	29,332	28,244	1,088	F	48,326	61%	29,863	29,692	(171)	U	50,493	59%	(531)	(1,448)	917	F	(2,167)

Commentary on significant variances

3 Waters

The \$63k favourable variance in revenue for 3 Waters is largely due to higher than budgeted trade waste charges revenue of \$82k. Expenditure is favourable by \$240k across a number of areas, including chemicals (\$79k) and contractors/consultants (\$72k). This favourable variance is likely to reduce given the timing of purchases.

Corporate and IT

The \$151k favourable variance for Corporate and IT is largely due to higher than budgeted investment income of \$114k and higher than budgeted rates penalties revenue of \$20k. Expenditure is favourable (\$77k) across a number of areas including contractors and professional services (\$48k).

Parks and Reserves

Parks and Reserves is currently recording a favourable variance overall of \$370k. This favourable variance is largely due to central government's Better Off and NZ Lottery Board funding accessed this year for the redevelopment of Tulloch Park (\$324k). This income is offset by the capital expenditure.

Regulatory

Regulatory is currently recording a favourable variance overall of \$218k. Income is \$897k favourable due to the financial contributions received from Mataura Valley Milk and the Kaiwera Downs wind farm. Expenditure is higher than budgeted by \$679k due to higher than budgeted District Plan related expenditure (\$837k) offset by lower than budgeted contractor and professional services expenditure (\$143k) across other areas of Regulatory.

Roading

Roading is currently recording an unfavourable variance of \$479k. This is largely due to an unfavourable variance in income of \$470k. This is a timing difference and will come back as Roothing's programme of work comes into its busy period.

Solid Waste

Solid Waste is currently recording a favourable variance overall of \$181k. This favourable variance is largely due to higher than budgeted waste disposal levy received from the Ministry for the Environment (\$96k) and higher than budgeted transfer station charges (\$49k).

Other

The \$163k favourable variance in other activities is due to higher than budgeted revenue and lower than budgeted expenditure across a number of areas.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 January 2025

	Actuals 31 January 2025 \$'000	Annual Plan 30 June 2025 \$'000
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	5,435	2,820
Inventories	759	774
Other financial assets	2,596	1,721
Other current assets	645	8
Trade and other receivables	3,628	3,573
Current assets total	13,063	8,896
Non-current assets		
Infrastructure property, plant and equipment	540,542	578,050
Other financial assets	1,853	1,261
Non-current assets total	542,395	579,311
Assets total	555,458	588,207
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Other financial liabilities	-	295
Employee entitlements	688	1,038
Short term borrowings	15,000	13,500
Short term provisions	-	48
Trade and other payables	2,707	3,164
Current liabilities total	18,395	18,045
Non-current liabilities		
Long term borrowings	44,500	45,086
Long term provisions	66	66
Other financial liabilities	-	62
Non-current liabilities total	44,566	45,214
Liabilities total	62,961	63,259
Net assets	492,497	524,948
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	133,801	134,777
Reserves	358,696	390,171
Equity total	492,497	524,948

Capital Expenditure by Department For the 7 Months Ended 31 January 2025

Department	Actuals \$'000	Current Budget \$'000	Variance \$'000	Annual Current Budget \$'000	% of Annual Budget Spent
3 Waters	736	1,811	1,075	7,537	10%
Aquatic Services and Stadiums	3	106	103	362	1%
Arts and Heritage	98	-	(98)	-	0%
Corporate and IT	136	113	(23)	194	70%
Libraries	49	83	34	142	35%
Parks and Reserves	548	259	(289)	444	123%
Property	214	232	18	910	24%
Regulatory	51	44	(7)	75	68%
Roading	1,374	1,975	601	3,572	38%
Solid Waste	39	60	21	103	38%
Other	-	9	9	15	0%
Total	3,248	4,692	1,444	13,354	24%

Commentary on the capital expenditure

More detailed information on specific capital projects is included in reports to the Assets and Infrastructure Committee.

3 Waters

The Mataura River Crossing project had been budgeted to be completed this financial year (\$3.9m). The project started later than originally budgeted and will continue into the 2025/26 year.

Aquatic Services and Stadiums

The variance in Aquatic Services and Stadiums is largely due to the dive block and bulkhead improvements project which is currently on hold.

Arts and Heritage

The variance in Arts and Heritage is mainly due to a vehicle renewal which was budgeted for in the 2023/24 financial year, as well as Waikaka Valley Windmill related expenditure that is fully offset by funding received.

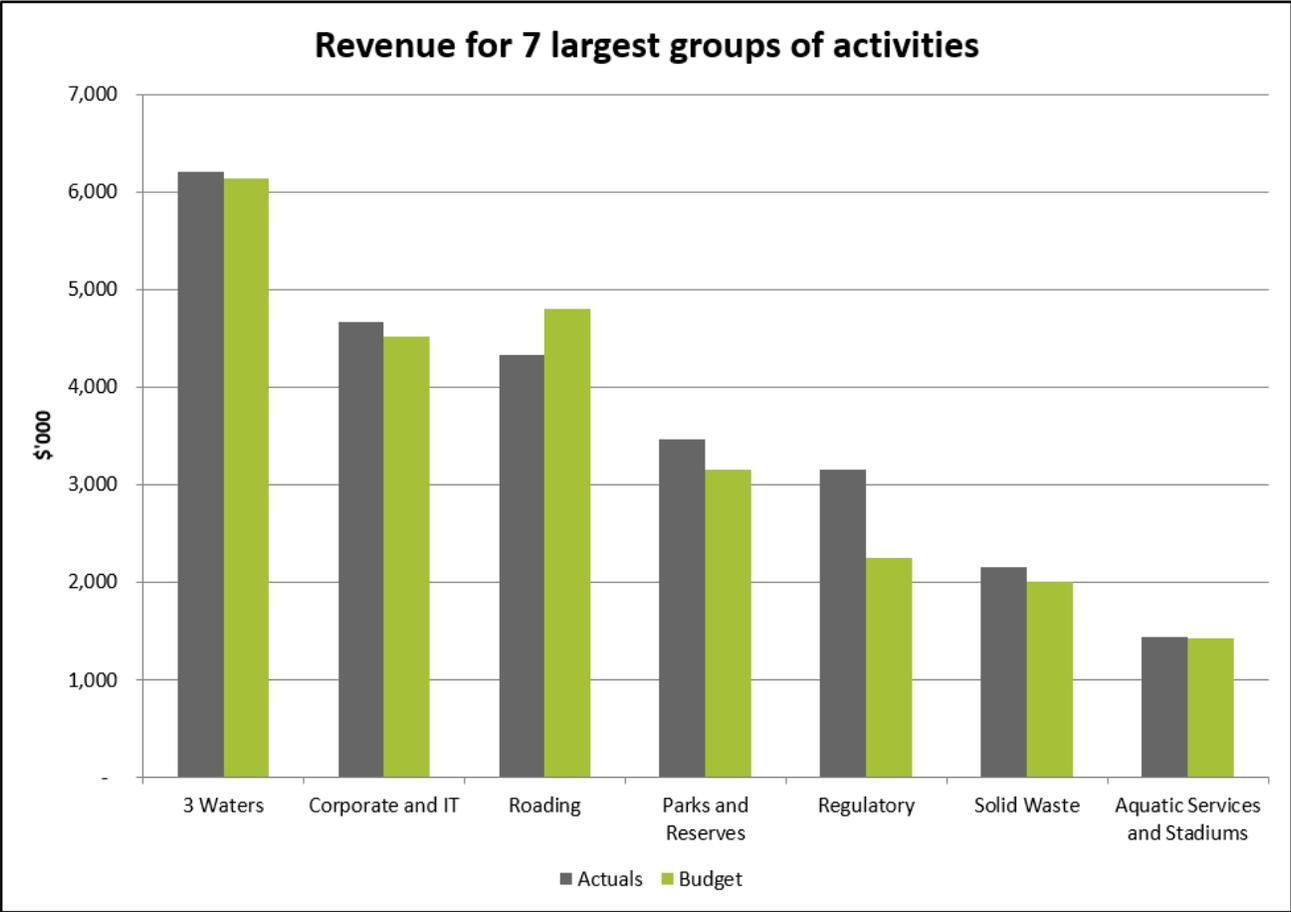
Parks and Reserves

Parks and Reserves are currently undertaking the redevelopment of Tulloch Park. Spend to date this financial year is \$324k. This expenditure is fully offset by Better Off funding as well as funding received from NZ Lotteries. The scoping of this project had been budgeted in the Council's 2021-2031 Long Term Plan to be undertaken in the 2022/23 financial year, with the project being activated with the receipt of external funding.

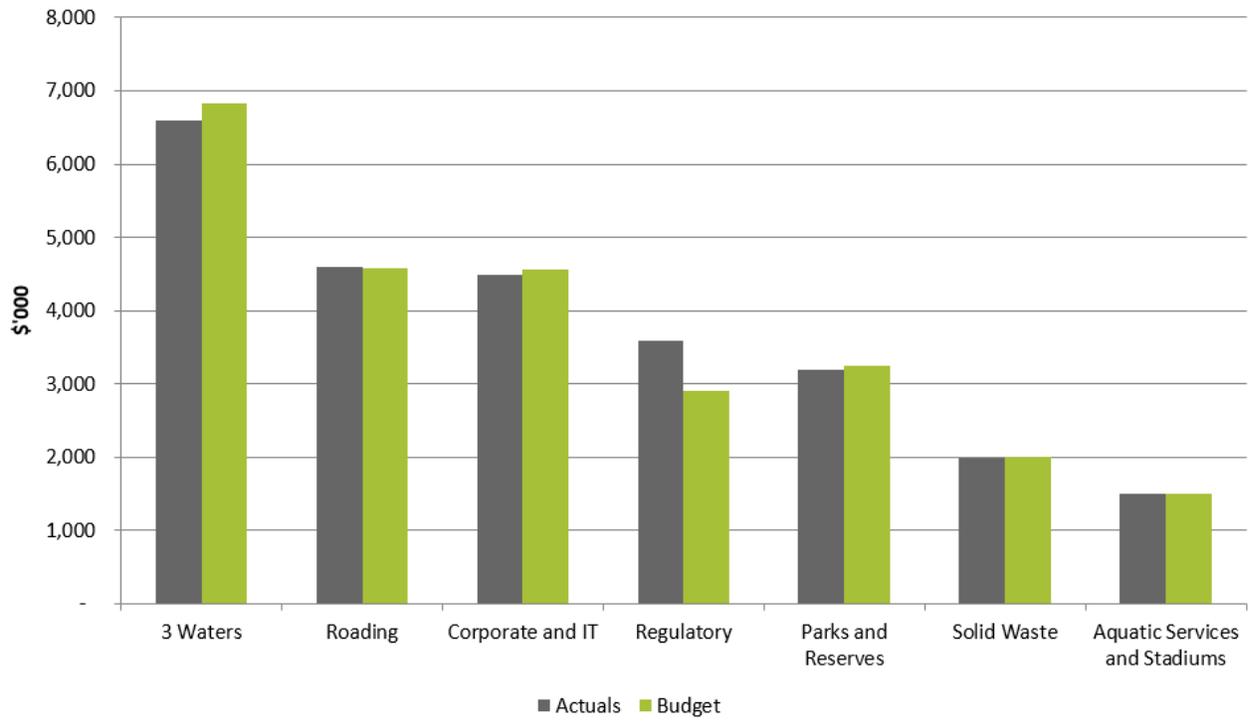
Roading

The variance in roading is largely due to a timing difference and will come back as the programme of work is completed in the coming months.

Additional graphs for information



Expenses for 7 largest groups of activities



7.4 Mayoral Report

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Emily Mason
Author title:	Mayoral Report - February
Report date:	Tuesday, 4 March 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council of the meetings/events that Mayor Bell has attended during February 2025, and for the Council to ask questions or provide updates.

Recommendation

2. That the Council:
 - a) Receive and note the Mayoral Report.

Mayor's update

3. Mayor Bell attended the following meetings/ events during February:
 - 31 January – Southland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meeting
 - 31 January – Meeting with Hon MP Mark Patterson
 - 1 February – Gore A&P Show
 - 3-7 February – Waitangi
 - 11 February – Oat Field Day
 - 13 February – Joint CCO Workshop (Dunedin)
 - 14 February – Great South Joint Shareholders Committee meeting
 - 15 February – MLT Moonshine Trail
 - 19 February – Meeting with Minister Watts (Queenstown)
 - 21 February – UFBA Opening Ceremony Maitua
 - 22 February – UFBA Awards Ceremony (Invercargill)
 - 23 February – On the Fly Festival
 - 24-25 February – National Council meeting (Wellington)
 - 26 February – Young Elected Members (YEM) Hui (Wellington)
 - 27 February – All of Local Government meeting (Wellington)
 - 28 February – Rural & Provincial Sector meeting (Wellington)

Mayor Bell attended the following formal governance meetings:

- 27 January – Maitua Community Board meeting
- 4 February – Long Term Plan briefing (online)

- 11 February – Audit & Risk Committee Meeting
- 18 February – Council meeting

Councillor updates

4. Councillors may have attended the following meetings and may wish to provide an update:
 - 27 January – Maitua Community Board meeting
 - 4 February – Long Term Plan briefing
 - February – Regional Climate Change (Cr P McPhail)
 - 5 February – Joint Otago/Southland Mayoral Forum in Queenstown (Cr Hovell)
 - 6 February – Waitangi Day in Queenstown (Cr Hovell)
 - 10 February – Connected Murihiku (Cr P McPhail)
 - 11 February – Audit & Risk Committee Meeting
 - 17 February – WasteNet Advisory Group meeting (Cr Hovell, Cr Phillips)
 - 27 February – Gore Health Inc (Cr P McPhail)
 - St James Theatre Trust - the theatre upgrade will be finished this month totally and the code of compliance should be issued. It is within budget if there are no major issues in the next two weeks. (Cr MacDonell)
 - Gore A&P Joint Management Committee (Cr MacDonell)

Minister interactions

5. 31 January – Meeting with Hon MP Mark Patterson
 - Minister Patterson popped into the office to meet with Mayor Bell as he was in town for the Gore A&P show. The pair discussed everything from Waters to District Planning. No specific outcomes came from this meeting, but the community was ecstatic to have him at the Gore A&P show.
6. 19 February – Meeting with Minister Watts (Queenstown)
 - Mayor Bell, along with the Mayor’s from Central Otago, Clutha and Waitaki all attended a meeting with Minister Watts to discuss the proposed multi-Council CCO. This was primarily to discuss challenges associated with Councils joining at a later date, timeframes and additional recourses required from DIA. Minister Watts was very open to all of our suggestions and very easy to work with.

LGNZ’s four-monthly report

7. Attached is the Local Government New Zealand four-monthly report.
8. Mayor Bell has attended two meetings as the Zone Six representative for National Council, including a strategy day on 24 February.



LGNZ four-monthly report for member councils

// November 2024 – February 2025





Ko Tātou LGNZ.

This report summarises LGNZ’s work on behalf of member councils and is produced three times a year. It’s structured around LGNZ’s purpose: to serve local government by **championing**, **connecting** and **supporting** members.

Please consider putting this report on the agenda for your next council meeting so that all councillors can review it and provide feedback. Sam, Susan or other National Council members are very happy to join council meetings online to discuss the report or any aspect of it – just let us know.

This report complements our regular communication channels, including *Keeping it Local* (our fortnightly e-newsletter), providing a more in-depth look at what we do.

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Introduction

This four-monthly report covers the summer holiday period when you hopefully had a well-deserved break. LGNZ continued to work hard on your behalf, delivering two All-of-local government events, meeting with Ministers, making submissions and producing resources for members.

January's Cabinet reshuffle meant a new Minister for Local Government, Simon Watts. LGNZ had dinner with the Minister on his first official day in the job, hosted him at February's All-of-local-government event and had our first formal meeting of the year on 6 March. As the Minister said at our February event, we have a positive relationship and want to work together. He acknowledged local government was fatigued by waves of reform and that a lot of the cost and burden that falls on local government is because of central government legislation (as LGNZ's research last year demonstrated). We're looking forward to working constructively with the Minister.

The political year unofficially starts at Waitangi, which offers many opportunities to mix formally and informally with Ministers, MPs and Iwi leaders. This year LGNZ stepped up our involvement and had a strong presence, including a number of National Council members, who were part of an official pōwhiri and delivered a prayer for the nation at the Dawn Service.

In the advocacy and policy space, in November we launched a set of [funding and financing tools](#) that could make a difference for local government. These tools, which include things like sharing GST on new builds, congestion charging and value capture from growth, gained strong media coverage. We also highlighted to media the potential negative implications of rates capping, with Australian guest speakers at both our November and February All-of-local-government events underlining the negative fiscal impacts for Australian councils and communities.

Other highlights of this period included:

- A range of quality submissions shared with members, including on resource management and water services reform.
- The launch of our Electoral Reform Issues paper, with the draft position paper launching 13 March. As well as four-year terms this covers the inevitable decline of post and how to respond.
- Members can now access for free more than \$1.2 million worth of professional development assets via our Ākona professional development platform (this is what it would cost councils to commercially develop the 15 Ako hours and 22 courses available).
- We distributed a free Vote 25 toolkit to all member councils just before Christmas – which you can use and adapt to promote voter registration, standing and voting.

We always welcome your comments and feedback.

Ngā mihi
Sam and Susan



Champion

Government relations

In January a reshuffled Cabinet meant a new Minister for Local Government along with other portfolio shifts relevant to local government, including a new Transport Minister. We have seized on the reshuffle and our already-strong relationship with incoming Local Government Minister Simon Watts to reset the relationship between central and local government. Sam and Susan had dinner with Minister Watts on his first official day in the job, we've locked in regular ongoing meetings, and the Minister spoke at our All-of-local-government meeting on 27 February. As well as staying as long as he could to answer questions, the Minister joined Mayors, Chairs and Chief Executives for morning tea ahead of his session.

As well as sending the Minister [an immediate letter](#) on key issues, we have developed a briefing for the Minister that sets out the state of play of local government issues, including where there are opportunities to work together in support of New Zealand's economic development. [Read the Briefing to the Incoming Minister](#).

We have confirmed quarterly meetings with the Prime Minister throughout 2025. We also meet regularly with Infrastructure and Resource Management Reform Minister Chris Bishop, who now holds the Transport portfolio as well, with Regional Development Minister Shane Jones, and of course Minister Watts. During this four-month period, we met with Minister for Building and Construction Chris Penk and got a good insight into what he would like to achieve in the portfolio. He is keen to make changes work on the ground and, as he put it, "make life easier for councils not harder". We are in conversation with MBIE as to how options for the building consents regime might be received by councils and how they might work in practice.

We secured a strong line up of Ministers and representation from the Opposition at both the November and February All-of-local-government meetings and individual sector meetings.

Waitangi Day kicks off the political year and this year LGNZ had a strong delegation that included a number of National Council members. We held formal and informal meetings with local MPs and iwi leaders, and had the opportunity for conversations with a range of Ministers we would not normally meet with, like Education Minister Erica Stanford. Sam, Campbell and Susan attended the Waitangi Trust's dinner alongside with political leaders, including Minister Watts and the Leader of the Opposition. We had a particularly useful meeting with Northland MP Grant McCallum, who was sympathetic to our safety concerns relating for Māori elected members given the tenor of debate around Māori Wards referenda. He was action-focused and was keen to support neutral messaging that promoted safe and informed local elections. He was also interested in looking into working with us to brief National MPs on other local government issues such as funding and financing.



Media

Our media engagement means balancing standing up for councils with being seen as a constructive partner of the Government. LGNZ has gained proactive media coverage of our perspective on rates capping, and our launch of funding and financing tools, and the closure of regional newspapers. Our advocacy positions on all three topics tied into our wider strategy to make local government feel more relevant and improve ratepayers' understanding of issues faced by councils.

Over the past 12 months, the media landscape has shifted significantly with the closure of major platforms, key newsrooms and culling of experienced journalists. These shifts made it harder to place proactive stories but we have intensified our efforts and continue to gain traction on major advocacy issues important to councils and our communities.

An example of these efforts coming to fruition was the coverage of LGNZ's All-of-local-government meeting, which drew the attention of media outlets from across the country on a range of topics, from rates capping and four-year terms to a new stalking bill and housing growth.

We got coverage on our position on [rates capping](#), including [Newsroom](#) leading with a well-written piece alongside stories on [NBR](#), [BusinessDesk](#), [RNZ](#), [The Press](#) and [The Post](#). [Four-year terms](#) for local government was also a hot topic, with Sam Broughton appearing on the [Mike Hosking breakfast](#) on [Newstalk ZB](#) to discuss the issue, with his comments included in [The Post](#).

LGNZ's CE Susan Freeman-Greene and Invercargill Councillor Alex Crackett also spoke with [Stuff/ThreeNews](#) and [RNZ](#) about the Government's proposed [stalking legislation](#) and the need to increase safety for elected members.

On Friday, Minister Bishop's announcement around new and improved funding and financing tools to reduce the disincentives for housing growth for councils made headlines. Analysis articles ran on [Stuff](#), [NZ Herald](#) and the [Gisborne Herald](#), with Stuff's Luke Malpass penning an insightful piece on the financial conundrum facing councils that appeared in [The Press](#), [The Post](#) and the [Waikato Times](#).

Some other specific media highlights in the past four months include:

- LGNZ's rollout of [a funding and finance toolkit](#) for councils got plenty of traction.
- We urged caution around central government's proposed [rates capping](#) introduction in New Zealand.
- We advocated to the Government [to share IVL funding](#) with councils to reduce pressure on ratepayers.
- We [welcomed the new Minister of Local Government](#) and presented the reshuffle as an opportunity to collaborate more.
- Sam penned an [op-ed](#) for Stuff, talking about the benefits of a true partnership between local and central government.
- LGNZ spoke out about the proposed Government changes to the [water and waste levies](#).



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- We [welcomed the move](#) towards benchmarking and more transparency, but pushed the Government to ensure any report card provides a 'full and accurate picture'

Local government funding and financing

In late November we launched a [set of 25 tools](#) to help councils better fund infrastructure and services – from sharing GST on new builds to value capture to improving councils' ability to recover costs.

It's a pragmatic list with three distinct tiers:

1. Tools that are on the Government's agenda
2. Tools the Government has shown an interest in
3. Tools councils want but the Government isn't interested in, so need longer-term advocacy.

While rates will always be local government's primary funding tool, these tools could make a real difference to the challenges councils face. We are starting to see the fruits of this work with the Government's announcement at our February All-of-local-government meeting on new tools that will see development contributions replaced with a development levy system, allowing councils to charge developers a share of long-term infrastructure costs – more on this below.

As well as the [set of tools](#), we developed some resources to support councils' conversations with communities and central government:

- [A set of key messages](#) explaining why we need new tools
- [Slides](#) with key messages and data
- [A draft op ed](#) that you can repurpose
- [A draft letter to your MP](#)

Treasury has released advice to the Minister of Finance on funding tools available to councils. The Minister is seeking to reduce funding calls on the Crown. Treasury considers that council funding tools are generally fit for purpose. Their view is that the barriers to the full use of these tools relate to political economy, such as a general resistance to increasing rates. This is a valid point, but LGNZ believes these tools need improvement to allocate costs better, address affordability, improve efficiency, and align government objectives with local incentives.

The Government's stance against rates increases and its consideration of rates caps risks deepening public resistance to existing funding tools and increasing pressure on Crown funding. LGNZ will continue to engage with Ministers on this issue and work to enhance public discourse on the relationship between the costs of services and infrastructure and rate rises.

Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS)

The new Local Government Minister has expressed interest in progressing the RAS. The RAS would allow ratepayers to cheaply borrow for specific improvements or ratepayer charges and in support of local and central government priorities. By leveraging the high credit quality of local government

rates, it accesses efficient capital market financing, passing savings to ratepayers. The RAS lends directly to ratepayers, keeping councils financially whole.

We are looking to capitalise on the Minister's interest and secure the necessary financial commitment and legislative changes. Minister Watts is positive about the scheme and has identified potential alignment with his energy portfolio if the RAS could foster investment in rooftop solar generation. We are working with Rewiring Aotearoa, an electrification advocacy group, to develop this element of the scheme.

Infrastructure funding and financing

In November, the Government released an [infrastructure funding and financing framework](#). This framework outlines the principles and processes underpinning the Crown's funding and financing decisions. It will have implications across water, energy, housing, climate adaptation, and transport. The framework makes it clear that the Government intends to only fund or finance projects as a last resort (and in minimal viable quantities). The Government also expects user pays and private financing to play a greater role in infrastructure funding and financing. Local government is not mentioned in this framework.

LGNZ will engage with new government agency *Infrastructure Funding and Financing Ltd (NIFFCo)* to ensure this framework is operationalised with councils in mind. Operationalising the framework will be challenging, given the substantial investment required for future infrastructure and the limitations of user-pays models in some sectors, as highlighted by the Infrastructure Commission.

We are also engaging with DIA and MHUD on their current work on changes to the development contributions system.

The Minister for Infrastructure announced changes to New Zealand's infrastructure funding and financing settings at February's All of Local Government meeting. The Government will replace development contributions with a development levy system, allowing councils to charge developers a share of long-term infrastructure costs. There will be regulatory oversight of development levies to ensure charges are fair and appropriate. Councils will also have more flexibility to set targeted rates that apply to new developments. Finally, the Infrastructure Funding and Financing (IFF) Act will be improved for developer-led projects and expanded to support major transport projects like those led by NZTA.

LGNZ has welcomed these changes, which were in our funding and financing toolkit. We will await further detail and work to ensure these reforms work effectively on the ground for councils.

Regional deals

Instead of the initially announced approach of inviting five regions to participate, all councils were eligible to express interest in a Regional Deal by 18 December 2024.

The Minister was clear that councils should work together across a region when submitting an expression of interest. This meant providing a light-touch proposal with an outline of the drivers of economic growth in a region, what the region will do to unlock growth, and what the region needs

from central government to assist. These expressions of interest will be assessed, and the Infrastructure and Investment Ministerial Group will decide which regional deals proceed to the next steps, which involve a MoU process and final negotiation.

Our understanding is that new Minister may be interested in seeing more than one deal agreed by the end of 2025 (we will certainly be encouraging this), with more agreed by the end of 2026.

Rates capping

Rates capping was a significant topic at both the November and February All-of-local-government meetings. This included presentations on the operationalisation and impacts of rates capping from local government representatives from New South Wales and Victoria (in November); and on transparency as an alternative from South Australia (in February).

In Australia, while rates capping has been effective in terms of constraining rates increases, it has failed to deliver an optimal mix of local services and rates. It has degraded council delivery and left councils increasingly financially unstable. In every overseas jurisdiction that has implemented rates capping, councils are advising us to oppose it as strongly as we can because of its negative impacts on councils' ability to deliver for communities.

We raised concerns about rates capping in meetings with numerous ministers, highlighting this policy's risks for communities and advocating for alternative measures. We are suggesting performance reporting and benchmarking should be prioritised instead – and that these would better achieve the Government's aims.

Water services reform

The Local Government Water Services Bill was introduced in December, with submissions closing in late February. This piece of legislation will establish enduring settings for the new water services system and is expected to be enacted in mid-2025. The bill sets out arrangements for the new water services delivery system, a new economic regulation and consumer protection regime for water services, and changes to the water quality regulatory framework and the water services regulator (Taumata Arowai). To help members prepare their submissions, in December LGNZ shared an [explainer on the stage three legislation](#) with members, based on [proactively released decisions](#) on the future system. In January, we circulated a draft submission on the Local Government (Water Services) Bill for member input, and we expect to present our oral submission in March.

The Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) carried out a short consultation on levies to fund water services regulation, with submissions closing in late January. These levies will be collected from councils or their water organisations, and will fund or part fund the water services regulatory functions of Taumata Arowai and the Commerce Commission. These agencies are already empowered by legislation to charge levies in this way. Taumata Arowai proposes to recover \$20.658 million per annum for the next three years from local government through this levy, around 84% of its operating costs. The Commerce



Commission is seeking to recover \$6.5m per annum for the next two years from local government (or their water organisations) from their levy. They both propose to allocate these on a population basis, resulting in a total for both levies of \$5.44 per person per year.

Councils will soon start consulting on aspects of their Water Service Delivery Plans (WSDPs), which must be finalised by 3 September 2025. As councils consult their communities, for some councils it will become obvious how difficult it is for water services to be financially sustainable, especially if charges to consumers are kept low. We will support member councils by providing information, connecting members to support from DIA, and advocating for DIA to increase this support. The Minister was also clear when speaking at LGNZ's All-of-local-government event on 27 February that councils should reach out for help now rather than wait till September.

Resource management reform

We are awaiting Cabinet decisions on the “blueprint” for new legislation to replace the Resource Management Act (RMA), which we understand was presented to the Minister Responsible for RM Reform last month.

In the meantime, the Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Act, and the Fast Track Approvals Act were both passed by Parliament.

In February, we submitted on the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill. This legislation progresses targeted amendments to the Resource Management Act to improve its performance while work on replacing the RMA continues. We are still awaiting the accompanying changes to National Direction, which LGNZ will also submit on.

Some councils have approached LGNZ seeking support for removing specific projects from the Fast Track process. For example, Waimate District Council has written to Ministers raising concerns about the inclusion of the proposed Waste to Energy Plant at Glenavy, primarily on the basis of environmental, health and economic impacts. While LGNZ can't lobby central government about specific projects for individual councils, this serves as another illustration of the tension between central and local government decision making. The Fast Track Approvals Bill aims to speed up consenting for major infrastructure, but the inevitable trade-off is less input from local communities on significant proposals that affect their area. We will continue to reflect this broader concern in our advocacy work.

We are currently working on a plan for how LGNZ will respond to the significant volume of consultations expected in the RM space over the next 12-18 months.

Transport

We have surveyed Transport Forum members to get an idea of the cost of implementing the Government's new policy of variable speed limits in school areas. While councils are at varying stages in terms of quantifying the impact of this policy, early indications are that this is having a



significant fiscal impact on councils that are already facing significant fiscal pressure as a result of funding decisions made in the NLTP 24-27.

Transport Forum meeting dates have been locked in for 2025, and following the letter from Sam and Neil to Simon Bridges, NZTA board members Paul Dougherty and Warwick Isaacs attended the Transport Forum meeting in February.

In November, the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi released a discussion document on increasing the private share (i.e. the portion of fares not subsidised by central or local government) of public transport operating expenditure, and wrote to regional councils suggesting specific targets for this share. This had been signalled in both the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and the National Land Transport Programme, both of which were released earlier in 2024. The Regional Sector and LGNZ have raised concerns about the impact on passenger fares in the media and with Ministers.

The new Transport Minister also holds the Housing, Infrastructure, and RM Reform portfolios, presenting significant opportunities for alignment. We have secured a meeting with Minister Bishop in March and also have briefed him in writing on the LGNZ Transport Forum, which met on 10 February and discussed how best to work with the new Minister.

The Government's 2025 Q1 action plan commits to passing the first reading of the Land Transport Management (Time of Use Charging) Bill. This bill, which was introduced last year, would enable time of use charging (aka congestion charging). This is one of our tier one funding and financing tools and LGNZ will be submitting on this legislation: the model adopted needs to give councils as much flexibility as possible.

Climate change

In November, the Office of the Auditor General has released a report [How well four councils are responding to a changing climate](#). The report highlights that climate change poses significant challenges for councils, requiring long-term strategies, governance clarity, and collaboration. While the four councils audited have taken steps to prioritise climate action, gaps remain in embedding these priorities into planning and resourcing. Recommendations include enhancing collaboration, setting clear climate objectives, strengthening performance measures, ensuring governance clarity, and improving public reporting. The Auditor-General encouraged all councils to consider these recommendations.

On 29 January, the Government published its [response](#) to the Finance and Expenditure Committee's inquiry into climate adaptation (which outlined high-level objectives and principles to guide development of New Zealand's climate change adaptation policy framework). The response signalled the Government intends to adopt a decentralised approach to climate adaptation, with decision-making and resource allocation occurring at the most-local level possible. This suggests residents and councils will generally bear the cost of adaptation. LGNZ will keep advocating for councils to be provided with adequate funding and policy tools to meet adaptation obligations. The Government has said it will consider the committee's recommendations as it finalises the adaptation framework and associated legislation, which is expected to be introduced this year.



Electoral Reform Working Group

Thank you for all your feedback on the Working Group’s issues paper, which has been taken into account by the group in developing a draft position.

Mayor Nick Smith will be launching the Electoral Reform Working Group’s draft position paper in March, including presenting to all zone meetings to get your feedback. As well as looking at a four-year parliamentary term, the group has also been looking at the unsustainability of postal voting and considering alternatives.

Other policy issues

Earthquake prone buildings

The steering group set up by MBIE to inform its comprehensive review of the seismic strengthening system has had its first meeting, with Nigel Bowen, Helen Craig, and Liam Hodgetts (all put forward by LGNZ) providing a local government voice at the table.

LGNZ has also set up our own informal Seismic Strengthening Group, chaired by Manawatū deputy mayor Michael Ford, which met for the first time in late November. This was a positive meeting that underscored what members want from the Government’s comprehensive review of the seismic strengthening regime. This group will meet on an as-needed basis to help guide LGNZ’s response to the Government’s review, and to support wider advocacy for the remit from Manawatū District Council passed in 2023.

Stalking

We produced [a submission](#) on the Crimes Legislation (Stalking and Harassment) Amendment Bill, which introduces a new stalking and harassment offence and other measures to reduce the harm that victims experience. In our 2022 survey of elected members, 43% had experienced harassment, prejudice, threatening or derogatory behaviours in their role. Aggressive and abusive behaviours can constitute stalking – or be a precursor to it – and we want to see elected members better protected.

Update on 2024 remits

Remit	Progress update
Appropriate funding models for central government initiatives That LGNZ proactively promote and lobby for the development of a more equitable and appropriate funding model for central government initiatives.	This remit is being progressed as part of the wider funding and financing work programme (and is a core objective of this work).
GST revenue sharing with local Government That LGNZ be proactive in lobbying central government on sharing GST revenue with local	This remit is being progressed as part of the wider funding and financing work programme. We understand the Government is looking at

<p>government, derived from local government rates and service fees related flood protection mitigation, roading, and three waters, for investment in these areas.</p>	<p>alternatives to this policy (such as more enabling changes) and will consider advice on this later this year.</p>
<p>Local Government Māori Wards and Constituencies should not be subject to a referendum That LGNZ lobbies central government to ensure that Māori wards and constituencies are treated the same as all other wards in that they should not be subject to a referendum. We oppose the idea that Māori wards should be singled out and forced to suffer a public referendum.</p>	<p>Now that legislation has been passed, we know that 42 councils will be holding a referendum on Māori wards. See the separate National Council paper on Māori wards, which discusses how LGNZ will support Te Maruata and the wider membership around the referendums and elections broadly.</p>
<p>Proactive lever to mitigate the deterioration of unoccupied buildings That LGNZ advocate to Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For legislative change enabling local authorities to compel building owners to remediate unoccupied derelict buildings and sites that have deteriorated to a state where they negatively impact the amenity of the surrounding area. • To incentivise repurposing vacant buildings to meet region-specific needs, for example, accommodation conversion. 	<p>Late last year we had an initial discussion with Gisborne District Council to determine the work programme for progressing this remit, which was also discussed at the first meeting of the LGNZ Seismic Strengthening Group. Information from GDC is currently being used to develop a work programme.</p>
<p>Representation Reviews That LGNZ advocate for changes that support the provision of timely and accurate regional and sub-regional population data to councils for use in council representation reviews.</p>	<p>Statistics NZ is reviewing the methodology for the 2028 census. We are monitoring this process in case it provides an opportunity to progress this remit. A move to a four-year term, which we are actively lobbying for, would require a change in the timings of representation reviews so this remit is also informing the thinking of the Electoral Reform Working Group.</p>
<p>Community Services Card That LGNZ advocate to Central Government to amend the Health Entitlement Cards Regulations 1993 so that the cardholder can use the Community Services Card as evidence for the purposes of accessing Council services which would otherwise rely on a form of means testing.</p>	<p>We wrote to relevant Ministers asking that councils be allowed to make use of the Community Services Card when offering discounts to council facilities. We have yet to receive a response. We also put out a media release, which got good coverage, and engaged via social media.</p>
<p>Graduated Licensing System That LGNZ advocate for changes to the fee structure for driver licensing, better preparing young people for driver licence testing, and greater testing</p>	<p>MTFJ has agreed to progress this remit because it relates to its work with the Driving Change Network.</p>



<p>capacity in key locations throughout New Zealand, in order to relieve pressure on the driver licensing system and ensure testing can be conducted in a quick and efficient manner.</p>	
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Connect

2025 calendar

We released a [final version of the 2025 calendar](#) in early December (though this remains subject to change if the need arises).

Vote25

In December, we shared our [free Vote25 toolkit](#) with member councils. This includes a set of creative assets that councils can customise, such as posters and social media tiles. The campaign covers all three phases: register to vote; stand for election; and vote.

All-of-local-government meetings

The November meeting, with a strong programme that focused on local government reform, drew more than 170 members. It was an opportunity to lay the foundations for stronger advocacy on key parts of reform in local government, such as rates capping. At that event we also launched the funding and financing toolkit discussed above, which gained strong media coverage.

February's All-of-local-government meeting focused on accountability and demonstrating value, with more than 180 members attending. Government speakers included Local Government and Climate Change Minister Simon Watts; Infrastructure, Transport, RMA Reform and Housing Minister Chris Bishop; and RMA Reform and Infrastructure Parliamentary Under-Secretary Simon Court. This was Minister Watt's first chance to address a large local government gathering in this role, and he set out his intention to work in partnership with local government while delivering on the reform agenda. Our guest speaker from South Australia's local government association shared how they managed to convince their government to not implement rates capping by implementing greater transparency; an advocacy approach that LGNZ is also taking.

The theme of the 1 May meeting is delivering infrastructure for growth. Confirmed speakers so far include Minister Chris Bishop and former Minister Steven Joyce – we'll be releasing the programme and inviting registrations in March. As usual, individual Regional, Metro and Rural & Provincial Sector meetings will happen on the following day.

Metro Sector

The Metro Sector meetings on 22 November and 28 February confirmed the group's focus areas for the remainder of the current electoral term, as follows:



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1. Enabling and supporting economic development and growth by showcasing the role of cities as engines of the national economy and driving regional collaboration.
 2. Lift LGNZ governance and accountability in order to improve LGNZ's impact.
 3. Improve alignment of central and local government investment cycles to reduce inefficiencies and encourage more bipartisan agreement on key infrastructure decisions.

Regional Sector and Te Uru Kahika

The final meeting of the Regional Sector for the year included engagement with Hon Mark Mitchell, the Minister for Emergency Management, a discussion with Hon Simon Upton, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment on water and land use roles, and discussions on Taumata Arowai's stormwater performance standards and phase 3 of resource management system reforms.

LGNZ has met new Te Uru Kahika Executive Director Iain Maxwell to welcome him on board and build on the positive relationship we enjoyed with his predecessor Liz Lambert. We work closely to coordinate Regional Sector meetings and collaborate on policy work.

February's Regional Sector meeting included new Transport Minister Chris Bishop, Taumata Arowai on wastewater performance standards, and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet on significant natural hazard events and recovery settings. This meeting also welcomed new Taranaki Regional Council Chair Craig Williamson, with Cr Charlotte Littlewood recently standing down from the Chair position.

Rural & Provincial

February's R&P meeting canvassed a number of areas impacting rural and provincial councils, with Local Water Done Well a key topic on people's minds, as well as new wastewater standards. The Department of Internal Affairs and Taumata Arowai spoke at the first R&P event of the year and took questions. Rural health was also a big topic so we had speakers address growing concerns over access to health in our rural communities and provided some examples of the hands-on role some councils are playing to bridge the gap. The Roading Efficiency Group also delivered a presentation.

Minister Chris Bishop used our February event as a platform to announce some major changes to local government funding and financing as part of his Going for Housing Growth programme. The event wrapped up with a session with KPMG's infrastructure financing expert Karen Mitchell on infrastructure funding and financing options such as using debt and PPPs.

SuperLocal25

Planning for SuperLocal25, which is from 16-17 July at the Te Pae Convention Centre, is well underway: the conference's theme will be Brilliant Basics and Beyond. We are currently finalising the programme and will open registrations in April.



Based on feedback from SuperLocal24, we have compressed the programme so that the event starts much earlier on the first day (the AGM will be at 8.30am on the Wednesday) and wraps up with the awards dinner on the Thursday night. This leaves Friday for visits to the wider region or travel home. Te Maruata and Young Elected Member hui will be held on Tuesday, before the conference, and there will be a breakfast for Women in Local Government at 7am on the Wednesday morning before the AGM.

Te Ao Māori

Iwi engagement

Waitangi presented new opportunities for engagement, thanks to LGNZ's representation by National Council. The Iwi Chairs Forum held one of their conferences ahead of the Waitangi commemorations at Waitangi, which allowed us to continue building that relationship as well as with Northland Iwi, hapū and whanau. It was the first year we were formally included in a pōwhiri at Waitangi, alongside the legislature, diplomats and the Waitangi Tribunal.

Te Maruata

Te Maruata met early in November to reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025. The Treaty Principles Bill and broader election-related issues, including how to support members, were also a hot topic. Te Maruata also provided support to LGNZ's participation at Waitangi.

Te Maruata Rōpū whakahaere will hold its first official meeting of the year at the beginning of March. The focus will be on fleshing out plans for Elections 2025, preparations for Te huinga o ngā roma – the in-person whānui hui in April – and plans for the Te Maruata hui at SuperLocal25.

Te huinga o ngā roma will be held from 3-4 April in Taupo. Te huinga o ngā roma acknowledges the tributaries of Lake Taupō and the role of water in the revitalisation and connection of people and place, which will ground the event. There will be a range of inspiring speakers, workshops and discussions to equip, support and inspire members.

Young Elected Members Network

The annual YEM Hui took place in Christchurch from 16-18 October. It was held there despite Christchurch City Council's decision to withdraw from LGNZ, because the YEM Committee had decided earlier this year to shift away from having a host council, with the Committee taking on full responsibility for hosting. We worked closely with Cr Deon Swiggs (Environment Canterbury and member of the YEM Committee) on planning for the event. Former Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel delivered the keynote address, with the theme of the hui being "mā mua kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua" – driving change through community leadership. The programme was about councils empowering community leaders to make real change and equipping YEM with the key skills needed to make good decisions around council tables. We also had former YEM Lan Pham from the Greens and Cameron Luxton from the ACT Party give their perspectives on how to deliver for communities.



Tikanga sessions were organised to support members to prepare for the whakataua at the commencement of their hui.

Planning is now underway to work through how the YEM network want to address voter turnout and get more young people to stand in the next local election.

The YEM Committee met at the end of February to develop a plan for the elections – this includes how to get more young people to stand and vote, as well as induction material specific to supporting YEMs. We will also be holding a three-hour YEM hui before SuperLocal25.

Community Boards

The Community Board Executive Committee met in early November and again in February. The committee welcomed a new member, Ross Munro from Pleasant Point community board (who replaces Simon Britten who stepped down due to Christchurch City withdrawing from LGNZ).

The meeting reflected on discussions with the Remuneration Authority on the formula for setting community board remuneration and an option for recognising and compensating boards which have additional responsibilities.

CBEC is keen to strengthen alignment with both YEM and Te Maruata, and also discussed using Ākona for community board members and community board induction, and the impact of representation reviews and on community boards

CBEC is continuing to work on its Relationship Agreement guide for councils and community boards, with a draft available soon for consultation. CBEC is also working on a community board workshop session for SuperLocal25; providing support to boards going through representation reviews; and liaising with the Remuneration Authority ahead of its review of elected members' remuneration.

Women in Local Government

Last year we brought women elected members together online and in person at SuperLocal24 (at a pre-conference lunch with keynote speaker Nicola Willis). We've had a lot of feedback that this work is valuable and should continue. As a result, we've developed a plan for this work that includes creating opportunities to connect; advocacy for system change that improves all elected members' safety (like submitting in support of the stalking legislation currently before Parliament); and championing this work.

Member visits

Susan and Sam are on track to have visited all councils since Sam became President, with the last visits scheduled in early 2025. For the remainder of the triennium, we will have a structured programme of calling Mayors and CEs (by Susan and Scott) as well as ad hoc visits/calls as needed.

Support

Ākona

We are seeing an increase in users as members realise how comprehensive it is, and that they can use it to suit their needs. Ākona has about 500 active users, with 42 users choosing to engage with the platform over the summer break. Over 200 users have made use of the skills analysis tool and 483 members have enjoyed the top five e-modules.

Between November and February, we held six Ako hours attracting a total of 184 registrations – and many individual registrations were for groups attending together.

The value of Ākona to councils continues to grow. An interactive professional development platform with 15 Ako hours and 22 courses would cost about \$1.2 million if you paid for it commercially.

The Induction 2025 pre-elected package of learning is on track for release at the end of March. This package teaches people about what it means to be an elected member, including what councils actually do, and will include a series of animated videos, along with interactive e-modules. You'll be able to share this pre-elected package with anyone interested in standing for council (they don't have to be members).

The Mayor Induction Hui and EM Induction hui around the country have been booked and details released to councils, which have welcomed the early communication. We'll also be holding a Chair Induction Hui after regional councils have elected their chairs.

The Ako Hour Academy, which will provide post-induction learning for all elected members, is being built collaboratively with members, in our governance bi-monthly hui. The response has been very positive, with everyone we have spoken to committing to weaving Ākona into local induction activities. Our Learning and Development Manager is meeting with each council in turn to discuss what materials they could upload into the new Ākona platform so it's a one-stop shop for all elected member learning.

Te Korowai – CouncilMARK

Te Korowai has progressed from three successful trials to a soft launch.

We are now seeking registrations of interest for participation in Te Korowai in 2025. There are multiple ways to engage with the programme:

- **Full programme cycle:** This includes an independent assessment by external assessors, an evaluation by the independent evaluation panel, and a development workshop following the evaluation report.
- **Integrity survey:** This serves as a stepping stone for councils wanting to assess their ability to function with integrity. Similar to an engagement survey, it involves an organisation-wide



rollout — including elected members — followed by an in-person workshop to discuss the findings.

Roading Efficiency Group

LGNZ is a founding partner of the Road Efficiency Group Te Ringa Maimoa (REG) sector partnership, which is entering its 12th year. We welcome the continued collaboration with RCAs and support REG in rolling out a number of exciting initiatives:

- A new governance dashboard in the Transport Insights web portal that provides elected members with valuable insight into the performance and benchmarking of their road network and RCA – www.transportinsights.nz
- An extensive learning and development programme to continue to raise capability.
- Delivering the Consistent Condition Data Collection project, which captures surface condition data for all sealed roads for local authorities.

Learn more at www.nzta.govt.nz/reg

Governance support

The 2025-2028 edition of the LGNZ standing orders template was [published in late December](#). This version has been updated to include recent legislation and additional principles. It's also been redrafted in plain English. As we have done previously, three templates have been developed, one for city and district councils, one for regional councils and one for community boards.

The 2025-2028 Guide to Standing Orders will be published in March. It has been updated and expanded with additional guidance, including:

- Advice on implementing the Ombudsman's Guidance on public access to workshops;
- More information on delegations and setting agendas;
- Guidance on issues that emerged in the last term, such as using co-chairs and vacating the chair;
- Protocols for webcasting and people joining meetings remotely; and
- Templates for parental leave and childcare policies.

LGNZ continues to provide support to a number of councils experiencing tension between elected members and/or between elected members and CEs.

7.5 December 2024 Quarterly Economic Monitor Report for the Gore District

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Amanda Drew
Author title:	Corporate and Governance Manager
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Thursday, 27 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To provide the Council with a copy of the Infometrics December 2024 Quarterly Economic Monitor Report for the Gore District.

Recommendation

2. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the December 2024 Quarterly Economic Monitor Report for the Gore District.

Context

3. The Council has recently subscribed to Infometrics Regional Economic Profile and the Quarterly Economic Monitor.
4. These provide a focused, timely, finger-on-the-pulse insight into how the Gore local economy has performed over the previous quarter through commentary from Infometrics' regional economists and a range of economic indicators.

Executive Summary

5. The December 2024 Quarterly Economic Monitor Report provides a number of indicators for Gore specifically, not limited to the following:
 - Leading economic indicators:
 - GDP in Gore District was provisionally down 0.7% for the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in New Zealand (0.5%) and Southland Region (0.3%).
 - Electronic card consumer spending was unchanged over the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier.

- Total guest nights in the Gore District decreased by 3.8% in the year to December 2024, compared to a 2023.
- Total tourism expenditure was approximately \$89 million in the Gore District during the year to December 2024, which was up from \$86 million a year ago.
- **Property market shifts:**
 - A total of 11 new residential building consents were issued in the Gore District in the December 2024 quarter, compared with 6 in the same quarter last year.
 - The number of new real estate listings in the Gore District decreased by 3.2% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier.
 - House sales in the Gore District increased by 7.7% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with increases of 13.4% in New Zealand and 9.0% in Southland Region.
 - The average residential rent in the Gore District was \$419 in the year to December 2024. This compares to \$574 in New Zealand and \$416 in Southland Region.
- **Social indicators**
 - The annual average unemployment rate in the Gore District was 4.1% in the year to December 2024, up from 2.7% in the previous 12 months.
 - Jobseeker Support recipients in the Gore District in the year to December 2024 increased by 9.6% compared to a year earlier. Growth was lower than in Southland Region (10.8%) and New Zealand (12.6%).
 - Gore has a higher rate of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET), with 17% of Gore's youth counted as NEET, compared to 13% nationally.
 - The crime rate in Gore District was 294 (per 10,000 residents) in the year to December 2024, down from 316 in the previous 12 months.
 - Average household incomes have risen at 4.7%pa, outpacing house value growth resulting in improved annual average affordability of 6.7 compared to 7.0 in the year to December 2023.
 - The average household income in the Gore District was \$103,013 in 2024, which was lower than the New Zealand average of \$132,873. (Extract from Regional Economic Profile, Gore)
 - The number of people enrolled with a primary health organisation in the Gore District in the year to December 2024 increased by 1.5% compared to a year earlier. Growth was lower than in New Zealand (2.3%) and Southland Region (2.3%).
 - Gaming machine profits in the Gore District decreased by 3.2% over the year to September 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with decreases of 3.4% in Southland Region and 3.6% in New Zealand.

Attachment

December 2024 Infometrics Quarterly Economic Monitor Report for the Gore District.

**QUARTERLY
ECONOMIC
MONITOR**



Q4

DOWNLOADED THU 27 FEB 2025

December
2024

Gore
District

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Overview of Gore District

Spotlight



Economic conditions remain challenging across the country, and Gore is no exception. Infometrics provisionally estimates that economic activity in Gore District fell by 0.7% in the year to December 2024, similar to the national fall of 0.5%. Improved prices for agriculture helped boost economic activity in Gore, but this was offset by softer returns in mining, and weaker activity across retail, wholesale and construction. The construction pipeline is looking more positive in Gore, with a 5.9% increase in new dwelling consents, and a solid level of non-residential consents, in the year to December 2024.

The primary sector is particularly important for Gore's economy, making up 30% of GDP in 2024, according to Infometrics Regional Economic Profile. Although mining returns are lower, the rest of the primary sector is doing well. The dairy payout is forecast to reach a record high this season, boosting returns for Gore farmers by \$96m, to a total of \$408m. Beef prices are tracking strongly too, and there has been some recovery in sheep meat prices.

Employment of Gore residents fell 1.9% in the year to December 2024, led by falls in agriculture, retail, hospitality and construction jobs. With scarcer job opportunities available, more people are turning to

support, with a 9.6% rise in Jobseeker Support recipients in Gore, just below the national increase of 13%. Gore's unemployment rate rose to 4.1% in the year to December 2024, but remains below the national average of 4.7%. However, Gore has a higher rate of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET), with 17% of Gore's youth counted as NEET, compared to 13% nationally.

The housing market remains muted nationally and in Gore, even though mortgage interest rates have started to fall. Gore's average house value fell 1.4%pa to \$421,400 in the December 2024 quarter, close to the national fall of 2.0%. Gore is one of the most affordable parts of the country to buy a house, with the average house value amounting to 4.0 times average household incomes, well below the national average of 6.7.

Recovery of the tourism sector has been slowing nationally, affecting the nearly 6% of Gore jobs in tourism, as of 2023. In the year to December 2024, tourism expenditure in Gore rose just 3.5% and guest nights fell 3.8%, with flat domestic activity and a slowing recovery of international tourists.

Economic indicators

Overview

Table 1. Overview of economic indicators

All Economic Labour market Housing Social

Indicator	Gore District	Southland Region	New Zealand
Gross domestic product (provisional)	-0.7% ▼	-0.3% ▼	-0.5% ▼
Business counts	+0.5% ▲	+0.2% ▲	+1.3% ▲
Consumer spending	+0.0% ►	-0.3% ▼	+0.2% ▲
Traffic flow	+1.6% ▲	+2.5% ▲	+0.0% ►
Tourism expenditure	+3.5% ▲	+4.2% ▲	+3.7% ▲
Guest nights	-3.8% ▼	-1.0% ▼	+0.8% ▲
Non-residential consents	+65.3% ▲	+35.5% ▲	-0.9% ▼
Electric vehicle registrations	-94.7% ▼	-79.2% ▼	-71.3% ▼
Car registrations	-24.2% ▼	-2.3% ▼	-17.6% ▼
Commercial vehicle registrations	+30.3% ▲	+24.0% ▲	+4.4% ▲
Greenhouse gas emissions (provisional) [⌚]	+0.8% ▲	+1.4% ▲	+0.5% ▲

[⌚] Data up to the September 2024 quarter.

All measures are annual average percentage changes.

Gross domestic product

Figure 1. Gross domestic product growth (provisional)
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

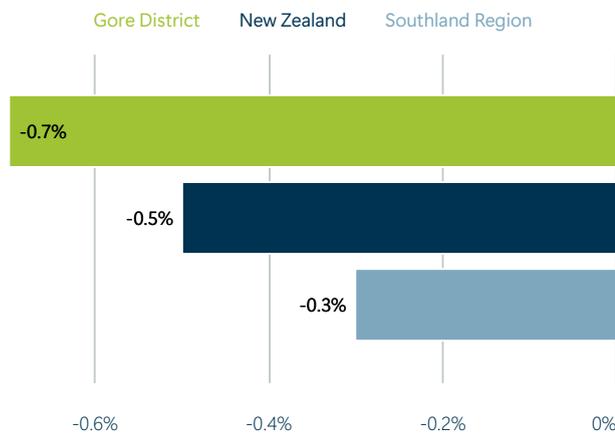
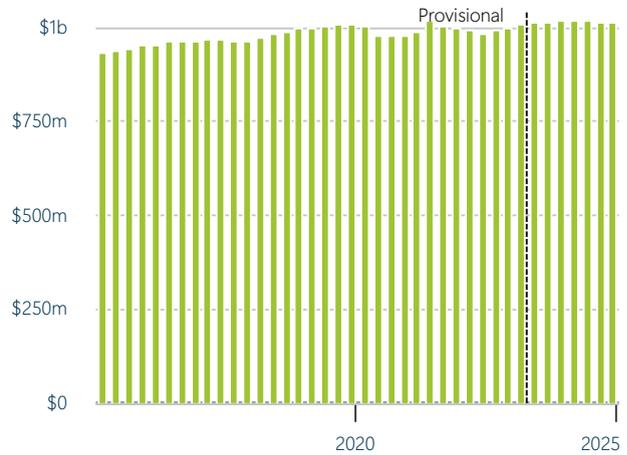


Figure 2. Gross domestic product
Annual level, Gore District



Highlights

- GDP in Gore District was provisionally down 0.7% for the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in New Zealand (0.5%) and Southland Region (0.3%).
- Provisional GDP was \$1,013 million in Gore District for the year to December 2024 (2024 prices).
- Annual GDP growth in Gore District peaked at 3.7% in the year to June 2021.

National overview

There are some early, small, tentative signs of a turnaround in the economy, but tough conditions remained for many areas and sectors of the economy at the end of 2024. Provisional estimates from Infometrics point to economic activity being 0.5%pa lower over the 2024 calendar year compared to 2023 – although the quarterly trend does show a slight improvement. Stronger export returns across the primary sector are starting to support activity across provincial and rural New Zealand, with strong returns for dairy, beef, and horticulture, and improving returns for lamb – although forestry returns remain poor. Tourism activity also had a stronger end to 2024, with rising international arrivals and slightly more domestic travelling. But construction and manufacturing activity and future intentions remain depressed. Some slight improvements in spending and employment indicators reinforce expectations of shifting economic gears in 2025, as household spending is freed up and economic momentum is regained.

Business counts

Figure 3. Growth in number of business units
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

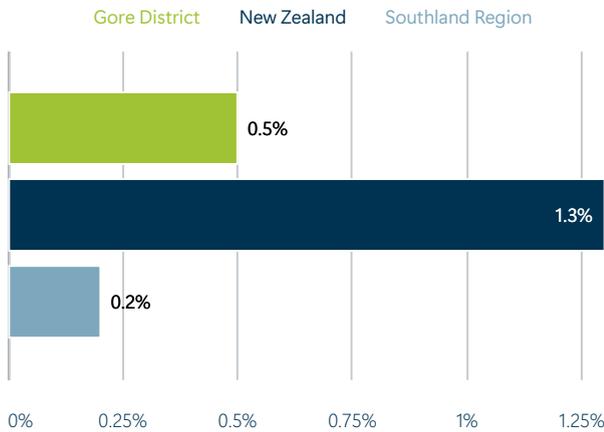
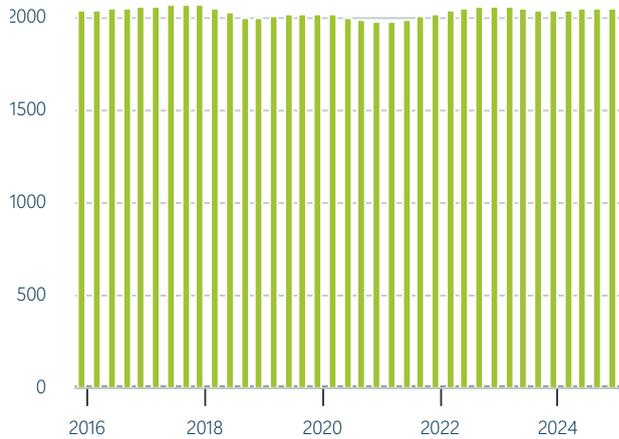


Figure 4. Business units
Annual level, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of business units in Gore District was up 0.5% for the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in Southland Region (0.2%) and was lower than in New Zealand (1.3%).
- The number of business units in Gore District reached an annual average of 2,044 in the year to December 2024, up from 2,033 in the previous 12 months.
- Annual growth in the number of business units in Gore District peaked at 3.5% in the year to June 2022.

National overview

Business units continue to rise steadily, up 1.3% in the year to December 2024. Growth was flat, in line with the year to September 2024 as economic conditions remained difficult for businesses. As households roll onto lower mortgage rates, budgets which have been constrained over recent years will see some relief, freeing up funds for discretionary spending. A recovery in consumer spending will improve the business environment for entrepreneurs looking to start a business. Rising unemployment over the first half of 2025 may limit the impact of lower mortgage rates on a recovery in consumer spending.

Consumer spending

Figure 5. Growth in consumer spending

Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

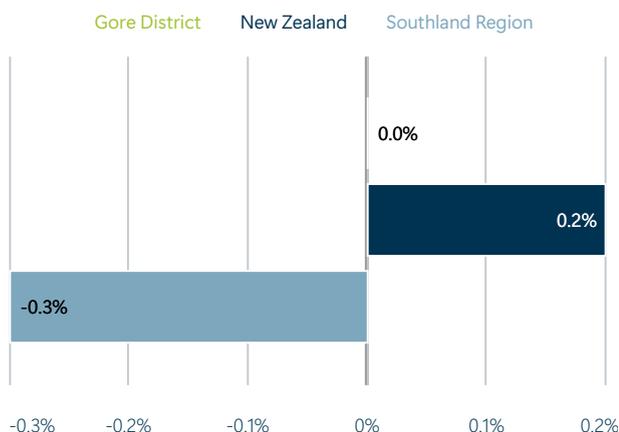
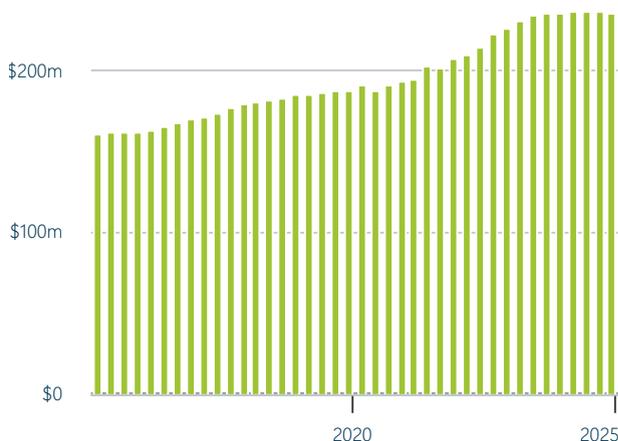


Figure 6. Consumer spending

Annual level, Gore District



Highlights

- Electronic card consumer spending in Gore District as measured by Marketview, was unchanged over the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 0.2% in New Zealand and a decrease of 0.3% in Southland Region.

National overview

Marketview data indicates that consumer spending remained subdued, up just 0.2%pa over the year to December 2024. Growth remains slower than inflation (2.2%pa over the same period), meaning consumers are paying more and receiving less due to higher prices. Spending growth was negative compared to a year ago for the second consecutive quarter as spending fell 0.5%pa in the December 2024 quarter compared to December 2023. Households remain reluctant to spend despite many rolling onto lower mortgage rates in the back end of 2024. Job security will be front of mind in the near term for households setting budgets as labour market opportunities remain limited and the unemployment rate ticks up.

Traffic flow

Figure 7. Annual change in traffic flows
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

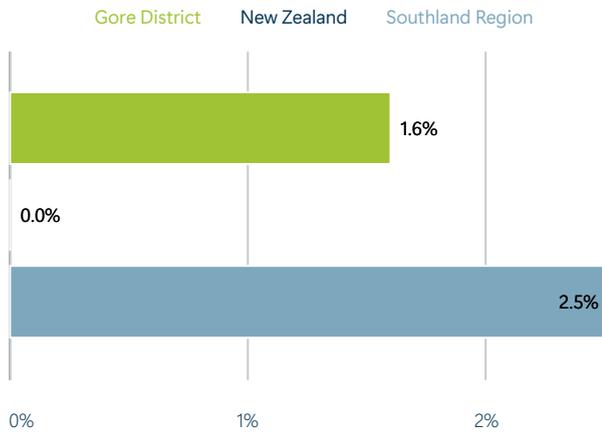
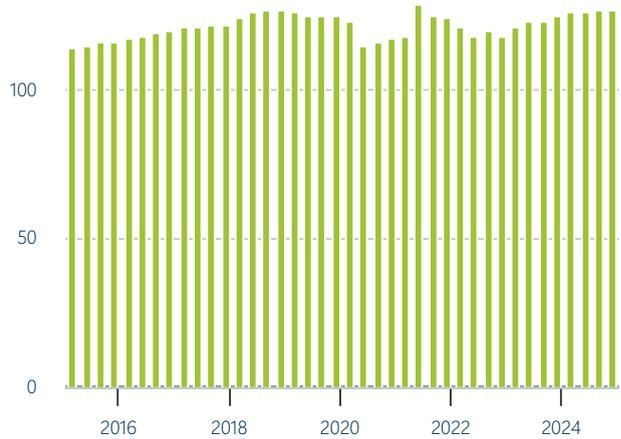


Figure 8. Traffic
Annual level, Gore District



Highlights

- Traffic flows in Gore District increased by 1.6% over the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 2.5% in Southland Region and no change in New Zealand.

National overview

Traffic flows were unchanged in the year to December 2024, as a 3.2%pa rise in the December 2024 quarter offset declines in previous quarters. Traffic flows reflect the movement of people and goods around the country, so the fall in traffic volumes is consistent with weaker economic conditions.

Tourism expenditure

Figure 9. Tourism expenditure
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

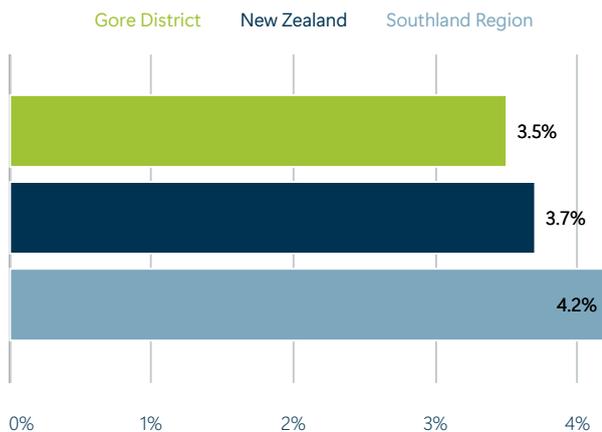


Figure 10. Tourism expenditure
Annual total, Gore District



Highlights

- Total tourism expenditure in Gore District increased by 3.5% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with increases of 4.2% in Southland Region and 3.7% in New Zealand.
- Total tourism expenditure was approximately \$89 million in Gore District during the year to December 2024, which was up from \$86 million a year ago.

National overview

Tourism expenditure continues to grow marginally, with a 3.7% rise in the year to December 2024, underpinned by moderate international tourist spending growth and weak domestic tourist spending. MBIE's Tourism Electronic Card Transactions data shows that international tourist spending rose 11%pa in the December 2024 quarter, as domestic tourist spending eased 0.4%. Weak domestic tourist spending reflects weak consumer spending more generally, although ongoing cuts to mortgage interest rates may provide a modest upside in the coming year. International visitor arrivals to New Zealand have stagnated at around 85% of pre-pandemic levels for the past 18 months, although it is encouraging to see continued moderate growth in spending.

Guest nights

Figure 11. Guest nights
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

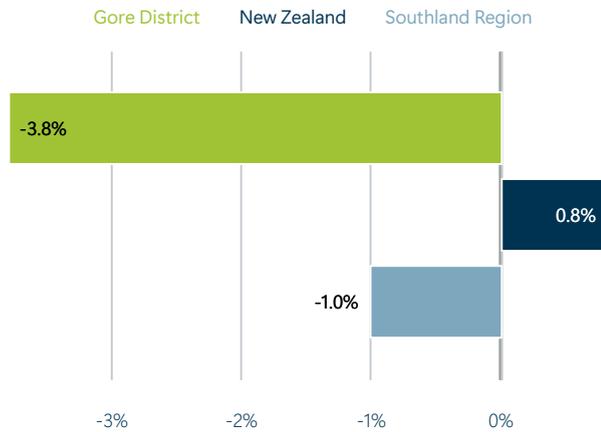


Figure 12. Guest nights
Annual number, Gore District



Highlights

- Total guest nights in Gore District decreased by 3.8% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 0.8% in New Zealand and a decrease of 1.0% in Southland Region.
- Visitors stayed a total of 45,900 nights in Gore District during the year to December 2024, which was down from 47,700 a year ago.

National overview

Recent weakness in guest nights has started to find a floor, with a 2.4%pa rise in guest nights in the December 2024 quarter, up from a 7.4%pa decline in the September 2024 quarter. Over the year to December 2024, guest nights rose just 0.8%, showing that it will be a long haul for the tourism sector to get back to pre-pandemic levels.

International visitors continue to drive growth, with 3.7%pa growth in international guest nights in the December 2024 quarter. Domestic guest nights rose by a negligible 1.6%pa this quarter but represent a positive sign that weak domestic tourism has stopped getting worse.

Non-residential consents

Figure 13. Growth in value of consents
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

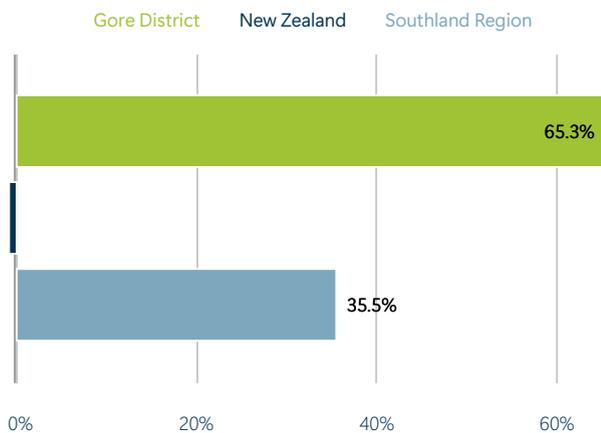
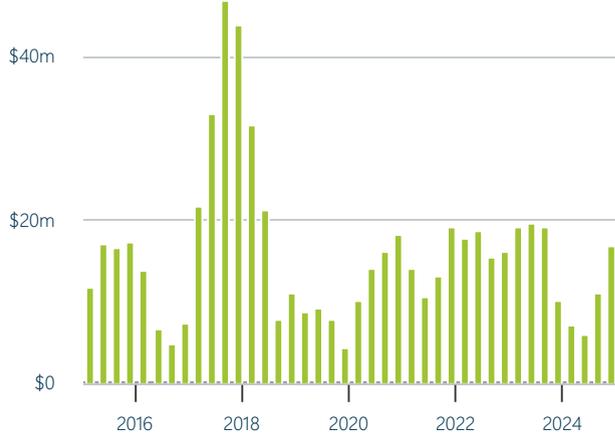


Figure 14. Non-residential consents, Gore District
Annual running total, Gore District



Highlights

- Non-residential building consents to the value of \$16.7 million were issued in Gore District during the year to December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of \$16.4 million.
- The value of consents in Gore District increased by 65.3% over the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. In comparison, the value of consents increased by 35.5% in Southland Region and decreased by 0.9% in New Zealand over the same period.

National overview

There was \$2.3b worth of non-residential consents issued throughout New Zealand in the December 2024 quarter, bringing the annual total to \$9.3b, down a narrow 0.9% compared to a year earlier. Non-residential consents temporarily showed a bit of strength in October and November before recording a much weaker month in December. Non-residential consents continue to broadly track lower as businesses lack the need and financial capacity to expand due to subdued consumer demand. Public sector consents will remain under pressure for the foreseeable future as fiscal restraint will limit government spending.

Dairy payout

Figure 15. Total dairy payout
May years

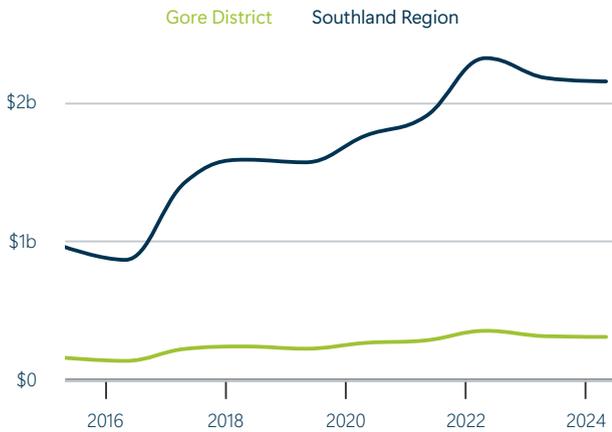


Figure 16. Total dairy payout
May years



Highlights

- Gore District total dairy payout for the 2022/2023 season is estimated to have been approximately \$317 million.
- Gore District's dairy payout for the 2023/2024 season is expected to be approximately \$312 million, \$5 million lower than last season, assuming that production levels from last season are maintained.
- The total dairy payout for New Zealand is estimated to have been approximately \$15,396 million in the 2022/2023 season, and is expected to be \$657 million lower in the 2023/2024 season.
- The total dairy payout for Southland Region is estimated to have been approximately \$2,181 million in the 2022/2023 season, and is expected to be \$25 million lower in the 2023/2024 season.

National overview

Current conditions across the primary sector are positive, with higher dairy prices a key element of a more positive outlook. Fonterra's farmgate milk price is currently sitting at a mid-point at \$10/kgMS, meaning an expected \$19.2b pay-out in the current season. At that level, the pay-out would be the largest ever, up \$4.5b from last season. The higher pay-out is also being supported by a lower exchange rate, and higher domestic production. Milksolids volumes produced are up 2.1% on an annual average basis, even as global supply remains a bit tighter. On-farm costs are stabilising, and interest rates are falling, increasing profitably on farm for dairy. Other parts of the primary sector are also showing more promise, with meat and horticulture prices sitting higher too – but forestry continues to struggle.

Electric vehicle registrations

Figure 17. Growth in number of EV registrations
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

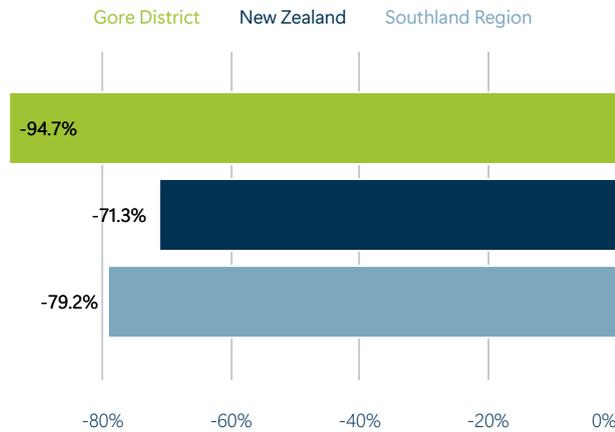
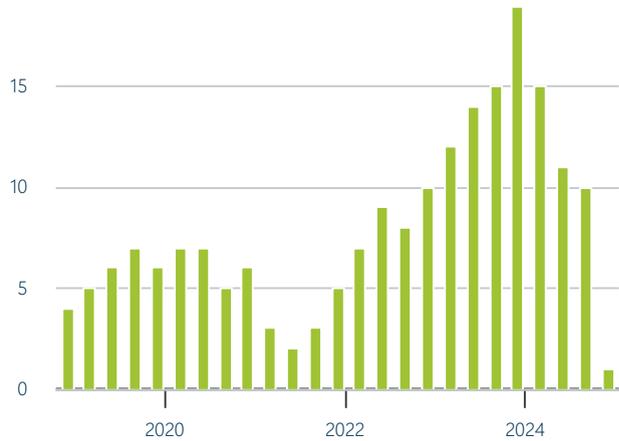


Figure 18. EV registrations
Annual level, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of EV registrations in Gore District decreased by 94.7% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in Southland Region (79.2%) and New Zealand (71.3%).
- The number of EV registrations in Gore District reached an annual total of 1 in the year to December 2024, down from 19 in the year to December 2023 and 10 in the year to December 2022.

National overview

Annual EV registrations declined 72%pa over the year to December 2024, falling through every quarter in 2024. Annual changes continue to be exacerbated by changes to the Clean Car Discount (CCD) in 2023 which saw a rush of buying to receive the rebate before the scheme ended. Much of the decline in the annual level of EV registrations to its lowest in over three years will be due to households bringing forward the purchase of an EV to receive the rebate, but cautious consumer spending was also likely a driving force behind the decline. The introduction of road user charges for EVs further removed financial incentives of switching to an EV from a petrol vehicle.

Car registrations

Figure 19. Car registrations

Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

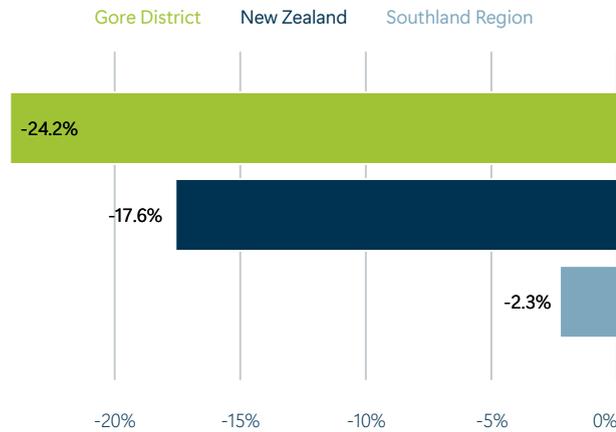


Figure 20. Car registrations

Annual number, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of cars registered in Gore District decreased by 24.2% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in New Zealand (17.6%) and Southland Region (2.3%).
- A total of 307 cars were registered in Gore District in the year to December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 419.

National overview

There were 48,683 total car registrations in the December 2024 quarter, down 24%pa from 2023. The December 2023 quarter was inflated by a rush of purchasing before the removal of the Clean Car Discount (CCD) scheme on 31 December 2023 making the quarterly comparison a difficult one. The vehicle market had a tough year in 2024 with the annual total reaching an 11-year low of 192,081pa, well below the 10-year average of 252,752pa. Vehicle purchases may remain low on the list of priorities for households in 2025 with consumer spending influenced by soft economic conditions and slow population growth, keeping car registrations subdued in the near-term.

Commercial vehicle registrations

Figure 21. Commercial vehicle registrations
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

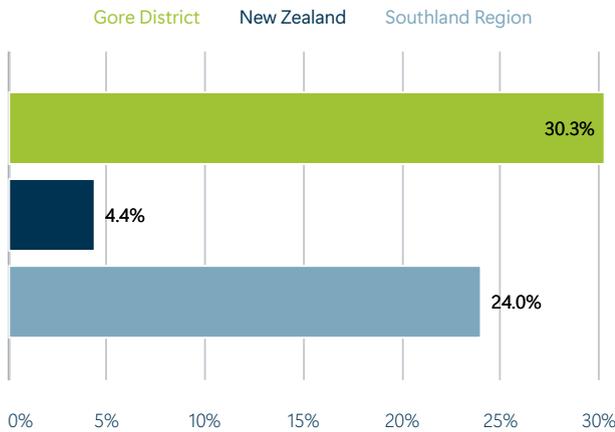


Figure 22. Commercial vehicle registrations
Annual number, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of commercial vehicles registered in Gore District increased by 30.3% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (4.4%) and Southland Region (24.0%).
- A total of 245 commercial vehicles were registered in Gore District in the year to December 2024. This is higher than the ten year annual average of 243.

National overview

Annual commercial vehicle registrations increased 4.4% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The uptick in the annual total was driven by 9.3%pa in light commercial vehicle registrations which rebounded temporarily in early 2024 following a six-month period of subdued registrations to end 2023 following the rush to avoid fees imposed by changes to the Clean Car Discount on 1 July 2023. Weak investment intentions will weigh on all vehicle types as population growth slows, construction activity remains subdued, resulting in subdued business revenue. Improving commodity prices will provide some upside to light commercial registrations in the near term as export earnings for the agricultural sector rise.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Figure 23. Greenhouse gas emission growth (provisional)

Annual average % change September 2023 - September 2024

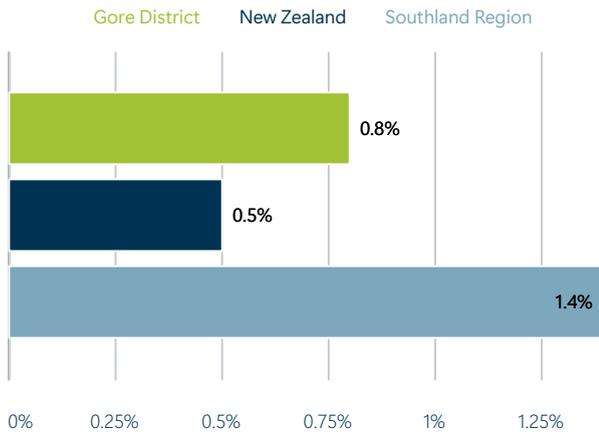
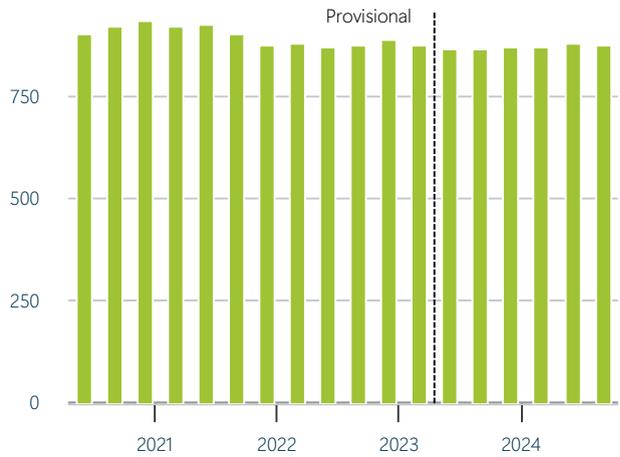


Figure 24. Greenhouse gas emissions

Annual level kilotonnes CO₂-e, Gore District



Highlights

- Greenhouse gas emissions in Gore District were provisionally up 0.8% for the year to September 2024, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (0.5%) and was lower than in Southland Region (1.4%).
- Provisional greenhouse gas emissions were 876 kilotonnes CO₂-e in Gore District for the year to September 2024.
- The sharpest decline in greenhouse gas emissions in Gore District occurred in the year to December 2021, with a fall of 6.5%.
- Please note that greenhouse gas emissions is not yet available for the year to December 2024. Data for the year to September 2024 is displayed instead.*

Labour market indicators

Overview

Table 2. Overview of labour market indicators

All Economic Labour market Housing Social

Indicator	Gore District	Southland Region	New Zealand
Employment (place of residence)	-1.9% ▼	-0.9% ▼	+0.0% ▶
Jobseeker Support recipients	+9.6% ▲	+10.8% ▲	+12.6% ▲
Unemployment rate ^	4.1% ▲	4.6% ▲	4.7% ▲
NEET rate ^	17.1% ▲	15.1% ▲	12.8% ▲

All measures are annual average percentage changes unless:

^ Levels

Employment (place of residence)

Figure 25. Employment (place of residence) growth
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

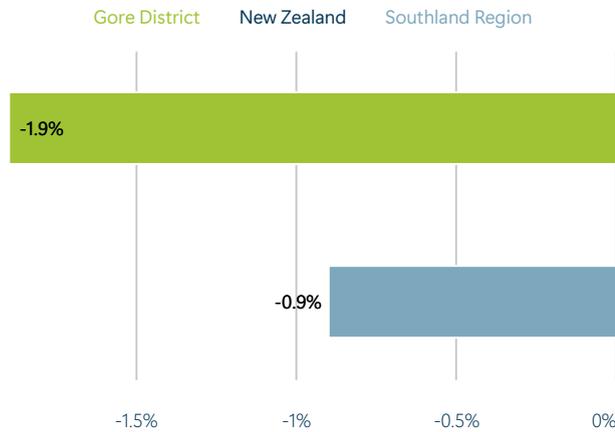
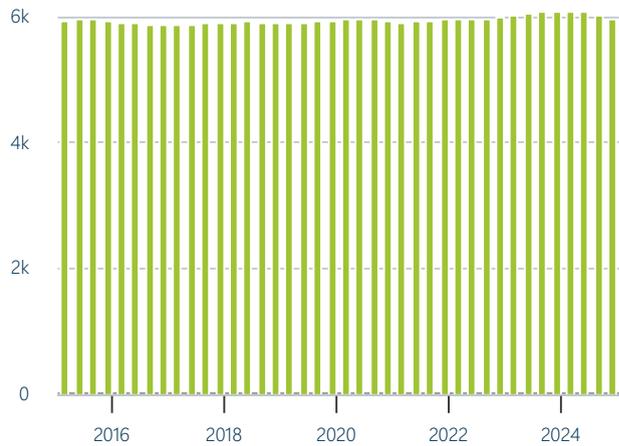


Figure 26. Employment (place of residence)
Annual level, Gore District



Highlights

- Employment for residents living in Gore District was down 1.9% for the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in Southland Region (0.9%) and New Zealand (0.0%).
- An average of 5,974 people living in Gore District were employed in the year to December 2024.
- Annual employment growth for Gore District residents peaked at 2% in the year to September 2023.

National overview

Employment growth was negative for the second consecutive quarter, with filled job numbers falling 1.6%pa in the December 2024 quarter. Annual average employment growth fell to 0.0% in the year to December 2024, the slowest rate since June 2021. The labour market participation has fallen to 71.0%, its lowest level since June 2022, showing people are discouraged due to the lack of job opportunities in the labour market as people enter education or training or otherwise not actively searching for work.

Declines in employment were led by administrative and support services, followed by retail trade and construction. The largest contributors to employment growth were health care, followed by education and central government administration.

Jobseeker Support recipients

Figure 27. Annual change in Jobseeker Support recipients
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

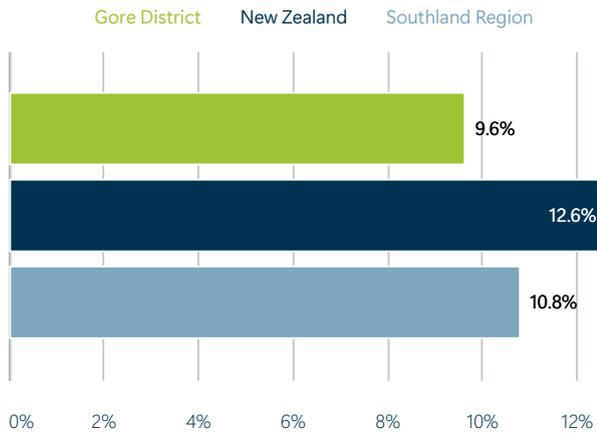


Figure 28. Jobseeker Support recipients
Annual average, Gore District



Highlights

- Jobseeker Support recipients in Gore District in the year to December 2024 increased by 9.6% compared to a year earlier. Growth was lower than in Southland Region (10.8%) and New Zealand (12.6%).
- An average of 344 people were receiving a Jobseeker Support benefit in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 331.

National overview

The number of Jobseeker Support recipients rose 12.6% or around 22,000 Jobseekers over the year to December 2024 as the labour market deteriorated. The annual average number of Jobseeker Support recipients rose to 200,638, rising above 200,000 for the first time since the pandemic effected year to June 2021.

We expect it to be another six months before the unemployment rate peaks in the June 2025 quarters, adding competition to an already tight labour market. Individuals who become unemployed will find it increasingly difficult to transition into a new role, pushing up Jobseeker Support recipient numbers in the near term.

Unemployment rate

Figure 29. Unemployment rate
Annual average rate to December 2024

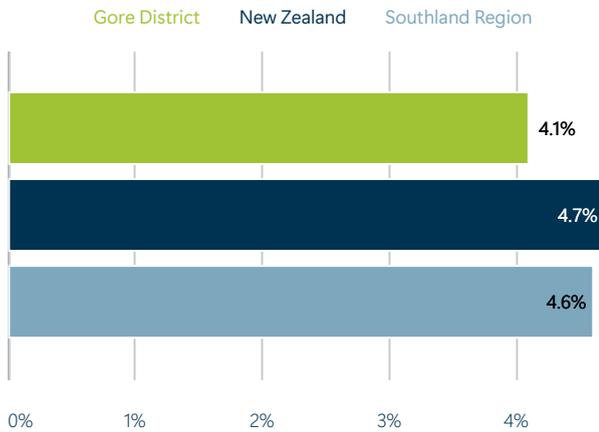
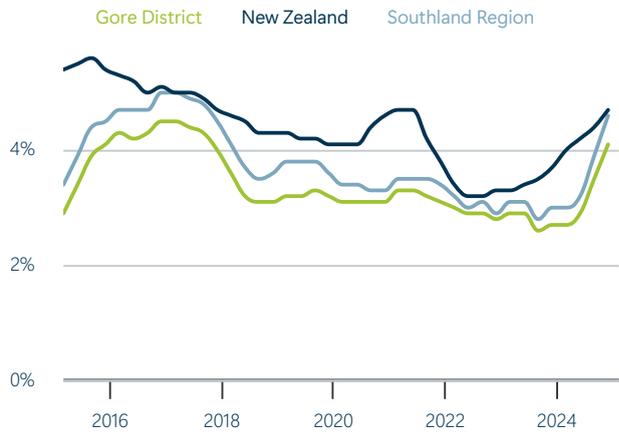


Figure 30. Unemployment rate
Annual average rate



Highlights

- The annual average unemployment rate in Gore District was 4.1% in the year to December 2024, up from 2.7% in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to December 2024, the annual average unemployment rate in Gore District was lower than in Southland Region (4.6%) and New Zealand (4.7%).
- Over the last ten years the annual average unemployment rate in Gore District reached a peak of 4.5% in March 2017.

National overview

The unemployment rate lifted to 5.0% in the December quarter, lifting the annual average unemployment rate to 4.7%, the highest rate in three and a half years. The labour market participation rate fell to 71.0%, the lowest rate since June 2022. The fall in participation showed the slack in the labour market is resulting job seekers being discouraged, and they are either moving into education or training or otherwise not actively searching for work. We expect the unemployment rate to rise further in 2025 as businesses continue to be under pressure as consumers remain cautious with spending.

NEET rate

Figure 31. NEET rate

% of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training, annual average rate to December 2024

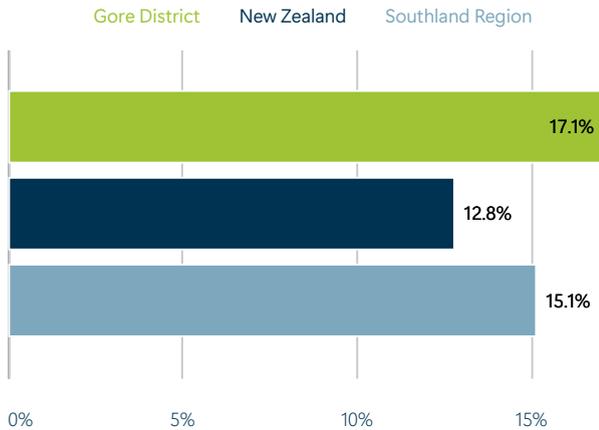
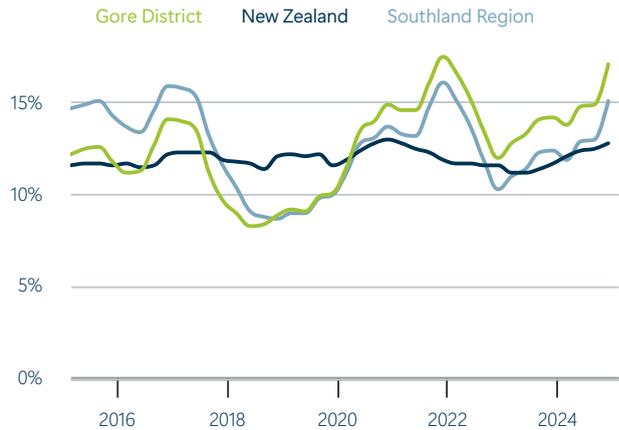


Figure 32. NEET rate

% of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training, annual average rate



Highlights

- The annual average NEET rate in Gore District was 17.1% in the year to December 2024, up from 14.2% in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to December 2024, the annual average NEET rate in Gore District was higher than in New Zealand (12.8%) and Southland Region (15.1%).
- Over the last ten years the annual average NEET rate in Gore District reached a peak of 17.5% in December 2021.

National overview

The proportion of people aged 15-24 years old that are not in employment, education or training (NEET) rose to 12.8% on average over the year to December 2024, up from 11.4% in the year to December 2023.

Young people continue to bear the brunt of a weaker labour market, with the number of filled jobs held by 15-24 year olds falling 5.6% in the year to December 2024, compared to no change for all age groups. Young people are highly exposed to industries affected by lower discretionary spending such as retail, hospitality and construction.

Housing indicators

Overview

Table 3. Overview of housing indicators

All Economic Labour market Housing Social

Indicator	Gore District	Southland Region	New Zealand
Residential consents	+5.9% ▲	-1.5% ▼	-9.8% ▼
House sales	+7.7% ▲	+9.0% ▲	+13.4% ▲
Real estate listings	-3.2% ▼	+9.4% ▲	+20.7% ▲
House values *	-1.4% ▼	+3.1% ▲	-2.0% ▼
Housing affordability ^	4.0 ▼	4.2 ▶	6.7 ▼
First Home Loan purchases 🕒	+0.0% ▶	-22.8% ▼	-13.8% ▼
Residential rents	+12.6% ▲	+8.3% ▲	+4.2% ▲
Rental affordability ^	20.9% ▲	18.8% ▲	22.0% ▲
Housing register applicants	-17.2% ▼	-5.3% ▼	-8.9% ▼
Public housing stock	+0.0% ▶	+7.9% ▲	+5.2% ▲

🕒 Data up to the September 2024 quarter.

All measures are annual average percentage changes unless:

* Annual percentage changes

^ Levels

Residential consents

Figure 33. Growth in number of new dwelling consents
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

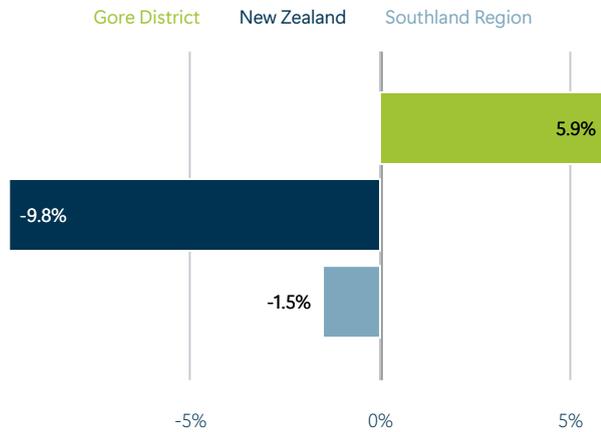
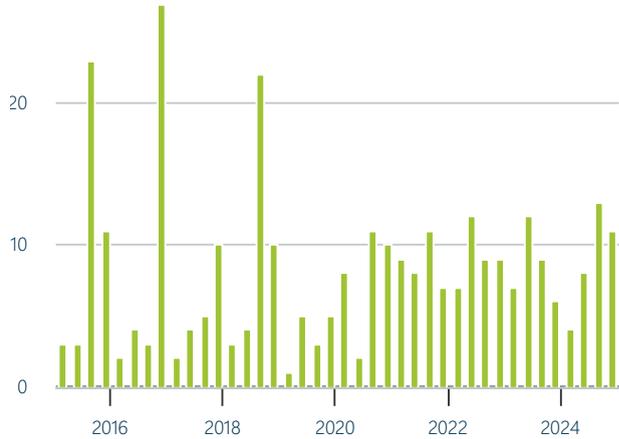


Figure 34. Residential consents
Quarterly number, Gore District



Highlights

- A total of 11 new residential building consents were issued in Gore District in the December 2024 quarter, compared with 6 in the same quarter last year.
- On an annual basis the number of consents in Gore District increased by 5.9% compared with the same 12-month period a year before. This compares with decreases of 1.5% in Southland Region and 9.8% in New Zealand over the same period.

National overview

There were 8,428 new dwellings consented across New Zealand in the December 2024 quarter, down 0.9%pa from the same period in 2023. The annual average decline eased further to 9.8% from 17% in the previous quarter. Residential consents stabilised over the second half of 2024, standalone house consents have been the driving force in the stabilisation of annual total of dwelling consents at around 33,000-34,000. There is still some volatility across attached dwelling consents, especially across build types with longer lead times such as townhouses and apartments. Retirement unit consents rallied in the September 2024 quarter but pulled back in the December quarter. Soft economic conditions and slow population growth will put a lid on any recovery in residential consents in 2025.

House sales

Figure 35. Annual change in house sales
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

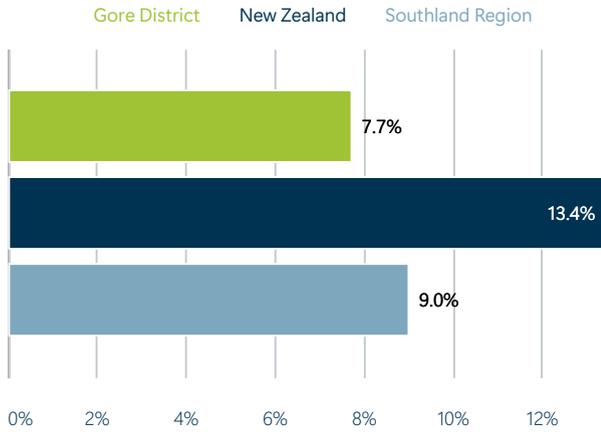
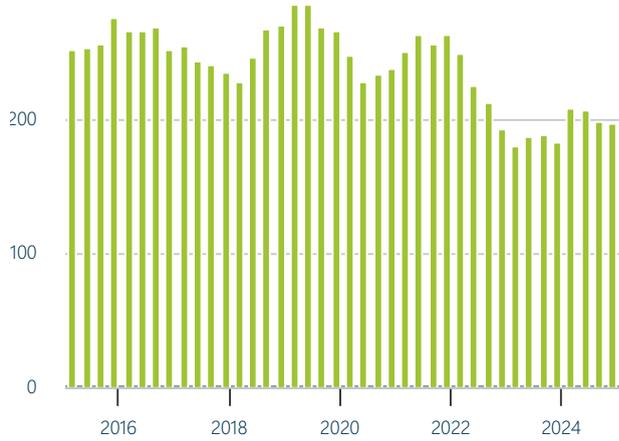


Figure 36. House sales
Annual number, Gore District



Highlights

- House sales in Gore District increased by 7.7% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with increases of 13.4% in New Zealand and 9.0% in Southland Region.
- A total of 196 houses were sold in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 237.

National overview

House sales rose 13.4% over the year to December 2024, with the annual total rising for seven consecutive quarters to 71,881pa. Annual sales reached above 70,000pa for the first time in two years, but sales remain well below the ten-year annual average of 78,264pa. House values, despite being well below their peak, remain overinflated, restricting investors from re-entering the market even though mortgage rates have fallen significantly since August. Potential buyers will be discouraged with the lack of opportunities in the labour market and remain concerned about job security as unemployment looks to peak in mid-2025. Improving consumer confidence and a turnaround in the labour market could spur the market to work through the surplus of properties available for sale, especially over the second half of 2025.

Real estate listings

Figure 37. Real estate listings

Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

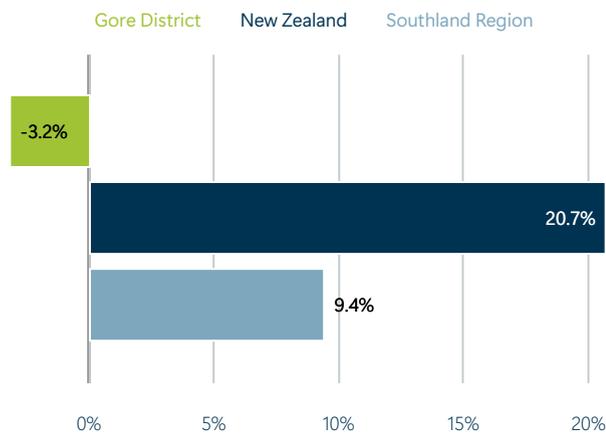
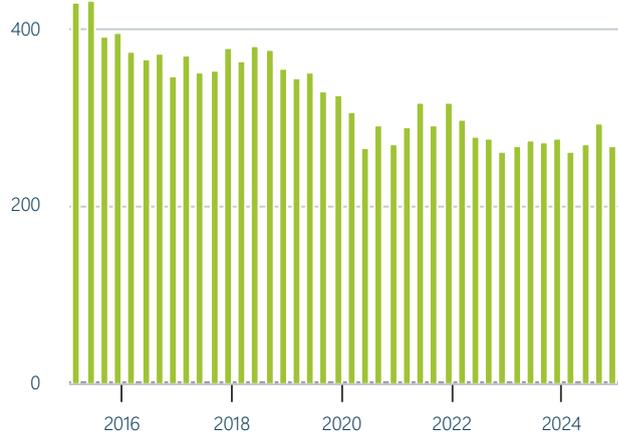


Figure 38. Real estate listings

Annual number, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of new real estate listings in Gore District decreased by 3.2% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in Southland Region (9.4% growth) and New Zealand (20.7% growth).
- There were an average of 269 new real estate listings in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 320 new real estate listings.

National overview

Annual new real estate listing numbers in the December 2024 quarter rose for the fifth consecutive quarter to 110,128pa, their highest level since September 2022. Listing numbers are nearing the 10-year average of 111,672pa. Real estate figures in December showed properties available for sale in the month fell for the first time in 18 months, along with new listing numbers falling from a year ago for the first time in almost a year. Further cuts to interest rates will see households roll onto lower mortgage rates, easing financial pressures to put their home on the market, although rising unemployment in the first half of 2025 might put a limit on the extent of relief from lower mortgage rates.

House values

Figure 39. Annual change in house value
Annual % change in house value December 2023 - December 2024

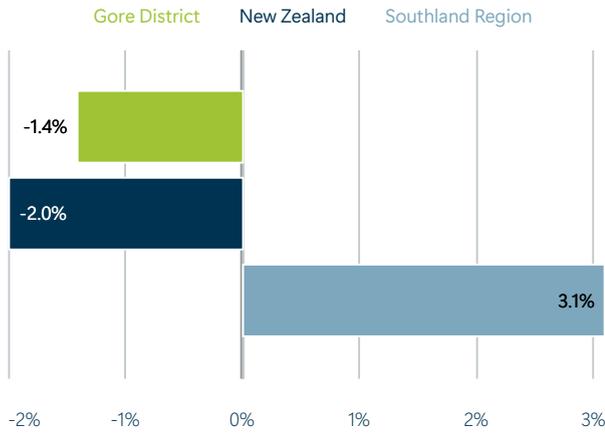
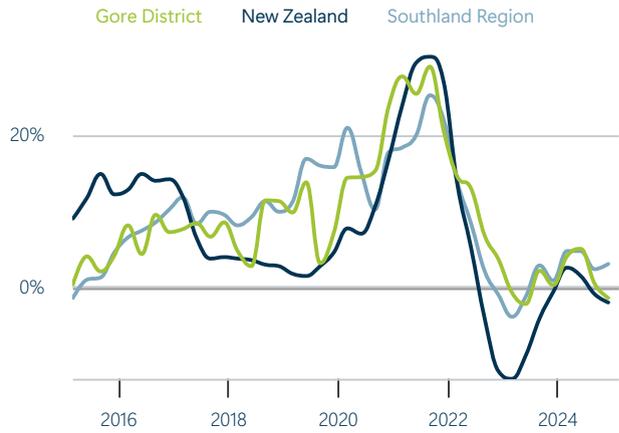


Figure 40. House value growth
Annual % change



Highlights

- The average current house value in Gore District was down 1.4% in December 2024, compared to a year earlier. The decline was not as low as in New Zealand (2.0%) and was greater than in Southland Region (3.1% growth).
- The average current house value was \$421,434 in Gore District in December 2024. This compares with \$478,836 in Southland Region and \$905,807 in New Zealand.

National overview

The average house value in New Zealand fell 2.0%pa to \$905,807 in the December 2024 quarter. The Reserve Bank delivered two bumper 50 basis points cuts to the official cash rate in the December 2024 quarter pushing 1-year fixed mortgages rates offered by major banks down to 5.8%pa from 6.5%pa. Additional interest rate cuts from the Bank will be delivered in 2025 pushing shorter fixed term mortgages rates down further, with much of the cuts already priced into longer term rates. House price growth will continue to be limited by the surplus of properties available for sale on the market. It will take some time for the market to work through the surplus as buyer numbers may remain subdued amid rising unemployment.

Housing affordability

Figure 41. Housing affordability
Ratio of house prices to household incomes, year to December 2024

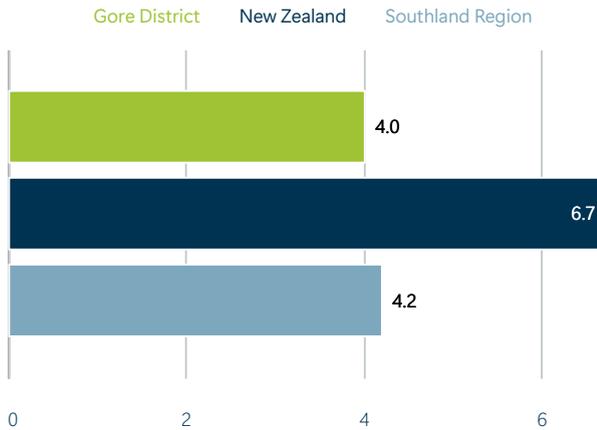
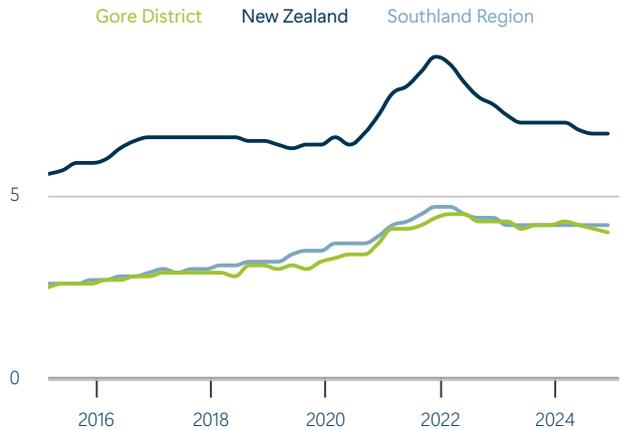


Figure 42. Housing affordability
Ratio of house prices to household incomes, annual average



Highlights

- Housing in Gore District (4.0) was more affordable than in Southland Region (4.2) and New Zealand (6.7) in December 2024, based on the ratio between mean house values and mean household incomes.
- Housing affordability in Gore District improved on average between December 2023 and December 2024. Housing affordability has improved in New Zealand and not materially changed in Southland Region over the same period.
- During the last ten years, housing in Gore District was most affordable in March 2015, when the index reached a low of 2.5.

National overview

The housing affordability ratio was 6.7 in the year to December 2024, unchanged from the year to September 2024. House values have fallen 2.0%pa over the year to December 2024 amid high interest rates, and economic pressures from the recession. Average household incomes have risen at 4.7%pa, outpacing house value growth resulting in improved annual average affordability of 6.7 compared to 7.0 in the year to December 2023. A surplus of properties available for sale will limit house price growth in the near term and limit a deterioration in housing affordability. Interest rates are not a modelled part of our housing affordability metric, but the recent interest rate cuts increase demand side pressures on house values.

First Home Grant purchases

Figure 43. Annual change in First Home Grant purchases
Annual average % change June 2023 - June 2024, First Home Grant purchases

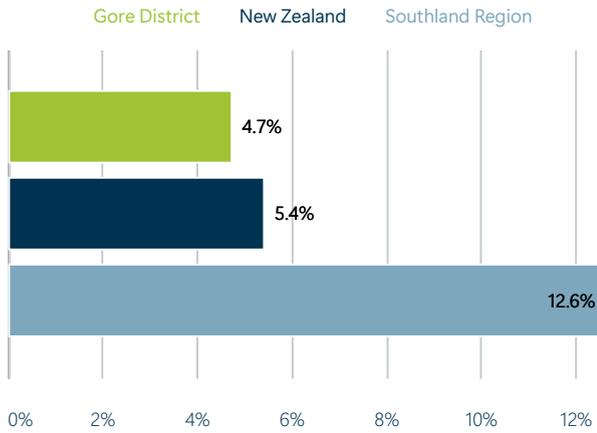
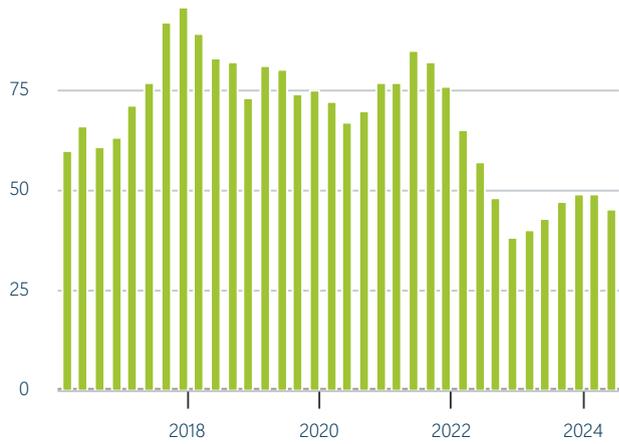


Figure 44. First Home Grant purchases
Annual number First Home Grant purchases, Gore District



Highlights

- First Home Grant purchases using the Kainga Ora First Home Grant in Gore District increased by 4.7% in the year to June 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with increases of 12.6% in Southland Region and 5.4% in New Zealand.
- A total of 45 properties were purchased using the First Home Grant in Gore District in the 12 months ending June 2024. This compares with the nine year annual average of 67.
- *Please note that First Home Grant purchases is not yet available for the year to December 2024. Data for the year to June 2024 is displayed instead.*

First Home Loan purchases

Figure 45. Annual change in First Home Loan purchases
Annual average % change September 2023 - September 2024, First Home Loan purchases

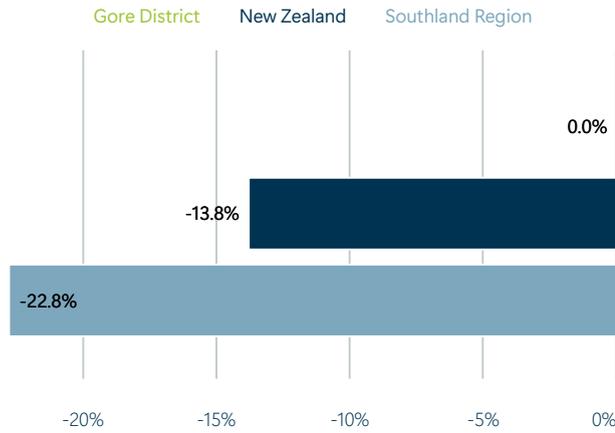


Figure 46. First Home Loan purchases
Annual number First Home Loan purchases, Gore District



Highlights

- Purchases using the Kainga Ora First Home Loan scheme in Gore District were unchanged in the year to September 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with decreases of 13.8% in New Zealand and 22.8% in Southland Region.
- A total of 14 properties were purchased using the Kainga Ora First Home Loan scheme in Gore District in the 12 months ending September 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 13.
- *Please note that First Home Loan purchases is not yet available for the year to December 2024. Data for the year to September 2024 is displayed instead.*

Residential rents

Figure 47. Annual change in residential rents
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

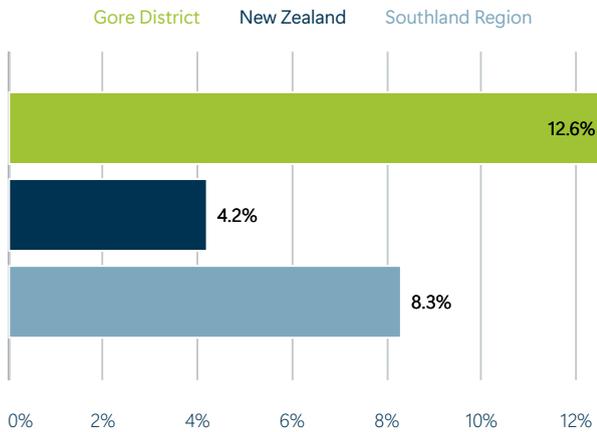
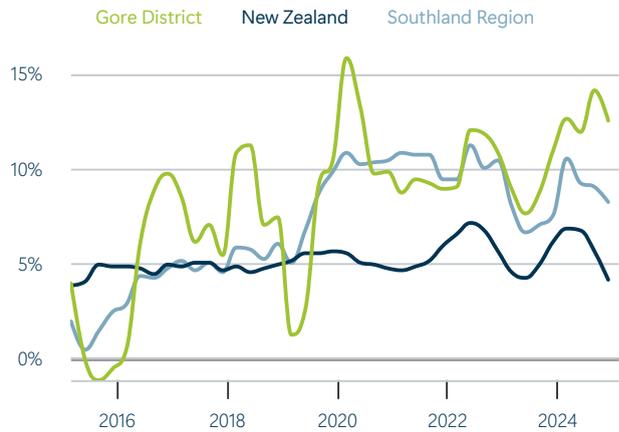


Figure 48. Residential rents growth
Annual average % change



Highlights

- The average residential rent in Gore District was up 12.6% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (4.2%) and Southland Region (8.3%).
- The average residential rent in Gore District was \$419 in the year to December 2024. This compares to \$574 in New Zealand and \$416 in Southland Region.
- Annual growth of residential rents in Gore District peaked at 15.9% in the year to March 2020.

National overview

Residential rents were under pressure throughout 2024 due to weaker net migration and the effects of the recession. The average weekly rent was \$572 in the year to December 2024. Annual growth in residential rents has slowed for three consecutive quarters, falling to 4.2% in December, the slowest growth since June 2015. Rents in the main centres (excluding Canterbury) were under significant pressure with rents in Auckland and Wellington lower than a year ago. Growth in average rents were outpaced by average household income, freeing up discretionary income for many households who have felt budget pressures during the cost-of-living crisis.

Rental affordability

Figure 49. Rental affordability
Rents as % of household income, year to December 2024

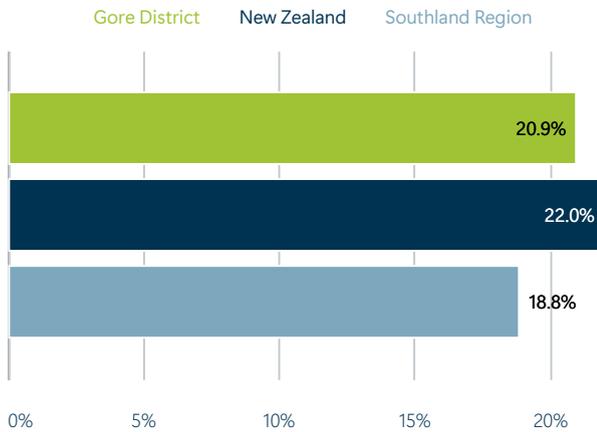
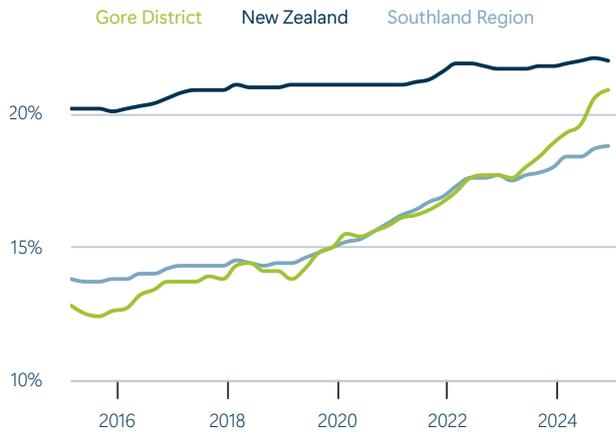


Figure 50. Rental affordability
Rents as % of household income, annual average



Highlights

- Renting in Gore District (20.9%) was less affordable than in Southland Region (18.8%) and more affordable than in New Zealand (22.0%) in the year to December 2024, based on the ratio of mean rents to mean household incomes.
- Rental affordability in Gore District deteriorated on average between December 2023 and December 2024. Rental affordability has deteriorated in Southland Region and New Zealand over the same period.
- During the last ten years, renting in Gore District was most affordable in September 2015, when the index reached a low of 12.4%.

National overview

Rental affordability improved slightly in the year to December 2024, with average rents amounting to 22.0% of household incomes, down from 22.1% in the year to September 2024. Growth in average residential rents slowed significantly from 5.7%pa in September 2024 to 4.2% in December. Growth in average rents was outpaced by mean household income growth of 4.7% in the year to December 2024. Residential rents have been under pressure from weaker net migrations and the effects of the recession in 2024, especially in the main centres (excluding Canterbury) with rents in Auckland and Wellington lower than a year ago.

Housing register applicants

Figure 51. Annual change in housing register applicants
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

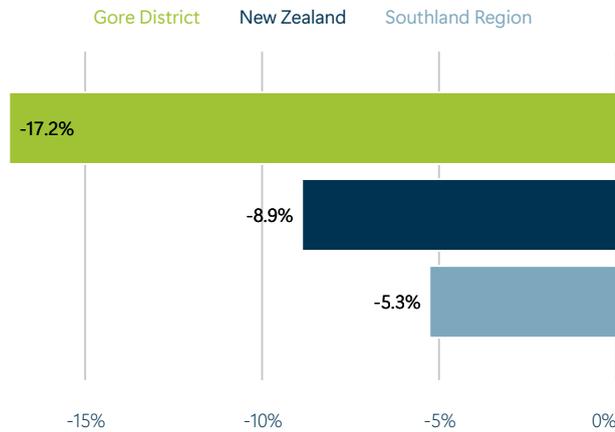
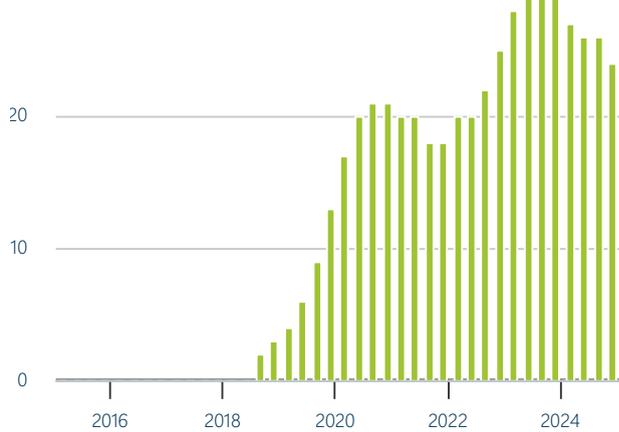


Figure 52. Housing register applicants
Annual average, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of applicants on the housing register in Gore District decreased by 17.2% in the year to December 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with decreases of 5.3% in Southland Region and 8.9% in New Zealand.
- An average of 24 applicants were on the housing register in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 13.

National overview

Housing register applications fell 8.9% in the year to December 2024 from a year ago, pulling the annual average register applications below 23,000. In the December quarter the number of housing register applicants was 20% lower than December 2023.

The housing register, often referred to as the public housing waiting list, counts applicants who are not currently in public housing, who have been assessed as eligible for public housing and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property. These applicants could be living in emergency housing, unaffordable private rentals, or other insecure arrangements.

Public housing stock

Figure 53. Public housing stock
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

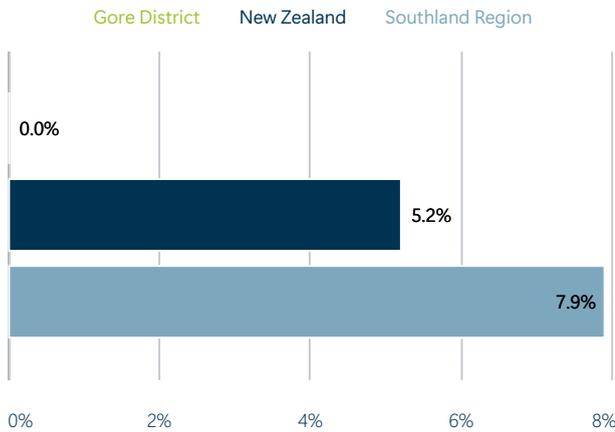
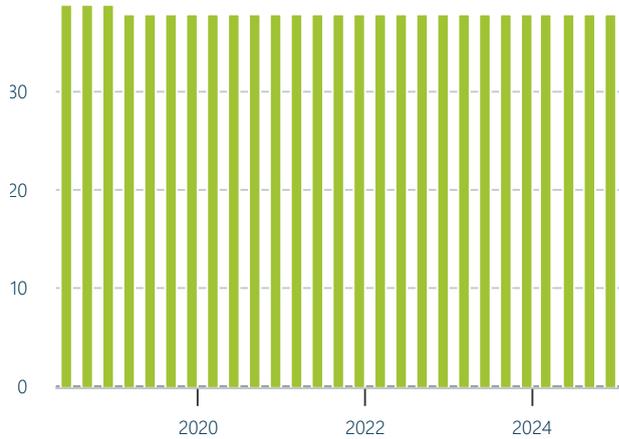


Figure 54. Public housing stock
Annual average, Gore District



Highlights

- The number of public houses in Gore District in the year to December 2024 was unchanged compared to a year earlier. Growth was positive in New Zealand (5.2%) and Southland Region (7.9%).
- There were an average of 38 public houses in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the seven year annual average of 38.

National overview

The public housing stock continues to grow steadily. Since the December 2023 quarter, the public housing stock grew by about 3,600 or 5.2%.

Public housing includes properties that are owned or leased by Kāinga Ora and other registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) that can be tenanted by people who are eligible for public housing. The totals presented include both occupied and vacant houses. Public housing was previously referred to as social housing. This data is sourced from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Social indicators

Overview

Table 4. Overview of social indicators

All Economic Labour market Housing Social

Indicator	Gore District	Southland Region	New Zealand
School attendance [^] [🕒]	56.9% [▲]	57.6% [▲]	55.0% [▲]
Gaming machine profits [🕒]	-3.2% [▼]	-3.4% [▼]	-3.6% [▼]
Crime rate [^]	294 [▼]	228 [▼]	221 [▼]
Health enrolments	+1.5% [▲]	+2.3% [▲]	+2.3% [▲]
Other benefit recipients	+5.7% [▲]	+5.7% [▲]	+3.4% [▲]

[🕒] Data up to the September 2024 quarter.

All measures are annual average percentage changes unless:

[^] Levels

School attendance

Figure 55. School attendance

% of school students attending greater than 90% of classes, annual average to September 2024

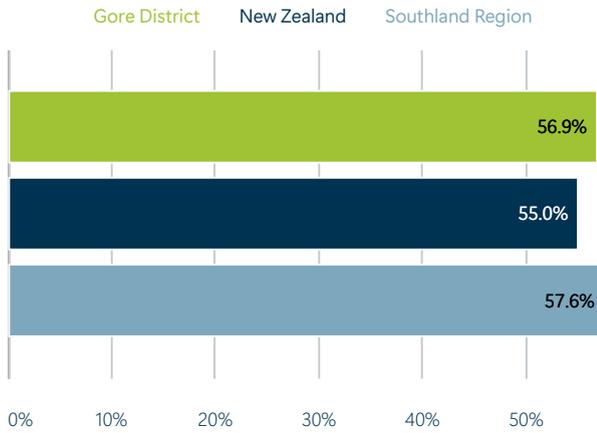
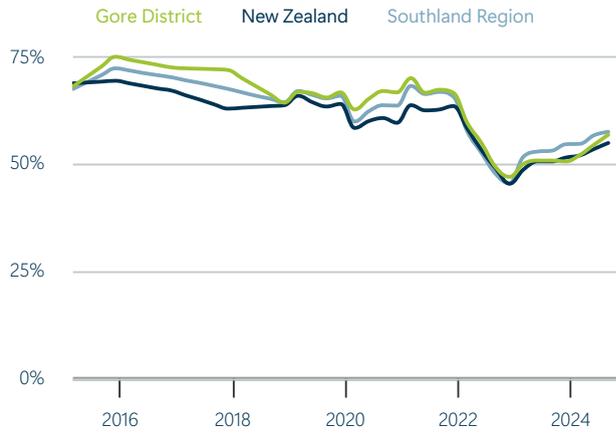


Figure 56. School attendance

% of school students attending greater than 90% of classes, annual average



Highlights

- The annual average school attendance rate in Gore District was 56.9% in the year to September 2024, up from 50.9% in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to September 2024, the annual average school attendance rate in Gore District was higher than in New Zealand (55.0%) and was lower than in Southland Region (57.6%).
- Over the last ten years the annual average school attendance rate in Gore District reached a peak of 75.1% in December 2015.
- *Please note that school attendance is not yet available for the year to December 2024. Data for the year to September 2024 is displayed instead.*

Gaming machine profits

Figure 57. Gaming machine profits
Annual level, Gore District

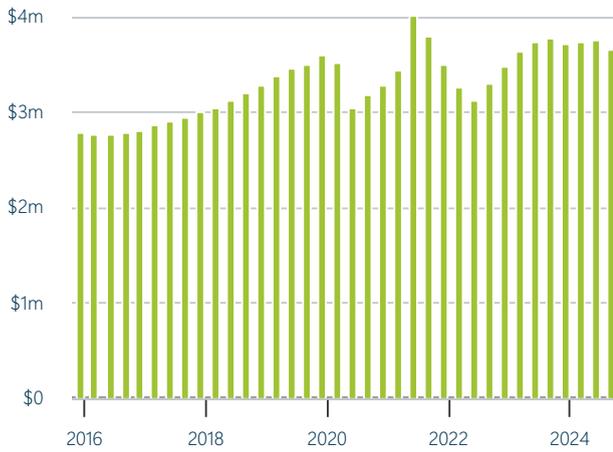
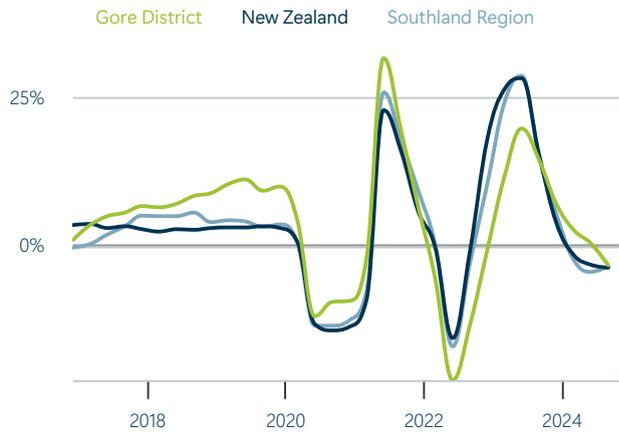


Figure 58. Gaming machine profits
Annual average % change



Highlights

- Gaming machine profits in Gore District decreased by 3.2% over the year to September 2024, compared to a year earlier. This compares with decreases of 3.4% in Southland Region and 3.6% in New Zealand.
- Gaming machine profits in Gore District totalled \$3.65 million in the year to September 2024.
- Annual gaming machine profit growth in Gore District peaked at 31.8% in the year to June 2021.
- *Please note that gaming machine profits is not yet available for the year to December 2024. Data for the year to September 2024 is displayed instead.*

Crime rate

Figure 59. Crime rate

Criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents, annual average to December 2024

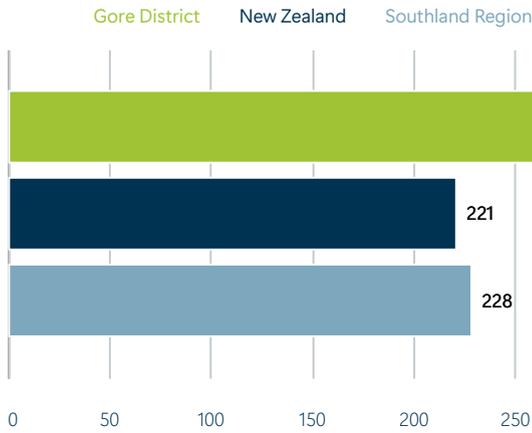
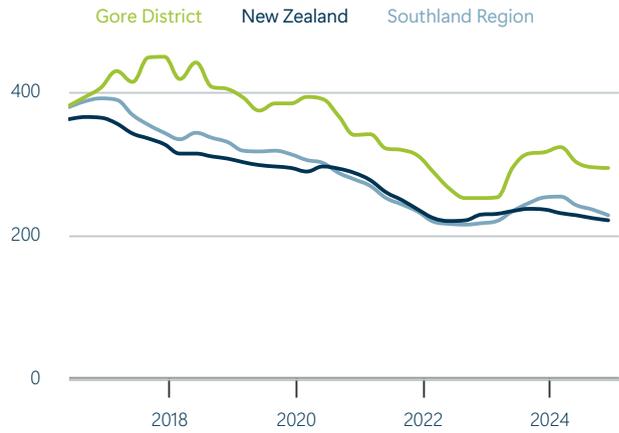


Figure 60. Crime rate

Criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents, annual average



Highlights

- The crime rate in Gore District was 294 (per 10,000 residents) in the year to December 2024, down from 316 in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to December 2024, the crime rate in Gore District was higher than in New Zealand (221) and Southland Region (228).
- Over the last ten years the annual average crime rate in Gore District reached a peak of 449 in December 2017.

National overview

New Zealand’s crime rate eased slightly over the past year, from 224 criminal proceedings per 10,000 people in the year to September 2024, to 221 in the year to December 2024. Two types of offences – dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons, and traffic and vehicle regulatory offences – recorded significant falls in proceedings, driving down overall criminal proceedings.

Health enrolments

Figure 61. Annual change in health enrolments
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

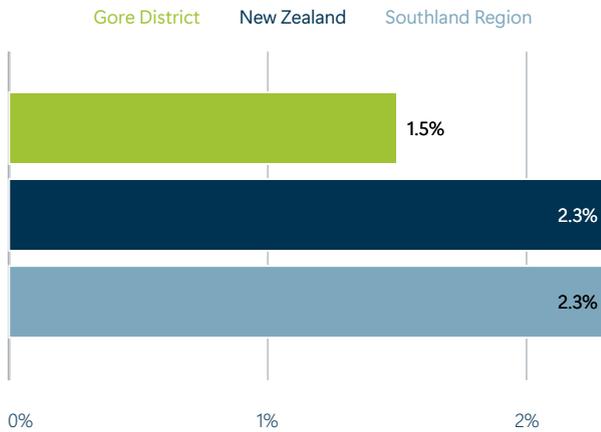
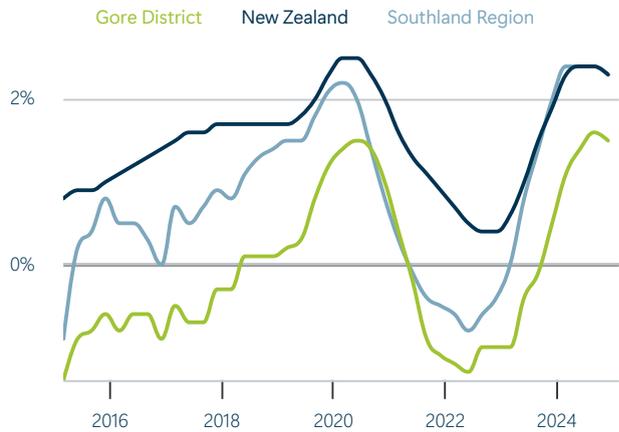


Figure 62. Health enrolments
Annual average % change



Highlights

- The number of people enrolled with a primary health organisation in Gore District in the year to December 2024 increased by 1.5% compared to a year earlier. Growth was lower than in New Zealand (2.3%) and Southland Region (2.3%).
- An average of 12,950 people were enrolled with primary healthcare providers in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 12,797.

National overview

Health enrolments serve as a timely local proxy for population growth. Health enrolments rose 2.3% in the year to December 2024, slowing to 2.1%pa in the December 2024 quarter.

Population growth is slowing as net migration comes down quickly from a record high in 2023. Stats NZ estimates that New Zealand’s estimated resident population rose 1.5% in the year to December 2024, down from 2.5% growth in the year to December 2023.

Other benefit recipients

Figure 63. Annual change in other benefit recipients
Annual average % change December 2023 - December 2024

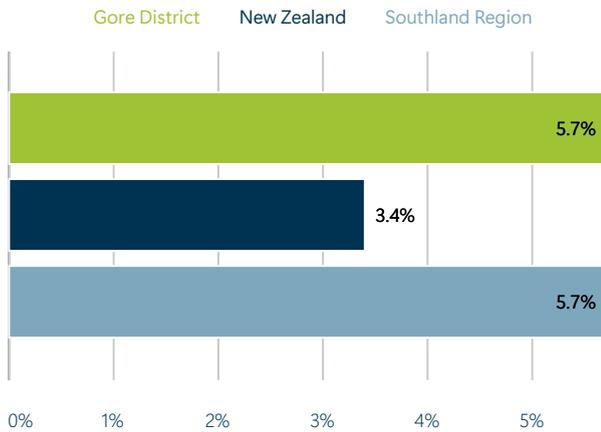
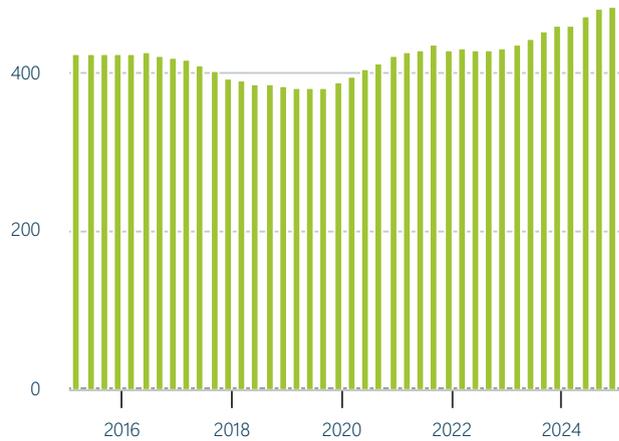


Figure 64. Other benefit recipients
Annual average, Gore District



Highlights

- Other benefits recipients (including Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment) in Gore District in the year to December 2024 increased by 5.7% compared to a year earlier. Growth was the same as in Southland Region (5.7%) and was higher than in New Zealand (3.4%).
- An average of 486 people were receiving an other benefit (including Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment) in Gore District in the 12 months ending December 2024. This compares with the ten year annual average of 424.

National overview

Other benefit recipients (including Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment) rose 3.4% in the year to December 2024. A rise in Sole Parent Support recipients drove the overall rise in other benefit recipients as the average number of recipients increased by around 2,900, up 3.9% from the year to December 2023. Supported Living Payment recipients rose slower, increasing 2.4% in the year to December 2024. Other benefit groups rose 14% from a year ago but make up just 3% of total other benefit recipients.

The rise in Sole Parent Support does not necessarily mean that there are more sole parents, as eligible sole parents who lose their job will generally shift to Sole Parent Support instead of Jobseeker Support.

Technical notes

Building consents

Building consents data is sourced from Stats NZ. The number of residential consents issued for new dwellings is the measure for residential consents. For non-residential consents, the measure is the value of both new buildings and alterations.

Business counts

This data is from Business Count Indicators (BCI) from Statistics New Zealand. It is a series based on a monthly count of geographic units as at the end of each month, mostly sourced from administrative data. Geographic units represent a business location engaged in one, or predominantly one, kind of economic activity at a single physical site or base (eg a factory, a farm, a shop, an office, etc).

The business counts data is different from the annually published Business Demography Statistics.

This series is limited to economically significant enterprises. It can be an individual, private-sector and public-sector enterprises that are engaged in the production of goods and services in New Zealand. These enterprises are maintained on the Statistics NZ Business Register, which generally includes all employing units and those enterprises with GST turnover greater than \$30,000 per year.

Calculating changes

We use several different calculations to calculate change in the indicators used in the Quarterly Economic Monitor.

- Annual average percentage change: Annual average percentage change compares average values over the past year with those in the prior year. For example, the change from the year ending March last year to the year ending March this year.
- Annual percentage change: Annual percentage change compares the value this quarter to the value in the same quarter last year. For example, the change from March quarter last year to March quarter this year.
- Levels: In the case of levels, such as unemployment rate, we do not calculate the change in level – we simply show the latest level value.

Consumer spending

The consumer spending data is sourced from Marketview. It measures total electronic card spending at 'bricks + mortar' retailers using a combination of spending through the Paymark network and modelled estimates at non-Paymark retailers. For further breakdown of the data by storetype and other variables contact Marketview.

Crime

The crude crime rate is calculated as the number of crimes committed and recorded (offender proceedings) in an area per 10,000 residents. Crime counts are sourced from the New Zealand Police. Population data is sourced from Stats NZ and Infometrics own population projections (for the most recent quarters).

The data available at a detailed level only included reported crime and does not provide a dimension of how safe people feel. However, higher crime is an obvious proxy for unreported crime (more reported crime would seem to imply a higher overall crime burden), and more crime would logically see people feel less safe.

Dairy

Dairy data has been sourced from the *New Zealand Dairy Statistics*, a publication jointly produced by DairyNZ and LIC, as well as calculations made by Infometrics. The data accords to dairy seasons, which run from June to May. Total dairy payouts in each territorial authority have been calculated by Infometrics by utilising milk solids production in conjunction with Fonterra's farmgate milk price (excluding dividends) from the dairy season in question. For the current season, Infometrics calculates a payout forecast using our own expectation of the farmgate milk price and the assumption that milk solids production continues running at the same level as the last 12 months.

Emergency housing

Emergency housing measures the number of households living in emergency housing at the end of each quarter. This is recorded based on data from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) on the number of emergency housing special needs grants (EH SNG) issued for individuals and families staying in short-term accommodation such as motels if they are temporarily unable to access a contracted transitional housing place or private rental.

Please note that some publications, such as the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's Public housing regional factsheets, report the number of emergency housing grants issued. This number is generally much higher than the number of households living in emergency housing, as the grants have to be renewed every few weeks. For example, a household living in emergency housing continuously through a quarter would receive several grants during that time. We present the number of households as this better reflects the ongoing use of emergency housing.

Employment (place of residence)

Employment data is based off a range of Stats NZ employment datasets, and represents the number of filled jobs, based on the area of residential address for the employee (rather than workplace address). This place of residence location means that the employment series reflects trends in employment of an area's residents, which may be different to trends in employment at businesses in an area, particularly when there are strong commuting flows. The most recent quarter is based off the average of Monthly Employment Indicator (MEI) filled jobs from Stats NZ for the past three months, with previous quarters being backcasted using the percentage change in the quarterly Business Data Collection dataset published by Stats NZ.

First Home Grant purchases

First Home Grant purchases are measured using data from Kainga Ora on the number of properties bought using a First Home Grant. The First Home Grant offers eligible first-home buyers with a grant of up to \$5,000 to put towards the purchase of an existing/older home, or up to \$10,000 to put towards the purchase of a brand new property. This does not capture all first home buyers, as some will be excluded by First Home Grant eligibility requirements including maximum annual income and regional house price caps.

First Home Loan purchases

First Home Loan purchases are measured using data from Kainga Ora on the number of properties bought (settled) using a Kainga Ora First Home Loan. First Home Loans are low-deposit (as low as 5%) home loans underwritten by Kainga Ora and issued through trading banks. First Home Loans were previously known as Welcome Home Loans. First Home Loans have additional eligibility criteria including a maximum income, and carry a 0.5% insurance premium to cover risks associated with such a low deposit. The uptake of First Home Loans varies by area, but changes in the number of purchases using the scheme serve as a useful indicator of changes in first home buyer activity.

First Home Loan purchases were introduced in the September 2024 Quarterly Economic Monitor to replace First Home Grants, which were closed to new applications in May 2024.

Gaming machine profits

Gambling activity is estimated using gaming machine profits (GMP) data published by the Department of Internal Affairs. This GMP data is based on Class 4 gambling which represents electronic gaming machines, commonly known as 'pokies', located in venues such as pubs and clubs. This excludes all sports betting and casino-based gaming. GMP represents money spent by gamblers which is not returned to gamblers in the form of winnings. A minimum of 40% of GMP are required by law to go back to the community in the form of grants.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Greenhouse gas emission estimates are modelled using Stats NZ emissions estimates for industries and regions, coupled with Infometrics estimates of GDP and employment.

Stats NZ's emissions estimates are produced using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) framework, designed to align greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data to economic indicators such as GDP. These are production-based emissions of greenhouse gas emissions for ANZSIC industries and households. Emissions are expressed in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂-e), which are the emissions of greenhouse gases weighted by their 100-year global warming potential.

Using a production-based approach means that emissions associated with consumption are not accounted for. For example, the emissions associated with burning coal for home heating will accrue to the area in which the coal is burnt. However, the emissions associated with burning coal to generate electricity accrue to the area with the power station, not the area which uses the resulting electricity to heat their homes.

Gross domestic product

Gross Domestic Product is estimated by Infometrics. A top-down approach breaks national industrial production (sourced from production-based GDP measures published by Stats NZ) to TA level by applying TA shares to the national total. Each TA's share of industry output is based on labour market data from LEED. GDP growth in recent quarters is based on a model which uses residence-based employment from Monthly Employment Indicators that have been mapped to place of work. Estimates of GDP for these recent quarters are provisional until Infometrics updates its annual GDP series in the Regional Economic Profile at the beginning of each year. Gross domestic product is measured in 2024 prices.

Guest nights

The number of guest nights is sourced from the Accommodation Data Programme, which is funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and managed by Fresh Info. A guest night is equivalent to one guest spending one night at an establishment. For example, a motel with 15 guests spending two nights would report that they had provided 30 guest nights.

Health enrolments

Health enrolments are sourced from the Ministry of Health. They record the number of people in each area who are enrolled with a Primary Health Organisation (PHO). Enrolment is voluntary, but most New Zealanders enrol at a general practice for health reasons and for the benefits of enrolment, such as cheaper doctors' visits and reduced costs of prescription medicines. Health enrolments are attributed to territorial authorities based on the residential address of patients, regardless of where their general practice is located.

The Ministry of Health changed how health enrolments were coded to areas in 2023, which caused a break in the series between the June 2023 and September 2023 quarter. We have undertaken modelling to combine the series over this period.

House sales

The number of house sales is sourced from REINZ. The indicator measures the number of house sales at the point when the sale becomes unconditional. The unconditional date is the date when all the terms of an agreement have been satisfied and the sale and purchase can proceed to settlement.

House values

House values (dollar value) are sourced from CoreLogic. The levels quoted in the report are average values for the quarter.

Household income

In 2024 we revised our methodology for estimating household incomes to incorporate new data sources. Previously we relied heavily on Stats NZ's LEED-Annual for historical income estimates, however, we have since uncovered a number of issues with how regional incomes are distributed to territorial authorities within some regions.

Previously, we eschewed Census data, due to its tendency to under-report incomes, due to challenge of accurately recollecting incomes when filling out a Census form. Stats NZ have started producing the Administrative Population Census (APC) which draws upon tax data to more completely record incomes, partially overcoming the problem of Census data. In light of the issues with LEED-Annual at a territorial authority level, we now use APC data to indicate each territorial authority's share of regional income. The APC still underestimates incomes, but is a reliable indicator of relative incomes.

These changes have resulted in historical revisions of our household income and housing affordability estimates for many areas, however, we expect future revisions to be minimal. We always recommend that you download a complete time series if looking to compare changes over time.

Housing affordability

Housing affordability is measured by comparing average current house values from CoreLogic with Infometrics' estimate of annual average household income. Household incomes are a better measure for housing affordability than individual incomes as it reflects the true ability of a household to afford housing. We present a ratio of average house values to average household incomes. A higher ratio, therefore, suggests that average houses cost a greater multiple of typical incomes, which indicates lower housing affordability.

Housing register applicants

The housing register counts applicants who are not currently in public housing, who have been assessed as eligible for public housing and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property. This is often referred to as the public housing waiting list. Public housing was previously referred to as social housing.

Data is sourced from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and are shown as the average number of applicants. One applicant could represent a single person, couple or family looking for housing. Applicants could be living in emergency housing, unaffordable private rentals, or other insecure arrangements such as couch-surfing or rough-sleeping.

Jobseeker Support recipients

In July 2013 the New Zealand's welfare system changed to better recognise and support people's work potential. As part of this the Jobseekers Support benefit was introduced. This benefit is for people who can usually look or prepare for work but also includes people who can only work part-time or can't work at the moment, for example, because they have a health condition, injury or disability.

Data presented for the September 2013 quarter onwards is provided by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Data prior to September 2013 are Infometrics estimates based on re-grouping pre-July 2013 benefit categories to be consistent with the post-July 2013 benefit categories. The pre-July 2013 benefit categories used to estimate the number of Jobseekers Support recipients are: Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Benefit Hardship; Unemployment Benefit Training and Unemployment Benefit Hardship Training; Sickness Benefit and Sickness Benefit Hardship; Domestic Purposes Benefit - Sole Parent (if youngest child is 14 or over); Women Alone and Widow's Benefit (without children or with children 14 or over)

NEET

NEET rates measure the proportion of young people aged 15-24 that are not in education, employment or training.

Infometrics estimates NEET rates by territorial authority. The following datasets are used in to estimate territorial authority NEET rates: Stats NZ's Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS), Census data, Jobseeker Support recipients by age, and transient secondary school student numbers.

Territorial authority estimates are benchmarked on annual average regional NEET rates from the HLFS, which at this level of disaggregation can be volatile from year to year. Large year-to-year changes are likely to be partially caused by sampling errors in the HLFS, rather than actual fundamental shifts in NEET rates. As the HLFS is the official measure of youth NEET in NZ, we benchmark our data to align with published NEET rates.

Other benefits

Other benefits include Sole Parent Support, Supported Living and other residual main benefits (excluding Jobseeker Support). Data is sourced from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and are shown as the average number of beneficiaries in each benefit category across each quarter for the current year. Further details of the benefit categories can be found on MSD's website.

Public housing stock

Public housing includes properties that are owned or leased by Kāinga Ora and other registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) that can be tenanted by people who are eligible for public housing. The totals presented include both occupied and vacant houses. Public housing was previously referred to as social housing. This data is sourced from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Real estate listings

Real estate listings measure the number of new listings for residential dwellings on realestate.co.nz. It is based on the number of listings added each quarter or year.

Rental affordability

Rental affordability is measured by comparing average annualised rents from CoreLogic with Infometrics' estimate of annual average household income. Household incomes are a better measure for housing affordability than individual incomes as it reflects the true ability of a household to afford housing. We present a ratio of an annual ratio of average rent to average household incomes. A higher ratio, therefore, suggests that average rents cost a greater multiple of typical incomes, which indicates lower rental affordability.

Residential rents

Residential rents (\$ per week) are sourced from monthly data provided by MBIE and averaged across each quarter or year using weighted geometric means. Rental data pertains to averages from data collected when bonds are lodged and does not control for specifications of the home (eg. size, number of bedrooms, age of home, etc).

School attendance

School attendance is presented as the percentage of school students who attend greater than 90% of their classes. This includes students at primary, intermediate and secondary schools. Some individual students have legitimate absences which bring their attendance to below 90%, but are still counted in this measure as the aim is to reflect overall trends in school attendance. This should not be taken as a proxy for truancy however.

The Ministry of Education provides attendance data on a school term basis. We have apportioned Terms 1, 2, 3 and 4 to the March, June, September and December quarters respectively.

Tourism expenditure

Tourism Expenditure is based on MBIE's monthly regional tourism estimates (MRTEs).

MBIE published the MRTEs for 2019-2023, and previously published a different MRTE series for 2009-2018. We present a combination of both series in the QEM for a consistent timeseries from 2009 to the current quarter. The MRTEs are based on electronic card transaction data, calibrated to be consistent with national tourism expenditure data shown in Stats NZ's Tourism Satellite Account. This calibration takes into consideration the International Visitor Survey, so that differences in propensities to use cards versus cash for visitors from various countries of origin are accounted for.

MBIE paused the MRTE series again after the September 2023 quarter, however, we have retained this series as the base for our tourism expenditure estimates. From the December 2023 quarter onwards, we use the MBIE's Tourism Electronic Card Transactions (TECTs) to indicate the growth in spending.

Traffic flow

Traffic flow growth rates are calculated from the number of vehicles passing approximately 110 sites monitored by New Zealand Transport Agency. Each territorial authority has been mapped to one or more sites.

From October 2022 until September 2024, there was a substantial level of non-reporting of traffic sites, forcing Infometrics to interpolate a high proportion of traffic activity based on adjacent reporting sites, or reporting sites that usually had a similar trend to a non-reporting site. Data over this period should be treated with caution.

Unemployment rate

Regional level unemployment rates are sourced from Stats NZ's Household Labour Force Survey. Trends in the number of Jobseekers are used to break down regional unemployment rates to TA levels. The TA level unemployment rates are benchmarked on census following the release of each census. To reduce volatility the unemployment rate is presented as an average for the last four quarters.

Vehicle sales

Car and commercial vehicle sales data are sourced from New Zealand Transport Authority. Sales are based on new registrations which include the first time registration of new vehicles and used vehicles imported from overseas. Electric vehicle registrations are based on new sales of battery electric cars (excluding hybrid, plug-in hybrid or fuel cell cars).

8. Reports for Decisions

8.1 Resignation of Mataura Community Board member – intention to appoint unsuccessful candidate

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Susan Jones
Author title:	Governance Manager
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Tuesday, 11 March 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council of the recommendation of the Mataura Community Board relating to its desire to appoint the highest voting unsuccessful candidate from the 2022 Board elections to replace Colleen Lieshout.
2. The resignation of Mrs Colleen Lieshout as a member of the Mataura Community Board had been received on 23 February 2025 and was effective immediately.

Recommendation

3. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the *Resignation of Mataura Community Board member – intention to appoint unsuccessful candidate* report,
 - b) resolve, in accordance with section 117 (3)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, to appoint Constance Waihape by virtue of being the highest voting unsuccessful candidate at the 2022 Mataura Community Board elections;
 - c) resolve, in accordance with section 118 (1)(a) and (b) to give public notice of the resolution and the process by which the person named in the resolution was selected for appointment;
 - d) note that the expiry of the prescribed period of 30 days will be 17 April 2025; and
 - e) note that on the basis the selected candidate accepts the appointment, the Council will, at an extraordinary Council meeting to be held on 17 April, confirm the appointment described in clause b) above.

Executive Summary

4. At its meeting on Monday 10 March, the Maitara Community Board formally received and acknowledged the resignation of Colleen Lieshout with effect from 23 February 2025.
5. Section 117 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 – extraordinary vacancy in local authority or community board - provides that, inter alia:
6. *(1) If a vacancy occurs in the office of a member of a local authority or in the office of an elected member of a community board more than 12 months before the next triennial general election, the vacancy must be filled by an election under this Act.*
7. *(2) If a vacancy occurs in the office of a member of a local authority or in the office of an elected member of a community board 12 months or less than 12 months before the next triennial general election, the chief executive of the local authority concerned must notify the local authority or community board of the vacancy immediately.*
8. *(3) On receiving notice under subsection (2), the local authority or community board must, at its next meeting (other than an extraordinary meeting) or, if that is not practicable, at its next subsequent meeting (other than an extraordinary meeting), determine by resolution—*
9. *(a) that the vacancy will be filled by the appointment by the local authority or local board or community board of a person named in the resolution who is qualified to be elected as a member; or*
10. *(b) that the vacancy is not to be filled.*
11. *(4) If for any reason the person specified in the resolution is unavailable, or otherwise unable to be notified of the appointment, a further vacancy occurs in that office.*
12. Further, section 118 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 - notice of intention to fill vacancy by appointment - provides that, inter alia:
13. *(1) If, under section 117(3)(a) or section 117A, a local authority or community board resolves that a vacancy will be filled by the appointment of a person by the local authority or community board, it must immediately, unless the vacancy is for the office of mayor, give public notice of—*
14. *(a) the resolution; and*
15. *(b) the process or criteria by which the person named in the resolution was selected for appointment.*
16. *(2) The local authority or local board or community board must, at a meeting held not later than the expiry of the prescribed period, by resolution confirm the appointment described in the resolution under subsection (1); and the person appointed is for all purposes to be treated as having been elected to fill the vacancy on the date on which that resolution is made.*
17. *(3) For the purposes of subsection (2), the **expiry of the prescribed period** is 30 days after the date of notification of the resolution under subsection (1).*
18. *(4) If for any reason the person specified in the resolution is unavailable or otherwise unable to be confirmed in the appointment, a further vacancy occurs in that office.*

Context

19. Ms Waihape was the highest voting unsuccessful polling candidate at the 2022 Maitara Community Board elections and is qualified in terms of the Local Electoral Act to be appointed to fill the vacancy.

20. In the event Ms Waihape is unavailable to be appointed, then the vacancy remains as an extraordinary one.
21. Given there are just four scheduled meetings remaining until the 2025 elections, and a 30 day public notice period, it would appear the appointment of any other unsuccessful candidate would be unlikely.

Discussion

22. If the recommendation is not approved, the Community Board is still able to continue without any legal impediment. There are four scheduled meetings remaining until the 2025 local authority elections.
23. In the event the appointee accepted the appointment, she could potentially be sworn in at the Maitaha Community Board meeting scheduled to be held on Monday 28 April 2025.

Reference

Local Electoral Act 2001

8.2 Proposal to amend and adopt three finance related policies

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Leon Mitchell
Author title:	Strategy and Policy Advisor
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Friday, 28 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council of the need for three finance related policies to be amended and adopted prior to the Council approving the Long Term Plan (LTP) consultation document at the Council meeting on 18 March 2025.
2. To provide an overview of the proposed changes to the three finance policies, as developed with the Chief Financial Officer and the Senior Finance Manager.
3. To seek the adoption of the amendments to these policies at the Council meeting on 18 March 2025.

Recommendation

4. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the proposal to amend the following finance related policies:
 - (i) Liability Management Policy;
 - (ii) Investment Policy; and the
 - (iii) Remission of Rates Policy.
 - b) approves the amendment and adoption of the Liability Management Policy
 - c) approves the amendment and adoption of the Investment Policy
 - d) approves the amendment and adoption of the Remission of Rates Policy
 - e) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any final editorial amendments to any of the above documents.

Executive Summary

7. The Chief Financial Officer has put forward suggestions for several minor and technical amendments to three finance related policies. These policies must be adopted by the Council prior to the adoption of the LTP consultation document.

Context

8. The Chief Financial Officer has advised that finance policies all have a bearing on the LTP, and therefore proper process is that any amendments to finance policies must be adopted before the Council approves the LTP consultation document. There are three finance policies with proposed amendments:
 - Liability Management Policy;
 - Investment Policy; and the
 - Remission of Rates Policy.
9. These finance related policies have amendments due to:
 - previously approved by the Council that have not been actioned; and/or
 - suggestions from the Council's auditors (Deloitte New Zealand), and/or
 - updates required due to changes in legislation, or to better reflect requirements of legislation; and
 - taking the opportunity to modernise and standardise the formatting of policies.

Discussion

Liability Management Policy

10. The purpose of this policy is to outline the level and nature of risks that are acceptable to the Council, and to control and manage borrowing costs, liquidity requirements and risks associated with treasury management activities.
11. This policy was reviewed in June 2022, with amendments adopted by the Council at its meeting on 20 June 2022. Those amendments have been incorporated into this document.
12. Other amendments proposed in this document are:
 - the inclusion of a purpose section (section 1) which includes
 - a general purpose (1.1);
 - updated references to legislative requirements (1.2);
 - and a clear link to related Council strategies and policies (1.3).
 - the policy is reformatted into the current policy format which makes it easier to read and follow, this format will be the standard for all council policies to become consistent and accessible for readers.

Investment Policy

13. This policy details how the Council investments are to be managed.
14. This policy was reviewed in 2021 as a part of the LTP process.
15. Amendments proposed in this document are:
 - the expansion of a purpose section (section 1) which includes
 - a general purpose statement (1.1 and 1.2);
 - a clear link to related Council strategies and policies (1.3);
 - and updated references to legislative requirements (1.4).

- the policy is reformatted into the current policy format which makes it easier to read and follow, this format will be the standard for all Council policies to become consistent and accessible for readers.

Remission of Rates Policy

16. A partial reduction in the amount of rates you have to pay is called a rates remission, and this policy details how the Council rates remissions are available for ratepayers that meet the criteria outlined in the policy.
17. This policy was reviewed in March 2022, with amendments adopted by the Council at its meeting on 15 March 2022 and in a subsequent workshop. Those amendments have been incorporated into this document.
18. Other amendments proposed in this document are:
 - the expansion of a purpose section (section 1) which includes
 - a general purpose statement (1.1 and 1.2);
 - a clear link to related Council strategies and policies (1.3);
 - and updated references to legislative requirements (1.4).
 - the addition of a scope section (section 2) which includes
 - clear plain language outline of the types of land listed in the legislation as being either fully non-rateable or 50% rates remission land (2.1 and 2.2);
 - other rates remission policies or criteria the Council has (2.3).
 - the addition of the previously stand-alone Council statement on rating of Māori freehold lands (section 7), which states such lands will be rated in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.
 - the policy is reformatted into the current policy format which makes it easier to read and follow, this format will be the standard for all Council policies to become consistent and accessible for readers.

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

19. The recommendations in this report align with the role of the Council under section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002.
20. Section 10 – the purpose of local government is:
 - (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
 - (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.

Consultation (Internal)

21. These policy amendments have been developed in collaboration with Chief Financial Officer and the Senior Finance Manager and have been reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Financial Considerations

22. The adoption of these policy amendments is cost neutral, as they are primarily administrative amendments.

Risks

23. As discussed in paragraph 5, Chief Financial Officer has advised that finance policies have a bearing on the LTP, and therefore proper process is that any amendments to finance policies must be adopted before the Council approves the LTP consultation document.
24. If the Council does not adopt these policies, then it is unable to approve the LTP consultation document.

Significance and Engagement Policy

Significance

25. Staff have considered the key considerations under the Significance and Engagement Policy and have assessed that the recommendations in this report are generally of low significance for the community.
26. The proposed policy changes are minor and technical in nature. Only the Remission of Rates policy requires a consultative process, and the minor amendments proposed to this policy do not meet the threshold for being significant.

Engagement

27. Given the level of significance, it is advised the no specific external consultation or engagement is required.

Attachments

Attachment One - Gore District Council Liability Management Policy 2025 - DRAFT

Attachment Two – Gore District Council Investment Policy 2025 - DRAFT

Attachment Three – Gore District Council Remission of Rates Policy 2025 - DRAFT

LIABILITY MANAGEMENT POLICY



Document Type	Operational Policy
Adopted by	Full Council
Date Adopted	TBC
Date Effective	1 July 2025
Responsible Department	Finance
Responsible Officer	Chief Financial Officer
To be reviewed	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the level and nature of risks that are acceptable to the Gore District Council (the Council), and to control and manage borrowing costs, liquidity requirements and risks associated with treasury management activities.
- 1.2. This policy adheres to the requirements in section 104 of the Local Government Act 2002 which requires each local authority to have a liability management policy that includes policies for:
 - interest rate exposure; and
 - liquidity; and
 - credit exposure; and
 - debt repayment.
- 1.3. This policy links to the Council's following strategic documents and policies:
 - Financial Strategy
 - Annual Plan
 - Long-Term Plan (LTP)
 - Strategic Plan
 - Investment Policy
 - Funding Policy for Capital Expenditure

2. Objective

- 2.1. The objectives of this are consistent with corporate best practice and will take into account the Council's annual and strategic plans, and its long-term Financial Strategy.
- 2.2. The key objectives of this policy are to:
 - ensure that the Council has the ability to meet its debts in an orderly manner as and when they fall due, in both the short and long-term, through appropriate liquidity and funding risk management;

- arrange appropriate funding facilities for the Council, ensuring they are not above market related margins utilising the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA), bank debt facilities and/or capital markets as appropriate;
- maintain lender relationships and the Council's general borrowing profile in the local debt and, if applicable, capital markets, so that the Council is able to fund itself appropriately at all times;
- control the cost of borrowing through the effective management of its interest rate risks;
- ensure compliance with any financing/borrowing covenants and ratios;
- maintain adequate internal controls to mitigate operational risks;
- produce accurate and timely reports that can be relied on by senior management and the Council for control and exposure monitoring purposes, in relation to the debt raising activities of the Council;
- prudently manage the Council's borrowing activities;
- borrow only under the Council's approved facilities and as permitted by this policy; and
- maintain operational controls and procedures to protect the Council against permanent financial loss, opportunity cost and other inefficiencies.

3. Borrowing Management

- 3.1. The Council raises loans for the following primary purposes:
- specific debt associated with projects and capital expenditure;
 - finance leases for fixed asset purchases;
 - to fund assets with intergenerational qualities;
 - general debt to help fund working capital.
- 3.2. When evaluating new borrowings (in relation to source, term, size, and pricing) the following factors will be considered:
- the size and the economic life of the project;
 - earnings, if any, flowing from the project;
 - the impact of the new debt on the borrowing limits;
 - the overall cash flow requirements of the Council;
 - the Council's overall debt maturity profile;
 - prevailing interest rates and credit spreads relative to term for LGFA and capital markets sourced debt and bank borrowing, and an assessment of future credit spreads and interest rate movements;
 - available terms for LGFA, capital markets and bank debt;
 - relevant margins under each borrowing source;
 - legal documentation and financial covenants.

Borrowing Authority

- 3.3. It is intended that all borrowings will be identified in the LTP or Annual Plan. The authority to carry out such borrowings may be exercised by any person with the delegated authority to do so.

- 3.4. Borrowings not in accordance with the LTP or Annual Plan must be authorised by resolution of the Council.
- 3.5. Borrowings raised on behalf of Council Controlled Organisations and for commercial activities, will be assessed on the individual case basis. These borrowings must be authorised by the relevant Board (if applicable) and by the Council.

Borrowing Facilities

- 3.6. The Council may borrow from any New Zealand Registered Bank with a S&P Global Rating short term rating of 'A-1' and a minimum long-term rating of 'A'. There will be no limit set on the amount of funds which any of the authorised banks may lend the Council.
- 3.7. The Council may also issue local authority bonds and debt sourced from the LGFA.
- 3.8. All borrowing facilities must be denominated in New Zealand dollars.

Borrowing Mechanisms

- 3.9. It is the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer to manage the borrowing, liquidity risk management and funding risk management activities of the Council.
- 3.10. The Council may use the following external borrowing mechanisms:
 - bank sourced debt available under a committed facility;
 - commercial paper;
 - floating rate notes;
 - fixed rate bonds.

Borrowing Limits

- 3.11. The Council will adhere to the following limits (based on the Council's latest core financial statements at the time new debt is taken out):
 - net debt as a percentage of total revenue shall be less than 175% (in line with LGFA lending covenant);
 - net interest as a percentage of total revenue shall be less than 20%;
 - net interest as a percentage of rates shall be less than 25%.

Internal Borrowing

- 3.12. General Council (including ward, community board or committee) investments may be used as a source for internal loans in relation to expenditure of a capital (or one-off) nature related to any activity that would normally be funded by an external loan.
- 3.13. The interest to be applied to internal loans will be determined at the commencement of the financial year based on, and not exceeding, the interest offered on a twelve-month investment by the Council's bank on 1 July. It is permitted to apply rates of interest below that or zero in specific cases, after considering fairness and equity.
- 3.14. The term for any internal loan shall be not more than 50 years and will be set taking into account the ability to pay off the ratepayers affected, alternative uses of the funds, and the life of the assets to be funded. All terms of internal loans will be subject to review during the life of the loan.
- 3.15. This section has been recommended for inclusion for completeness. The Council currently undertakes informal internal borrowing, and this inclusion reflects that.

4. Debt Repayment

- 4.1. The Council's policy on debt repayment is to ensure that the Council is able to repay debt on maturity with minimum impact on the Council's operations.
- 4.2. Repayment of debt (interest and principal) is governed by the:
 - affordability of debt servicing costs;
 - sustainability of debt over the long-term;
 - maintenance of debt levels below prudent levels of debt at all times;
 - preservation of flexibility in borrowing capacity to deal with community and Infrastructural needs which will arise in the future; and
 - intergenerational equity principles (present and future).
- 4.3. The application of surplus cash will have the following priority:
 1. Repayment of debt
 2. Priority projects
 3. Investment.

5. Security

- 5.1. The Council policy on security is to ensure that the Council is able to provide suitable security to lenders, whilst retaining maximum flexibility and control over assets.
- 5.2. The security for most of the Council's debt will be the ability to levy rates. The Council may offer assets or rates as security for its borrowing.
- 5.3. The Local Government Act requires this security to be registered under the Companies Act. This registration is available for public inspection.

6. Interest Rate Exposure

- 6.1. Interest rate risk refers to the impact that movements in interest rates can have on an organisation's financial performance. The Council prefers predictable interest income and expense to minimise the risk of adverse movements impacting the operating surplus.

Objectives

- 6.2. The primary objective of interest rate risk management is to reduce uncertainty about net interest income or expense as interest rates change.

Interest Rate Risk Management

- 6.3. Mechanisms used include matching the interest rate re-pricing profile of the council financial investment and financial liabilities and, within risk limits, fixing rates through fixed-rate borrowings and by using interest rate hedging instruments. The Council manages interest rate risk on its debt on a portfolio basis.
- 6.4. In recognition of the competing principles of flexibility and accountability, the Council will manage its interest rate risk via a Treasury Management Panel. This panel, which is a sub-committee of the Council's Audit and Risk Committee, assists senior Council Management in striking a balance between risk, certainty and minimising exposure to higher than necessary costs of finance.
- 6.5. The interest rate exposures of the Council shall be managed according to the hedging parameters detailed in the following table:

Fixed Rate Hedging Percentages		
	Minimum Fixed Rate Amount	Maximum Fixed Rate Amount
0 – 2 years	0%	100%
2 – 4 years	0%	80%
4 – 10 years	0%	60%

7. Liquidity

Objectives

7.1. The key Liquidity Management objectives are to:

- manage short-term cash flows in an efficient and prudent manner;
- maintain a level of liquidity sufficient to meet both planned and reasonable unforeseen cash requirements;
- maintain accurate cash flow forecasts to increase efficiency in the Council's investment and borrowing decision making.

Liquidity and Funding Risk Management

7.2. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for monitoring and managing liquidity by:

- Forecasting, monitoring and managing daily cash activities.
- Ensuring appropriate liquidity to meet unexpected cash expenditure or revenue shortfalls.
- Arranging debt facilities and/or maintaining financial assets which can be readily converted to cash within a suitable time period.
- Having in place contingency plans to meet worst case scenarios.

7.3. To manage liquidity and funding risk the following shall apply:

- to avoid a concentration of debt maturity dates the Council will, where practicable, aim to have no more than 35% of debt subject to refinancing in any rolling twelve- month period, but may be up to 50%;
- the Council shall aim to maintain committed funding lines of not less than 110% of projected core debt for the coming year. Core debt is defined as that contained in the Annual Plan or as otherwise determined by the Chief Financial Officer.

8. Credit Exposure

Objectives

8.1. The key credit management objectives are to:

- prudently manage the Council's credit exposures;
- only borrow, invest, and otherwise transact with approved parties with pre-determined limits as permitted by this policy.

Credit Management

8.2. Prudent credit management can reduce the risk of loss due to a party failing to meet its obligations.

- the Council will only place investments with parties who have, at a minimum, a S&P Global Ratings ("S&P short term rating of 'A-1' and long-term rating of 'A' rating or Moody's Investors Service or Fitch rating equivalents);

- financial derivative contracts will only be held with registered banks, with a minimum S&P, or other equivalent agency rating, short term rating of 'A-1' and long-term rating of 'A' or Moody's Investors Service or Fitch rating equivalents.

9. Other Liabilities

Current Liabilities

9.1. Current liabilities reflect those obligations, expressed in monetary terms, which the Council has to meet within the next twelve months. For day-to-day obligations for its operational and capital expenditure, the Council's policy is to pay such in full (or to the full extent of any contractual obligations) by due date. This eliminates any credit exposure or risk.

Contingent Liabilities

9.2. The Council does not provide financial guarantees, with the exception of LGFA. Contingent liabilities may arise due to legal processes. These will be reported to the Council as soon as they become apparent. Provision for the likely financial implications of these liabilities will be made in accordance with the Council's policy.

10. Delegations

10.1. The delegated authority in respect of this policy is as follows:

- approvals required from the Council:
 - adoption of policies;
 - amendments to policies in the case of identification of any material error or proposed changes that are significant rather than of a technical or typographical nature.
- day to day management of the policy is delegated as per the Councils delegation register.

11. Reporting

11.1. A report each quarter will be compiled which contains the following key details of the Council's debt and hedging profile, including:

- total current debt;
- interest rate hedging profile against percentage hedging limits (graphically illustrated);
- details of all interest rate derivative transactions;
- details of current funding tranches and maturity profile (graphically illustrated);
- weighted average cost of funds;
- a statement of policy compliance;
- details of any exception reports including remedial action taken, or intended to be taken.

12. Local Government Funding Agency

12.1. Despite anything earlier in this policy, the Council may borrow from the New Zealand LGFA and in connection with that borrowing, may enter into the following related transactions to the extent it considers necessary or desirable:

- contribute a portion of its borrowing back to the LGFA as an equity contribution to the LGFA;

- provide guarantees of the indebtedness of other local authorities to the LGFA and of the indebtedness of the LGFA itself;
- commit to contributing additional equity (or subordinated debt) to the LGFA, if required;
- subscribe for shares and uncalled capital in the LGFA;
- secure its borrowing from the LGFA and the performance of other obligations to the LGFA or its creditors, with a charge over the Council’s rates and rates revenue.

13. Treasury Advice

13.1. The Council will retain the services of an independent treasury advisor to assist with the management of this policy.

14. Policy implementation and review

14.1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to deliver the objectives of this policy.

14.2. This policy is to be reviewed as a part of the Financial Strategy for the next Long-term Plan review, or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner.

14.3. This policy comes into effect on 1 July 2025.

14.4. This policy was adopted by the Gore District Council at its meeting held on [date].

Debbie Lascelles

Chief Executive

[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
1.0	Creation of original document	January 2021	Chief Executive	2024
2.0	Review of document	June 2022	Chief Executive	2024
3.0	Review of document	February 2025	Chief Executive	2028

INVESTMENT POLICY



Document Type	Operational Policy
Adopted by	Chief Executive
Date Adopted	TBC
Date Effective	1 July 2025
Responsible Department	Finance
Responsible Officer	Chief Financial Officer
To be reviewed	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy details how Gore District Council (the Council) investments are to be managed.
- 1.2. The Council manages funds for the following purposes:
 - day to day working capital management;
 - part of an investment strategy;
 - debt mitigation;
 - to meet debt repayments; and
 - to fund short term and long-term commitments identified in the Council's annual plan, long-term financial strategy or the Long-Term Plan (LTP).
- 1.3. This policy links to the Council's following strategic documents and policies:
 - Liability Management Policy
 - Financial Strategy
 - Annual Plan
 - Long-Term Plan
- 1.4. This policy adheres to the requirements in section 105 of the Local Government Act 2002 which requires each local authority to have an investment policy that includes:
 - the mix of investments;
 - the acquisition of new investments;
 - an outline of the procedures by which investments are to be managed and reported to the Council; and
 - an outline of how risks associated with investments are to be assessed and managed.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of this policy are consistent with corporate best practice and will take into account the requirements of the Council's annual and strategic plans and its long-term financial strategy or LTP.
- 2.2. The objectives of this are consistent with corporate best practice and will take into account the Council's annual and strategic plans, and its long-term Financial Strategy.
- 2.3. The key objectives of this policy are to:
 - ensure the protection of ratepayers capital takes precedence over income generation;
 - ensure that the Council has funds available to meets its liabilities as they fall due;
 - safeguard the Council's financial market investments by establishing and regularly reviewing investment parameters and ensuring that all investment activities are carried out within these parameters;
 - produce accurate and timely information that can be relied on by senior management and the Council for control and exposure monitoring purposes in relation to the investment activities of the Council; and
 - maintain operational controls and procedures to protect the Council against financial loss, opportunity cost and other inefficiencies.

3. Investments Defined

- 3.1. The Council's investments may include:
 - cash;
 - company shares;
 - property;
 - financial assets held in or on behalf of Trusts or reserve funds;
 - investment portfolios as part of an investment strategy, or for debt repayment or debt mitigation purposes; and/or
 - shareholdings in Council Controlled Organisations.
- 3.2. Loans to community organisations have social considerations and are not considered investments for the purposes of this policy.

4. Investment Mix

- 4.1. The Council holds fixed interest investments sufficient to match the funds of selected Trusts and reserves accounts. Fixed interest investments may also be set up for working capital management.
- 4.2. The Council may also hold money market and fixed interest investments in investment portfolios as part of an investment strategy or for debt repayment or debt mitigation purposes. The investment parameters for the money market and fixed interest activities are contained in Appendix One.
- 4.3. Property and shares may be held as primary functions of the Council contributing to the achievement of the Council's annual and strategic plans. The Council may hold property and shares in perpetual or externally managed investment portfolios as part of an investment strategy.
- 4.4. The mix of investments may vary from time to time to meet the Council's functional and expenditure and investment management requirements.

5. Investment Revenue

- 5.1. Interest on funds invested on behalf of Trusts and selected reserves is credited to the relevant Trust or reserve. Interest on other funds is taken into the consolidated revenue of the Council.
- 5.2. Where deposits have been set up to offset actual debt, interest earned on the deposit is applied to the interest incurred on that debt.
- 5.3. Other investment revenues must be used to meet the objectives of the function from which the revenue was derived, unless otherwise authorised by the Council.

6. Asset Sale Proceeds

- 6.1. Funds released on the maturity of an investment or as the proceeds of an asset sale may be used as follows:
 - debt reduction;
 - reinvested;
 - as per the terms of the relevant Trust deeds;
 - to the function from which they were derived; or
 - any other purpose approved by the Council.

7. Investment Risk

- 7.1. The specific risks associated with each investment will be identified and assessed against the benefits available. Investment risk shall be managed in accordance with the overall objectives of this policy.

8. Local Government Funding Agency

- 8.1. Despite anything earlier in this policy, the Council may invest in shares and other financial instruments of the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) and may borrow to fund that investment. The Council's objective in making any such investment will be to:
 - obtain a return on the investment; and
 - ensure that the LGFA has sufficient capital to become and remain viable, meaning that it continues as a source of debt funding for the Council.
- 8.2. Because of this dual objective, the Council may invest in LGFA shares in circumstances in which the return on that investment is potentially lower than the return it could achieve with alternative investments.
- 8.3. If required in connection with the investment, the Council may also subscribe for uncalled capital in the LGFA.

9. Policy implementation and review

- 9.1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to deliver the objectives of this policy.
- 9.2. This policy is to be reviewed as a part of the Financial Strategy for the next Long-term Plan review, or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner.
- 9.3. This policy comes into effect on 1 July 2025.

9.4. This policy was adopted by the Gore District Council at its meeting held on [date].

Debbie Lascelles
Chief Executive
[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
1.0	Creation of original document	January 2021	Chief Executive	2023
2.0	Review of document	February 2025	Chief Executive	2028

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Appendix One: Authorised Investment Criteria – Money Market and Fixed Investment Portfolio

Authorised Asset Classes	Overall Portfolio Limit as a Percentage of the Total Portfolio	Approved Financial Market Investment Instruments (must be denominated in NZ dollars)	Credit Rating Criteria – S&P Global Rating (or Moody's or Fitch equivalents)	Limit for each issuer subject to overall portfolio limit for issuer class
New Zealand Government	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Stock Treasury Bills 	Not Applicable	Unlimited
Rated Local Authorities	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Paper Bonds/MTNs/FRNs 	Short term S&P rating of A1 or better Long term S&P rating of A- or better Long term S&P rating of A+ or better Long term S&P rating of AA or better	\$3.0 million \$2.0 million \$3.0 million \$5.0 million
Local Authorities where rates are used as security	60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Paper Bonds/MTNs/FRNs 	Not Applicable	\$2.0 million \$2.0 million
New Zealand Registered Banks	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call/Term Deposits/Bank Bills/Commercial Paper Bonds/MTNs/FRNs 	Short term S&P rating of A1 or better Long term S&P rating of A- or better ¹ Long term S&P rating of A+ or better	\$10.0 million \$3.0 million \$5.0 million
State Owned Enterprises	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Paper Bonds/MTNs/FRNs 	Short term S&P rating of A1 or better Long term S&P rating of BBB+ or better Long term S&P rating of A+ or better	\$3.0 million \$1.0 million \$3.0 million
Corporates ²	60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Paper Bonds/MTNs/FRNs 	Short term S&P rating of A1 or better Long term S&P rating of A- or better Long term S&P rating of A+ or better Long term S&P rating of AA or better	\$2.0 million \$1.0 million \$2.0 million \$3.0 million
Financials ³	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Paper Bonds/MTNs/FRNs 	Short term S&P rating of A1 or better Long term S&P rating of A- or better Long term S&P rating of A+ or better Long term S&P rating of AA or better	\$2.0 million \$1.0 million \$2.0 million \$3.0 million
Building Societies ⁴	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call and Term Deposits 	To be individually approved by the Council	\$3.0 million

¹&⁴ Term deposits may be placed with SBS Bank by resolution of the Council

² & ³ The combined holding of Corporates and Financials shall not exceed 70% of the portfolio

REMISSION OF RATES POLICY



Document Type	Operational Policy
Adopted by	Chief Executive
Date Adopted	TBC
Date Effective	1 July 2025
Responsible Department	Finance
Responsible Officer	Chief Financial Officer
To be reviewed	By June 2028

1. Purpose

- 1.1. A partial reduction in the amount of rates you have to pay is called a rates remission.
- 1.2. This policy details how Gore District Council (the Council) rates remissions are available for ratepayers that meet the criteria outlined in the policy.
- 1.3. This policy links to the Council's following strategic documents and policies:
 - Financial Strategy
 - Annual Plan
 - Long-Term Plan
- 1.4. This policy adheres to the requirements in Section 109 of the Local Government Act 2002, and also Part 4 and Schedule 1 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002. If a local authority develops a remission of rates policy, it must include:
 - the objectives sought to be achieved by the remission of rates; and
 - the conditions and criteria to be met in order for the rates to be remitted.

2. Scope Of Remissions

Fully non-rateable

- 2.1. All land detailed in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 will be treated as fully non-rateable. This includes land that is:
 - designated by legislation as reserves, National Parks and conservation areas;
 - used by a local authority for public gardens, playgrounds, games and sports (excluding horse or greyhound racing), libraries, public halls, museums, art gallery, swimming pools;
 - used for educational purposes such as a school or early childhood and care centres or training centres (state, integrated, specialist, private, charter and Kohanga Reo) – except where that school or early childhood centre operates for profit;
 - owned or used by Health New Zealand to provide health related services;

- used solely or principally as a place of worship, or as a Sunday or Sabbath school – except where that Sunday or Sabbath school is for private profit;
- Māori customary land, Māori freehold land on which a meeting house is erected, or land that is used as a marae – except where that Māori freehold land or marae land is primarily used for commercial or agricultural activity or as residential accommodation.

Fifty percent remission of general rates

2.2. A 50% remission of general rates will apply to all land qualifying under Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002. This includes land that is:

- owned or used by an incorporated society (under the Agricultural and Pastoral Societies Act 1908) as a showground or place of meeting – except where that use is for private profit;
- owned or used by a society or association for games or sports (excluding horse or greyhound racing) – except where the land is covered by a current club licence (under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2021);
- owned or used by a society or association for the purpose of any branch of the arts – except where that use is for private profit.

Other remission related

2.3. In addition to these, the Council has remission policies for:

- Community and Sporting Organisations
- Economic Development Rating Incentives
- Penalties
- Remission of Uniform Annual General Charge and Southland Heritage Trust rates where a property extends into a neighbouring district
- Rating of Māori Freehold Land

3. Community and Sporting Organisations

Objectives

3.1. The objectives of this policy are to:

- facilitate the ongoing provision of non-commercial (non-business) community services that meet the needs of Gore District residents;
- facilitate the ongoing provision of non-commercial (non-business) recreational opportunities for Gore District residents;
- assist the organisation's survival; and
- make membership of the organisation more accessible to the general public, particularly disadvantaged groups. These include children, youth, young families, aged people, and economically disadvantaged people.

Conditions and Criteria

3.2. The Council may remit rates where the applications meet the following criteria:

- i) the policy will apply to land owned by the Council or owned and occupied by a charitable organisation, which is used exclusively or principally for sporting, recreation, or community purposes;
- ii) the policy will not apply to organisations operated for private pecuniary profit, or which charge commercial tuition fees;

- iii) the policy will not apply to groups or organisations whose primary purpose is to address the needs of adult members (over 18 years) for entertainment or social interaction, or who engage in recreational, sporting, or community services as a secondary purpose only;
- iv) no remission of rates will be granted to organisations that receive a grant from the Council, nor will a remission be granted for premises that hold either a liquor or gambling licence;
- v) the application for rate remission must be made to the Council prior to the commencement of each rating year; applications received and approved during a rating year will be applicable from the commencement of the following rating year. No approvals will be backdated;
- vi) organisations making an application should include the following documents in support of their application:
 - a) statement of objectives;
 - b) full financial accounts;
 - c) information on activities and programmes;
 - d) details of membership or clients.
- vii) organisations that meet the criteria will be entitled to a 50% remission of all rates except for targeted rates for water, wastewater, and solid waste;
- viii) notwithstanding the above, groups whose primary purpose is to provide recreational, sporting or community services for children (under 18 years) may apply for a 100% remission of all rates except for targeted rates for water, wastewater, and solid waste;
- ix) Gore and Districts Health will receive a 100% remission of rates on land that it owns or occupies and from which it provides health or related services. Any remission will apply to all rates except for targeted rates for water, wastewater, and solid waste.

4. Economic Development Rating Incentives

Objective

4.1. The Council offers a rate remission as an encouragement for business development and growth.

Conditions and Criteria

4.2. The incentive will be made available, on application, for new business initiatives and for expansion of existing businesses that meet the following criteria:

- i) the Council must be sure that it is not providing an advantage to one business over another when there is competition between two or more business enterprises;
- ii) Council support will only be given to well-planned developments from applicants who can show a good track record of success;
- iii) no incentives will be given as a subsidy to 'stay alive';
- iv) incentives will be relative to employment opportunity and the creation of full-time positions or full time equivalent positions (fte). Each fte is required to have a value of \$10,000 or more and must be resident within the Gore District;
 - a) the scale of incentives will be –
 1. – 10 fte = reduction of 10.0%
 2. – 20 fte = reduction of 10.0%
 3. – 50 fte = reduction of 10.0%
 4. – 100 fte = reduction of 20.0%

5. -- 150+ fte = reduction of 25.0%

- v) the reductions will apply to all rates except for targeted rates for water, wastewater, and solid waste;
- vi) rates reductions will be paid retrospectively upon receipt of evidence that the employment opportunities have been created;
- vii) the rate reductions will be available for up to three years;
- viii) all applications must comply with relevant legislation.

4.3. The Council may apply additional conditions as it sees fit from time to time.

4.4. The Council may cancel any remission granted in respect of the rating year in the event of noncompliance with any conditions imposed and if it does so, it may require full rates to be paid.

4.5. The application of this policy will be at the sole discretion of the Council.

5. Penalties

Objective

5.1. The objective of the remission policy is to enable the Council to act fairly and reasonably in its consideration of rates which have not been received by the Council by the penalty date due to circumstances outside the ratepayer's control.

Conditions and Criteria

5.2. The Council may remit the penalty rates where the applications meet the following criteria:

- i) remission of one penalty will be considered in any one rating year where payment has been late due to significant family disruption. Remission will be considered in the case of death, illness, or accident of a family member, as at the due date;
- ii) remission of the penalty will be granted if the ratepayer is able to provide evidence that their payment has gone astray in the post or the late payment has otherwise resulted from matters outside their control. Each application will be considered on its merits and remission will be granted where it is considered just and equitable to do so;
- iii) remission of rates penalties will be considered where the remission will facilitate the recovery of rates arrears from a property;
- iv) remission of rates penalties will be applied where the ratepayer enters into a direct debit arrangement that is sufficient to keep their rates account up to date;
- v) remission of rates penalties will be considered where there is a mutually agreed rates repayment plan with the Council;
- vi) where the circumstances are such that to not remit some or all of the penalty would be unfair or unreasonable and inconsistent with the criteria above;
- vii) the Council may remit small balances due to cash rounding;
- viii) decisions on remission of penalties will be delegated to officers as set out in the Council's delegation manual.

6. Remission of Uniform Annual General Charge and Southland Heritage Trust rates where a property extends into a neighbouring district

Objectives

6.1. In the rare case where a property extends into the territory of a neighbouring council, that property qualifies as a rating unit in both territories. This means the property will be charged fixed rates such as a

Uniform Annual General Charge by both Councils. In essence this means the property pays rates on the same land twice.

- 6.2. The objective of this policy is to apply a remission so property owners in this situation are not disadvantaged.

Conditions and Criteria

- 6.3. The Council will remit the Uniform Annual General Charge and the Southland Regional Heritage trust Rate from land that extends into a neighbouring district and that meets the following criteria:
- i) the remission will apply where the portion of the land in the Gore District is not used separately from the rest of the land, and there are no dwellings on the portion of the land in the Gore District;
 - ii) where a dwelling or separately used part of a rating unit exists in the Gore District, the remission will not apply.

7. Rating of Māori Freehold Land

- 7.1. Māori Freehold land will be rated in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 and the Gore District Council's rates remission and postponement policies. The Council does not have a rates remission or rates postponement policy specific to Māori Freehold land.

8. Policy implementation and review

- 8.1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to deliver the objectives of this policy.
- 8.2. This policy is to be reviewed by June 2028.
- 8.3. This policy comes into effect on 1 July 2025.
- 8.4. This policy was adopted by the Gore District Council **at its meeting held** on [date].

Debbie Lascelles

Chief Executive

[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
1.0	Creation of original document	January 2017	Chief Executive	2023
2.0	Review of document	March 2022	Chief Executive	2025
3.0	Review of documents	March 2025	Chief Executive	2028

8.3 Proposal to amend and adopt the Asset Management Policy

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Leon Mitchell
Author title:	Strategy and Policy Advisor
General Manager lead:	General Manager Critical Services
Report date:	Friday, 28 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council of the need for minor amendments to the Asset Management Policy, as a part of the Long Term Plan (LTP) review.
2. To provide an overview of the proposed changes to the Asset Management Policy, as developed with the General Manager Critical Services and the 3 Waters Capital Projects and Asset Manager.
3. To seek the adoption of the amendments to this policy at the Council meeting on 18 March 2025.

Recommendation

4. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the proposal to amend the Asset Management Policy;
 - b) approves the amendment and adoption of the Asset Management Policy; and
 - c) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any final editorial amendments to the Asset Management Policy.

Executive Summary

5. The General Manager Critical Services has put forward suggestions for minor and technical amendments to the Asset Management Policy.

Context

6. The General Manager Critical Services has advised that Asset Management Policy should be reviewed as a part of the LTP process.

Discussion

Asset Management Policy

7. The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles, requirements, and responsibilities for undertaking asset management across the Council. Infrastructure assets underpin our standard of living, and so the policy supports the Council's long-term strategic goals.
8. This policy was reviewed in March 2021 as a part of that LTP review process.
9. The amendments proposed in this document are:
 - the amendment to the purpose section (section 1) which includes
 - updated references to legislative requirements (1.3);
 - and a clear link to related Council strategies and policies (1.4).
 - the removal of a section from the existing policy which related to the content of an Asset Management Strategy, as this reference is redundant given the Council has a full Infrastructure Strategy and Asset Management Plans.
 - the policy is reformatted into the current policy format which makes it easier to read and follow, this format will be the standard for all council policies to become consistent and accessible for readers.

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

10. Infrastructure assets underpin our standard of living, and so the policy supports the Council's long-term strategic goals.

Consultation (Internal)

11. These policy amendments have been developed in collaboration with General Manager Critical Services and the 3 Waters Capital Projects and Asset Manager and have been reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Financial Considerations

12. The adoption of these policy amendments is cost neutral, as they are administrative in nature.

Risks

13. The policy amendments make it clearer and improve the links to other Council documents. Leaving the references to an Asset Management Strategy creates confusion.
14. This could result in duplication if an Asset Management Strategy was required in addition to the Infrastructure Strategy and Asset Management Plans.

Significance and Engagement Policy

Significance

15. Staff have considered the key considerations under the Significance and Engagement Policy and have assessed that the recommendations in this report are of low significance for the community.
16. The proposed policy changes are minor and technical in nature.

Engagement

17. Given the level of significance, it is advised the no specific external consultation or engagement is required.

Attachment

Gore District Council Asset Management Policy 2025 - DRAFT

ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY



Document Type	Operational Policy
Adopted by	Chief Executive
Date Adopted	
Date Effective	1 July 2025
Responsible Department	Critical Services
Responsible Officer	General Manager Critical Services
To be reviewed	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy outlines the principles, requirements, and responsibilities for undertaking asset management across the Gore District Council. Infrastructure assets underpin our standard of living, and so the policy supports the Council's long-term strategic goals.
- 1.2. These strategic goals are to:
 - ensure that the Gore District remains a great place to live;
 - promote economic development;
 - protect our water resources and use them wisely; and
 - maintain the quality infrastructure that we have.
- 1.3. The policy builds on the Council's strategic goals by promoting an integrated approach to managing service delivery across all types of assets. It also promotes a sustainable development approach to reflect the changes to the purpose of the Local Government Act 2002.
- 1.4. This policy links to the Council's following strategic documents:
 - Long-term Plan (LTP)
 - Infrastructure Strategy
 - Asset Management Plans



2. Objective

2.1. The objectives of the policy are to:

- support continuous improvement in the asset management system to ensure service delivery is optimised to deliver agreed community outcomes and levels of service for residents, visitors and the environment;
- optimise expenditure over the life cycle of the assets;
- ensure risks are managed appropriately;
- provide confidence to the community and stakeholders of value for money; and
- integrate asset management into the Council's strategic, tactical and operational planning frameworks – including corporate, financial and business planning.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy incorporates all the Council's activities that own or operate assets in order to deliver the Council's strategic goals. Specifically, these activities include:

- Roading
- Water supply
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Solid waste
- Property
- Community facilities
- Parks and reserves

4. Principles

4.1. The following principles guide asset management planning and decision-making:

- provision of a safe and healthy work environment;
- effective consultation to determine the appropriate levels of service;
- informed decision-making using a life-cycle, risk management and inter-generational approach;
- transparent and accountable asset management decision-making;
- professional development to improve asset management capability;
- efficient and effective service delivery models.

5. Policy implementation and review

5.1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to deliver the objectives of this policy.

5.2. This policy is to be reviewed with the review of the Infrastructure Strategy for the next Long-term Plan review, or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner.

6. Policy implementation and review

6.1. This policy comes into effect on 1 July 2025.

This policy was adopted by the Gore District Council at its meeting held on [date].

Debbie Lascelles
Chief Executive
[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
1.0	Creation of original document	March 2021	Chief Executive	2023
2.0	Review of document	February 2025	Chief Executive	2028

DRAFT

8.4 Proposal to adopt the existing Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venue policies

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Leon Mitchell
Author title:	Strategy and Policy Advisor
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Friday, 28 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To seek the adoption of the existing and unchanged Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venue policies at the Council meeting on 18 March 2025.

Recommendation

2. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the proposal provided to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 11 February to adopt the existing and unchanged policies:
 - (i) Class 4 Gambling Policy
 - (ii) TAB Venue Policy
 - b) approves the adoption of the existing and unchanged Class 4 Gambling Policy
 - c) approves the adoption of the existing and unchanged TAB Venue Policy.

Executive Summary

3. The Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 11 February recommend that the Council adopt the existing and unchanged Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venue policies.

Context

4. The existing Council policies for Class 4 Gambling and TAB Venue are required to be reviewed every three years as directed by 102 (5) of the Gambling Act 2003 and section 97 (4) of the Racing Industry Act 2020 respectively.
5. Reviews of these policies legislatively required to be conducted in accordance with the special consultative procedure set out in section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Discussion

6. The Audit and Risk Committee agreed with the proposal to adopt the unchanged and existing policies.

7. A review will be undertaken within the next 12 months.

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

8. The recommendations in this report align with the Council's Vision to provide an environment that allows people to enjoy the lifestyle and culture of their choice.

Consultation (Internal)

9. This proposal to adopt the unchanged and existing policies was developed in consultation with Gambling team at the Department of Internal Affairs and has been reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Financial Considerations

10. There is no financial consideration if the proposal to roll over the policies is approved.

Risks

11. If the Council does not adopt these policies, then it will be failing in its duties under section 102 (5) of the Gambling Act 2003 and section 97 (4) of the Racing Industry Act 2020.

Significance and Engagement Policy

Significance

12. Staff have considered the key considerations under the Significance and Engagement Policy and have assessed that the recommendations in this report are generally of low significance for the community.
13. The proposed policy changes are minor and technical in nature. Only the Remission of Rates policy requires a consultative process, and the minor amendments proposed to this policy do not meet the threshold for being significant.

Engagement

14. Given the level of significance, it is advised the no specific external consultation or engagement is required.

Attachments

Attachment One - Gore District Council, Class 4 Gambling Policy 2021

Attachment Two – Gore District Council, TAB Venue Policy 2021

GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL CLASS 4 GAMBLING POLICY 2021



1. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- I. To assist in limiting the harm of problem gambling in the community.
- II. To encourage responsible gambling practices and attitudes in Class 4 Gambling Venues.
- III. To reduce the number of electronic gaming machines in the community.

2. CLASS 4 GAMING

- (a) The Gore District Council will not grant consent under section 98 of the Gambling Act 2003 to allow any increase in class 4 gaming venues or class 4 machine numbers except in the circumstances set out below.
- (b) The Gore District Council will grant a consent where two or more corporate societies are merging and require Ministerial approval to operate up to the statutory limit in accordance with section 95 (4) of the Gambling Act 2003. The total number of machines that may operate at the venue must not exceed nine machines.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt except for the circumstances described in 2 (b), or damage caused to an existing premises through an event such as flood, earthquake or fire, a transfer to a new venue by the same or different licensee, will not be approved.

Applications

Applications for consent to the Gore District Council must be made on the approved form and must provide:

- Name and contact details for the application;
- Street address of premises proposed for the Class 4 licence;
- The names of management staff;
- Evidence of police approval for owners and Managers of the venue;
- A 12 month business plan or budget for the establishment, covering both gambling and other activities proposed for the venue, including details of each floor of the venue; and
- Details of alcohol licence(s) applying to the premises.

Application fees

These will be set by the Gore District Council from time to time, and shall include consideration of the following:

- i. The cost of processing the application, including any consultation and hearings involved;
- ii. The cost of triennially reviewing the Class 4 Gambling Venue and TAB Venue Policy;
- iii. The cost of inspecting Class 4 gambling venues on a regular basis to ensure compliance with consent or license conditions; and
- iv. A contribution towards the cost of gambling in the Gore District

Monitoring and review

The Council will monitor the social and economic impact of gambling on the district's community during the life of the policy. The Council may amend this policy as a result of the findings of any economic and social impact of gaming on the community.

As part of its monitoring, the Council will seek support from licence holders to adopt the Best Practice Code of Conduct attached as appendix 1 to this policy. Licence holders will be invited to submit to the Council evidence of actions taken to comply with this code as part of the monitoring and review process.

If the Council amends or replaces this policy it shall do so in accordance with the special consultative procedure of the Local Government Act 2002. The Council will carry out a review of this policy at a minimum of every three years in accordance with the Gambling Act 2003.

Reviewed and adopted by the Gore District Council at a meeting held on 10 August 2021 .



**BEST PRACTICE CODE OF CONDUCT
CLASS 4 GAMBLING POLICY**

A Code of Conduct is not within the scope of the Class 4 Gambling and TAB venue policies. Any code is voluntary and will not be assessed as part of venue consent. It is envisaged that as part of the District wide Alcohol Strategy and in line with DIA monitoring practices, such a code could be promoted and implemented to assist gambling venues to demonstrate responsible best practice. The code will however assist the Council in assessing the social impact of its Gambling and TAB Venue policies. The table below sets out relevant criteria and supporting actions that form part of the Code.

Best Practice	Supporting Action
Host responsibility and harm minimisation policy	<p>The applicant has in place a host responsibility and harm minimisation policy.</p> <p>The programme conforms to best practice as set out by national guidelines or standards should these become available.</p>
Staff training programme or activities	<p>The applicant demonstrates that staff and management are familiar with its Host Responsibility and Harm Minimisation policy.</p> <p>The programme provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential effects of gambling on customers; • The identification of problem gambling traits; • The processes for approach, intervention and follow up for patrons with suspected problem gambling; • Identification practices for patrons appearing under 25 and actions to be followed; • Systems in place to support self barring; • Recognition of intoxicated patrons and steps to be followed to prevent intoxicated patrons from gambling; and • Systems to be followed if children are left unattended in premises or nearby premises.
Policy on underage access to gambling machines	<p>The venue manager must ensure that appropriate signage is in place indicating age restrictions so that this is visible at every gambling machine and at the point(s) of entry into the gambling area.</p>

	<p>Policy on identification checks for patrons appearing under 25.</p> <p>Staff training on identification of patrons appearing under 25 and actions to be followed.</p>
Provision of problem gambling information	<p>The venue manager must ensure that patrons have access to appropriate information on problem gambling and problem gambling help services.</p> <p>Gambling help line phone number information is placed on or near all gambling machines.</p> <p>Additional material on problem gambling and help services displayed in at least one other area within the premise, situated near to gambling machines.</p>
Clocks are visible in premise	The venue manager ensures that clocks are visible from the other side of the room from gambling machines.
There is good visibility where gambling machines are located	Natural or artificial light illuminates the area where gambling machines are located at all times when machines are in operation.
Self barring of patrons is supported	<p>The venue manager ensures that systems to support self barring and exclusion by patrons are put in place.</p> <p>Staff training on systems to support self barring or exclusion of patrons.</p>
Children are not left unattended while gambling is undertaken	<p>The venue manager will take active steps to prevent parents leaving their children unattended without adult supervision, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring employees to report incidents where a child has been left unattended, either inside the premise or immediately outside the premise; and • Where a child has been left unattended, the licensee will take steps to locate an adult responsible for the child. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the licensee will contact the police.
Intoxicated patrons are prevented from gambling	<p>Staff training on identification of intoxicated patrons and actions to be followed if intoxicated patrons attempt to gamble.</p> <p>The venue manager takes practicable steps to ensure that no person who appears to be intoxicated is allowed to gamble.</p>

Host Responsibility and Harm Minimisation – Distribution of Gambling Profits

Corporate societies are encouraged to demonstrate best practice by providing information to the Council and the community on how they distribute the proceeds from their gambling machines.

The Code of Conduct would require corporate societies to provide information on the distribution of gambling profits to community groups by giving public notice at least annually in a newspaper circulated in the district free of charge, of funds allocation and providing a copy of this to the Gore

District Council. Where possible, societies are encouraged to provide information that is specific to the Gore District, and provide data on separate venues within the District. This information may be displayed on the Gore District Council website.

Information about the Trust or body responsible for the distribution of gambling profits should also be made available to the public and to the Gore District Council and should include:

- Contact details (address, phone numbers, electronic contact (if available)); and
- Names of trustees.

GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL TAB VENUE POLICY 2021



Objectives of the policy

- To ensure the Council and the community has influence over the provision of new gambling in the district.
- To allow those who wish to participate in totalisator (TAB) gambling to do so within the district.
- To review the type and number of TAB venues being established in the district from time to time and assess any social effects arising from this activity.

Where TAB venues may be established

TAB venues may be established in the district subject to the Gore District Council Plan, and meeting the following criteria:

- Not being located within 100 metres of any playground, kindergarten, early childhood centre, school or place of worship;
- Not being located within 100 metres of an automatic teller machine;
- Operators supplying adequate evidence that measures will be in place to ensure that people under the age of 18 years cannot access gambling facilities.

Applications

Applications for consent to the Gore District Council must be made on the approved form and must provide:

- Name and address details for the application;
- Street address of premises proposed for the TAB venue;
- The names of management staff;
- A site plan covering both gambling and other activities proposed for the new venue, including details of each floor of the venue. This site plan must clearly show where the TAB stands are to be located on the premises.

Application fees

These will be set by the Gore District Council from time to time and shall include consideration of:

- The cost of processing the application, including any consultation and hearings involved;
- The cost of triennially reviewing the TAB venue policy;
- The contribution towards the cost of triennial assessments of the economic and social impact of gambling in the Gore district.

Monitoring and review

The Council will monitor the social and economic impact of gambling on the district's community during the life of the policy. The Council may amend this policy as a result of the findings of any economic and social impact of gaming on the community.

As part of its monitoring the Council will seek support from licence holders to adopt the Best Practice Code of Conduct attached as appendix 1 to this policy. Licence holders will be invited to submit to the Council evidence of actions taken to comply with this code as part of the monitoring and review process.

If the Council amends or replaces this policy it shall do so in accordance with the special consultative procedure of the Local Government Act 2002. The Council will carry out a review of this policy at a minimum of every three years in accordance with the Racing Act 2003.

Adopted by the Gore District Council at a meeting held on 10 August 2021.

**TAB VENUE POLICY
BEST PRACTICE CODE OF CONDUCT**

A Code of Conduct is not within the scope of the Class 4 Gambling and TAB venue policies. Any code is voluntary and will not be assessed as part of venue consent. It is envisaged that as part of the District wide Alcohol Strategy and in line with DIA monitoring practices, such a code could be promoted and implemented to assist gambling venues to demonstrate responsible best practice. The code will however assist the Council in assessing the social impact of its Gambling and TAB Venue policies. The table below sets out relevant criteria and supporting actions that form part of the Code.

Best practice	Supporting action
Host responsibility and harm minimisation policy	The applicant has in place a host responsibility and harm minimisation policy. The programme conforms to best practice as set out by national guidelines or standards should these become available.
Staff training programme or activities	The applicant demonstrates that staff and management are familiar with its Host Responsibility and Harm Minimisation policy. The programme provides information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential effects of gambling on customers; • The identification of problem gambling traits; • The processes for approach, intervention and follow up for patrons with suspected problem gambling; • Identification practices for patrons appearing under 25 and actions to be followed; • Systems in place to support self barring; • Recognition of intoxicated patrons and steps to be followed to prevent intoxicated patrons from gambling; and • Systems to be followed if children are left unattended in premises or nearby premises.
Policy on underage access to gambling machines	The venue manager must ensure that appropriate signage is in place indicating age restrictions so that this is visible at every gambling machine and at the point(s) of entry into the gambling area. Policy on identification checks for patrons appearing under 25.

	Staff training on identification of patrons appearing under 25 and actions to be followed.
Provision of problem gambling information	The venue manager must ensure that patrons have access to appropriate information on problem gambling and problem gambling help services. Gambling help line phone number information is placed on or near all gambling machines. Additional material on problem gambling and help services displayed in at least one other area within the premise, situated near to gambling machines.
Clocks are visible in premise	The venue manager ensures that clocks are visible from gambling machines.
There is good visibility where gambling machines are located	Natural or artificial light illuminates the area where gambling machines are located at all times when machines are in operation.
Self barring of patrons is supported	The venue manager ensures that systems to support self barring and exclusion by patrons are put in place. Staff training on systems to support self barring or exclusion of patrons.
Children are not left unattended while gambling is undertaken	The venue manager will take active steps to prevent parents leaving their children unattended without adult supervision, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring employees to report incidents where a child have been left unattended, either inside the premise or immediately outside the premise; and • Where a child has been left unattended, the licensee will take steps to locate an adult responsible for the child. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the licensee will contact the police.
Intoxicated patrons are prevented from gambling	Staff training on identification of intoxicated patrons and actions to be followed to if intoxicated patrons attempt to gamble. The venue manager takes practicable steps to ensure that no person who appears to be intoxicated is allowed to gamble.

Host responsibility and harm minimisation – distribution of gambling profits

Corporate societies are encouraged to demonstrate best practice by providing information to the Council and the community on how they distribute the proceeds from their gambling machines.

The Code of Conduct would require corporate societies to provide information on the distribution of gambling profits to community groups by giving public notice at least annually in a newspaper circulated in the district free of charge, of funds allocation and providing a copy of this to the Gore District Council. Where possible, societies are encouraged to provide

information that is specific to the Gore District, and provide data on separate venues within the District. This information may be displayed on the Gore District Council website.

Information about the Trust or body responsible for the distribution of gambling profits should also be made available to the public and to the Gore District Council and should include:

- Contact details (address, phone numbers, electronic contact (if available)); and
- Names of trustees.

8.5 Proposal to amend and consult on Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Leon Mitchell
Author title:	Strategy and Policy Advisor
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Friday, 28 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council of the need for the amended Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy to be approved for public consultation at the Council meeting on 18 March 2025.
2. To provide an overview of the proposed changes to the Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy, as developed with the Regulatory Services Manager and the Dog Control Administrator.

Recommendation

3. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the proposal to amend the following documents:
 - (i) Dog Control Bylaw
 - (ii) Dog Control Policy
 - b) approves the amended Dog Control Bylaw to go out for public consultation;
 - c) approves the amended Dog Control Policy to go out for public consultation;
 - d) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any final editorial amendments to any of the above documents prior to the public consultation; and
 - e) considers holding an extraordinary Council meeting prior to expiry of the existing Dog Control Bylaw.

Executive Summary

6. The Dog Control Bylaw is due to lapse at the end of May 2025. As a part of the renewal process the Regulatory Services Manager has put forward suggestions for several minor and technical amendments to the Dog Control Bylaw and associated Dog Control Policy.
7. Renewals and amendments to bylaws require public consultation to be undertaken prior to the Council adopting a revised bylaw. It is proposed that the Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy are included in the public consultation at the same time as the Long-Term Plan (LTP) consultation.

Context

8. The current Dog Control Bylaw was adopted at a meeting of the Gore District Council held on Tuesday 14 May 2013 and ordered to come into force on the 1st day of July 2013.
9. Section 159 of the Local Government Act 2022 states that a local authority must review a bylaw no later than 10 years after it was last reviewed. Section 160A states that a bylaw not reviewed as required (by section 159) is revoked on the date that is 2 years after the last date on which the bylaw should have been reviewed under that section.
10. As outlined in paragraphs 6 and 7 above, the Council's existing Dog Control Bylaw will be revoked on 14 May 2025, being the anniversary date of the decision to adopt the bylaw and therefore the end of that review period. This means the Council needs to adopt a Dog Control Bylaw prior to 14 May.
11. Section 20 of the Dog Control Act 1996 states that any territorial authority may, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002, make bylaws for all or any of the following purposes:
 - (a) prohibiting dogs, whether under control or not, from specified public places;
 - (b) requiring dogs, other than working dogs, to be controlled on a leash in specified public places, or in public places in specified areas or parts of the district;
 - (c) regulating and controlling dogs in any other public place;
 - (d) designating specified areas as dog exercise areas;
 - (e) prescribing minimum standards for the accommodation of dogs;
 - (f) limiting the number of dogs that may be kept on any land or premises;
 - (g) requiring dogs in its district to be tied up or otherwise confined during a specified period commencing not earlier than half an hour after sunset, and ending not later than half an hour before sunrise;
 - (h) requiring the owner of any dog that defecates in a public place or on land or premises other than that occupied by the owner to immediately remove the faeces;
 - (i) requiring any bitch to be confined but adequately exercised while in season;
 - (j) providing for the impounding of dogs, whether or not they are wearing a collar having the proper label or disc attached, that are found at large in breach of any bylaw made by the territorial authority under this or any other Act;
 - (k) requiring the owner of any dog (being a dog that, on a number of occasions, has not been kept under control) to cause that dog to be neutered (whether or not the owner of the dog has been convicted of an offence against section 53);
 - (l) any other purpose that from time to time is, in the opinion of the territorial authority, necessary or desirable to further the control of dogs.

Discussion

Consultation requirement

12. Section 156 of the Local Government Act 2002 outlines the consultation requirement for a local authority making or amending a bylaw, which for a bylaw with public impact or interest (such as the Dog Control Bylaw) means that the four-week special consultative procedure must be undertaken.

13. As the LTP is also going for public consultation, the Council has already agreed in principle for the Dog Control Bylaw to be consulted on at the same time (currently that consultation period is 19 March to 23 April 2025). This reduces costs and 'consultation fatigue' of having two different periods of public engagement.
14. During the required four week consultation period, members of the public may make submissions on the proposed bylaw and policy; and have the option of requesting to speak to their submission in a hearing held as soon as possible after the end of the consultation period.
15. The results of the submission and hearing are then considered, and the bylaw and policy may be amended to account for matters raised in submissions. The revised bylaw and policy are then presented to the Council for adoption.
16. The next available Council meeting is scheduled for 20 May, which would mean the Council's existing Dog Control Bylaw will have lapsed six days previously. It is therefore advised that the Council hold an extraordinary Council meeting prior to 14 May 2025 to consider and adopt the new Dog Control Bylaw with an enactment date of 14 May.

Amendments proposed to the Dog Control Bylaw

17. The Dog Control Bylaw only applies to dogs and is made for the effective control and regulation of dogs to protect the public from nuisance in the Gore District.
18. The amendments proposed in this document are minor formatting and improved clarity:
 - the inclusion of a statement in section 9.2 which explicitly states that the prohibition of dogs in certain places does not apply to disability assist dogs;
 - the inclusion of maps for added clarity in Schedule A, outlining areas that are designated dog exercise, leash control or prohibited areas.
 - the Dog Control Bylaw is reformatted to align with the current policy format which makes it easier to read and follow, to make Council document more accessible for readers.

Amendments proposed to the Dog Control Policy

19. The purpose of this policy is to promote good dog care and control through the use of education, registration, and enforcement measures. It is a companion document to the Dog Control Bylaw.
20. The amendments proposed in this document are minor formatting and improved clarity:
 - the inclusion of a statement in section 6.4 which explicitly states that the prohibition of dogs in certain places does not apply to disability assist dogs;
 - the Dog Control Policy is reformatted to align with the current policy format which makes it easier to read and follow, to make Council document more accessible for readers.

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

21. The recommendations in this report align with the Council's Vision to provide an environment that allows people to enjoy the lifestyle and culture of their choice.

Consultation (Internal)

22. The proposed amendments have been developed in collaboration with Regulatory Services Manager and the Dog Control Administrator and have been reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Financial Considerations

23. The adoption of the proposed Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy amendments is cost neutral, as they are primarily administrative amendments.
24. There are however financial implications in not adopting the Dog Control Bylaw by the date on which it lapses, as referenced in paragraph 24 below.

Risks

25. As discussed in paragraphs 6 and 7 above, the Council's existing Dog Control Bylaw will be revoked on 14 May 2025. If the Council does not adopt a Dog Control Bylaw prior to 14 May, it will be unable to fulfil or enforce the requirements as outlined in paragraph 8 above.
26. This will mean the Council would be unable to impound dogs, revoke or enforce registration, or charge and collect fees for those dog control and regulation activities. Any actions undertaken by the Council, with respect to dog control and regulation activities, would be open to legal challenge.

Significance and Engagement Policy

Significance

27. Staff have considered the key considerations under the Significance and Engagement Policy and have assessed that the recommendations in this report are of significance for the community.
28. The proposed bylaw and policy changes are minor and technical in nature, adding clarity for the public.
29. However, the topic of dog control is one in which the public is likely to have a strong opinion. And as there are over 3,400 registered dogs in the Gore District, a significant proportion of the community will have an interest as dog owners.

Engagement

30. As outlined in paragraph 10 above, it is advised that specific external consultation and engagement is required in accordance with Section 156 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Attachments

Attachment One - Gore District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2025 - DRAFT

Attachment Two – Gore District Council Dog Control Policy 2025 – DRAFT

Document Type	Bylaw
Adopted by	Full Council
Date Adopted	TBC
Date Effective	1 June 2025
Responsible Department	Regulatory
Responsible Officer	Regulatory Services Manager
To be reviewed	With Dog Control Policy 2025 or 1 July 2035, whichever is sooner

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Local Government Act 2002 allows the Council to protect the public from nuisance by introducing a bylaw. This bylaw is made pursuant to Section 145 of the Local Government Act 2002 and Section 20 of the Dog Control Act 1996.
- 1.2. This bylaw should be read in conjunction with the “Gore District Council Dog Control Policy” and the Dog Control Act 1996.

2. Commencement and Repeal

- 2.1. This bylaw shall be known as the Gore District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2025 and will come into force on 1 June 2025.
- 2.2. The Gore District Dog Control Bylaw 2013 is hereby repealed from the day this bylaw comes into force.

3. Purpose and Exclusions

- 3.1. This bylaw only applies to dogs and is made for the effective control and regulation of dogs in the Gore District.
- 3.2. The bylaw does not include animal welfare matters. The Animal Welfare Act 1999, Ministry of Primary Industries Code of Welfare: Dogs and Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018 refer.

4. Interpretation

- 4.1. In this Bylaw, unless inconsistent with the context:
- 4.2. To assist with the understanding of this bylaw the following definitions have been included. All definitions, except the definition of a ‘roaming dog’ are taken from the Dog Control Act 1996. All references made below to the ‘Act’ are in relation to the Dog Control Act 1996.

Disability Assist Dog – means a dog certified by one of the organisations listed in Schedule 5 of the Act as being a dog that has been trained (or is being trained) to accompany and assist a person with a disability. For information, the organisations listed in Schedule 5 as at 10 March 2025 are:

- Assistance Dogs New Zealand
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People New Zealand

- K9 Medical Detection New Zealand
- Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust
- New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust
- Pawsible Service Dogs
- Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust
- Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind Incorporated

District Plan – means the operative Gore District Plan pursuant to the Resource Management Act 1991.

Officer – means an Animal Control Officer or Dog Ranger appointed under the Dog Control Act 1996 and includes an honorary dog ranger.

Owner – every person who:

- owns the dog; or,
- has the dog in his or her possession, whether the dog is at large or in confinement (otherwise than for a period not exceeding 72 hours), for the purpose of preventing the dog from causing injury, damage, or distress or for the sole purpose of restoring a lost dog to its owner; or,
- the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who:
 - is the owner of the dog pursuant to this definition, and,
 - is a member of the parent or guardian’s household living with a dependant on the parent or guardian.

but does not include any person who has seized or taken custody of the dog under this Act, the Animal Welfare Act 1999 or the National Parks Act 1980 or the Te Urewera Act 2014 of the Conservation Act 1987 or any order made under this Act or the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

Property – means a piece of land or real estate.

Public Place – means public place a defined in Section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Reserve – means any park, garden, plantation, forest, open space or ground set aside for public recreation or enjoyment and which is controlled or administered by the Council.

The Council – the Gore District Council.

Working Dog – means working dog as defined under Section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

5. Shelter for Dogs

Community safety and wildlife protection

5.1. The owner of any dog shall provide for it:

- a) a weatherproof kennel or place of confinement of adequate size, constructed of well drained ground; and
- b) access to clean water; and
- c) in the case of a kennel without other means of confinement, provided with a fixed chain or running wire which allows the dog free movement about the kennel.

5.2. All kennels or places of confinement shall be kept in a reasonable, sanitary condition. A place of confinement may include a dwelling.

- 5.3. No owner of any dog shall keep it on any property in any kennel other than a dwelling, any part of which is nearer than one metre to any boundary of the property. Exceptions will apply to properties that are too small to accommodate this, or a kennel is adjoining a solid fence or wall and does not cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties.

6. Control of Dogs in a Leash Control Area

- 6.1. Where a dog is in a public area, it must be on a leash and under control at all times.
- 6.2. Dog owners must ensure that their dog is kept under control at all times; and when in public places (excluding specified off leash areas) dogs must be on a leash held by a person who is capable of controlling the dog. This is to protect public safety and to help to ensure the safety of dogs and other animals.

7. Controlled Public Places

- 7.1. All dogs must be kept under proper and effective control at all times. A dog may be allowed to be unrestrained in any area that is not defined under this Bylaw as a leash control area or prohibited area provided that the dog is properly controlled.

8. Dogs Exercise Areas

- 8.1. Dogs within designated dog exercise areas may be exercised at large at all times while under direct control, or on a leash according to the appropriate signage for that area. Refer to Schedule A designated dog exercise areas.
- 8.2. Owners must pick up and dispose of dog faeces deposited by their dogs in any exercise area immediately.

9. Public Places in which Dogs are Prohibited

- 9.1. The Council may prohibit dogs from certain areas where it considers necessary for the protection of the health and safety of the public, or where it is considered desirable due to intense public use or the need to protect an area from dogs or for such other purpose as the Council may from time to time consider appropriate.
- 9.2. Dogs are prohibited in those places listed in Schedule A at all times unless otherwise specified. This excludes any dog defined as or being trained as a disability assist dog.
- 9.3. The Council may from time to time make areas temporarily prohibited to dogs because of any potential conflict with people, domestic animals, or at the advice of the Department of Conservation, wildlife. Temporary prohibitions will be notified by signage placed at the points of entry to the areas and by way of public notice on the Council's website.

10. Fouling in Public Places

- 10.1. Every person who, being the owner of a dog which defecates in any public place, or on any land or premises other than land or premises occupied by that person, shall immediately remove the faeces. Where a public litter bin or similar receptacle is used to dispose of the faeces, the faeces must be suitably wrapped or contained to prevent fouling of the receptacle.

11. Infectious or Infested Dogs

11.1. No person being the owner or having control or charge of any infectious dog shall take the same into any public place or permit or suffer such dog to enter or remain in a public place except when being taken to or from a veterinary clinic.

12. Bitches in Season

12.1. No person being the owner or having control or charge of any bitch in season shall take the same into any public place or permit or suffer such dog to enter or remain in a public place except when being taken to or from a veterinary clinic. Such bitches shall be kept confined but adequately exercised.

13. Nuisances

13.1. Nuisance covers a wide range of issues and includes (but is not limited to) persistent and loud barking or howling, dog faeces, roaming, and general dog activities. The owner of any dog, and the owner or occupier of any premises on which any dog or dogs are kept shall ensure it does not create a nuisance or annoyance by:

- a) ensuring the dog does not obstruct the lawful passage of persons in public places; or
- b) ensuring the dog does not rush and/or frighten persons in a public place or lawfully on private property; or
- c) taking adequate precautions to prevent the dog or dogs, or the keeping thereof, from becoming a nuisance or annoyance; or
- d) permitting it to be kept in circumstances that may be offensive or likely to be injurious to health; or
- e) allowing it at any time to destroy, tear or otherwise interfere with any refuse container whether the container is on private property or in a public place.

13.2. If, in the opinion of the Council, any dog or dogs or the keeping thereof on any premises has become or is likely to become a nuisance, the Council may, by notice in writing, require the owner or occupier of the premises within a time specified in such notice, to do all or any of the following:

- a) reduce the number of dogs kept on the premises;
- b) order the permanent removal of a single dog on a property;
- c) construct, alter, reconstruct or otherwise improve the kennels, places of confinement or other buildings used to house or contain such dog or dogs (Animal Control Officers have the discretion to determine what is acceptable or reasonable);
- d) require such dog or dogs to be tied up or otherwise confined during specific periods; or
- e) take such other action as the Council deems necessary to minimise or remove the likelihood of nuisance.

14. Dog Classifications

Dangerous Dogs

14.1. Dangerous Dog has the same definition as in section 31(1) of the Dog Control Act 1996.

14.2. The owner of any dog classified as dangerous must follow these additional obligations:

- a) the owner must ensure the provision of a secure area for the dog where it is possible to gain unrestricted access to at least one door of the dwelling;

- b) the dog must be muzzled in any public place when not confined in a vehicle or cage;
- c) the owner may not rehome the dog to any other person without the written consent of the Council;
- d) the dog must be desexed within one month of the dog being classified as dangerous; and
- e) pay 150% of the standard owner registration fee.

14.3. The Council has delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to classify dogs as dangerous.

Menacing Dogs

14.4. The Council considers a dog to be menacing either by a dog's behaviour or a specific breed or type in accordance with the following provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996:

- a) section 33A Territorial authority may classify dog as menacing; or
- b) Section 33C Dogs belonging to breed or type listed in Schedule 4 to be classified as menacing.

Menacing by Behaviour:

14.5. If the Council considers a dog to be menacing by behaviour, the owner is required to meet any or all of the obligations listed below:

- a) ensure that the dog is muzzled in any public place when not confined in a vehicle or cage;
- b) ensure the provision of a secure area where unrestricted access to at least one door of the dwelling is possible;
- c) not rehome the dog to any other person without the Council's written consent;
- d) desex the dog - the owner of the dog must produce to the Council, within one month after the receipt of notice of classification, a certificate issued by a registered veterinary surgeon certifying:
 - i) that the dog is or has been neutered; or
 - ii) that for reasons that are specified in the certificate, the dog will not be in a fit condition to be neutered.

Menacing by Breed or Type

14.6. The following breeds and types of dogs are automatically considered menacing under the Act:

- a) Breeds:
 - i) Dogo Argentino
 - ii) Brazilian Fila
 - iii) Japanese Tosa
 - iv) Perro de Presa Canario
- b) Type:
 - i) American Pit Bull Terrier

14.7. Any dog classified as menacing by breed or type must be desexed within one month of ownership, notice by the Council, or when a puppy has reached 12 months of age. The Council may consider an appeal to desexing a dog if the owner can produce a letter from a veterinarian specifying the medical reasons why the dog cannot be desexed within one month of notification.

14.8. Any owner of a dog classified as menacing by breed or type must follow these additional obligations:

- a) ensure the provision of a secure area where unrestricted access to at least one door of the dwelling is possible;

- b) ensure that the dog is muzzled in any public place when not confined in a vehicle or cage;
- c) the owner is required to notify the Council in writing within seven days of the dog being rehomed, providing the new owner's details and the address where the dog is living.

15. Permit to Keep More than Two Dogs

- 15.1. No more than two dogs of registrable age (whether or not such a dog is registered) may be kept on any premises unless:
- a) the owner or occupier is the holder of a permit to keep three or more dogs; or
 - b) the premises are zoned Rural, General Rural or Rural Lifestyle in the Council's district plan.
- 15.2. No permit shall be granted to the owner or occupier of any premises if such premises by reason of inadequate fencing, size, location or detrimental effect on any other premises would be inappropriate for the housing of three or more dogs.
- 15.3. If the property in which the dog owner resides is leased/rented, the written consent of the property owner is required to keep three or more dogs on that property before any consideration for a permit will be given. A copy of the written consent must be provided with any application.
- 15.4. A permit issued is subject to any conditions that may be set by the Council.
- 15.5. Any breach of these conditions, or changes in circumstances related to the property, such as subdivision, may result in the permit being reviewed or revoked. Additionally, all dogs must be registered each year; failure to do so will result in the permit being cancelled.
- 15.6. Applications for permits to keep more than two dogs shall be made on the form supplied by the Council and shall provide such information in respect of the application as the Council may reasonably require.
- 15.7. The fee for such permits shall be payable in addition to the registration fees.

16. Impounding of Dogs

- 16.1. When an Officer sees a dog wandering in a public place, the dog may be impounded in accordance with section 52(3) the Dog Control Act 1996.

17. Offence and Penalty for Breach of Bylaw

- 17.1. Every person who breaches this bylaw commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to the penalty.
- 17.2. Any person convicted of an offence against this bylaw is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding \$20,000.

18. Dog Control Fees

- 18.1. The Council will annually review its dog control fees. Fees will be set by resolution, publicly notified and advertised.

19. Amendment of Schedules

- 19.1. That any items contained in the attached schedules to this bylaw may be altered at any time by resolution of the Council and publicly notified.

20. Commencement Of Bylaw

20.1. This bylaw was adopted by the Gore District Council at its meeting held on [date] and ordered to come into effect on [date] 2025.

20.2. The Common Seal of the Gore District Council was hereunto affixed this {date} in the presence of:

Ben Bell
Mayor
[date]

Debbie Lascelles
Chief Executive
[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
1.0	Creation of original document			
2.0	Review of original document	[date]	Full Council	2035

Schedule A

Designated Dog Exercise Areas

These areas allow dogs to be exercised off leash, although you must carry a leash and have the dog under control at all times. Dogs under control are permitted without a leash unless stated otherwise.

Gore

- River Street flood bank
- Woolwich Street Walnut Plantation
- River Terrace
- Hamilton Park (perimeter only not playing surface)
- Hamilton Park Dog Park

Mataura

- East riverbank (below main bridge)
- South bridge (Henderson Park)
- Mataura Dog Park

Note: Dogs are not permitted in children's playgrounds or on marked sports grounds adjacent to any of these exercise areas, nor on Gore District Council reserves or tracks unless otherwise stated.

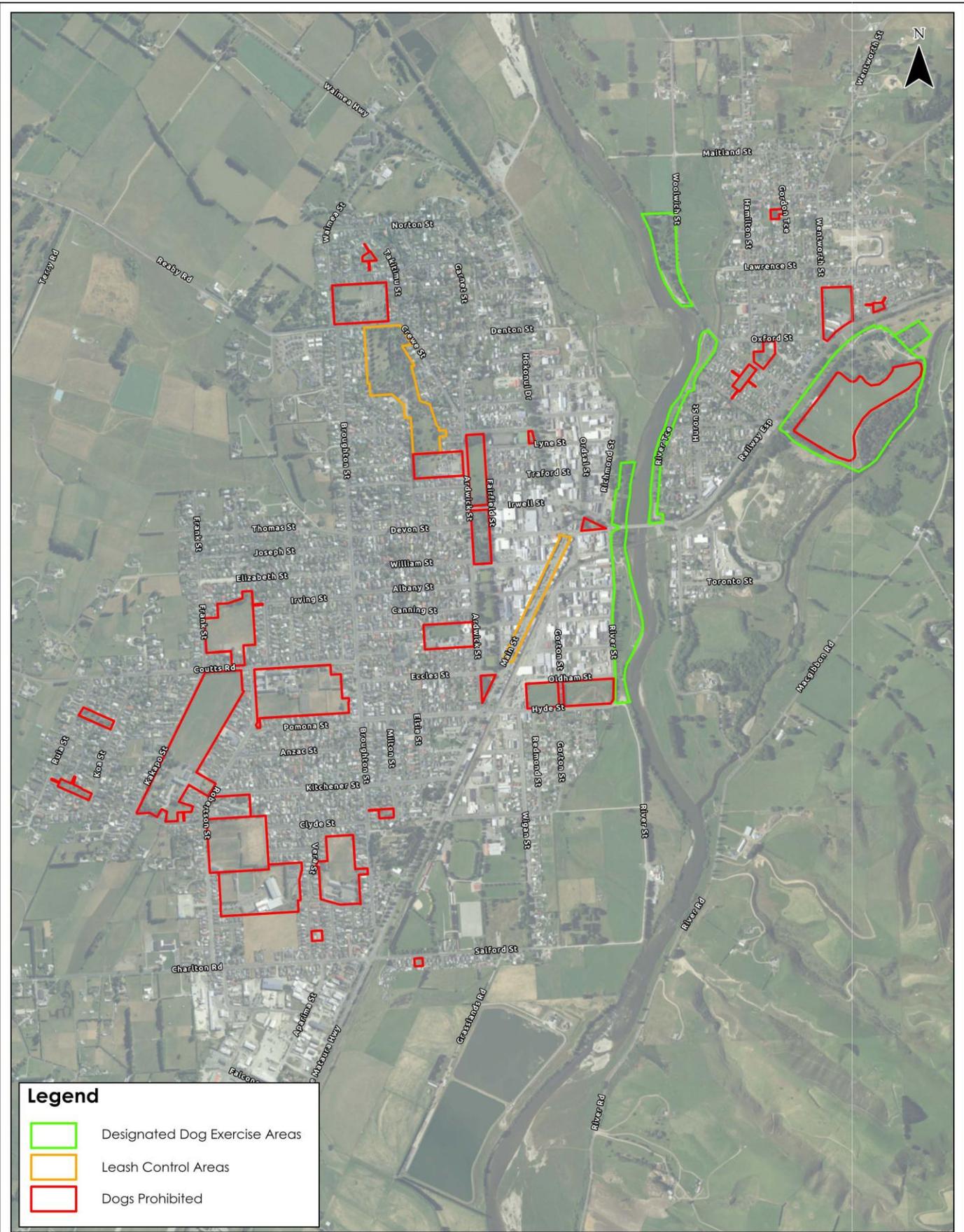
Leash Control Areas

- Main Street, Gore
- Bannerman Park

Areas Where Dogs Are Prohibited

- All playgrounds
- All school grounds
- The designated playing area of all marked sports grounds
- All cemeteries
- Gore Public Gardens
- Ardwick Street Reserve
- Newman Park
- Wayland Park (Gore MultiSport Complex)
- Hyde Park
- Triangle Reserve (Trout)
- Dolamore Park Scenic Reserve
- Tulloch Park

The Council may from time to time make areas temporarily prohibited to dogs because of any potential conflict with people, domestic animals, or at the advice of the Department of Conservation, wildlife. Temporary prohibitions will be notified by signage placed at the points of entry to the areas and by way of public notice on the Council's website.



GDC Dog Control Policy Schedule A - Gore

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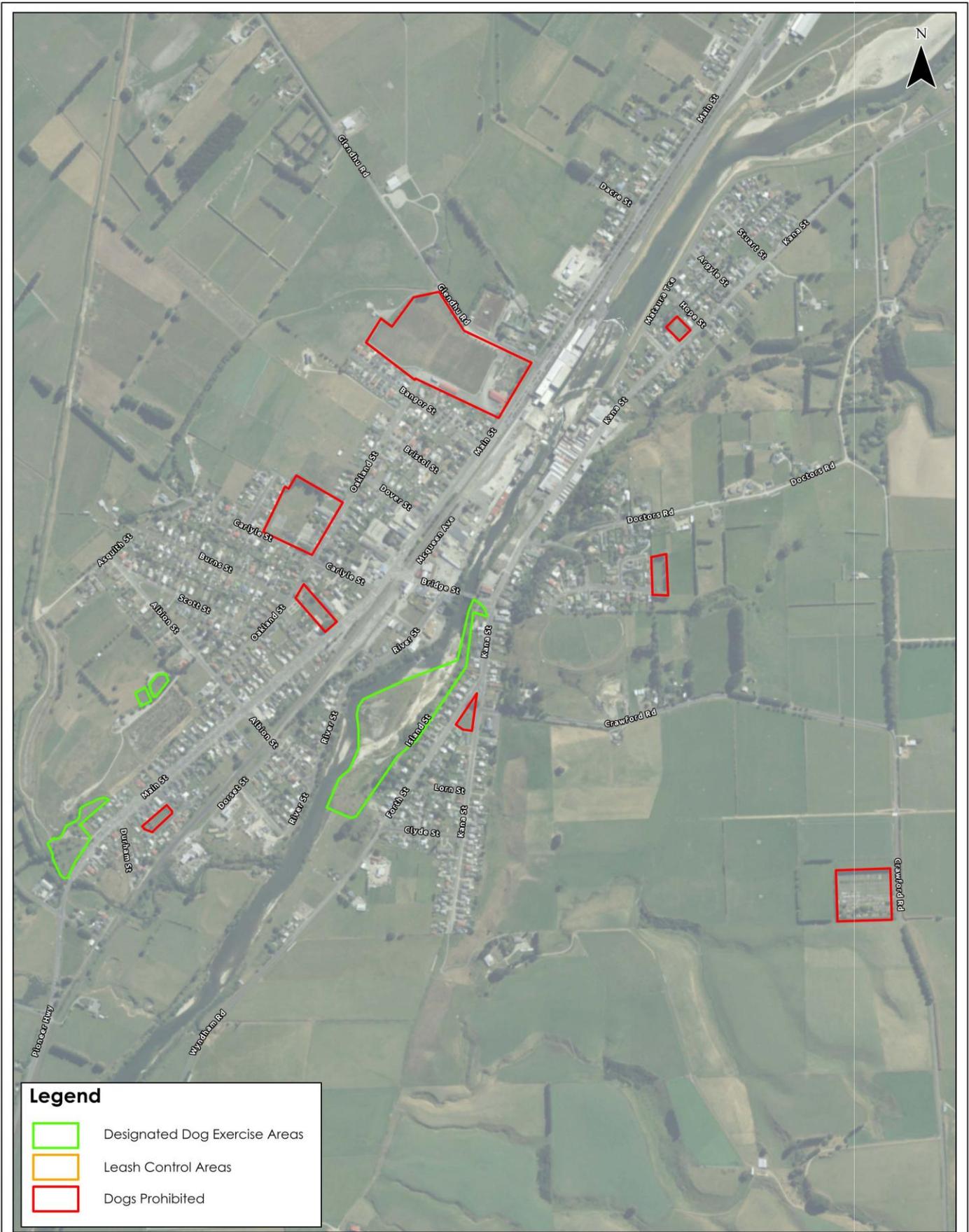
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Date Printed: 28/02/2025



GDC Dog Control Policy Schedule A - Matura

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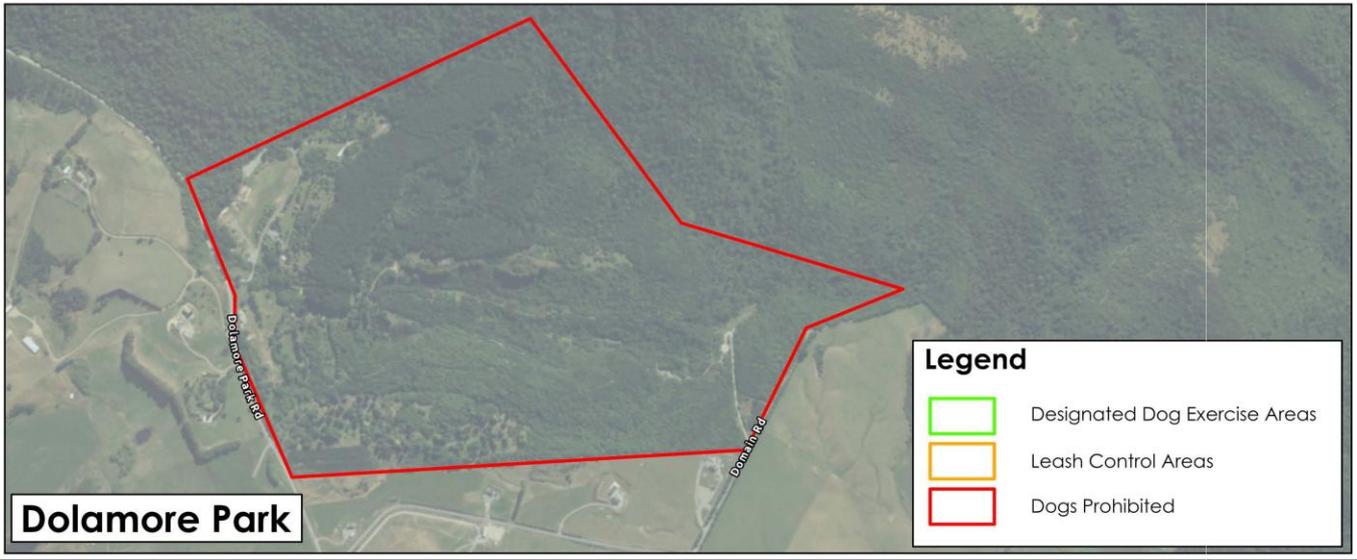
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Date Printed: 28/02/2025



Legend

- Designated Dog Exercise Areas
- Leash Control Areas
- Dogs Prohibited

**GDC Dog Control Policy
Schedule A - Rural**

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Date Printed: 28/02/2025

Document Type	Operational Policy
Adopted by	Full Council
Date Adopted	TBC
Date Effective	TBC 2025
Responsible Department	Regulatory
Responsible Officer	Regulatory Services Manager
To be reviewed	With Dog Control Bylaw 2025 or 1 June 2035, whichever is sooner

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Dogs play a significant role in many people's lives, providing companionship and contributing to health and well-being. As such, dog control is an important job for all local councils. Our Officers not only enforce the laws but also educate and support both dog owners and non-dog owners.
- 1.2. However, dogs in the community can also cause issues such as wandering, aggression, barking, fouling, and harm to protected wildlife. The Council has established this policy and an accompanying bylaw to address potential problems and ensure dogs integrate well into our communities.

2. Purpose And Scope

- 2.1. This policy outlines how the Council will fulfil its responsibility under the Dog Control Act 1996.
- 2.2. This policy is a tool to create a mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of dog owners and the Council. The Council acknowledges that dog ownership contributes to people's health and well-being through companionship and the need to exercise dogs regularly.
- 2.3. This policy promotes good dog care and control through the use of education, registration, and enforcement measures.
- 2.4. This policy and the accompanying bylaw have effect in all areas of the Gore District.

3. Fees

- 3.1. The Dog Control Act 1996 allows the Council to set reasonable fees for the registration and control of dogs. In setting fees, the Council considers the relative costs of these activities described in this policy as well as other relevant matters.
- 3.2. The Council has given considerable thought to what level of fee is fair and reasonable, and the guiding considerations are:
 - The policy follows a user-pays approach, ensuring fees are recovered from owners who fail to meet their legal obligations.
 - The cost of registration should reflect the level of service required by the Act and expected by members of the public.

- Since most dog control services benefit the public, it's reasonable for ratepayers to make some contribution.

4. Definitions

4.1. To assist with the understanding of this policy the following definitions have been included. All definitions, except the definition of a 'roaming dog' are taken from the Dog Control Act 1996. All references made below to the 'Act' are in relation to the Dog Control Act 1996.

Act – the Dog Control Act 1996.

Disability Assist Dog – means a dog certified by one of the organisations listed in Schedule 5 of the Act as being a dog that has been trained (or is being trained) to accompany and assist a person with a disability. For information, the organisations listed in Schedule 5 as at 10 March 2025 are:

- Assistance Dogs New Zealand
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People New Zealand
- K9 Medical Detection New Zealand
- Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust
- New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust
- Pawsible Service Dogs
- Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust
- Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind Incorporated

Dog Control Fee – any fee prescribed under section 37 of the Act.

Dog Control Officer – a Dog Control Officer appointed under section 11 of the Act and includes a warranted officer exercising powers under section 17 of the Act.

Dog Ranger – a Dog Ranger appointed under section 12 of the Act and includes an honorary Dog Ranger.

Domestic Animal – includes:

- any animal (including a bird or reptile) kept as a domestic pet
- any working dog
- any other animal kept by any person for recreational purposes or for that person's occupation or employment.

Infringement Offence – has the meaning given to it in section 65(1) of the Act.

Leash - a lead that is capable of restraining a dog.

Neutered Dog – a dog that has been spayed or castrated but does not include a dog that has been vasectomised.

Owner – every person who:

- owns the dog; or,
- has the dog in his or her possession, whether the dog is at large or in confinement (otherwise than for a period not exceeding 72 hours), for the purpose of preventing the dog from causing injury, damage, or distress or for the sole purpose of restoring a lost dog to its owner; or,
- the parent or guardian of a person under the age of 16 years who:
 - is the owner of the dog pursuant to this definition, and,

- o is a member of the parent or guardian's household living with a dependant on the parent or guardian.

but does not include any person who has seized or taken custody of the dog under this Act, the Animal Welfare Act 1999 or the National Parks Act 1980 or the Te Urewera Act 2014 of the Conservation Act 1987 or any order made under this Act or the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

Poultry – any live bird (including a domestic fowl, duck, goose, turkey, guinea-fowl, pheasant, emu, ostrich, quail, or pigeon) that is kept or raised for the purposes of sale or of producing eggs, hatching eggs, or poultry products or for the purposes of rearing on behalf of another person.

Protected Wildlife –

- any animal for the time being absolutely protected pursuant to section 3 of the Wildlife Act 1953
- any animal for the time being partially protected pursuant to section 5 of the Wildlife Act 1953, other than an animal in such circumstances that it may be hunted or killed under the authority of subsection (2) of that section
- any animal that is a marine mammal within the meaning of the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978.

Public Place – a place that, at any material time, is open to or is being used by the public, whether free or on payment of a charge, and whether any owner or occupier of the place is lawfully entitled to exclude or eject any person from that place and includes any aircraft, hovercraft, ship or ferry or other vessel, train, or vehicle carrying or available to carry passengers for reward.

Registration Year – has the same meaning as that given to the term 'financial year' by section 5(1) of the Local Government Act 2002. Currently this is defined as the 1st day of July in any one year to the 30th day of June the following year.

Roaming Dog – any dog that is found unaccompanied in any public place or on any land or premises other than that occupied by the owner.

Stock –

- any live horse, cattle, sheep, swine, alpaca, llama, bison, donkey, hinny, or mule that is not in a wild state
- any deer, goat, thar, or other animal that is kept within a fence or enclosure for domestic or farming purposes.

The Council – the Gore District Council.

Working Dog – any working as defined under Section 2 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

5. Dog Ownership Obligations

Community safety and wildlife protection

- 5.1. The Council is responsible for safeguarding community health and safety, as well as protecting native, indigenous, or protected wildlife. To achieve this, it is necessary to control dog activities to avoid potential conflicts, prevent danger, and to minimise distress caused by dogs to the community and protected wildlife populations and habitats.
- 5.2. The Council will implement the following measures:
 - Access to Public Places – restrict dogs' access to public places where there is a likelihood of conflict with the community or protected wildlife.

- Education and Compliance – provide information to ensure that the community and dog owners are informed about the risks associated with dogs, how to identify them, how to avoid them, and the importance of protecting wildlife.
- Enforcement – when community health, safety, or wildlife protection is at risk, effective measures will be taken to address the issue and ensure compliance with dog control regulations. This includes actions such as:
 - Issuing a warning or infringement notice
 - Impounding roaming dogs
 - Impounding unregistered dogs
 - Prosecuting when the offence or its effects are significant

Dog Welfare

- 5.3. It is important to recognise that dogs have certain physiological and psychological requirements. Owners of dogs need to be aware that they have a responsibility to provide for their dog's welfare. The owner of any dog must ensure that the dog receives proper care and attention, is supplied with proper and sufficient food and water, shelter and receives adequate exercise.
- 5.4. In managing dog welfare, the Council will implement the following measures:
- **Access to Public Places** – The classification of public places should provide sufficient opportunities for owners to meet the exercise and welfare needs of their dogs.
 - **Education** – Information will be provided to owners about the welfare requirements of dogs.
 - **Enforcement** – When welfare is not sufficiently provided for, the Council will ensure that appropriate action is taken. This includes investigating welfare complaints that relate to the provision of food, water and shelter. The Council can provide water, food and shelter as necessary should this be required. The Council will report all welfare issues to the SPCA or other agencies for investigation. To deter non-compliance with dog control laws related to dog welfare, the following measures may be put in place:
 - Refer to SPCA or other agencies for investigation
 - Issuing a warning
 - Issuing an infringement notice

Registration

- 5.5. The maintenance of a registration system is both a statutory requirement and an essential component of the efficient running of a dog control service.
- 5.6. Every person in possession of a dog older than three months of age must register their dog annually with the Council. The dog owner must complete and sign the registration forms or complete the appropriate online acknowledgements. Registration commences for any given year on 1 July.
- 5.7. When a dog is re-homed from one owner to another, both owners are required to notify the Council of the change of ownership for registration purposes.
- 5.8. When a dog is relocated to the district from another council's district, the tag is to be surrendered to the Council, upon which a new tag containing Gore District Council details will be issued to the owner at no extra charge provided the registration is current.
- 5.9. In the event of the death of a dog, the owner must notify the Council in writing. On receipt of written notification, the Council will process a refund for the remainder of the registration year.

5.10. If owners do not meet the obligations to register their dogs or notify the Council of a change of address or ownership, enforcement action may be initiated, and fines may be imposed.

Microchipping

5.11. All dogs, except working dogs registered for the first time as of 1 July 2006, must be microchipped. A microchip certificate is to be provided for all newly registered dogs within 30 days of registering the dog. Failure to do so may result in the issue of an infringement notice. Any dog that is unregistered and is impounded will be required to be microchipped and registered prior to release.

5.12. The Council acknowledges that multiple separate microchip databases are maintained throughout New Zealand. The dog's microchip number and owner information will be uploaded to the National Dog Database by the Council. This is the database that all councils use throughout New Zealand to assist in the quick identification and the ability to reunite dogs with their owners. The Council also acknowledges the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (NZCAR), which is a voluntary database and is often used by vets and rescue organisations to help track lost pets.

Nuisances

5.13. Dog activities can annoy and cause discomfort to community members. Nuisances include barking, roaming dogs, dog faeces, etc.

5.14. It is important to identify these problems when they occur and take appropriate measures to minimise or mitigate their adverse effects.

5.15. To manage dog nuisances, the Council will implement the following measures:

- **Education and Compliance** – Educate owners about the nuisances associated with dog ownership and how to avoid them.
- **Registration discounts** – Owners who are responsible dog owners by avoiding complaints, impoundments, or infringements will receive a discount on their registration.
- **Enforcement** – When a nuisance exists, provide effective control to reduce the problem and sufficient deterrent against non-compliance. This includes:
 - Issuing a warning or infringement notice
 - Impounding roaming dogs
 - Impounding unregistered dogs
 - Prosecuting when the offence or its effects are significant

6. Dog Ownership Obligations

Controlled Public Places

6.1. All dogs must be kept under proper and effective control at all times in public places. A dog may be allowed to be unrestrained in any area that is not defined by a Council Bylaw as a leash control area or prohibited area provided that the dog is properly controlled. Council officers will monitor rules are being complied with, focusing on educating dog owners. If owners repeatedly ignore the rules, enforcement action may be taken.

Prohibited Areas

6.2. These are areas where it is important to control dogs to ensure the safety and comfort of people in public places. To prevent any potential issues and reduce the nuisance caused by dogs, they are not allowed in these areas.

6.3. The following areas are classified as Prohibited Areas in the Gore District Council's Dog Control Bylaw 2025.

- All playgrounds
- All school grounds
- The designated playing area of all marked sports grounds
- All cemeteries
- Gore Public Gardens
- Ardwick Street Reserve
- Newman Park
- Wayland Park (Gore Multisport Complex)
- Hyde Park
- Triangle Reserve (Trout)
- Dolamore Park Scenic Reserve
- Tulloch Park

6.4. This excludes any dog defined or being trained as a disability assist dog.

6.5. The Council may temporarily prohibit dogs in areas because of potential conflict with people, domestic animals, or wildlife, or at the advice of the Department of Conservation. Temporary prohibitions will be notified by signage placed at the points of entry to the areas and by way of public notice on the Council's website.

Leash Control Areas

6.6. Where a dog is in a public leash-controlled area, it must be on a leash and under control at all times. This is to protect public safety and help ensure the safety of dogs and other animals.

Dog Exercise Areas

6.7. Dogs within designated dog exercise areas may be exercised at large at all times while under direct control or on a leash according to the appropriate signage for that area.

Fouling in Public Places

6.8. Dog owners must immediately clean up after their dog in public places or on others' property and dispose of the waste hygienically. Where a public litter bin or similar receptacle is used to dispose of the faeces, the faeces must be suitably wrapped or contained to prevent fouling of the receptacle.

7. Education And Desexing

7.1. The Council emphasises the importance of education in raising awareness about dog control issues among both dog owners and the general community. By providing information about dogs and their requirements, the Council aims to avoid dog control problems before they occur. This education is crucial for ensuring that dog owners understand their responsibilities under the Act and know how to handle any issues that may arise.

7.2. The Council acknowledges that desexing can effectively reduce many negative dog behaviours and provides a discount to all dog owners who desex their pets.

8. Permit Required To Keep More Than Two Dogs

- 8.1. To ensure proper management of dog ownership, the Council has established guidelines limiting the number of dogs that can be kept on any premises. No more than two dogs of registrable age are allowed unless the owner or occupier holds a permit for three or more dogs, or the premises are zoned Rural, General Rural or Rural Lifestyle in the Council's district plan.
- 8.2. Permits will not be granted if the property is deemed unsuitable due to inadequate fencing, size, location, or potential negative impact on neighbouring properties. Additionally, if the property is leased or rented, written consent from the property owner is required before a permit will be considered. Permits are not transferable from property to property. If a permit has been issued for two or more dogs and the owner moves to another property, a new assessment of the property will be required before the permit is re-issued for the new property.
- 8.3. Permits are subject to conditions set by the Council, and any breach of these conditions or changes in property circumstances may result in permit review or revocation.
- 8.4. All dogs must be registered annually, and failure to do so will lead to permit cancellation.
- 8.5. The permit fee must be paid before a permit will be issued. Permit fees are per property and are in addition to any dog registration fees.

9. Custody Of Dogs

Impounding

- 9.1. Where any dog is found at large in a public place in contravention of a bylaw or on any property other than the owner's, it may be impounded. Where any dog is impounded, and the owner is known, the Council shall make all reasonable attempts to contact the owner. The owner has seven days from the date of impounding to recover the dog from the pound.
- 9.2. Where the owner of the dog is unknown, the Council must keep the dog for seven days. If the dog is not claimed after this time the dog may be disposed of or destroyed as the Council sees fit.
- 9.3. No dog will be released from the pound until all registration and pound fees are paid.
- 9.4. If a dog is repeatedly found wandering, the officer must ensure that appropriate measures have been implemented to prevent further wandering before the dog is returned to its owner.

Releasing Dogs

- 9.5. Dogs shall only be released by prearranged appointment during business hours from the Animal Care Facility under the following circumstances:
 - All fees must be paid prior to release.
 - An Officer is satisfied that the dog is registered.
 - An Officer is satisfied that the dog is microchipped.
 - An Officer is satisfied that the person obtaining the dog is the rightful owner of the dog or has been duly authorised by the rightful owner to act in that capacity.
- 9.6. Early release may be arranged with an Officer for out of hours by arrangement, if the dog has a medical condition that requires early release or other extenuating circumstances. There are additional costs for dogs released after hours.

Rehoming Unclaimed Dogs

- 9.7. An unclaimed dog deemed suitable for re-homing may be rehomed if an officer of the Council deems the person or organisation suitable for rehoming a dog.

- 9.8. The Council will microchip and register (for the remainder of the current registration year) any dog deemed suitable for rehoming. The Council will not be held responsible for any dog that has fallen ill after re-homing or found to be ill once it has been released.

Euthanasia of Dogs

- 9.9. Impounded dogs that are not claimed within seven days, and that are deemed unsuitable for rehoming, will be euthanised by humane means. Dogs deemed suitable for rehoming that have not found a suitable owner, may be euthanised by humane means at the discretion of the Council.
- 9.10. Where the owner wishes that their impounded dog be euthanised, it will be arranged at the owner's cost.

10. Dog Owner Classification

- 10.1. Under the Act, the Council can classify owners as probationary or disqualify them from owning a dog. These classifications apply in certain situations and carry restrictions on dog ownership.
- 10.2. If the Council determines that probationary ownership is an appropriate response to an offence, it has the authority to impose such a measure. This allows the Council to monitor and evaluate the owner's compliance with dog control regulations and ensure that corrective actions are taken to prevent future issues. Probationary ownership serves as a tool to promote responsible dog ownership and enhance public safety.

Probationary Owners

- 10.3. Section 21 of the Dog Control Act 1996 allows for classification as a Probationary Owner.
- 10.4. An owner may be included in this class if they have received three or more infringement notices in a 24-month period or if they have been prosecuted under the Act. The Chief Executive has the delegation to declare any owner probationary.
- 10.5. A person classified as a probationary owner may object to the classification by lodging, with the Council, a written objection to the classification; and shall be entitled to be heard in support of the objection.
- 10.6. Any owner classified as a probationary owner will remain so for 24 months unless terminated by the Council following an objection from the owner. However, no objection may be lodged within 12 months of the hearing of any previous objection to the classification.
- 10.7. The probationary classification has the following effect:
- The owner is not allowed to own any additional dogs other than the ones registered and in their possession at the time probationary status is given.
 - The owner must dispose of any unregistered dogs.
- 10.8. In considering an objection, the Council will have regard to;
- the circumstances and nature of the offence(s); and
 - the competency of the person in terms of responsible dog ownership; and
 - any steps taken by the person to prevent further offences; and
 - the matters advanced in support of the objection; and
 - any other relevant matters.
- 10.9. In addition to the matters listed, the Council will encourage owners to undertake approved education and obedience courses.

Disqualification of Dog Owners

- 10.10. Section 25 of the Dog Control Act 1996 the Council must disqualify a person from owning a dog for a period of up to five years if:
- The person commits three or more infringement offences (not relating to a single incident or occasion) within a continuous period of 24 months ; or
 - The person is convicted of an offence (not being an infringement offence) against the Act; or
 - The person is convicted of an offence against Part 1 or Part 2 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, section 26ZZP of the Conservation Act 1987, or section 56I of the National Parks Act 1980.
- 10.11. However, the Council may determine that the circumstances of the offence or offences are such that disqualification is not warranted and may instead classify the person as a probationary owner.
- 10.12. The Chief Executive has the delegation to disqualify any person from owning a dog.
- 10.13. A disqualified dog owner has the right to object to the disqualification. Any objection must be made in writing, and the owner is entitled to be heard in support of that objection.
- 10.14. In considering an objection, the Council will have regard to;
- the circumstances and nature of the offence(s); and
 - the competency of the person in terms of responsible dog ownership; and
 - any steps taken by the person to prevent further offences; and
 - the matters advanced in support of the objection; and
 - any other relevant matters.
- 10.15. If an owner is classified as probationary and commits further offences, the owner will be disqualified from owning a dog. The disqualified owner must dispose of any dogs in their possession within 14 days and may not transfer ownership to another person residing in the same dwelling. The Council will provide any disqualified owner with a notice of the effects of the disqualification and information on how to object to the disqualification.

11. Dog Classifications

Dangerous Dogs

- 11.1. Dangerous Dog has the same definition as in section 31(1) of the Dog Control Act 1996.
- 11.2. The owner of any dog classified as dangerous must follow these additional obligations:
- The owner must ensure the provision of a secure area for the dog where it is possible to gain unrestricted access to at least one door of the dwelling.
 - The dog must be muzzled in any public place when not confined in a vehicle or cage.
 - The owner may not rehome the dog to any other person without the written consent of the Council.
 - The dog must be desexed within one month of the dog being classified as dangerous.
 - Pay 150% of the standard owner registration fee.
- 11.3. The Council has delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to classify dogs as dangerous.

Menacing Dogs

- 11.4. The Council considers a dog to be menacing either by a dog's behaviour or a specific breed or type.

Menacing by Behaviour:

- 11.5. The Council considers a dog menacing by behaviour if there have been reports or observations of menacing behaviour or the Council considers the dog poses a threat to people, protected wildlife, stock, domestic animals or poultry.
- 11.6. If the Council considers a dog to be menacing by behaviour, the owner is required to meet any or all of the obligations listed below:
- Ensure that the dog is muzzled in any public place when not confined in a vehicle or cage.
 - Ensure the provision of a secure area where unrestricted access to at least one door of the dwelling is possible.
 - Not rehome the dog to any other person without the Council's written consent.
 - Desex the dog - the owner of the dog must produce to the Council, within one month after the receipt of notice of classification, a certificate issued by a registered veterinary surgeon certifying:
 - that the dog is or has been neutered, or
 - that for reasons that are specified in the certificate, the dog will not be in a fit condition to be neutered.

Menacing by Breed or Type

11.7. The following breeds and types of dogs are automatically considered menacing under the Act:

Breeds:

- Dogo Argentino
- Brazilian Fila
- Japanese Tosa
- Perro de Presa Canario

Type:

- American Pit Bull Terrier

- 11.8. Any dog classified as menacing by breed or type must be desexed within one month of ownership, notice by the Council, or when a puppy has reached 12 months of age. The Council may consider an appeal to desexing a dog if the owner can produce a letter from a veterinarian specifying the medical reasons why the dog cannot be desexed within one month of notification.
- 11.9. Any owner of a dog classified as menacing by breed or type must follow these additional obligations:
- Ensure the provision of a secure area where unrestricted access to at least one door of the dwelling is possible.
 - Ensure that the dog is muzzled in any public place when not confined in a vehicle or cage.
 - The owner is required to notify the Council in writing within seven days of the dog being rehomed, providing the new owner's details and the address where the dog is living.

12. Enforcement

Enforcement

- 12.1. The Council acknowledges that most dog owners are responsible, and typically, explaining an issue is sufficient to resolve it. This will be the initial step in the Council's enforcement protocol, except in cases where the incident causes injury or distress to an animal or person.
- 12.2. In some cases, a written warning will be issued. If Council records show that two or more written warnings have been issued within a 12-month period, an infringement notice may be issued. Officers have the authority to issue an infringement notice at any time if they deem it necessary, either in the field or after further investigation without warning.
- 12.3. Enforcement actions are necessary to ensure community safety and to penalise and deter irresponsible dog ownership.

Abatement of Nuisance

- 12.4. Where in the opinion of the Council the keeping of any dog(s) on a premises is, or is likely to become, a nuisance or hazardous to the health, property or safety of any member of the public, the Council may issue the owner with a written notice requiring the owner to take specific steps to solve the problem.

Barking Dogs

- 12.5. When the Council receives a complaint about a barking dog, the Council will initiate a process to investigate the issue. For the barking or howling to be considered a nuisance, it must be persistent and loud. If the problem continues despite efforts to educate the owner and steps being taken to rectify the issue, the Council may issue the owner with a notice requiring reasonable steps to abate the nuisance.
- 12.6. The owner of the dog has seven days to either comply with the notice or object to the Council about its content. If, after seven days, the notice has not been complied with and further complaints are received, the Council may remove the dog from the land or premises. If an objection is received, the objector shall have the right to be heard by the Council, who will consider the notice and any evidence submitted with the objection and confirm, cancel, or modify the notice. If the notice is not complied with, the Council may undertake enforcement actions, including removing the dog from the property.

Wandering Dogs

- 12.7. Where an Officer sees a dog wandering in a public place, the Officer may uplift the dog. The dog will be handled in accordance with the Council's process for wandering dogs. Typically, the dog will be impounded, but at the Officer's discretion, the dog may be returned to its home address. A warning or infringement notice may be issued if a dog is returned.
- 12.8. Impounded dogs will be subject to impounding fees as set out in the Council's fees and charges.

Prosecution

- 12.9. Where an offence is considered to be serious enough, and sufficient evidence exists, the Council may prosecute an offender in the District Court. These offences include, but are not limited to, the following situations where the dog or their owner has:
 - Caused significant damage to property.
 - Caused significant damage or injury to any person or animal, domestic or wildlife.
 - Caused severe distress.
 - Caused danger, distress or nuisance to any person or the community on several occasions.
 - Not complied with the dangerous or menacing classification requirements.

12.10. Prosecution will be considered for offences against the Act or any Council Bylaw. In all circumstances, the Council has delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to determine whether to proceed with prosecution.

Infringements and Penalties

12.11. Infringements and penalties are set by the Act. The Council does not have the authority to set or alter fines. Infringements are set out in Schedule 1 of the Act.

12.12. Please note if a person is prosecuted under the Bylaw or a breach of the Act, prosecution may have higher penalties associated.

13. Commencement Of Policy

13.1. This policy comes into effect on [date] 2025.

13.2. This policy was adopted by the Gore District Council at its meeting held on [date].

Debbie Lascelles
Chief Executive
[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
1.0	Creation of original document			
2.0	Review of original document	[date]	Full Council	2035

8.6 Proposal to amend and consult on the Significance and Engagement Policy

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Leon Mitchell
Author title:	Strategy and Policy Advisor
General Manager lead:	General Manager Corporate Support
Report date:	Friday, 28 February 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To inform the Council of the need for the amended Significance and Engagement Policy to be approved to go out for public consultation at the Council meeting on 18 March 2025.
2. To provide an overview of the proposed changes to the Significance and Engagement Policy, as developed with the Communications Manager and the Senior Management Team.

Recommendation

3. That the Council:
 - a) receives and notes the proposal to amend the Significance and Engagement Policy;
 - b) approves the amended Significance and Engagement Policy to go out for public consultation; and
 - c) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any final editorial amendments to the Significance and Engagement Policy prior to the public consultation.

Executive Summary

4. The Council is legislatively required to have a Significance and Engagement Policy, and to review the policy via public consultation in most circumstances.
5. It is proposed that the Significance and Engagement Policy is included in the public consultation at the same time as the Long-Term Plan (LTP) consultation.
6. The amendments proposed to go out for consultation are to improve clarity, making the document easier to read and understand, and to reinforce the expectation that the Council improves engagement with Māori.

Context

7. The existing Gore District Council Significance and Engagement policy is reviewed every three years in conjunction with the Long-Term Plan (LTP) process.

8. The policy currently on the Council’s public website was adopted in November 2014, and is the version included in the 2021-2031 LTP.
9. The purpose of the policy is to:
 - enable the Council and its communities to identify the degree of significance attached to particular issues, proposals, assets, decisions, and activities;
 - provide clarity about how and when communities can expect to be engaged in decisions about different issues, assets, or other matters;
 - inform the Council from the beginning of a decision-making process about the extent of any public engagement that is expected before a particular decision is made; and the form or type of engagement required.

Discussion

Consultation requirement

10. Section 76AA (5) of the Local Government Act 2002 outlines the consultation requirement for a local authority amending its Significance and Engagement policy, which means that the four-week special consultative procedure must be undertaken - unless it considers on reasonable grounds that it has sufficient information about community interests and preferences to enable the purpose of the policy to be achieved.
11. As the LTP is also going for public consultation, the Council has already agreed-in-principle for the Significance and Engagement policy to be consulted on at the same time (currently that consultation period is 19 March to 23 April 2025). This reduces costs and ‘consultation fatigue’ of having two different periods of public engagement.

Amendments currently proposed to the Significance and Engagement Policy

12. The amendments proposed in this draft Significance and Engagement Policy are:
 - Introduction of a definitions section (section 2) of common or key terms used in this policy, the inclusion of key definitions is consistent with the approaches taken by many other local Councils;
 - Introduction of a new section (section 4) to explicitly mention of intention for engagement with Māori – as well as a mention in the in the principles, this new section explicitly refers to the need to engage with local Māori, noting an awareness of existing agreements to strengthen that engagement;
 - refreshed language and redrafted into new format – the Plain Language Act 2022 requires public sector agencies and entities to improve the accessibility of certain documents that they make available to the public, by reducing unnecessarily complicated or jargonistic language.

Linkage to Strategic Plan Priorities

13. The recommendations in this report align with the Council’s mission to encourage participation by the people.
14. The recommendations also align with the Council’s responsibility under Section 76AA of the Local Government Act 2002, which require Council to have a Significance and Engagement policy.

Consultation (Internal)

15. The proposed amendments have been developed in collaboration with Communications Manager and have been reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Financial Considerations

16. The adoption of the proposed Significance and Engagement Policy amendments is cost neutral, as they are primarily administrative amendments.
17. This would also be the case for any amendments made following the public consultation process.

Risks

18. Aside from the legislative requirements to have a Significance and Engagement policy, there is a reputational risk to the Council if the policy is deemed to be no longer fit-for-purpose and does not meet the needs of either the Council or the public.
19. Poor engagement and lack of appropriate transparency could lead to Council decisions being challenged, or the actions of the Council otherwise being open to criticism or investigation.

Significance and Engagement Policy

Significance

20. Staff have considered the key considerations under the Significance and Engagement Policy and have assessed that the recommendations in this report are of significance for the community.
21. The nature of the Significance and Engagement policy is one in which the public is likely to have an opinion, as it relates to how and when the Council engages with the community around issues and decisions.
22. Currently, proposed policy changes are primarily minor and technical in nature, adding clarity for members of the public.

Engagement

23. As outlined in paragraph 9 above, it is advised that specific external consultation and engagement is required in accordance with Section 76AA of the Local Government Act 2002.

Attachment

Gore District Council Significance and Engagement Policy 2025 - DRAFT

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Document Type	Operational Policy
Adopted by	Chief Executive
Date Adopted	TBC
Date Effective	TBC
Responsible Department	Communications
Responsible Officer	General Manager Corporate Support
To be reviewed	Three yearly as a part of the Long-term Plan review process

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1. Let our communities know how and when they can expect to be engaged in Council’s decision-making processes.
- 1.2. Provide guidance on the degree of significance to be attached issues, proposals, assets, decisions and activities.
- 1.3. Guide the Council’s decision making on consultation and engagement.

2. Definitions

Definition	Detail
Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. Includes interested parties, affected people, and key stakeholders.
Consultation	A subset of engagement - a formal process to gain input or feedback from the community about an identified Council option(s) or proposal subject to a decision.
Decision	A decision made by or on behalf of the Council, including those made by its Committees, the Chief Executive or officers under delegated authority. A decision implies that a proposal has been considered if required, that the views of the community have been taken into account in the decision-making process.
Engagement	The process of seeking views from the community to inform and assist Council decision making.
LGA 2002	Local Government Act 2002
Māori	Includes Hokonui Rūnanga and the mana whenua of Māruawai and its surrounding area.
Proposal	A suggestion of change presented to the Council, subsequently resulting in a decision made by or on behalf of the Council at a Council or Committee meeting.

Definition	Detail
Special Consultative Procedure (SCP)	<p>The Special Consultative Procedure, as outlined in section 83 of the LGA 2002, which sets out minimum requirements for engagement including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making available a Statement of Proposal. • Allowing a minimum of one month to receive written views. • Allowing people to present views in a spoken manner.
Significance	<p>Defined in section 5 of the LGA 2002, the degree of importance of the proposal or decision as assessed by the Council, in terms of its likely impact on, and likely consequences for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the District • any persons who are likely to be particularly affected by, or interested in, the issue, proposal, decision or matter. • the capacity of the Council to perform its role, and the financial and other costs of doing so.
Significant	<p>Defined in section 5 of the LGA 2002, in relation to any proposal or decision means that the proposal has a high degree of significance. Decisions made by the Chief Executive or officers under delegated authority will not be deemed to be significant.</p>
Significant Activity	<p>A term used to describe those groups of activities which the Council has historically invested substantial funding. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roading • Water • Wastewater • Stormwater • Libraries • Reserves • Recreational facilities • Solid waste
Strategic Asset	<p>Defined in s5 of the LGA 2002 as an asset or group of assets the Council needs to retain if it is to maintain its capacity to achieve or promote any outcome it determines is important to the current or future well-being of the community.</p> <p>The following are the Council's strategic assets at the time of the adoption of this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Cumming Community Centre & Library • Gore Aquatic Centre • MLT Event Centre • Eastern Southland Gallery • Māruawai Centre • Dolamore Park • Bannerman Park • Hamilton Park • Tulloch Park • Queens Park • Gore Public Gardens • Cemeteries • Mataura Library & Service Centre

Definition	Detail
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mataura Community Centre • Civic Administration Building • Gore Airport • Sports Grounds • Wastewater network (as a whole) • Gore oxidation ponds • Stormwater network (as a whole) • Water reticulation and treatment network (as a whole) • Roothing network (as a whole) • Gore Transfer Station
Statement of Proposal	A document that provides the basis for consultation with the community under the SCP by setting out the Council's proposition with respect to a particular decision.
Council	Gore District Council

3. Principles

3.1. The Council will:

- Be consistent and transparent in how it engages the public
- Commit to genuine community engagement
- Ensure the view of Māori are considered when engaging
- Consider language, accessibility and cultural needs in any engagement
- Act honestly and openly when analysing and presenting any engagement results
- Provide appropriate information to help people understand what is being proposed
- Allow sufficient time for the community to consider and respond
- Prominently outline a proposals or decisions cost in any engagement.

4. Engaging with Māori

4.1. Engagement with Māori will take into account any co-governance or co-management arrangements, including those established by legislation (including Treaty of Waitangi claim settlement legislation), and/or the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.

5. Application of the Policy

5.1. This policy is applied in two steps:

- Step 1: Determining the significance of the proposal/decision
- Step 2: Determining the requirement to engage or not (guided by the level of significance), and if there is a requirement to engage, what level should that be at.

5.2. Where the Council makes a decision that is significantly inconsistent with this policy, the steps identified in section 80 of the LGA 2002 will be applied.

5.3. There may be occasions when the Council does not follow this policy. Examples include:

- where failure to make a decision urgently would result in unreasonable or significant damage to property
- risk to people's health and safety, or
- the loss of a substantial opportunity to achieve the Council's strategic objectives.

Step 1 – Determining the level of significance

5.4. The Council will consider the following when assessing the degree of significance of proposals and decisions, and the appropriate level of engagement:

- Is there a legal requirement to engage with the community
- The level of financial consequences of the proposal or decision
- Whether community interest is high
- Whether the proposal or decision will affect a large portion of the community
- The likely impact on present and future interests of the community
- The likely impact on Māori cultural values and their relationship to land and water
- Whether the proposal affects the level of service of one or more significant activities
- Whether the likely consequences are controversial and has a likely impact on the reputation of the Council
- Whether community views are already known, including the community's preferences about the form of engagement
- The form of engagement used in the past for similar proposals and decisions.

5.5. The Council will consider the level of financial consequences (short and long term) in relation to unbudgeted operating cost or capital cost in the Long-term Plan.

5.6. If a proposal or decision is affected by the above considerations, it is more likely to have a high degree of significance.

5.7. In general, the more significant an issue, the greater the need for community engagement.

5.8. If a matter is considered to be significant, staff reports will include a statement indicating why this conclusion was reached. The statement will include an explanation of which factors indicate the decision is significant, the potential implications of the decision, the range of community views that might exist, and whether there is a need for a further degree of community engagement before a final decision is made.

5.9. Where the proposal or decision is considered to be significant, the report will also include a statement addressing the appropriate observance of ss.77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82 and 82A of the Act as applicable, together with the corresponding degree of community engagement considered.

Step 2 - Determining engagement approach

5.10. The Council acknowledges that community engagement occurs across a spectrum at differing levels and is broader than consultation.

5.11. Engagement is a process involving all or some of the community and can be focused on sharing information, generating ideas, decision making, and/or problem solving.

- 5.12. Council staff will consider existing information on the community's views and perceptions related to a proposal before undertaking any further community engagement.
- 5.13. The engagement approach (platform, questions, audiences, tactics, analysis, reporting) and associated communications, will be outlined by Council staff in a communication and engagement plan specific to the proposal. The content of this plan will be informed by subject matter experts.
- 5.14. The Council may use a variety of engagement techniques based on a range of factors, including history and public awareness of the issue/proposal, stakeholder involvement, and timing related to other events and budgets.
- 5.15. When engaging with the community, the Council will:
- Seek out and encourage contributions from people who may be affected by or interested in a decision
 - Provide reasonable access to relevant, timely and balanced information so people can contribute in a meaningful way
 - Provide a variety of appropriate ways and opportunities for people to have their say
 - Tell the community what Council's decision is and the reasons for that decision
 - Provide a clear record or description of the relevant decisions made by the Council and explanatory material relating to the decision.
- 5.16. There are times when it will not be appropriate to engage with the community on certain issues, proposals, decisions, or matters. Examples of this include:
- Organisational decisions (e.g. staff changes and operational matters) that do not materially reduce a level of service
 - Decisions that are consistent with the Council's Long-term Plan, or another policy or plan that has already been subject to consultation, or directives from central government
 - Protection of the privacy and safety of individuals (as provided for in the Privacy Act 2020 and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987)
 - Maintenance of confidentiality and/or commercial sensitivity to enable the Council to carry out commercial activity or negotiations without prejudice (as provided for in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987)
 - Where the Council is acting with urgency (for example under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002)
 - Decisions to act where is necessary to:
 - Comply with the law
 - Save, or protect life, health or amenity and prevent serious damage to property
 - Avoid, remedy or mitigate an adverse effect on the environment
 - Protect the integrity of existing and future infrastructure and amenity
 - Decisions in relation to regulatory and enforcement activities.
- 5.17. The Council will use a customised version of an internationally recognised approach to public engagement (IAP2). The Council's Community Engagement Spectrum outlines its approach to determining level of engagement. Progressing from left to right, Appendix 2 shows increasing levels of community engagement in decision-making and expectations for each.

6. Use of Special Consultative Procedure

- 6.1. The Council will use the Special Consultative Procedure (as set out in section 83 of the LGA 2002) where required under the LGA or any other legislation.
- 6.2. The Council will develop a proposal to fulfil the requirements of section 82A of the LGA 2002, will make this available to the public, allow written submissions for a period of up to four weeks and will consider all submissions prior to making decisions.
- 6.3. Specific issues where the Council may use this form of consultation include:
 - The adoption of an Annual Plan where it differs significantly from the content of the Long-term Plan
 - The adoption of the Development Contributions Policy where it differs significantly from the content of the previous policy
 - The making, amending, reviewing or revoking bylaws
 - Or any other situation as defined by section 87 of the LGA 2002 or where the Council deems an issue would benefit from this approach
- 6.4. A special consultation procedure is to be used for the adoption or amendment of a Long-term Plan but in accordance with the changes described in section 93 of the LGA 2002.
- 6.5. Where an engagement is not subject to the SCP (section 83 of the LGA 2002), the Council will apply the Principles of Consultation (section 82 of the LGA 2002).
- 6.6. Where engagement might be beneficial, but does not need to meet the requirements set out in either section 82 or 83 of the LGA, other less formal means of communication will be utilised.

7. Commencement Of Policy

- 7.1. This policy comes into effect on [date] 2025.
- 7.2. This policy is to be reviewed no later than three years from the date it comes into effect, or as a part of the next Long-term Plan review process in 2027.
- 7.3. This policy was adopted by the Gore District Council at its meeting held on [date].

Debbie Lascelles

Chief Executive

[date]

Document History and Version Control Table

Version	Action	Approval Date	Approval Authority	Due for Review
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Appendix 1 – Determining Significance

Significance Level →			
Key consideration	High	Medium	Low
Alteration of a service which comes under the Council's significant activities	Ceasing or commencing a service. (e.g. the closure of the pool)	A more than nominal alteration of a service. (e.g. the digitisation of most hard copy books at public libraries).	A nominal or no alteration of a service. (e.g. the undertaking of a tender with a different contractor).
Involves the transfer of ownership or control of strategic assets to or from the Council.	Majority transfer (i.e. more than 51%) or transfer in its entirety. (e.g. a full transfer of a theatre facility).	Minority transfer. (e.g. long-term lease of a pool).	Nominal or no transfer. (e.g. the transfer of a council owned statue)
Level of financial consequences in relation to unbudgeted operating cost or capital cost in the 10-year plan.	Unbudgeted operating cost(s) greater than 10% of total expenses in the financial year of the proposal / decision. (e.g. a \$6m unbudgeted increase in lease costs). AND/OR Unbudgeted capital cost(s) greater than 1% of total assets in the financial year of the proposal / decision. (e.g. the construction of a \$10m unbudgeted building).	Unbudgeted operating cost(s) greater than 5% but less than 10% of total expenses in the financial year of the proposal / decision. (e.g. a \$3m unbudgeted increase in lease costs). AND/OR Unbudgeted capital cost(s) greater than .5% but less than 1% of total assets in the financial year of the proposal / decision. (e.g. the construction of a \$5m unbudgeted building).	Unbudgeted operating cost(s) less than 5% of total expenses in the financial year of the proposal / decision. (e.g. a \$1m unbudgeted increase in lease costs). AND/OR Unbudgeted capital cost(s) less than .5% of total assets in the financial year of the proposal / decision. (e.g. the construction of a \$1m unbudgeted building).
Ability to reverse the decision.	Highly difficult. (e.g. constructing a purpose-built building)	Moderately difficult. (e.g. adoption of a Bylaw).	Low difficulty. (e.g. minor amendment to a policy)
Consistency with a prior decision or decisions (i.e. proposal or decision which is consistent with current policies and strategies)	Decision or proposal is significantly inconsistent. (e.g. a decision or proposal that retires a Council adopted strategy).	Decision or proposal is consistent but with some notable variations. (e.g. a decision or proposal contrary to the public places policy allowing restaurants to use entire width of public footpaths for outdoor entertainment).	Decision or proposal is consistent. (e.g. adopting the public places bylaw to enforce the public places policy).

Significance Level →			
Key consideration	High	Medium	Low
Levels of public interest known.	High levels of public interest known. (e.g. the adoption of the psychoactive substances policy).	Moderate levels of public interest known. (e.g. the adoption of the Event Sponsorship policy).	Low levels of public interest known. (e.g. the adoption of an amendment to a dog control policy).
Impact on proportion of the community.	Impacts a large proportion of the community. (e.g. a change in the rubbish collection timeframes).	Impacts a subgroup or groups within the community. (e.g. the creation of a neighbourhood playground).	Impacts an individual person or household. (e.g. refunding an individual their overdue library fines).
Degree of impact on affected people in the community.	High degree. (e.g. the change of a road name).	Moderate degree. (e.g. the investment in a small playground)	Low degree. (e.g. changing the timetable for swimming programmes).

Appendix 2 – Determining Engagement Approach

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide affected communities with clear, balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives or solutions	To gain input or feedback from the community about an identified Council option(s) or proposal.	To work directly with affected communities throughout the process to ensure their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered in decision making.	To work closely with affected communities to clarify the issue(s), develop alternative options and recommend a preferred and agreed solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of affected communities.
Types of issues that we might use this for	Annual Report Road closures Water Restrictions	Annual Plan Bylaws Policy Amendments	Long-term Plan (LTP) District Plan	Representative Review Commercial street layout	Local Body Elections
Tools we might use	Website Media release Social media	Formal submissions Focus groups Surveys	Hui Workshops Focus group	External working groups (involving community experts).	Referendums

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
	E-newsletter Antenno Newspaper	Social Media Public Meetings	Public meetings		
When the community can expect to be involved	The Council would generally advise the community once a decision has been made.	The Council would advise the community once a draft decision has been made on a proposal and would generally provide the community with up to four weeks to participate and respond.	The Council would generally provide the community with a greater lead-in time to allow it time and /or the chance to be involved in the process for a proposal	The Council would generally involve the community (and/or a subset of the community) at the start to scope the issue, after information has been collected, and when options for a proposal are being considered.	We would generally provide the community with a greater lead in time to allow them time to be involved in the process. e.g. typically, a month or more
Level of significance	Low to medium	Medium to high	Medium to high	Medium to high	High

8.7 Proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards

Report to:	Council
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 18 March 2025
Author:	Jason Domigan
Author title:	General Manager Critical Services
Report date:	Monday, 10 March 2025
Confidentiality:	Public

Purpose

1. To provide a high-level overview of the recently released proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards (the Standards) and seek feedback from the Council on any direction to draft a submission on the Standards.

Recommendation

2. That the Council:
 - a) receive and note the report on the Proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards;
 - b) direct that staff draft a submission on the Proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards; and
 - c) provide direction on any key focus areas for the submission.

Executive Summary

3. On 25 February 2025, the Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai (the Authority) began consulting on the proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards.
4. The goal of wastewater standards is to put in place a clear framework to respond to a national infrastructure challenge, and to set clear expectations about the treatment of wastewater in a way that helps Councils as they plan for, fund and obtain consents for the necessary infrastructure upgrades.
5. The proposed standards are expected to:
 - result in significant cost and time efficiencies for consenting of wastewater treatment plants, in a way that responds to the bow wave of re-consenting of wastewater infrastructure over the next decade;
 - strike a balance between the cost of upgrading wastewater infrastructure while ensuring that public health and environmental outcomes are achieved;
 - create national consistency to give councils the certainty needed to plan and fund the significant infrastructure upgrades that much of New Zealand’s aging public wastewater networks requires;

- set clear expectations about treatment quality to assist with community engagement about different options to manage wastewater; and
 - ensure that, as a sector, there is good quality wastewater performance data to identify what's working well as well as opportunities for improvement.
6. This initial suite of four proposed wastewater standards cover the most common wastewater management activities. These include:
- discharge of treated wastewater to water (including tailored treatment requirements for small wastewater treatment plants);
 - discharge of treated wastewater to land;
 - the beneficial reuse of biosolids; and
 - managing overflows and bypasses.
7. Consultation on proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards is open until 5.00pm on Thursday, 24 April 2025.

Analysis

8. Given the relatively short timeframe since the standards were released, staff have only had an opportunity to review the standards at a high level. Overall, the standards will be beneficial for Councils giving a level of national consistency for wastewater discharges across the country. However, it should be noted that these standards are proposed and subject to this consultation process which could result in amendments. Given both Gore and Mataura are current discharges to water, this has been the focus. However, managing overflows and bypasses is relevant and some commentary on this has been provided also.

Discharge to water

9. Interpreting the standards for a discharge to water is effectively a 3-step process. This involves categorising the receiving environment, understanding the treatment and monitoring requirements and implementation through consent conditions.
10. In terms of the discharge at the Gore wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), it would likely be classified as a river or stream with moderate sensitivity. This would require the discharge to meet the moderate dilution standards. Currently, the discharge would not meet the standards for total suspended solids (TSS) and total nitrogen. Based on the proposed upgrade to the Gore WWTP, the proposed discharge would likely comply with TSS, be on the standard for nitrogen but may exceed for ammonia. There may be a need to reinvestigate additional treatment for nitrogen and ammonia.
11. In terms of the discharge at the Mataura WWTP, it would likely be classified as a river or stream with low sensitivity. This is due to the dilution being greater at Mataura due to a lower flow discharge from the WWTP. On review, the current discharge at Mataura would likely meet the proposed standards and may not require to be upgraded to the degree proposed in our existing consent application.

Small plant discharges

12. It is likely that the discharge consent for Waikaka will fall into the tailored solutions for small plant discharges which should provide for a more efficient consenting pathway for this consent renewal process.

Overflow and bypass standards

13. Gore has a significant issue due to high proportion of combined stormwater and wastewater networks. As a result, the overflow and bypass standards will apply. The Council will be required to develop a Wastewater Network Risk Management Plan which categorises the risk and priority of overflows. The management plan will also need to include approaches to manage, control, monitor or eliminate risks.
14. Under the proposed controlled activity standards, a programme must be in place to reduce network overflows to an average of no more than two events per discharge per annum by 2040. This gives a clear standard that needs to be achieved and will potentially avoid a lengthy and expensive consenting process to agree on an acceptable level of improvement. However, achieving this by 2040 is going to be a significant challenge for Gore, particularly when considering the focus on the next few years will be implementing the Local Water Done Well provisions of the Water Services Act. Deferring the target date of 2040 might be something the Council may want to outline in its submission.

Conclusion

15. The proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards introduce a much-needed level of consistency across the country, providing clear expectations for treatment, monitoring and network management. While the Gore and Mataura WWTP discharges generally align with the proposed framework, some compliance challenges remain, particularly concerning nitrogen and ammonia levels at Gore.
16. The tailored approach for small plant discharges, such as Waikaka, offers a more efficient pathway for consent renewals, while the overflow and bypass standards present a significant challenge due to Gore's combined stormwater and wastewater network.
17. Meeting the requirement of reducing overflows to an average of two events per annum by 2040 will require substantial investment and planning. Given the competing demands on Council resources, including the implementation of the Water Services Act, a pragmatic approach to phasing and prioritisation should be considered in the submission process to ensure both regulatory compliance and financial sustainability.

Attachments

Appendix 1 - Discussion document on Proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards

Appendix 2 - Staff presentation on Proposed National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards



National Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards

Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards

- Released **25 February 2025** by the Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai
- National framework to provide **certainty and consistency** for wastewater upgrades
- **Streamline consenting processes** for wastewater discharges
- Proposed standards **subject to amendments** through public consultation process
- **Consultation closes 24 April 2025**

What are the proposed benefits?

The proposed standards are expected to:

- provide the consistency and certainty needed to enable wastewater infrastructure improvements
- improve public health and environmental outcomes
- create cost efficiencies for councils and communities
- support improved performance through increased transparency
- ensure communities have access to better information
- ensure that overflows are better understood and managed
- make compliance and enforcement for regional councils easier



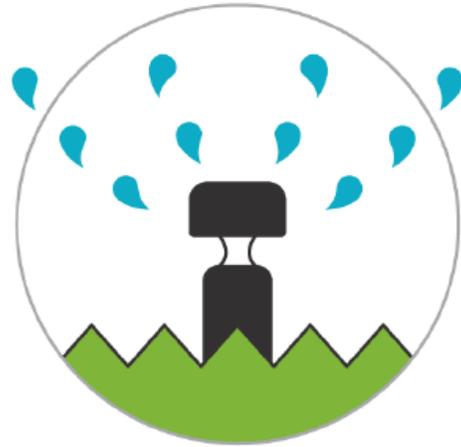
Legislative Framework

- Wastewater environmental performance standards can relate to a broad range of wastewater activities.
- Standards only apply to public wastewater networks.
- Standards have direct effect on resource consents as they come up for renewal.
- There are specific Treaty settlement obligations that must be considered.
- The Authority has other functions that may be used alongside the standards.
- Standards are contingent on proposed Bill 3 changes (to both the WSA and the RMA) being enacted as planned.

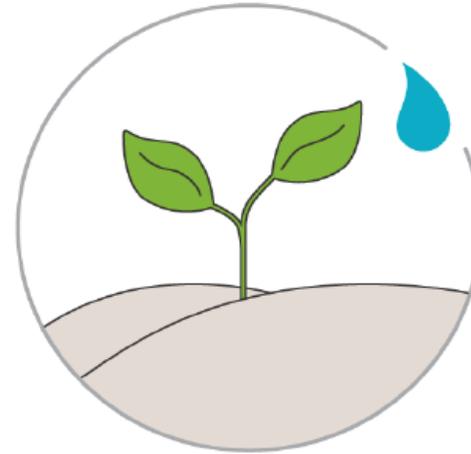
What the standards cover



Discharges to water



Discharges to land



Beneficial
reuse of
biosolids



Overflows and
bypasses

Discharge to water (Gore and Mataura)

What the standard proposes:

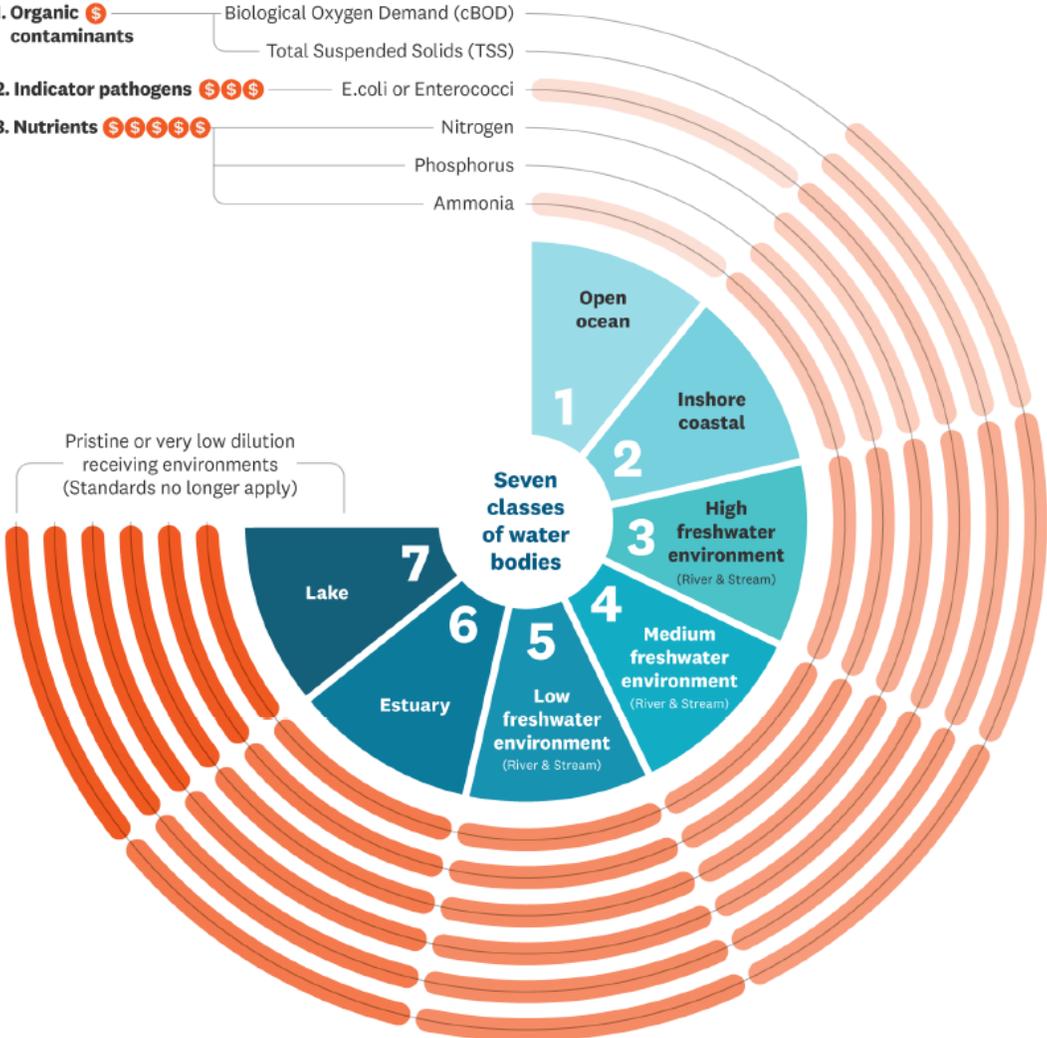
- **Categorises** waterbodies (e.g. lakes, rivers, ocean) based on their sensitivity.
- **Sets treatment requirements** for key contaminants found in treated wastewater, tailored to the category of waterbody, at a level to protect the health of communities and the environment .
- **Requirements for monitoring and reporting** to ensure treatment requirements are met.
- Includes **tailored treatment requirements** for existing small wastewater treatment plants.
- Note that a **35-year consent must be issued** when standards are complied with.
- Proposes **exceptions where standards do not apply** – e.g. pristine water bodies or where the discharge is to a very low dilution water body.

Discharge to water – receiving environment



Discharge to water standards involve three main treatment types:

- 1. Organic contaminants \$
 - Biological Oxygen Demand (cBOD)
 - Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
- 2. Indicator pathogens \$\$\$
 - E.coli or Enterococci
- 3. Nutrients \$\$\$\$\$
 - Nitrogen
 - Phosphorus
 - Ammonia



Step 1:

Categorise the receiving environment

Discharge to water – treatment limits

Step 2:

Contaminant/measure	Measurement approach	Lakes and natural ponds	Rivers and streams (high sensitivity)	Rivers and streams (moderate sensitivity)	Rivers and streams (low sensitivity)	Estuaries	Low energy coastal	Open ocean
Carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand (cBOD ₅)	Annual median	15 mg/L	10 mg/L	15 mg/L	20 mg/L	20 mg/L	50 mg/L	Not applicable
Total suspended solids (TSS)	Annual median	15 mg/L	10 mg/L	15 mg/L	30 mg/L	25 mg/L	50 mg/L	Not applicable
Total nitrogen	Annual median	10 mgN/L	5 mgN/L	10 mgN/L	35 mgN/L	10 mgN/L	10 mgN/L	Not applicable
Total phosphorus	Annual median	3 mgP/L	1 mgP/L	3 mgP/L	10 mgP/L	10 mgP/L	10 mgP/L	Not applicable
Ammoniacal-nitrogen (ammonia)	Annual 90 th percentile	3 mgN/L	1 mgN/L	3 mgN/L	25 mgN/L	15 mgN/L	20 mgN/L	50 mgN/L
<i>E. coli</i>	Annual 90 th percentile	6,500 cfu/100mL	1,300 cfu/100mL	6,500 cfu/100mL	32,500 cfu/100mL	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Enterococci	Annual 90 th percentile	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2,000 cfu/100mL	4,000 cfu/100mL	40,000 cfu/100mL

Discharge to water – treatment limits

Contaminant/ measure	Measurement approach	Proposed river mod- sensitivity	Gore current discharge	Gore upgrade discharge	Proposed river low- sensitivity	Mataura current discharge	Mataura upgrade discharge
cBOD5	Annual median	15 mg/L	10 mg/L	10 mg/L	20 mg/L	6 mg/L	10 mg/L
Total suspended solids	Annual median	15 mg/L	17 mg/L	10 mg/L	30 mg/L	13 mg/L	10 mg/L
Total nitrogen	Annual median	10 mg/L	14 mg/L	10 mg/L	35 mg/L	11 mg/L	10 mg/L
Total phosphorus	Annual median	3 mg/L	0.28 mg/L	0.5 mg/L	10 mg/L	0.73 mg/L	10 mg/L
Ammoniacal nitrogen	Annual 90 th percentile	3 mg/L	10 mg/L	5 mg/L	25 mg/L	8.9 mg/L	5 mg/L
E. coli	Annual 90 th percentile	6,500 cfu/100ml	91 MPN/100 ml	50 MPN/100 ml	32,500 cfu/100ml	470 MPN/100 ml	500 MPN/100 ml

Discharge to water – Implementation in consents

Step 3:

- Regional councils **can't require higher or lower levels of treatment** for listed contaminants.
- Standards set the **metrics for monitoring** and consistent reporting nationally.
- Covers most **common contaminants** only.
- **Guidance to be developed** to support implementation.

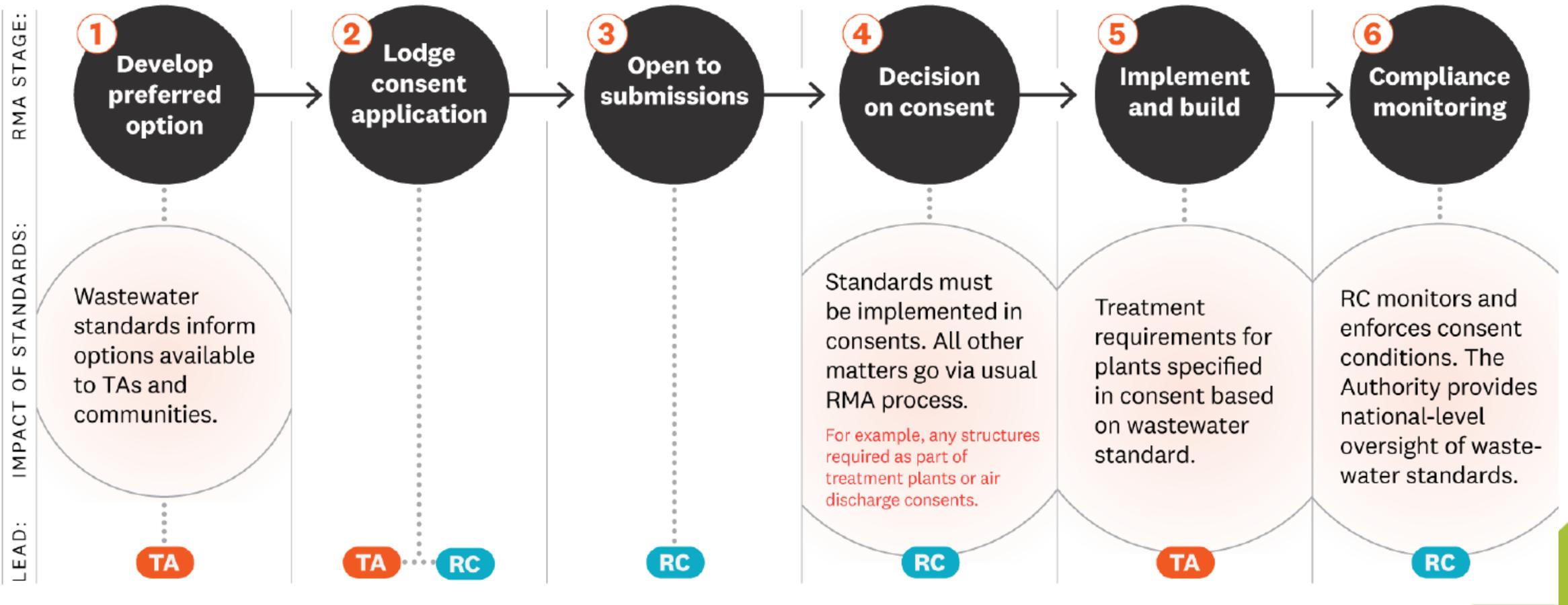
Tailored approach for small plants (Waikaka)

- Applies to existing plants with influent cBOD5 loads of 85kg/day or less.
- The possible changes for small plant standards include:
 - removal of treatment requirements for nutrients
 - less stringent treatment requirements for other parameters (such as TSS or pathogens)
 - a standard for dissolved oxygen rather than cBOD5
 - operational requirements such as regular desludging of oxidation ponds.
- Full standard applies to new or upgraded small plants.

Overflows and bypasses

- Makes all **existing overflow points from networks and bypasses of treatment plants a controlled activity** under the Resource Management Act 1991, consistent with proposed changes through the Local Government (Water Services) Bill.
- Sets specific **requirements for monitoring and reporting of overflows** from the network or treatment plant bypass, based on the risk to public health and the environment .
- Requires all wastewater network operators to **develop and implement a wastewater risk management plan.**
- **Telemetric monitoring required** at:
 - all **engineered overflow points** that are classified as high risk
 - all **new overflow points and pump stations** as they are built
 - all **uncontrolled overflow points** where overflows happen often.
- Reporting is separated into ‘first response’ and ‘follow-up’ reporting.

How the standards will be used

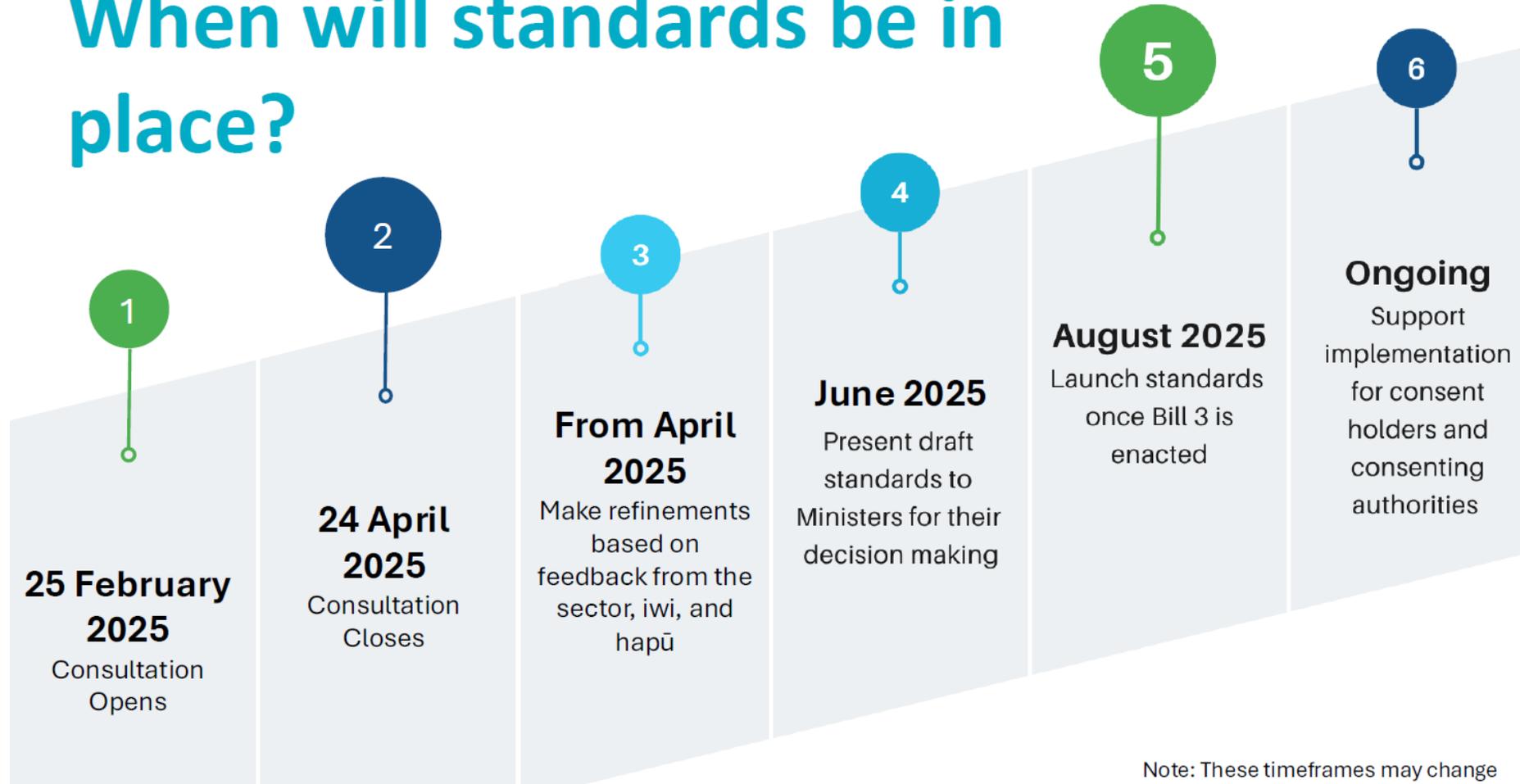


Transition arrangements

- The Local Government (Water Services) Bill includes provision that enabling a council whose wastewater treatment plant is **operating on section 124** of the Resource Management Act 1991 to:
 - **withdraw their application** and prepare a new one that complies with a wastewater standard;
 - If they do, continue to operate on section 124 for **6 months from the date of withdrawal.**
- The Bill also provides that **consents which expire within 2 years** of the Bill being enacted will have their expiry date extended to 2 years after the enactment.
- The WWS standards propose that wastewater treatment plants may only **operate on section 124 for a maximum of 2 years.**
- It is proposed that this will **take effect 5 years after wastewater standards** are made.

Standards timeline

When will standards be in place?



Note: These timeframes may change

Any questions or discussion?

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Consultation on proposed wastewater environmental performance standards

Discussion document

Minor clarification made to page 21 on 10 March 2025



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1. How to make a submission

The Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai (**the Authority**), on behalf of the Minister of Local Government, is consulting on a set of proposed wastewater environmental performance standards ('wastewater standards') under section 138 of the Water Services Act 2021. We welcome feedback on the proposals to inform the first set of national wastewater standards and how they are implemented.

This discussion paper includes some questions (set out in boxes) you may like to respond to in your submission. **Appendix Three** contains the full list of questions. You are invited to answer any or all the questions included. Where possible, please include evidence to support your views (for example, references to facts and figures, or relevant examples).

Timeframes

The consultation is open for 2 months from 25 February 2025. It closes at **5.00pm on 24 April 2025**. You can make a submission via:

- our [online survey form](#), or
- sending your responses to korerero@taumataarowai.govt.nz or mailed to Level 2, 10 Brandon Street, PO Box 628, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.

Please include your name, or the name of your organisation and contact details in your submission.

You will find all the information on this consultation at: korerero.taumataarowai.govt.nz/regulatory/wastewater-standards

Please direct any questions you may have in relation to the submission process to: korerero@taumataarowai.govt.nz.

Your feedback will inform the final wastewater standards and how they are implemented

The Authority welcomes feedback on the proposals in this document. This consultation document outlines the first set of proposed wastewater standards. Once submissions have been received, a final proposal will be developed for the Minister of Local Government's consideration. The final wastewater standards will be set in regulations made by the Governor-General by Order in Council, on the advice of the Minister.

The wastewater standards are expected to be set in mid- to late-2025. This will follow enactment of the Local Government (Water Services) Bill.

2. Executive summary

New Zealand's publicly-owned wastewater infrastructure is facing a significant challenge. A significant proportion was built around 30-40 years ago, and upgrades or renewals are required for many wastewater treatment plants and networks. Population growth and urban development is driving the need for infrastructure renewals, with larger communities and housing areas requiring treatment plants and networks with significantly greater capacity than they currently have.

In the next decade, 57 percent of public wastewater network plant infrastructure will require re consenting, and of this number, approximately 20 percent of plants are currently operating on expired resource consents. The resource management system can be challenging for network owners and communities. Across the country, resource consents are developed, assessed and monitored largely on a case-by-case basis. This means the consenting process can be lengthy, uncertain and information intensive. Upgrading wastewater infrastructure is resource intensive and a significant investment for councils, particularly with many facing affordability challenges and competing demands on how rates should be spent. This directly affects communities throughout New Zealand in terms of higher rates, increased public health risks and the impact on the environment.

National or state-level wastewater environmental performance standards (**wastewater standards**) combined with transparent public reporting, are a common feature in many jurisdictions that New Zealand commonly compares itself to, such as the United Kingdom, the European Union, Australia and Canada.

This discussion document proposes New Zealand's first set of wastewater standards. These standards will set nationally consistent requirements for all wastewater networks and operators through resource consents as these are renewed or issued for new wastewater infrastructure. Wastewater standards will:

- support environmental outcomes,
- drive cost and time efficiencies,
- support owners of networks to better plan for the cost of infrastructure, and
- save time for territorial authorities as owners of the public infrastructure, and regional councils as regulators.

The proposed wastewater standards are expected to deliver significant cost-efficiencies that may include reduced consenting costs of up to 40 percent based on case study examples. This includes reductions in costs associated with the consenting process such as staff time, technical assessments, feasibility assessments, legal costs and consultation and engagement costs.

Reductions to capital upgrade costs and ongoing operating costs such as staff training and maintenance can also be expected. The costs savings on an individual plant will depend on specific circumstances, such as the type or size of the plant, treatment processes, and options for where the plant discharges. However, over time, further costs savings are expected as materials are standardised, and modular plant options are available that comply with wastewater standards.

Wastewater standards will provide increased certainty to territorial authorities as owners of networks so they can better plan for the cost of infrastructure, and leverage cost efficiencies in designing, procuring and operating wastewater treatment plants. This will support territorial authorities in developing long-term plans in future.

The Local Government (Water Services) Bill proposes 'infrastructure design solutions' that will be used as part of the second implementation phase for wastewater standards. These instruments will support network operators to meet wastewater standards and provide design and operating requirements for modular wastewater treatment plants.

Infrastructure design solutions will result in faster consenting processes and potentially significant cost savings, and over time will enable network operators to standardise the design and procurement of infrastructure, and enable modular, off-the-shelf solutions to be installed.

What does this package of wastewater standards cover?

The initial package of proposed standards covers areas where resource consents are commonly sought for wastewater treatment plants, specifically:

- discharges to water for a range of parameters and receiving environments, alongside a tailored standard for small wastewater treatment plants,
- discharges to land,
- beneficial reuse of biosolids, and
- arrangements for wastewater network overflows and bypasses of wastewater treatment plants.

The proposed standards do not cover the following matters:

- discharges to air from wastewater treatment plants,
- recycled treated wastewater for non-potable use,
- contaminants of emerging concern such as endocrine disruptors, PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and heavy metals, and

- arrangements for onsite wastewater treatment systems (such as septic tanks) or community owned and operated schemes.

These areas will continue to be regulated through the existing resource consenting process, pending future wastewater standards that address them. To ensure standards remain fit-for-purpose, the Authority will establish an ongoing work programme to evaluate how standards have been implemented and to consider where additional standards may be appropriate or whether amendments are necessary.

How will wastewater standards be implemented?

Wastewater standards will primarily be implemented through future resource consents for public wastewater treatment plants and networks as they come up for renewal. Wastewater standards must be implemented as part of any new resource consent for existing plants and networks, as well as consents for new wastewater infrastructure. The certainty generated by wastewater standards will streamline these consent processes and decisions. Any matters not covered by wastewater standards will continue to be set through the existing resource consent process as they are now.

Regional councils remain the regulator for catchments, including wastewater treatment plants, networks and their discharges, and will have a critical role in implementing and ensuring compliance with wastewater standards through resource consents. Consistent with this role, regional councils will implement the wastewater standards through consent conditions. The Authority will collect information through regular network environmental performance reporting and summarise it annually in a public-facing report, to provide a further layer of transparency about plant and network environmental performance.

Decisions about wastewater arrangements, such as where plants are located and discharge to, will continue to sit with territorial authorities and their communities. Territorial authorities will, for example, continue to consult with their communities about their preferences under local government legislation, and apply to regional councils for new consents for wastewater treatment plants or networks in a way that reflects community preferences.

Relationship with Local Water Done Well

Wastewater standards are a core aspect of Local Water Done Well, the Government's approach to address long-standing water infrastructure challenges. Wastewater standards are intended to reduce the regulatory burden relating to consenting, and lead to greater standardisation in plant design, performance and operation, while providing councils with greater certainty of costs for their wastewater network investments.

The Local Government (Water Services) Bill (**the Bill**), which is currently before a Parliamentary select committee, proposes changes that impact how wastewater standards are made and implemented. These amendments are designed to ensure regional councils must implement any requirements imposed as part of a wastewater standard in a new consent, and cannot include any conditions in a consent which are any more or less restrictive. The Bill also proposes that, where the infrastructure proposed in a new consent meets the relevant wastewater standard, a 35-year consent must be issued, to maximise the benefit of public investment in the wastewater treatment infrastructure. The Bill also proposes changes to the consultation that applies when wastewater standards are made.

Many councils have wastewater treatment plants with resource consents that will expire in the first two years following the implementation of wastewater standards. The Bill proposes an automatic extension of these consents, so they expire two years following the commencement of the Bill.

Appendix Two outlines the proposals in the Bill that, if enacted, will impact how wastewater standards are created and implemented. The proposals in this discussion document are based on the new arrangements set out in this Bill. The Government proposes to make the first set of wastewater standards once this Bill is enacted later this year.

You can find more information about the Local Government (Water Services) Bill [here](#).

Proposal on-a-page

i The Water Services Authority—Taumata Arowai (the Authority), on behalf of the Minister of Local Government, is consulting on a set of proposed national wastewater environmental performance standards (‘wastewater standards’) under section 138 of the Water Services Act 2021.

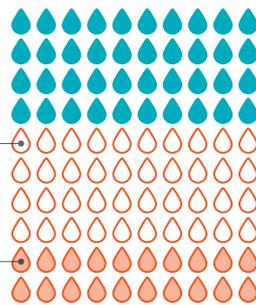
A What is the rationale for change?

A significant proportion of Council and Crown-owned wastewater infrastructure was built 30–40 years ago. These now require upgrades or renewals.

Population growth and urban development also drive the need for infrastructure renewals, with larger communities and housing areas requiring treatment plants and networks with much greater capacity than they currently have.

Around 60% of public wastewater infrastructure will require reconsenting in the next decade.

Of this number, 20% of plants are currently operating on expired resource consents.



KEY:
● Valid
○ Due to expire
● Expired

The resource management system can be challenging for network owners and communities across the country.

Resource consents are developed, assessed, and monitored largely on a case-by-case basis. The current process can be lengthy, uncertain, and information intensive as a result.

B What does this package of wastewater standards cover?

The Water Services Act 2021 (the Act) (section 138) enables the Authority to make wastewater standards following public consultation.

Standards only apply to Council and Crown-owned infrastructure, and may include requirements, limits, conditions, or prohibitions related to activities associated with wastewater treatment plants and networks, including:

- + **Discharges to land, air or water**
- + **Biosolids** and other **by-products** from wastewater
- + **Energy use**
- + **Waste** introduced by a third party into a wastewater network (such as trade waste).

The initial package of proposed standards covers areas where resource consents are commonly sought for wastewater treatment plants and networks, specifically:



Discharges to water

THIS STANDARD PROPOSES:

- + Treatment requirements for the main contaminants discharged from a treatment plant, varying by the risk and sensitivity of the receiving environment.



Discharges to land

THIS STANDARD PROPOSES:

- + A framework for identifying suitable land for discharge application, based on a site-specific risk assessment.
- + Treatment requirements for nutrients and pathogens discharged to land.



Beneficial reuse of biosolids

THIS STANDARD PROPOSES:

- + A grading system for processing biosolids from wastewater treatment plants, with corresponding activity status for how and when biosolids can be reused based on Water NZ guidelines.



Wastewater network overflow and bypass arrangements

THIS STANDARD PROPOSES:

- + Risk-based planning, monitoring and reporting requirements for overflows from networks and bypasses of plants.
- + All existing overflow points must be consented.

+ Monitoring and reporting requirements will apply across all the standards.

i Small plant standard (SPS)

The discharge to water standard will impose different treatment requirements for wastewater treatment plants that service very small communities. These plants are significantly different to those that service larger towns and cities. They are usually

oxidation ponds that rely on passive treatment arrangements that require little operation, at isolated sites and often without access to electricity. These small plants often have a minimal impact on the receiving environment because of their small size, particularly in

comparison to contaminants like nutrients from surrounding land. Due to this, no nutrient treatment is proposed as part of the small plant standard, and other treatment requirements are tailored to suit infrastructure of this nature.

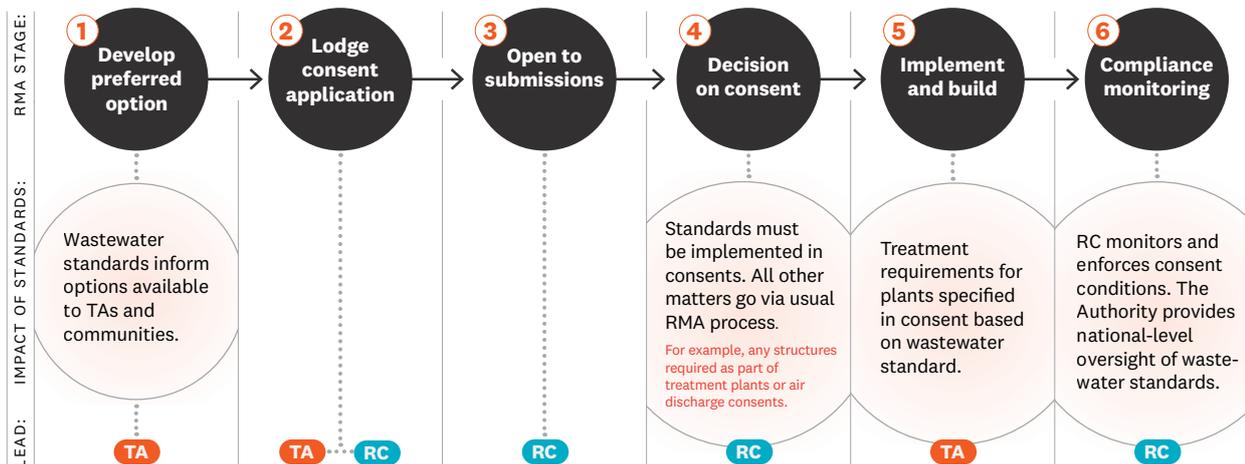
C How will territorial authorities (TAs) and regional councils (RCs) use the standards?

Territorial authorities (TAs) who have wastewater treatment plants due for upgrade or renewal will consult with their communities under the Local Government Act 2002 to determine the best arrangement for their circumstances.

The standards will set treatment requirements based on the type of water body or land the plant discharges to. These standards will guide councils and communities in making decisions, and in the design, planning, and funding once a decision is made.

Examples of what this might look like:

- Communities and TAs may choose to either:
- Decommission and replace an old plant with one that discharges to land in the summer, and water in the winter, or
 - Upgrade an existing plant or combine multiple plants into one centralised arrangement.



D What are the expected benefits of the proposed standards?

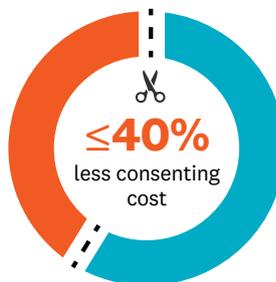
Wastewater standards will:

- ✔ Support environmental outcomes.
- ✔ Drive cost and time efficiencies.
- ✔ Support owners of networks to better plan and fund infrastructure.
- ✔ Provide clear expectations about treatment quality to communities.

Expected cost efficiencies:

Based on case studies, we expect up to 40% reduction in consenting costs. This includes cost reductions in staff time, technical and feasibility assessments, legal costs, and consultation/engagement expenses. Over time, further savings will come from standardising infrastructure and operations

to comply with the proposed wastewater standards.



The standards will provide certainty to TAs, helping them to better:

- Plan
- Design
- Engage with communities
- Fund infrastructure upgrades
- Develop long-term plans

E What was the process to develop the standards?

The Authority developed these proposals using evidence, technical advice, testing.



The goal is to create credible standards that balance:



The proposed standards do not cover the following matters:

- ✗ Discharges to air from wastewater treatment plants.
- ✗ Recycled treated wastewater for non-potable use.
- ✗ Other contaminants from treatment plants (such as endocrine disruptors, heavy metals, and PFAS).
- ✗ Arrangements for private networks or onsite wastewater treatment systems (such as septic tanks).

3. What is covered by the proposed wastewater standards?

Relevant provisions in the Water Services Act 2021

The [Water Services Act 2021 \(the Act\)](#) (section 138) enables the Authority to make wastewater standards. The Local Government (Water Services) Bill proposes to change this so that standards are set through regulations made by Order in Council, on the advice of the responsible Minister.

Standards may include (but are not limited to) requirements, limits, conditions, or prohibitions related to activities associated with wastewater networks, including:

- discharges to land, air or water,
- biosolids and any other byproducts from wastewater,
- energy use, and
- waste that is introduced by a third party into a wastewater network (for example, trade waste).

The Local Government (Water Services) Bill also expands and clarifies how standards affect processes and decisions under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The Act enables the Authority to exercise several functions that are relevant to the proposed wastewater environmental standards. These include:

- **Network Environmental Performance Measures:** network operators are required to monitor and report on the environmental performance of their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater networks. Robust data collection and reporting is critical to providing a clear picture about how networks are performing, to minimise potential impacts on the environment and public health over time.
- **Wastewater Network Risk Management Plans:** these plans can be required under section 139 of the Water Services Act (once a timeframe is set by notice in the Gazette) and must meet any relevant wastewater measures, standards or targets.¹ Once made they must be reviewed every 5 years.
- **Wastewater Environmental Performance Targets:** The Authority may also create targets that apply to wastewater network and their operators. These will be introduced at a later date, once there is a clearer picture of how wastewater networks are performing and where targets may be appropriate.

Wastewater standards apply to public wastewater networks

The Act provides that wastewater standards may only apply to public networks (i.e., owned by a territorial authority or its service delivery organisation such as Watercare, or certain Central Government organisations), as defined in the Act:

wastewater network means the infrastructure and processes that—

- (a) are used to collect, store, transmit through reticulation, treat, or discharge wastewater; and
- (b) are operated by, for, or on behalf of one of the following:
 - (i) a local authority, council-controlled organisation, or subsidiary of a council-controlled organisation;
 - (ii) a department;
 - (iii) the New Zealand Defence Force

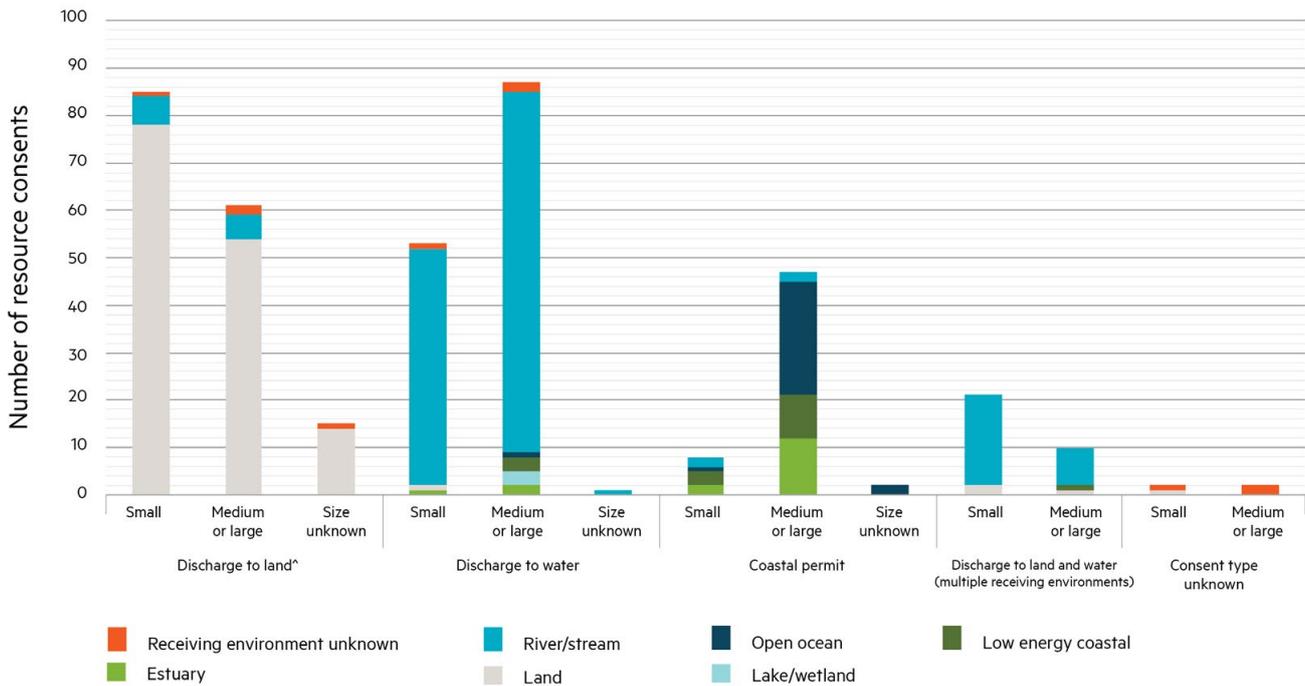
The standards do not apply to privately owned networks, septic tanks or onsite systems for treating wastewater (those captured by AS/NZS 1547:2012). This includes onsite systems with primary, secondary and disinfection wastewater systems – for example, wastewater from campground ablution blocks and amenity public toilets – as well as septic tanks. In these situations, wastewater is generally from one or multiple buildings but within one land area or site. Treatment is typically minimal (compared to a treatment plant with multiple levels of treatment) as is the environmental impact.

What are the proposed wastewater standards in this discussion document?

This document proposes an initial set of wastewater standards for discharges to land and water, and arrangements for applying biosolids to land and managing overflows and bypasses. This initial set of standards targets areas where performance improvements will be most effective for this essential infrastructure and cover the majority of consents for wastewater treatment plants as set out in the graph below.

¹ To date, the Water Services Authority hasn't published any requirements or guidance on Wastewater Network Risk Management Plans should cover.

Wastewater discharge consents by consent type, size and receiving environment*



*Based on 353 primary discharge consents from Water Services Authority Wastewater Discharge Consents Database
[^] Includes discharges to land that may enter water

Discharge to water standard

The proposed standard for discharges to water includes:

- treatment limits for the main contaminants or ‘parameters’ that are discharged by wastewater treatment plants, and which commonly are subject to limits or monitoring arrangements in resource consents,
- different classes of receiving environment, in relation to which the treatment limits vary,
- ‘end of pipe’ monitoring and reporting requirements for the treatment limits, and
- sets separate treatment requirements that are tailored to small wastewater treatment plants that service very small populations and have a minimal impact on the receiving environment.

Discharge to land standard

The proposed standard for discharges to land is based on a site-specific risk assessment and includes:

- a framework for identifying areas of land appropriate for land application and classifying its risk,
- treatment requirements for wastewater that is discharged to land, and
- monitoring and reporting requirements, including for soil and water at and around the discharge site.

Beneficial reuse of biosolids standard

The proposed standard for beneficial reuse of biosolids includes:

- a grading system for processing biosolids, with corresponding activity status under the Resource Management Act 1991 for how and where biosolids can be reused,
- additional treatment requirements and mitigation measures where biosolids have a lower grade, and
- monitoring and reporting requirements, which correspond with the grade of biosolids.

Arrangements for wastewater network overflows and bypasses of wastewater treatment plants

The proposed standard for wastewater network overflows and bypasses includes:

- requirements for network operators to develop wastewater risk management plans, to identify where overflows and bypasses are a risk, and how they should be managed,
- monitoring and reporting requirements for overflows and bypasses from wastewater networks, and
- classification of overflows and bypasses as controlled activities under the Resource Management Act 1991.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- Do you agree with the areas the first set of standards are proposed to cover?
- What areas should we prioritise to introduce wastewater standards in future?

How will wastewater standards be implemented?

Regional councils remain the regulator for wastewater and stormwater networks and are responsible for land-use planning, resource consent processes, and monitoring, reporting and compliance and enforcement under the Resource Management Act 1991. The proposed standards will be implemented through new resource consents, which for discharges to water and land will be granted for 35-year timeframes.

We are developing guidance to support network owners and operators, as well as consenting authorities, to implement wastewater standards.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- What topics should we cover in the guidance material to support implementation of the standards?
- Are there particular groups we should work with to develop guidance and if so, who?
- How should factors such as climate change, population growth, or consumer complaints be addressed when considering a 35-year consent term?

Discharges to land and water

The proposed wastewater standards will determine some of the conditions imposed on discharge consents under the Resource Management Act 1991. For the specific parameters (and corresponding limits) included in the standard, regional councils will not be able to introduce conditions that require either higher or lower levels of treatment. Monitoring and reporting requirements will also be set through consent conditions.

If a matter is not dealt with in wastewater standards – for example, air or odour discharges – the relevant regional council will continue to set consent conditions. Outside of matters covered in the standards, regional councils (and, where relevant, city or district councils) will still need to consider other consenting aspects of wastewater infrastructure and discharges, such as the location and whether any structures for the plant are required. The proposed standards do not remove the requirement for applicants to engage with communities as part of the infrastructure planning and consenting process.

Wastewater overflows and bypasses

This discussion document proposes that risk-based monitoring and reporting arrangements be implemented for wastewater overflows, including for both overflows from networks and bypasses of wastewater treatment plants. It also proposes that overflows and bypasses must have an associated consent (that is, they are a ‘controlled activity’ under the Resource Management Act 1991).

Regional councils will continue to control how adverse effects of overflows and bypasses on the environment are managed. The specific monitoring and reporting requirements in the proposed standard will be included in the wastewater standard and set through consent conditions.

Beneficial reuse of biosolids

This discussion document proposes a framework for grading biosolids to reflect the level of treatment they have received and the residual levels of contaminants that they contain. The grading framework will also set the consent requirements for different grades of biosolids, with the highest grade not requiring a resource consent to be applied to land (that is, a ‘permitted activity’ under the Resource Management Act 1991).

This proposal is based on Water New Zealand’s draft Beneficial Use of Biosolids and other Organic Materials of Land (Good Practice Guide). This guide has been developed with the sector, and is based on existing guidelines that have been in place since 2002 that have been implemented in some regional plans and consents.

Second phase of wastewater standards: Infrastructure Design Solutions

The Local Government (Water Services) Bill provides for ‘infrastructure design solutions’ that will be developed as part of the second implementation phase for wastewater standards, with a new provision inserted into the Water Services Act 2021. These voluntary solutions will set out standardised design and operating requirements for modular wastewater treatment plants or components of wastewater treatment plants that are deemed to meet the wastewater standards. This is intended to support network operators to meet wastewater standards in a cost-effective way.

The infrastructure design solutions are initially likely to focus on treatment plants in smaller communities. They are not in scope for this consultation on proposed wastewater standards. They will be developed and publicly consulted on once enabled through legislation as part of the implementation of the standards.

4. Our wastewater environment

By the numbers: Wastewater treatment plants²

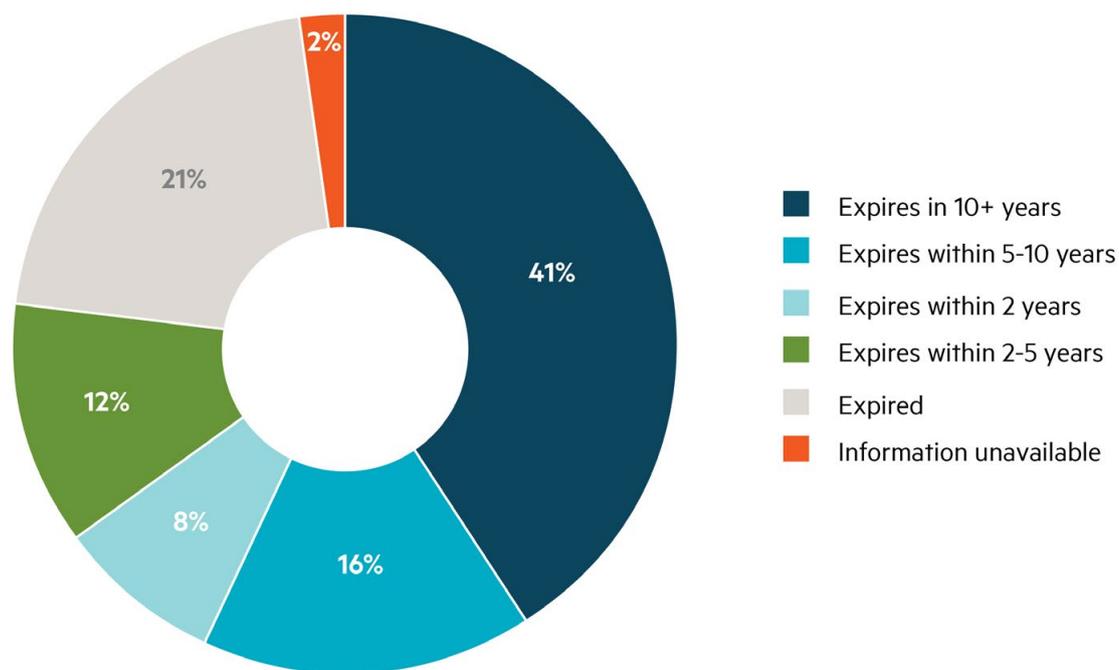
- There are 334 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants across New Zealand, which are owned and/or operated by councils, their council-controlled organisations, or by Crown agencies like the Department of Conservation and the New Zealand Defence Force.
- All 67 local councils operate one or more wastewater treatment plants.
- Approximately 50 percent of wastewater treatment plants serve communities of less than one thousand people.

What are the main challenges?

Over the next 10 years, at least 57 percent of consents for wastewater treatment plants will come up for renewal.³

Already, expired consents make up 21 percent of wastewater treatment plant consents.

Wastewater discharge consent expiry timeframes*



*Based on 353 primary discharge consents from Water Services Authority Wastewater Discharge Consents Database

² These figures are based on the Water Services Authority Database of Wastewater Resource Consents.

³ The percentage of consents coming up for renewal is based on a Water Services Authority Database of Wastewater Resource Consents. This database was compiled in late-2024 and differs from previously shared numbers of consents coming up for renewal and those that are already expired.

This will place a large consenting burden on councils as well as communities that engage with the consenting process (often on a voluntary basis). There is an opportunity to streamline part of the consenting process, through the introduction of a standardised approach to how wastewater discharges and other wastewater network activities are managed.

The upgrades required to New Zealand's wastewater treatment plants and the associated networks represent a significant infrastructure challenge for councils. A large portion of New Zealand's wastewater plant infrastructure was built around 30-40 years ago, with network infrastructure typically older and in unknown condition. In many cases, significant upgrades are now needed.

Many networks have limited capacity to accommodate population growth, which increases the rate and frequency of overflows and means wastewater treatment plants need to be upgraded to manage increasing demands due to urban development and housing growth. In Auckland, for example, there are current wastewater network constraints limiting development, in areas such as the Hibiscus Coast and Warkworth.

The realities for smaller plants

Approximately 50 percent of wastewater treatment plants serve communities of fewer than one thousand people. The technology used in these small plants tends to be relatively simple (e.g., mostly oxidation pond-based systems).

Oxidation pond-based systems often cannot perform to the same standard as more technologically sophisticated plants. Affordability challenges are particularly felt in smaller communities, with the cost of consenting and upgrading treatment plants falling on limited or declining ratepayer bases in areas such as Southland. Geographic constraints often mean amalgamating smaller treatment plants is not feasible.

[Source: The Southland Economic Project \(2018\)](#)

The effects-based consenting process is complex, costly and varies across the country

Under the Resource Management Act 1991, wastewater treatment plants require several resource consents, including for discharges of treated wastewater to water or land, discharges to air (including odour), certain activities associated with beneficial reuse of biosolids, land use for the treatment plant, and in some regions, overflows.

The resource consenting process follows an effects-based approach, which means managing the effects of activities on the environment, rather than the activities themselves. This approach has led to three main issues:

- there are significant costs in investigating and agreeing on the effects of a proposed activity to inform a consent,
- there is significant variation in wastewater treatment requirements (both across the country and within regions), and this impacts the overall system and its performance in multiple ways, and
- there is a lack of transparency about how the wastewater system is performing.

There is significant variation in wastewater treatment requirements across the country

The existing resource management system is based on the consenting arrangements for wastewater treatment plants and networks being set "at place" based on a particular plant, the associated receiving environment and the specific effects on it, and any community preferences about the arrangements. This approach has led to significant variation in treatment limits, monitoring and reporting requirements from plant to plant, with no consistency based on common areas such as the age of a plant, its treatment processes or infrastructure, or impacts on the receiving environment. The approach has also resulted in significant design, operating and consenting costs for plants, long consent processing times and treatment arrangements determined without any clear baseline or expectations for what "good" treatment should be. The bespoke process limits potential efficiencies and cost savings, for example, from standardising how treatment plants are designed, constructed and operated.

Compliance with consents can be particularly challenging due to the varying treatment limits and inconsistencies in consent conditions. Many contaminants have no limits placed on them, or alternatively are articulated in ways that make compliance and enforcement difficult or impossible. Regional councils may experience challenges in taking timely and consistent enforcement action due to a lack of reliable information.

There are significant costs in investigating and determining the effects of a proposed activity for a consent

The consenting process for infrastructure such as wastewater is complex, time-consuming and expensive. Costs are often incurred through:

- engaging technical specialists to assess environmental effects and required plant upgrades,
- consultation with communities and other potentially affected parties,
- peer review by the consenting authority, and
- at times, Environment (or High) Court appeals.

Resource consenting for wastewater has also had to occur in parallel with implementing freshwater policy changes, for example, under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management. This has required considerable time and effort from councils and their communities.

The variable cost of wastewater consents

A 2021 report prepared by the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission – Te Waihangā looked at the cost of consenting infrastructure projects in New Zealand. The report found the cost of consenting to be considerably higher in the waste and water sectors (compared to other infrastructure sectors).

This was largely driven by the amount of expert advice and intensive engagement required. The report also found that the most significant indirect costs are those associated with delay. Funding set aside for infrastructure upgrades may be unable to be used due to significant consenting delays. The cost of construction and availability of resources (labour and materials) may change during the consenting processes.

A national stocktake of wastewater treatment plants, undertaken in 2019, found a range of reasons for why treatment plants are operating on expired consents. These reasons include the capacity and capability of small councils to manage the consenting process, lengthy and/or difficult consultation processes, and affordability constraints to meet community expectations.

[Source: National stocktake of municipal wastewater treatment plants \(2019\)](#)

[Source: The cost of consenting infrastructure projects in New Zealand \(2021\)](#)

There is a lack of transparency about wastewater system performance

The general age and condition of wastewater infrastructure has implications for communities, including for public health and environment quality. When wastewater systems are not properly managed, including the collection, treatment, and disposal processes, it can lead to various health issues and risks. A badly maintained wastewater system can expose communities to disease-causing pathogens; and in disaster situations, such as floods, the risk of water-borne diseases travelling through a community can increase.

The impacts of deferred maintenance include an increase in overflows from the broader network. In an overflow, untreated wastewater escapes from a network into environments including streams, rivers, harbours and coastlines. This impacts community members using these environments to swim or gather food, as well as the plants and animals living there.

Despite these impacts on communities, public information about the performance of wastewater networks is hard to find. The lack of transparency and consistent public reporting makes it difficult to understand how environmental and public health risks are being managed. There is an opportunity for the Authority to improve national consistency through its monitoring and reporting functions, which will increase transparency about how wastewater networks are performing. Wastewater standards can also support this work.

Opportunity and benefits of national wastewater standards

To drive cost efficiencies, save time for both those seeking and issuing consents, and make infrastructure design and procurement more efficient, there is an opportunity to put wastewater standards in place ahead of the large number of consents coming up for renewal.

Wastewater standards will drive cost efficiencies in plant design, procurement and operations

The proposed wastewater standards are expected to deliver significant cost-efficiencies relating to consenting costs. The interim regulatory impact statement published with this discussion document (which can be found [here](#)) includes case studies that estimate, for example that up to 40 percent of costs on consenting may be saved through application of the proposed standards. This includes reductions in costs associated with the consenting process including staff time, technical assessments, feasibility assessments, legal costs and consultation and engagement costs.

In some cases, there may also be reductions to capital upgrade costs and ongoing operating costs such as staff training and maintenance. The costs savings on an individual plant will depend on specific circumstances, such as the type or size of the plant, treatment processes, and options for where the plant discharges. However, over time, further costs savings are expected as materials are standardised, and modular options that comply with wastewater standards become available.

Wastewater standards will provide certainty to network owners and operators, so they can better plan for the cost of infrastructure – and leverage cost efficiencies in designing, procuring and operating wastewater treatment plants. This will support territorial authorities in developing future long-term plans (including 30-year infrastructure strategies).

The consistency created by national wastewater standards will enable benchmarking of performance and incentivise transparent and consistent compliance and enforcement.

The Authority publishes system-level information about the environmental performance of wastewater networks [annually](#). Nevertheless, public information about individual wastewater network performance can be hard to find. At the same time, community expectations about how wastewater discharges are managed and reported are increasing.

Establishing nationally consistent wastewater standards will help to:

- ensure communities have access to better information, which will enable clearer expectations about the quality and service of wastewater treatment,
- streamline consent processes (design and engagement) to save applicants time and reduce the cost of consultants,
- provide certainty to local councils as network owners, so that they can plan for the cost of upgrading and maintaining wastewater infrastructure,
- provide opportunities for economies of scale in plant design, procurement and operator capability building / training,
- ensure that overflows from networks are better understood by network owners, ensuring that the pipe infrastructure is appropriately managed and maintained, and public health and environmental risks are reported to affected communities,
- make compliance and enforcement for regional councils easier by standardising the main contaminant limits and monitoring and reporting requirements in wastewater discharge consents,
- enable benchmarking of performance, to drive improved efficiencies over time, and
- improve public health and environmental outcomes over time.

Learning from international practices

National or state-level wastewater standards have been in place for decades in many of the jurisdictions that New Zealand commonly compares itself to, including the European Union (EU), United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

Internationally, the protection of public health is broadly considered the key driver for setting wastewater discharge regulations, closely followed by environmental protection. Phased introduction of standards is a common approach taken overseas to support the manageability, fiscal impacts and prioritisation of certain upgrades: the EU has applied standards to different sizes of treatment plants over different timeframes as an example.

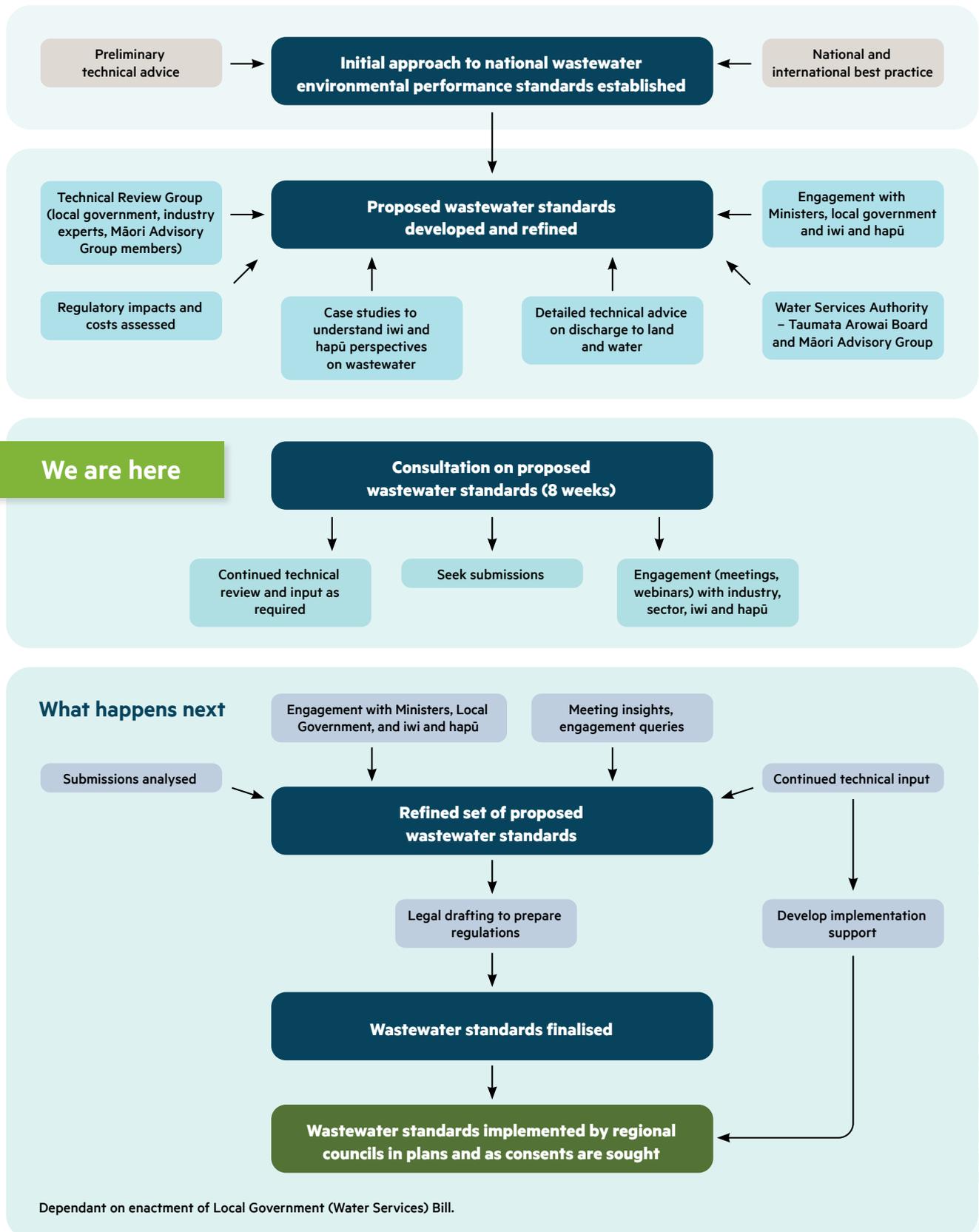
In many jurisdictions there is a population (or population equivalent) or flow (volume) component for setting standards, dependent on discharge type. While there are different approaches to setting, implementing and enforcing standards, there is widespread use of central parameters.

There are well-established monitoring and reporting requirements for overflows in many international jurisdictions that provide detailed information on overflow events – for example, the number, location and volume of overflows. The data collected is used to:

- identify where there are issues (primarily the scale and type of overflows),
- benchmark performance and identify areas for improvement,
- inform the public and community groups,
- prioritise what and where infrastructure improvement is needed,
- develop standards, and
- make investment decisions based on reliable data.

5. How were the proposals in this discussion document developed?

Developing the first set of wastewater standards



The Authority has developed these proposals through a policy process that has drawn on a range of evidence, technical advice and testing with councils and industry experts. This has included:

- reviewing a range of previous work in this area, including the New Zealand Wastewater Sector report (2021), commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment, and a suite of reports commissioned by the Department of Internal Affairs⁴
- commissioning technical reports into potential areas where standards could be made
- commissioning case studies that detail iwi and hapū involvement in wastewater treatment arrangements to better understand Māori values and perspectives, and how existing wastewater treatment arrangements can meet iwi and hapū aspirations
- commissioning detailed technical advice into the discharge to water and land standards

Copies of these documents can be found [here](#).

The Authority convened a Technical Review Group to provide advice on proposals relating to wastewater standards. This group was comprised of individuals with leading expertise across sectors involved with wastewater management, including representatives from regional councils, territorial authorities, industry professionals, and Water New Zealand. Members of the Authority's Board and Māori Advisory Group also participated in the Technical Review Group.

Regulatory impact statement

An interim regulatory impact statement has been prepared to comply with Cabinet requirements for proposals that will have regulatory impact – this can be found [here](#). This provides a summary of the problem being addressed, the options considered, their associated costs and benefits, the consultation undertaken, and the proposed arrangements for implementation and review. The regulatory impact statement will be updated following consultation and will be considered by the Minister of Local Government and Cabinet as part of the process for the setting of standards.

Iwi and hapū perspectives on wastewater treatment arrangements

To inform the development of the standards, the Authority engaged with a number of iwi and hapū to understand perspectives on wastewater treatment arrangements. The Authority commissioned a series of case studies to understand how mana whenua views have been incorporated into areas like resource consents, what processes work well, and where there is room for improvement. For each case study, the Authority also engaged with the relevant territorial authority and regional council.

Some of the themes from this engagement include:

- there is a strong preference for ongoing 'at-place' decision-making to ensure that iwi and hapū are involved in decisions affecting them and can actively participate in all phases of wastewater treatment processes. This extends from design arrangements through to monitoring and reporting of the infrastructure once built and its effect on the environment.
- iwi and hapū consider human waste to be tapu (prohibited) due to its impact on the health of people and the environment. This means that human waste must undergo a process of whakanoa (cleansing) before it can be safely integrated back into the environment. There are various ways that wastewater infrastructure has responded to this, including arrangements to allow waste to have contact with land before it is discharged to water.
- the preference is for the highest standard of treatment possible for both water and land-based approaches at the point of discharge. Where wastewater is discharged to water, at minimum it should not have a detrimental impact on the health and quality of the taiao (receiving environment) or the people that use the environment.
- while iwi and hapū strongly prefer discharge to land, there are several examples where this option has not proved feasible. This has primarily been because nearby land is not suitable (e.g., too porous), because the land is highly productive and therefore too expensive, or because the wastewater treatment plant is too large meaning the quantity of land required is not a practical alternative.

⁴ This includes the [national stocktake of municipal wastewater treatment plants, and cost estimates for upgrading wastewater treatment plants that discharge to the ocean](#).

- resource consenting processes are often protracted and experiences of working with councils tended to be highly variable, often due to a lack of early engagement and changes in council staff as the key contact point. Iwi and hapū input is often done on a voluntary or in-kind basis and limited (for example, due to competing demands), which makes it difficult to engage consistently. There is therefore a preference for resourcing or funding to enable good engagement in these processes.
- the case studies, together with information from other sources, demonstrated that comprehensive engagement processes involving iwi led to better outcomes from the iwi and hapū perspective.

You can read through the case studies [here](#).

Treaty settlement obligations and other arrangements between councils, iwi and hapū

There are several legislative and regulatory mechanisms that provide for iwi and hapū engagement and involvement in wastewater management processes. This includes legal obligations between councils and iwi and hapū, as well as the statutory obligations imposed on the Authority to engage early and meaningfully with Māori.

Treaty settlement obligations impose a duty on territorial authorities, regional councils, and decision-makers under the Water Services Act (including the Authority) to have regard to Treaty settlement arrangements that exist and cover the Waikato, Waipā, and Whanganui River catchments.

To inform development of the standards, the Authority is engaging with iwi in these catchments where there are specific settlement obligations to uphold. Broader engagement is also underway with iwi and hapū who have agreements or arrangements with Councils that impact on wastewater arrangements, such as regional participation arrangements under the Resource Management Act 1991, customary marine title holders under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, freshwater obligations under Treaty of Waitangi and parties to joint management arrangement.

This engagement will inform the advice to the Minister of Local Government on how the standards could apply where there are settlement or other relevant obligations.

6. A discharge to water environmental performance standard

The **proposed approach** is to establish a discharge to water environmental performance standard that:

- Sets treatment limits for specified contaminants or 'parameters' that will vary depending on different types of receiving environments.
- Imposes monitoring and reporting arrangements for treatment requirements.
- Provides that, where a consent applicant can demonstrate they will meet treatment requirements imposed by the standard, the consent authority must issue a discharge consent with a 35-year timeframe.
- Sets separate treatment requirements that are tailored to small wastewater treatment plants (oxidation ponds) that service very small populations and have a minimal impact on the receiving environment.

What is a 'discharge to water' from a wastewater treatment plant?

Many wastewater treatment plants discharge treated wastewater to a water body (for example, the ocean or a river). Resource consent conditions set requirements relating to the quality and volume of the discharge, and specify any treatment requirements relating to particular contaminants that are potentially harmful to the environment or create risks to public health.

A resource consent will include monitoring and reporting requirements to track compliance with consent conditions, and require reporting on performance (and any non-compliance) to the relevant regional council.

If the operator of the plant does not comply with these requirements or conditions, they will be in breach of their resource consent. Regional councils are responsible for compliance and enforcement where this occurs – actions can include requiring the operator to remedy the non-compliance, issuing a fine, or commencing court action.

In this context, 'discharge to water' from a wastewater treatment plant does not refer to overflows from the broader pipe network, or where partially treated wastewater bypasses the wastewater treatment plant. These areas are dealt with in the overflows section of this discussion document (covered in [section nine](#) of this document).

Given the impacts of poorly managed pathogens in coastal and freshwater environments (for example, to swimming and shellfish collection), these contaminants are routinely considered for discharge to water consents. For many waterbodies, there are also a range of other activities that impact water quality – for example, recreational boating or activities on nearby farmland. Regional councils manage the cumulative impacts of these activities on water bodies through planning, consenting and enforcement.

Current arrangements for discharges to water

Based on the Authority's Public Register of Wastewater Networks and a stocktake of resource consents, There are 202 resource consents for wastewater discharges to water.

The management of wastewater discharges to water varies significantly throughout New Zealand and within regions. Variations apply to contaminants and the corresponding limits in consents, as well as their monitoring and reporting requirements.

There are currently 50 wastewater treatment plants discharging to water with expired consents; a situation authorised under section 124 of the Resource Management Act 1991. Of these 50 plants, the average time a plant has been operating on an expired consent is 5 years – the longest is 24 years.

Receiving environments for discharges to water range from large open ocean environments to more static estuarine or lake environments. Generally, due to the significant amount of dilution and dispersion, open ocean environments are less sensitive to discharges than lakes, rivers and streams.

Relevant documents and processes

Consenting authorities consider a range of documents when managing discharges to water, including:

- The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) and associated National Objectives Framework, which identifies values for freshwater through engagement with mana whenua and communities⁵
- The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, which requires consenting authorities to have particular regard to the sensitivity and capacity of receiving environments, nature of contaminants, and avoiding adverse impacts on ecosystems and habitats

⁵ The NPS-FM is under review and is scheduled to be replaced in 2027.

- Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessments (QRMA), which are increasingly used by consenting authorities to assess the public health risk associated with coastal marine wastewater discharges
- The Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality (revised in 2018), which provide guidance to assess, manage and monitor the water quality of aquatic systems in Australia and New Zealand.

How will wastewater standards help to manage discharges to water?

Improving consistency in how discharges to water are managed, and the treatment limits for specific receiving environments will make it easier for network operators to plan, design and operate wastewater infrastructure. It will reduce the complexity of resource consenting and setting conditions.

National standards provide an opportunity to apply consistent limits to a core set of contaminants (such as total nitrogen, total phosphorous, sediment and pathogens) that are discharged from wastewater treatment plants and can impact waterbodies, and the aquatic life and recreational activities in and around these areas. The proposed standards would also set consistent requirements for parameters that indicate there are public health risks, such as *E.coli* or enterococci.

Standards will introduce consistent monitoring and reporting requirements for the core set of contaminants, which will build a clear and comparable picture of how wastewater treatment plants are performing. In future, this information may be used to introduce measures to lift the performance of wastewater networks.

Proposed approach: discharge to water environmental performance standard for wastewater treatment plants

Discharge to water environmental performance standard will specify receiving environment types

It is proposed that treatment requirements will vary depending on the type of receiving environment. This approach is proposed because:

- treatment requirements are generally less stringent where the discharge is to a water body with higher levels of dilution – for example, to the open ocean or a large river;
- conversely, where the discharge is to a water body that has lower levels of dilution or is sensitive in nature, treatment requirements should be higher – for example, a lake or estuary; and
- treatment requirements should differ depending on whether the discharge is to a saline / marine environment or to a freshwater environment.

The proposal is to specify seven categories of receiving environment in the standard, based on dilution and type of receiving environment. A dilution approach is proposed because it is simple, is understood by regulators and operators, and removes the need for more complex (and costly) dispersion modelling. This is reflected in its frequent use in other jurisdictions (including Canada, USA, Switzerland, European Union). It is intended to be a proxy for mixing, as well as the assimilative capacity in the receiving environment and the relative scale of the discharge in relation to the volume of the waterbody.

$$\text{Dilution ratio} = \frac{\text{Volume} + \text{Flow}}{\text{Volume}}$$

Volume: the largest predicted annual median for discharge volume, across the duration of a consent (m³/day)

Flow: the average of the lowest 7 days average flow across a year (m³/day)

The following categories of receiving environment are proposed:

Category of receiving environment	Definition
Lakes and natural ponds with dilution ratio >50	Body of standing freshwater, which is entirely or nearly surrounded by land. It includes lakes and natural ponds but excludes any artificial ponds. Typically, low energy depositional environment in which dispersion/dilution is limited by an absence of strong water currents.
River or stream with dilution ratio >10 and <50 (low)	A continually flowing body of fresh water, including streams and modified watercourses, but excludes any artificial watercourse (including an irrigation canal, water supply race, canal for the supply of water for electricity power generation, and farm drainage canal).
River or stream with dilution ratio >50 and <250 (moderate)	Rivers or streams or streams with very low dilution (dilution ratio <10) are excluded from the standards due to their lower ability to assimilate wastewater discharges.
River or stream with dilution ratio >250 (high)	
Estuaries with dilution ratio >50	A partially enclosed coastal body of water that is either permanently or periodically open to the sea in which the aquatic ecosystem is affected by the physical and chemical characteristics of both runoff from the land and inflow from the sea. It includes features variously named on the NZMS 1:50,000 topographic maps as estuary, creek, firth, inlet, gulf, cove, river mouth, bay, lagoon, harbour, stream, fjord, sound, haven, and basin. ⁶
Low energy coastal with dilution ratio >100	Area that is sheltered from large waves and long period waves. Occur in gulfs and behind islands and reefs on the open coast and includes recessed harbours and embayments.
Open ocean with dilution ratio >1000	Water that is remote from estuaries, fiords, inlets, harbours, and embayments, typically >500m from a shoreline and high energy environment.

Seasonality

Assessing the seasonal implications of wastewater discharges is complex because changes occur both at the treatment plant and in the receiving environment.

Flow varies in the receiving environment and is typically low in summer and higher in winter. Sensitivity of the receiving environment – to nutrients in particular – varies seasonally usually with a greater probability of eutrophication effects in warmer temperatures. In summer months, the discharged nutrient loads pose a greater risk to the receiving environment because the waterbodies are in a low flow state. Over the year, flows in and out of some treatment plants may increase due to significant increased visitor numbers relative to the usual population. Wastewater treatment plants should be designed in a way that accommodates changes in flow.

The risk of seasonal fluctuations in flow is addressed using:

- the 7 Day Median Annual Low Flow to establish the proposed dilution categories.
- the Median Design Flow and proposed numeric limits manage loading to the environment and forms the basis for the discharge volume that will be consented.
- the annual median statistical basis in the proposed standard allows for some flexibility over the course of the year.

These features of the proposed approach provide flexibility to allow for seasonal variation while maintaining an appropriate level of protection for freshwater environments under low flow conditions. This approach will mean that treatment plants are effectively designed to meet the proposed standard across all seasons.

6 A list of estuaries in New Zealand can be found here: [Assessment of the eutrophication susceptibility of New Zealand's estuaries | Ministry for the Environment](#)

Parameters and numeric limits for discharges to water

The proposed discharge to water standard sets limits on the contaminants most commonly found in treated wastewater discharges. In the case of *E. coli* and enterococci, they are faecal bacteria indicators that, if present in sufficient quantities, indicate that other harmful pathogens may be present that can cause illness.

Some effects are not covered by the proposed standard as they are influenced by site-specific factors and will therefore continue to be addressed by regional councils during the consenting process. These include:

- The volume of discharge: this relates to site-specific effects such as scour, as well as the scale of the discharge relative to the receiving water body.
- Cumulative effects of contaminants from other sources and their impact on the broader catchment.*
- Toxicity of metals and other contaminants, such as pesticides, drugs, antibacterial agents and PFAS.
- The presence of artificial chemicals, such as microplastics.
- Bioaccumulation of contaminants in organisms in the receiving water body, such as mercury. (note, the standards address the risk of bioaccumulation on human health after eating affected organisms, particularly filter feeders such as mussels).
- Other effects, such as odour, noise and the location of the discharge structures and bypasses.

*Bullet point above updated on 10 March 2025 to make it clearer.

Contaminants and parameters not covered by the proposed discharge to water standard

Where contaminants are not covered by the standard (for example, heavy metals), the usual resource consenting process would apply. This would mean regional councils may set an appropriate limit on these contaminants if this is considered necessary. We anticipate these limits would likely draw on the Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality, or other factors that a regional council considers appropriate.

Some of the parameters covered by the standard will regulate the levels of other contaminants not covered by the standards. For example, limits proposed for Total Nitrogen will also regulate levels of heavy metals in a treated discharge.

When there are multiple metrics for a parameter the standard is intended to cover all types of that parameter. For example, parameters are proposed for Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorous and this is intended to cover all forms of nitrogen and phosphorous. This means that a consent may not include different treatment limits for types of nitrogen or phosphorous.

Wastewater standards may be expanded in future to include additional contaminants where there is a clear body of evidence and there would be benefit in having a nationally consistent approach.

Treatment requirements for discharges to open ocean

Discharges to open ocean are typically subject to a higher rate of mixing and dispersion, subject to stronger tidal and wind currents, and tend to have less frequent public access to the discharge point.

To reflect the assimilative capacity of the open ocean, discharges are only required to treat for enterococci and ammoniacal-nitrogen. This is on the assumption that discharges to ocean and coastal receiving waters will be milli screened to remove solids, as is common in wastewater treatment plants in New Zealand. Trade Waste bylaws also typically control and manage the effects of the discharges of highly coloured waste streams to ocean and coastal receiving waters, as well as known toxic compounds.

Pathogen limits for discharges to water

As an alternative to the default limits in the standard and to protect shellfish health, we are proposing that a Quantitative Risk Management Assessment (QRMA) could be completed to determine what numeric parameters apply for pathogens (enterococci and *E. coli*) in situations where:

- shellfish is routinely collected, and these areas could be impacted by a new outfall discharge, or
- regular monitoring of an existing discharge has indicated some microbial contamination of shellfish.

The outcome of the QRMA would be used to determine whether the consent holder could meet a higher or lower limit from the proposed standard. We have commissioned additional technical advice about what these limits should be.

We would like your feedback on the following question:

- How should we consider checks and balances to protect against situations where the degree of microbial contamination may change throughout the duration of a consent?

Exceptions to the proposed standard

The proposed standard will not apply in all situations. For discharge to water arrangements that aren't captured by the proposed standard, the wastewater standards would not apply, and any treatment requirements would be set in resource consent conditions by the relevant regional council.

The proposed standard will not apply in the following situations:

- discharges to a waterbody that meets the requirements of Attribute Band A for all attributes contained in Appendix 2A and Appendix 2B of the NPS-FM. This will only be a very small proportion of New Zealand's water bodies that are in a natural, undegraded state.
- discharges to rivers or streams with very low dilution (with a dilution ratio of <10).
- discharges from a wastewater treatment plant directly to an aquifer (commonly known as deep well injection). This is relatively new technology and there are currently no treatment arrangements of this nature in New Zealand.
- discharges to natural wetlands (i.e., those which are not part of the treatment process for the wastewater discharge).

- discharges within the following proximities:
 - » 1,000m upstream or 100m downstream of human drinking water abstraction points in rivers
 - » 500m radius from human drinking water intakes in lakes
 - ~ 1,000m upstream of any tributaries that discharge to lakes within the 500m radius from intakes
- discharges to a waterbody that has naturally high levels of a particular parameter. This is not intended to capture waterbodies that have existing high levels of a particular parameter due to diffuse discharges that occur through land use such as farming.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- Are the areas for exceptions appropriate to manage the impacts of discharges and do you anticipate implementation challenges?
- How should the exceptions be further defined to ensure there are no unintended consequences?

Parameters covered by the discharge to water standard (including the rationale, measurement unit and numeric limits)

Parameter, rationale and statistic	Lakes and natural ponds	Rivers and streams (low dilution)	Rivers and streams (moderate dilution)	Rivers and streams (high dilution)	Estuaries	Low energy coastal	Open ocean
<p>Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (cBOD₅)</p> <p>Rationale: cBOD₅ can indicate the effectiveness of wastewater treatment processes. High levels of cBOD₅ can deplete dissolved oxygen and harm aquatic life.</p> <p>Statistic: Annual median</p>	15 mg/L	10 mg/L	15 mg/L	20 mg/L	20 mg/L	50 mg/L	Not applicable
<p>Total Suspended Solids (TSS)</p> <p>Rational: Total Suspended Solids an important visible indicator of water quality. Suspended solids absorb light, which can increase water temperature and decrease oxygen levels in waterbodies.</p> <p>Statistic: Annual median</p>	15 mg/L	10 mg/L	15 mg/L	30 mg/L	25 mg/L	50 mg/L	Not applicable
<p>Nutrients (Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorous)</p> <p>Rationale: Nutrients can affect ecosystem health through eutrophication, increases in plant growth (e.g., algal blooms) and reduced water clarity. The proposed discharge to water standards sets limits on total nitrogen and total phosphorous. For each of the subcategories, limits for nutrients reflect flow and loading.</p>	10 mgN/L	5 mgN/L	10 mgN/L	35 mgN/L	10 mgN/L	10 mgN/L	Not applicable
<p>Total Nitrogen –</p> <p>Statistic: Annual median</p>							
<p>Total Phosphorus –</p> <p>Statistic: Annual median</p>	3 mgP/L	1 mgP/L	3 mgP/L	10 mgP/L	10 mgP/L	10 mgP/L	Not applicable
<p>Ammoniacal-nitrogen (ammonia)</p> <p>Rationale: Ammonia can deplete oxygen levels in water, resulting in reduced biodiversity and declining fish populations.</p> <p>Statistic: Annual 90%ile</p>	3 mgN/L	1 mgN/L	3 mgN/L	25 mgN/L	15 mgN/L	20 mgN/L	50 mgN/L
<p>E. coli</p> <p>Rationale: As with enterococci, <i>E. coli</i> indicates the presence of pathogens and faecal pollution in freshwater.</p> <p>Statistic: Annual 90%ile</p>	6,500 cfu/100mL	1,300 cfu/100mL	6,500 cfu/100mL	32,500 cfu/100mL	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
<p>Enterococci</p> <p>Rationale: Enterococci and <i>E. Coli</i> indicate the presence of disease-causing bacteria, viruses or protozoa. Enterococci is the most suitable bacteria to test for in marine waters.</p> <p>Statistic: Annual 90%ile</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2,000 cfu/100mL	4,000 cfu/100mL	40,000 cfu/100mL

Compliance, monitoring and reporting requirements

Compliance, monitoring and reporting requirements are proposed as part of the discharge to water standard. These will be included in the consent relating to the wastewater treatment plant, and the consent holder will be required to comply with the monitoring and reporting requirements as a condition of the consent.

Compliance, monitoring and reporting requirements are a standard feature of consent conditions. However the detail of these arrangements varies widely from consent to consent and region to region, and this results in poor outcomes including:

- Some compliance conditions in consents are not articulated in a way that makes breach of a condition or limit enforceable – this compromises enforcement action and can impact on environmental outcomes.
- Differences in monitoring and reporting from plant to plant is, in some cases, an unjustifiable regulatory burden to both operators and regional councils when the plant arrangements are broadly similar.
- There is currently a lack of transparency (and public accountability) for compliance of plants with conditions of a consent.
- It is currently not possible to benchmark performance from plant to plant or operator to operator, which is a standard feature of many other jurisdictions.

Operators will be required to monitor compliance with each of the parameters covered by the standards. The following requirements will apply to all wastewater treatment plants:

- Monitoring the discharge directly from the discharge point ('end of pipe' monitoring) will be required for all contaminants covered in the proposed standard.
- The standard will not require receiving environment monitoring.
- Monitoring requirements are set out in the table of parameters and are based on either the 90th percentile or annual median.

The frequency of monitoring will vary according to the size and complexity of a wastewater treatment plant increases, so does the frequency of the monitoring required:

- Continuous monitoring will be required for wastewater treatment plants serving populations greater than 10,000 – this is already often the case in resource consents for plants of this size.
- Fortnightly monitoring is required for plants serving populations between 1,000 and 10,000 people.
- Monthly reporting is required for small-scale plants serving 1000 people or less.

The following proposed reporting requirements would apply to all parameters:

- Any breach of a parameter must be reported by an operator to the relevant regional council as soon as reasonably possible after the breach is detected.

- An operator must publish compliance against parameters in applicable standards on a monthly basis, on a publicly available website maintained by the operator, and provide the report to the relevant regional council.
- Annual reporting is required of compliance against parameters in applicable standards to regional council and the Water Services Authority.

To provide confidence in how the standards are implemented, network operators will be required to engage a third party, on an annual basis, to audit compliance with matters covered by the standard, including monitoring and reporting requirements. Costs associated with third party auditing will be covered by network operators, rather than consenting authorities.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- Are the treatment limits, and monitoring and reporting requirements proportionate to the potential impacts of the different discharge scenarios?
- What benefits and challenges do you anticipate in implementing the proposed approach? Are there particular matters that could be addressed through guidance material?

Periphyton

Periphyton is the slime and algae that grows on primarily hard-bottomed waterbodies such as beds of streams and rivers and requires certain environmental conditions to grow. While it is essential for healthy ecosystems, periphyton can have significant environmental impacts when it proliferates – it can degrade swimming and fishing spots and clog irrigation and water supply intakes. Periphyton is increasingly being used as an indicator of waterbody health, for example, in the Waikato River Authority's River Health and Wellbeing Report.

The Authority proposes that, where a wastewater treatment plant discharges to a hard bottomed or rocky stream or river, the nitrogen and phosphorous limits in the standard would not apply, and the treatment requirements will be set on the basis of a site-specific risk assessment. This represents a best practice approach and is commonly undertaken in existing consents. Based on the outcome of assessment, the infrastructure owner would develop an approach that would be incorporated in the discharge consent.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- What feedback do you have for managing periphyton in hard bottomed or rocky streams or rivers?
- What detail should be covered in guidance to support implementing this approach for managing periphyton?

A discharge to water standard for small wastewater treatment plants

The wastewater standard for discharges to water will set different treatment requirements for small plants that service very small communities given how many are in this category and their shared characteristics. These plants are significantly different to those that service larger towns and cities. Most of these plants are oxidation ponds that rely on passive treatment processes that require little operation and less frequent monitoring, at sites that are isolated and often do not have access to electricity.

These plants generally have a low impact on the receiving environment, particularly in relation to nutrients, compared to other sources in the surrounding catchment. Different standards are therefore proposed for small plants that are proportionate to their scale and operating requirements.

The criteria for small plants would be based on the influent cBOD₅ load entering the treatment plant.

- If an existing plant receives a mean annual influent cBOD₅ load of 85kg / day or less, it will qualify for the small plant standard.
- The small plant standard would only apply to existing plants with a mean annual influent load of this volume or less.

We have defined small plants using the average cBOD₅ rather than population served to account for situations where a plant may service only a small population but also receive waste from significant industrial or trade-waste sources.

New treatment plants, including those that meet the definition of small plants, will need to be designed and operated to meet the default standards.

Where the influent cBOD₅ load increased so that it no longer qualified for the small plant standard, it would need to be upgraded to meet the general standard. This would be specified as a condition of the consent.

The discussion document identifies potential specific characteristics for the small plant standard including:

- removal of treatment requirements for total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorous (TP) – an ammoniacal nitrogen standard would continue to apply because of its toxicity

Feedback is sought on less stringent treatment requirements for other parameters:

- *E. coli* / enterococci could be made less stringent, particularly where limited human contact with receiving waters occurs
- a standard for dissolved cBOD₅ rather than cBOD₅, and TSS limit could be reduced recognising that solids discharged from a well operated wastewater treatment are likely to be algae solids
- operational requirements such as regular desludging of oxidation ponds – these would be included in the consent for the plant.

We would like your feedback on the following question:

- How should we define small plants and what changes to the default standards should apply to them?

7. A discharge to land environmental performance standard

The **proposed approach** is to establish a discharge to land environmental performance standard that:

- Sets out a risk-based framework, to determine what types of land treated wastewater may (or may not) be discharged to.
- Sets out treatment requirements, to reflect each risk category, for wastewater that is discharged to land.
- Imposes monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- Provides that, where a consent applicant is able to demonstrate that they will meet treatment requirements imposed by the standard, the consent authority must issue a discharge consent with a 35-year timeframe.

What is a 'discharge to land' from a wastewater treatment plant?

In this discussion document, discharges to land refer to discharges of treated wastewater from wastewater treatment plants only, rather than discharges from onsite arrangements such as septic tanks.

While the majority of treated wastewater is discharged to water (freshwater or coastal), approximately 35 percent of wastewater treatment plants discharge treated wastewater to land. Some treatment arrangements are seasonal, with wastewater being discharged to water during conditions when rainfall means wastewater levels are higher and conditions are less suitable for discharge to land. It is more common for small wastewater treatment plants to discharge to land. Discharging treated wastewater to land is often used to provide an additional layer of treatment – for example, through physical filtering.

Treated wastewater can be discharged to land using a variety of methods, to influence how quickly it is released and what method is used. The characteristics of the land will also impact how treated wastewater can be applied. Broadly, land application falls into the following categories:

- **Discharging to rapid infiltration basins:** where treated wastewater is applied to areas that are highly permeable. Compared to other methods, this requires a much smaller area of land but requires deep and highly porous soils, and typically require relatively high-level wastewater treatment beforehand.
- **Slow rate irrigation systems:** where treated wastewater is applied to the surface of a site with plants, crops or pasture.
- **Discharging to sub-soil:** where treated wastewater is applied through buried distribution lines, typically using drainage fields.

- **Discharge to wetlands:** where wetlands are unsealed and unlined, some or all of the discharge will infiltrate through the base of the wetland. This is typically considered a discharge to land. Some wetlands constructed for the purpose of wastewater treatment may collect the discharge at the end of the wetland and pump this to a land application site, this would also be considered a discharge to land.
- **Discharging to land where there is human contact (for example, parks or golf courses):** this is typically done using slow-rate surface irrigation, usually with a much slower flow rate.
- **Mixed wastewater discharge systems:** in some situations, depending on factors such as weather, treated wastewater is only discharged to land for part of the year. Heavy rainfall compromises the ability of the land to absorb discharges.

Discharging to land is technically more complex than discharging to water, for several reasons:

- The topography of the land used will impact the degree of soil erosion and runoff, what plants are suitable and which wastewater disposal system should be used.
- Climate conditions impact how feasible land discharges are.
- Some soils do not have capacity to absorb wastewater or may become oversaturated over time.
- Land-based discharges can lead to potential contamination of water – particularly through nitrogen leaching.
- As the distance between land disposal sites and wastewater treatment plants increases, so do the capital and operating costs.

Rapid infiltration basins are not covered by the Standard

At this stage, the proposed standard is limited to low-rate infiltration arrangements. This is because there are some fundamental differences in design and operation compared to slow-rate irrigation systems. As a result, it is anticipated that the design and application of limits on nutrients and pathogen loads for rapid infiltration systems will require detailed, site-specific assessments. Given the complex nature of land discharge and the need for further technical work, rapid infiltration systems will be addressed in a subsequent standard.

Current arrangements for discharges to land

Resource consents set requirements relating to matters such as the quality and volume of the discharge, and include treatment requirements relating to particular contaminants that are potentially harmful. Currently, there are no standardised consent conditions for wastewater discharged to lands. This creates variation in what contaminants are covered in consents and what limits apply. This has impacts on network operators – in their ability to plan, design and operate wastewater infrastructure.

Some regional plans include policies that promote land-based disposal of wastewater, for example:

- The proposed regional plan for Northland states that an application for a consent to discharge to water resource consent will generally not be granted unless discharge to land has been considered and found not to be environmentally, economically or practically viable (D.4.2 of Proposed Regional Plan, 2024).
- The Greater Wellington Regional Council Operative Natural Resources Plan indicates a preference for land-based discharge of wastewater. New discharges of treated wastewater to coastal water are discouraged and new wastewater discharges to freshwater are to be avoided unless discharge to land is not practicable.

The New Zealand Land Treatment Collective has developed the *New Zealand Guidelines for Utilisation of Sewage Effluent (2000)*. These guidelines have been designed to support network operators and consenting authorities to consider relevant factors for planning, design, consenting, management, and monitoring of a land treatment system.

Relationship with recycling treated wastewater for non-potable reuse

Some jurisdictions have treatment standards for reuse of treated water for non-potable use – for example, to irrigate sports fields, parks, or horticulture, or for dust suppression. There are broader conversations happening in New Zealand about how to reuse treated wastewater for non-potable purposes. While this is out of scope for the first set of wastewater standards, it may be picked up in future – particularly with increasing demand to consider alternative water sources with population growth and pressure from climate change.

Opportunity

A national environmental standard for discharges to land informs site selection and evaluation, provides certainty for what limits need to be met through consents, and confirms what monitoring and reporting requirements apply.

While the standard doesn't determine how wastewater should be managed, it will support councils to have discussions with communities about where treated wastewater should be discharged and help them evaluate the trade-offs and costs of different options.

Proposed approach: discharge to land environmental performance standard for wastewater treatment plants

Risk management assessment for specific types of land

The proposal is for a risk management assessment of the site and its suitability, which can be applied to specific land scenarios. This approach is a common way to consider whether a potential site is appropriate to discharge to, ahead of incurring significant expense through technical assessments.

The feasibility of potential sites is assessed using a baseline assessment, which will allow a network owner to assess the suitability of land and the treatment requirements early in the process. This assessment also allows risks to be identified, managed and mitigated in a way that will allow land discharge to be a viable alternative to discharge to water, especially for smaller wastewater treatment plants.

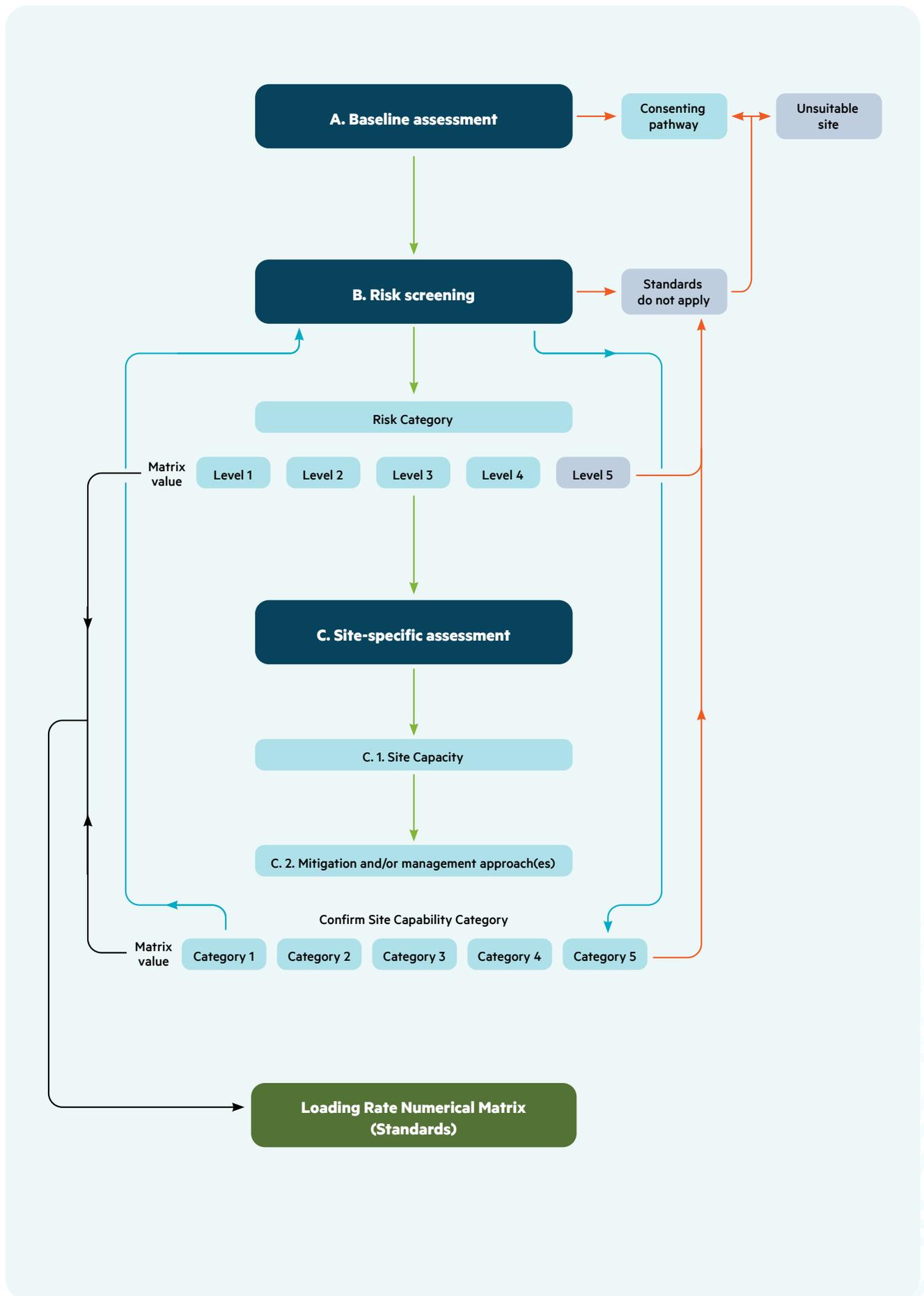
To encourage standardisation, while accounting for variables that influence site suitability, we have developed a risk-based framework that ensures all relevant factors are considered. The risk-based approach will consider a range of variables to determine a risk class for the land which will then set treatment requirements and application limits that apply. Detail about this approach and how it will apply is set out in **Appendix Four**.

The risk-based approach is comprised of three components:

- a desktop feasibility assessment of prospective land (to consider factors such as climate and underlying geology);
- a risk screening assessment which generates a score that to indicate the risk category; and
- a site-specific assessment, which determines the capability of the site and identifies necessary mitigation measures and management approaches.

A diagram outlining the risk assessment process is set out below:

Preliminary assessment



A baseline assessment will confirm whether a site is suitable to apply to standards to. This assessment will consider items such as underlying geology and groundwater, physical attributes of the site such as topography and size, and current or proposed land uses.

In situations where potential sites are deemed unsuitable for discharging treated wastewater, this is generally intended to prevent risks of:

- adversely impacting public health.
- run-off, erosion and reduced infiltration efficiency (for example, where discharged at surface or above surface irrigation on slopes greater than 10 degrees).
- infrastructure failure, groundwater contamination, surface runoff and environmental degradation (for example, where sites are geologically unstable).
- leaching and groundwater contamination in situations where soils are inappropriate for land application (for example, heavy clay and peat soils).
- compromising cultural heritage, traditional land use practices, and respect the values of local communities. This captures areas which are wāhi tapu, tūpuna, and other sites on Rarangi korero / New Zealand Heritage List.

Sites will also be deemed unsuitable where it is necessary to protect public health, preserve soil health and prevent contamination of crops (for example, irrigation to human food crops). Situations where a customised design approach is needed, for example, for partial land discharge arrangements such as riparian strip wetlands and mix-and-match schemes, are also considered unsuitable.

Suitable sites will move through to more detailed risk screening and site-specific assessments.

Risk screening involves applying a qualitative risk assessment tool, to identify pathways for contaminants (Total nitrogen, Total phosphorous and *E. coli*) to reach a receptor as a result of the discharge. This will consider environmental, public health, and social risks. A risk category between 1 – 4 will be assigned.

A site-specific assessment will involve a detailed check of key factors to understand the capability of the site to receive and manage a discharge. This will consider the proposed application method, detailed groundwater and soil assessments, and possible options for mitigating the effects of a discharge. A site capability category between 1 – 4 will be assigned.

		Site Capability Category			
		1	2	3	4
		Site has decreasing ability to manage discharges →			
Risk Category Greater pathways for contamination ↓	1	Class 1	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
	2	Class 1	Class 2	Class 2	Class 3
	3	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2	Class 3
	4	Class 2	Class 2	Class 3	Standards don't apply (Category 5)

Combining the risk and site capability categories will then determine the overall Class for the site, and the subsequent loading rates and numeric limits that apply for parameters covered by the standard. The table below sets out which parameters are covered by this standard and the rationale for each parameter.

Parameter	Rationale
Total Phosphorus	The proposed discharge to land standard uses total nitrogen and phosphorus as they represent the sum of all forms of these nutrients present in wastewater. Managing these nutrients is important to avoid run-off to waterbodies causing eutrophication.
Total Nitrogen	
<i>E. coli</i>	The proposed discharge to land standard includes <i>E. coli</i> as it indicates the presence of pathogens and faecal pollution in soil.

The Class determines what numeric limits need to be met for parameters covered by the standard. Where no limit applies for *E. coli*, this assumes the pathway/receptor connection can be adequately removed. The loading rates and concentration with each class account for total load from a site, including from the discharge itself, the land on which it is applied and how it is managed.

Class	Total Nitrogen (kg/ha/year)	Total Phosphorous (kg/ha/year)	<i>E. coli</i> (public health) (cfu/100mL)
1	500	75	No limit
2	250	50	< 2,000
3	150	20	< 1,000

The hydraulic loading rate for discharges to land shall not exceed 5 mm/hour or 15 mm/application event. This application rate reflects the capacity of many soil types and is designed to avoid significant ponding or surface run-off.

Contaminants and parameters not covered by the proposed discharge to land standard

Some parameters, such as total suspended solids and heavy metals, are not directly covered by the proposed standard. These will need to be considered when designing and maintaining the land discharge system, to avoid operational risks such as blockages and surface run-off. Where contaminants are not covered by the standard, the usual resource consenting process would apply, and regional councils would set an appropriate limit.

We may expand the standards in future to include additional contaminants where there is a clear body of evidence and there would be benefit in having a nationally consistent approach.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- Are the proposed parameters appropriate to manage the impact of wastewater discharges to land?
- What benefits and challenges do you anticipate in implementing the proposed approach? Are there other particular matters that could be addressed through guidance material?

Management and Operation Plans

All consents that involve the discharge to wastewater to land will be required to be the subject of a Management and Operation Plan. These plans should include detail about:

- site restrictions
- site inspection requirements (general site operation)
- management requirements and recommendations
- maintenance and contingency requirements, and environmental monitoring
- environmental monitoring and reporting requirements.

Guidance will be developed by the Water Services Authority to support implementation of the standards. This will provide detail about the form and content of Management and Operation Plans, to support network operators.

Monitoring and reporting requirements

It is proposed that the following requirements will apply to all discharge to land arrangements:

- Groundwater monitoring will be required for all arrangements to assess the potential impact of the discharge.
 - » All arrangements will have to monitor for pH, electrical conductivity, Total ammoniacal nitrogen, Total nitrogen, Nitrate nitrogen, dissolved reactive phosphorous, *E. coli* and Chloride.
 - » Water quality monitoring must be undertaken every 3 months.

- » The number of monitoring wells differs depending on whether the bore is up gradient (minimum 1 well), down gradient (minimum 2 wells) or up gradient of sensitive receptors (site-specific).
- Soil monitoring will be required for all arrangements. While additional monitoring may be required through individual Management and Operation Plans, the following requirements apply as a starting point:
 - » Frequency: soil monitoring must be undertaken as part of the baseline and site-specific assessments, and every 5 years thereafter.
 - » Number of samples: soil samples are to be collected at a per hectare rate, determined by a Suitably Qualified Experienced Practitioner considering the treatment level, plant size and soil capability.
 - » Parameters:
 - ~ Cation exchange capacity
 - ~ Exchangeable Cations (all measured by me/100g and base saturation %): Sodium, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium.
 - ~ Sodium absorption ratio
 - ~ Soil pH
 - ~ Total phosphorous
 - ~ Olsen phosphorous

The following proposed reporting requirements would apply to all discharge to land arrangements:

- Any breach of a parameter must be reported by an operator to the relevant regional council as soon as reasonably possible after the breach is detected.
- An operator must publish compliance against parameters in applicable standards on a monthly basis, on a publicly available website maintained by the operator, and provide the report to the relevant regional council. Water quality monitoring and groundwater monitoring results should also be published and shared with the relevant regional council.
- Annual reporting is required of compliance against parameters in applicable standards to regional council and the Water Services Authority.

To provide confidence in how the standards are implemented, network operators will be required to engage a third party, on an annual basis, to audit compliance with matters covered by the standard, including monitoring and reporting requirements. Costs associated with third party auditing will be covered by network operators, rather than consenting authorities..

We would like your feedback on the following question:

- Are the monitoring and reporting requirements proportionate to the potential impacts of the different discharge scenarios?

8. A beneficial reuse of biosolids environmental performance standard

The **proposed approach** will establish an environmental performance standard for beneficial reuse of biosolids, including:

- setting out a grading system for processing biosolids, with corresponding activity status under the Resource Management Act 1991 for how and where biosolids can be reused.
- imposing additional requirements where biosolids have a lower grade.
- imposing monitoring and reporting requirements to reflect the grade of biosolids.

What are biosolids?

In the 2024 Network Environmental Performance Measures Guide, biosolids are defined as:

solids or semi-solids (sludge) from the wastewater treatment process, which have been physically and/or chemically treated to produce a semi-solid, nutrient-rich product.

Biosolids are a nutrient and energy-rich by-product of the wastewater treatment process and are predominantly a mix of water and organic materials. During the treatment process, microorganisms digest wastewater and break down the organic solids. This separates into two streams – a liquid stream (wastewater) and a solids component (sewage sludge). The water content of the solids is further reduced through additional treatment processes (for example, centrifuges or solar drying), to produce biosolids. The quality and composition of biosolids depends on the profile of wastewater entering the treatment plant. Biosolids normally contain between 15 and 95 percent solids, which often contain:

- Macronutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur.
- Micronutrients, including copper, zinc, calcium, magnesium, iron, boron, molybdenum and manganese.

Biosolids usually contain other substances. These can include synthetic chemical compounds such as pharmaceuticals, microplastics, per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), or heavy metals.

When managed and treated appropriately, biosolids can be used to improve soil conditions and provide nutrition for plants and forestry, rehabilitate land such as mines or landfills, and improve the microbiology and the water holding capacity of soils. Energy and gases can be extracted from biosolids, to generate heat energy, biogas and biofuel. Internationally, biosolids have also been used in construction (for example, biosolids bricks) and to produce protein- and fat-rich biomass.

The biosolids covered by this standard follow the above definition, and do not include untreated raw sewage sludge, septic tank sludge or sludge from industrial processes.

To realise the beneficial reuse of biosolids, the risks need to be carefully managed to protect environmental, cultural and public health. Typical risks from biosolids involve exposure from concentrated contaminants finding their way into waterbodies, or via uptake into crops, fish, birds, livestock and people. Some contaminants in biosolids can accumulate in the soil they are applied to, which can mean the land becomes contaminated and unsuitable for particular uses.

Current arrangements for managing biosolids

The Australian and New Zealand Biosolids Partnership has carried out regular surveys of wastewater treatment plants since 2010. Key findings from the 2023 survey indicates that Biosolids production has increased year on year in New Zealand⁷ – the increase is not uniform across plants or regions.

Some examples of management of biosolids in New Zealand include:

- **Incineration:** the Tahuna wastewater treatment plant (owned and operated by Dunedin City Council) operates the only biosolids incinerator in Australasia.

⁷ [Trends in the New Zealand Biosolids Industry: The Australia and New Zealand Biosolids Partnerships Survey \(2024\)](#), Marcus Richardson (Stantec), Catherine Vero (Ekistica), Rob Tinholt (Australia New Zealand Biosolids Partnership).

- **Land rehabilitation:** this amounts to about 43 percent of biosolids. About 330 tonnes of treated biosolids a day from the Mangere wastewater treatment plant is being used to rehabilitate a retired quarry on neighbouring Puketutu Island.
- **Sludge minimisation facilities:** Wellington City Council is building a facility to reduce the volume of sludge generated by the Karori and Moa Point wastewater treatment plants. The facility will produce a dry, odourless product that can be more easily transported, and used as a soil conditioner and as fuel for industrial heat.
- **Storage:** it's estimated that 15 percent of wastewater treatment plants are storing biosolids. Geo-bags are sometimes used as part of the biosolids production process. Central Hawke's Bay Council used a series of geobags at its Waipawa and Waipukurau wastewater treatment plants to store and stabilise biosolids, prior to removing these from their respective sites.
- **Compost:** The MyNoke worm farm in Taupō produces compost from organic waste (including biosolids), which is purchased by the council and used as fertiliser in parks and reserves.
- **Landfill:** approximately 40 percent of biosolids⁸ are disposed of at landfills.

Compared to other jurisdictions, such as Australia and those in the European Union, the rate of reuse of biosolids in New Zealand is low. The relatively high proportion of disposal of biosolids to landfill is an outlier in the international context. Landfills are reaching limits about how much biosolids they receive and the cost of disposing of them is increasing. As not all landfills accept biosolids, some councils truck biosolids for disposal outside their region, often at considerable expense.

Many small-scale wastewater treatment plants with oxidation ponds are not desludged regularly, despite expected operating and maintenance arrangements. This affects the operation of the ponds and increases the concentrations of contaminants, heavy metals and odour. The high number of small oxidation ponds in New Zealand means this is likely to be a significant national problem.

Planning and consenting arrangements

Regulatory settings for managing biosolids in New Zealand are quite different to other countries. Many other jurisdictions have national frameworks that provide for the beneficial reuse of biosolids, in ways that incentivise options other than disposal at landfill. Some regional plans (for example, the Auckland Unitary Plan) allow application of biosolids to land as a permitted activity, if the biosolids have met processing requirements around pathogens and contaminants such as heavy metals. Most regional plans do not have specific provision for biosolids, which means that application of biosolids to land may require a resource consent. This is likely to be a regulatory disincentive to the reuse of biosolids.

Guidelines for the Safe Application of Biosolids to Land in New Zealand

The *Guidelines for the Safe Application of Biosolids to Land in New Zealand* (the Guidelines) have been in place since 2003. The Guidelines were reviewed in 2017, and a subsequent comprehensive review of the guidelines is underway, coordinated by Water New Zealand. The draft *Beneficial Use of Biosolids and other Organic Materials on Land (Good Practice Guide)* was tested with the sector in late-2024 and is due to be published in mid-2025.

The guidelines aim to implement best practice arrangements for beneficial reuse of biosolids, including links through to planning controls to allow significantly broader reuse of biosolids in New Zealand than currently occurs. The Guidelines are known and understood by the sector, and have already been implemented in some plans and consents.

Proposed approach: environmental performance standard for beneficial reuse of biosolids

The Authority proposes a standard for beneficial reuse of biosolids that is based on the Guidelines. The current comprehensive revision of these guidelines has been subject to extensive technical review, together with engagement with sector experts.

8 As above.

The core elements of the proposed standard are as follows:

- Set out a grading system for processing of biosolids. The grade will reflect the extent to which the pathogen content and vector attraction has been controlled, as well as the level of metals and organic chemical contaminants in the product.
- Application of biosolids that have been processed to the highest grade to land will be treated as a permitted activity. Biosolids that have been processed to lower grades will be a controlled or restricted discretionary activity.
- Exclusion periods will apply where biosolids have a lower pathogen grade depending on the land use – for example, where there is public access, or for permitted types of horticulture or agriculture.
- The nitrogen application rate for biosolids must not exceed, at maximum, an average of 200kg total nitrogen per hectare per year.

Grading system

The Guidelines contain detailed procedures for the monitoring and sampling of biosolids to ensure that end-products are appropriately categorised, and subsequently managed in their reuse. Biosolid producers will need to develop a detailed process and product monitoring programme in accordance with the Guidelines.

The proposed grading system is designed to differentiate between organic products that are of low risk and those that contain pathogens and/or contaminants that may pose a risk to the receptors. Using this system, biosolids are to be categorised by two grades, as follows:

- **Stabilisation grade, A or B.** This is determined by the pathogen content of the product and whether or not an approved pathogen reduction procedure and an approved vector attraction reduction method have been implemented.
 - » A product is considered Grade A if:
 - ~ It has a documented quality assurance system
 - ~ It has undergone at least one of the listed pathogen reduction processes
 - ~ It has undergone at least one of the listed vector attraction reduction methods
 - ~ It meets all listed product pathogen standards after processing but prior to application
 - » A product is considered Grade B if:
 - ~ It has a documented quality assurance system
 - ~ It has undergone at least one of the accepted vector attraction reduction methods
 - » If a product does not attain Grade B stabilisation, it is not classified

- **Contaminant grade, 1 or 2.** This is determined by the levels of metals and organic contaminants in the product.
 - » Grade 1 is a product that has compliant levels for every contaminant
 - » Grade 2 is not compliant for at least one of the contaminants.

Confirmation of pathogen and contaminant grades will require two sets of sampling:

- » Verification sampling demonstrates whether a treatment process is producing a final product of consistent quality and is typified by a high-frequency sampling regime.
- » Routine sampling is required to demonstrate continued compliance with the product standards.

The following table sets out the proposed approach for grading beneficial reuse of biosolids:

	Contaminant grade 1	Contaminant grade 2
Stabilisation Grade A	Permitted activity (provided all activity standards are met)	Restricted discretionary activity (provided all activity standards are met)
Stabilisation Grade B	Controlled activity (provided all activity standards are met)	

Consenting approach

The Authority proposes to establish Permitted, Controlled, and Restricted Discretionary consenting pathways for the reuse of biosolids, depending on their categorisation grade. Verified monitoring and sampling of the biosolid products will be a condition of the reuse as either a Permitted, or Restricted Discretionary Activity.

In situations where the proposed reuse of a Grade A1 or B1 biosolid does not meet the applicable activity standards, the proposal would be considered a restricted discretionary activity. Should a biosolid not receive a grade under the framework – for example, where a vector attraction reduction method has not been completed – reusing the biosolids would be assessed by the relevant regional council through the consenting process. When the biosolids standard is made, it will be applied through applications for resource consents.

We are seeking feedback on appropriate Permitted, Controlled, and Restricted Discretionary activity standards and subsequent matters of control and restricted discretion. Common examples of such provisions from rules around the country are provided below.

Examples of qualifying criteria for the reuse of biosolids

- (1) Biosolid application must be to land only and must avoid groundwater or surface water contamination
- (2) Biosolids may not be applied to certain areas or land types such as:
 - (a) wāhi tapu or sites of cultural significance
 - (b) water supply protection zones
 - (c) sites with geographical, geological or hydrological constraints
- (3) Buffer requirements from:
 - (a) property boundary;
 - (b) surface water body and the coastal marine area;
- (4) Restrictions on supplementary land uses such as land used for food production or residential areas.
- (5) Verification requirements for grades of bio-solids.
- (6) Restrictions on the production of offensive or objectionable odour or dust.
- (7) Specific requirements for record keeping and reporting such as:
 - (a) the nature of the biosolids including dry solids content, application, volume, location and frequency; and
 - (b) the total nitrogen mass-load applied per hectare per annum.
- (8) Baseline soil testing, or testing where biosolids have been applied to land continuously for more than 5 years

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- What matters of control or restricted discretion should sit with consenting authorities to manage the reuse of biosolids?
- What should the permitted activity standards include?

Approach for managing contaminants of emerging concern in biosolids

Global research continues into the significance of contaminants of emerging concern and the implications for beneficial reuse of biosolids. At this stage, some contaminants of emerging concern are not included in the proposed standard (for example, PFAS). Instead, the Authority proposes keeping the matter under active review and may update the standard as new developments occur.

This will mean we are well-positioned to leverage research by other international regulators, as well as agencies such as New Zealand's Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). The profile of biosolids in New Zealand is likely to mean international limits cannot be applied directly, and work would be required, alongside the Ministry of Health and the EPA, to determine what controls are appropriate. Taking a watching brief approach also means we can observe longer-term trends, such as whether and how contaminants of emerging concern accumulate over time.

We would like feedback on two proposed options about how PFAS, as a contaminant of emerging concern, should be addressed in the short-term:

- **Option One:** Provide guidance to support implementation of the standards that could include advice on contaminants of potential concern – such as organic contaminants like microplastics or PFAS. These areas could be brought into the standard over time, as research continues and there is greater capacity in the New Zealand market to test for contaminants of emerging concern.
- **Option Two:** This option would build on guidance issued as part of Option One. Alongside guidance, risk analysis could be undertaken to determine which wastewater treatment plants should test for contaminants of emerging concern. This would provide a local baseline for quantities of these contaminants that might trigger stricter regulation.

We would like your feedback on the following question:

- How should contaminants of emerging concern in biosolids be addressed in the short-term?

9. Management of overflows and bypasses

The **proposed approach** will establish risk-based planning, monitoring and reporting arrangements for wastewater network overflows and bypasses from wastewater treatment plants, including:

- Requiring network operators to use wastewater risk management plans to identify where risks of overflows are, and how they should be managed, controlled, monitored and eliminated.
- Imposing monitoring and reporting requirements for overflows from wastewater networks.
- Making all overflows a controlled activity under the Resource Management Act 1991, consistent with proposed changes through the Local Government (Water Services) Bill.

What are overflows and bypasses?

Overflows occur where untreated or partially treated wastewater escapes from a wastewater network into the environment. Overflows of untreated wastewater are a public health risk that impacts communities, compromising areas used for swimming, recreational activities and mahinga kai (food collection). Overflows are inevitable. In the 2021/2022 financial year, the Water New Zealand National Performance Review reported a total of 3,121 overflows across New Zealand and this number doesn't include instances where overflows are not reported.

Overflows are caused by a range of factors:

- Constrained capacity to accommodate population growth, which increases the rate and frequency of overflows due to demand on the network.
- Blockages such as build-up of fat and oil, tree roots or incorrectly marketed products (e.g., flushable wipes).
- Plant failures or equipment damage such as broken pipes or pump breakdown.
- Flows that exceed system capacity, either caused by significant inflow or infiltration⁹.

Wastewater networks are particularly vulnerable to impacts of climate change, with increasing severe weather events likely to exacerbate the frequency and impact of overflows.¹⁰

Almost all wastewater networks are designed to overflow when the amount of water coming into the pipe network exceeds the capacity of the network and/or treatment plant. Some networks are designed so wastewater overflows into the stormwater network when the capacity of the wastewater network is exceeded – for example, during heavy rainfall. Similarly, some older (combined) networks collect both wastewater and stormwater, which means stormwater is also received by the wastewater treatment plant.

Engineered overflow points are used to manage when and where overflows occur. Most networks are designed so wastewater overflows caused by constrained capacity go into the stormwater network through constructed (engineered) overflow points. Even with engineered overflow points, uncontrolled overflows still occur at network points that aren't designed to overflow (such as manholes or gully traps). Uncontrolled overflows are typically caused by blockages or faults in a network, rather than high flows.

Bypasses occur where partially treated wastewater is diverted to protect a treatment plant

A bypass occurs where partially treated wastewater is diverted past the normal treatment plant route and discharged to the environment. Plants are designed to do this to prevent issues with equipment and systems within the treatment plant, that can occur during periods of high rainfall and inflow.

Current arrangements for monitoring, reporting and managing network overflows

The approach to managing overflows varies significantly across New Zealand. While wastewater treatment plant discharges are consented, many overflows from wastewater networks remain unconsented or partially consented. Some networks have a comprehensive consent that covers overflows from the entire network, while others have consents for specific overflow points.

⁹ Inflow is generally where stormwater gets into the wastewater network from illegal roof connections, low gully traps or cross-connected stormwater systems. Infiltration occurs when water from saturated surrounding soil enters the wastewater network through defects in pipe joints, damaged pipes, private laterals in poor condition and/or offset manhole risers.

¹⁰ ['Impacts and implications of climate change on wastewater systems: A New Zealand Perspective' \(2021\), James Hughes, Katherine Cowper-Heays, Erica Olesson, Rob Bell and Adolf Stroombergen.](#)

From a stocktake of regional plans, around half of regional councils prohibit network overflows, or consider them emergency discharges under section 330 of the Resource Management Act 1991. This approach means that overflows often remain unconsented, and therefore subject to limited or no monitoring or reporting, or requirements for network operators to remove the cause or mitigate any adverse effects from the overflow. As overflows are inevitable, this approach results in the problem being hidden and is not a long-term solution.

Similarly, there is no shared definition or approach to monitoring and reporting of overflows resulting in high variability across New Zealand. Some councils only record overflows that are reported by a member of the public. Others have taken a risk management approach, with telemetric monitoring and public reporting of high-risk overflows. As there isn't a common definition of what constitutes an overflow, councils may have different methods for counting and classifying them. This variability means it is difficult to build a clear picture of what causes overflows, and where and how frequently they occur.

In 2019, the [Regional best practice guide for the management of wastewater overflows](#) was developed¹¹ to provide a standardised framework and key performance targets for the response, monitoring and reporting of wastewater overflows across the Bay of Plenty region. In 2022, Water New Zealand published a [Good Practice Guide for Addressing Wet Weather Wastewater Network Overflow Performance](#). While the guide provides a common framework for wastewater network service providers to implement, it appears uptake has been minimal.

What information about overflows is publicly available?

Despite the impact on public health and water-based recreation, it is often difficult for the public to find reliable, real-time information about overflows when they occur. Due to poor information about where and when overflows occur, even network owners can't properly manage their networks to reduce the frequency of overflows to improve public health and environmental outcomes.

Nevertheless, some tools provide publicly available information on water pollution risk and swim safety, including where water quality has been impacted by overflows. These include:

- [Land, Air, Water Aotearoa \(LAWA\)](#) presents national environmental data (collected by regional councils and unitary authorities) and information about river, lake and recreational water quality, alongside a range of other environmental health topics

- The SafeSwim programme in Auckland and Northland provides transparent real-time information about the risk of swimming at specific locations. SafeSwim draws on a range of inputs, including real-time monitoring of wastewater and stormwater networks (and consequently, overflows), alongside predictive models.

Network Environmental Performance Measures

As part of mandatory requirements set by the Authority, network operators are now required to monitor and report on the environmental performance of wastewater networks. From mid-2024, network operators were required to start recording wastewater overflow information for reporting to the Authority by 30 September 2025. This requires operators to record overflows against consistent definitions and causes. This information will be summarised in an annual network environmental performance report and published on the Authority's website.

Improving monitoring and reporting arrangements for overflows

Given the public health and environmental impacts and variability in how overflows are monitored, reported and managed, the wastewater standards present an opportunity to set out a risk-based monitoring and reporting regime that:

- Creates greater consistency in how overflows are categorised, managed and reported.
- Supports network operators to prioritise, manage and reduce wastewater overflows.
- Ensures there is greater transparency of public information about overflows affecting areas where people might swim or gather shellfish, and how operators are trying to reduce them.
- Supports regional councils to monitor compliance with wastewater overflow consents and to take proportionate enforcement action where required.

Proposed approach for managing overflows

The Authority is proposing a risk-based approach, that gives network operators the tools to prioritise addressing overflows based on the risk, impact and likelihood of overflows, within their means. The proposed requirements would apply to all wastewater network overflows, including those from combined wastewater and stormwater networks.

11 This document was developed by the Bay of Plenty Regional Wastewater Management Group. This group includes representatives from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, relevant territorial authorities and the Toi Te Ora Public Health Service.

Consistent with the Authority's approach to mandatory network environmental performance reporting, the Authority proposes defining overflows as:

Instances where untreated or partially treated wastewater (or stormwater contaminated with wastewater) spills, surcharges, discharges or otherwise escapes from a wastewater network to the external environment. This may be due to different causes and may be released via either constructed (engineered) or unconstructed overflow points. Engineered overflow points are designed and intended to act as an emergency relief valve during instances of capacity overload in the network, whereas unconstructed overflow points are not (but inadvertently perform this function).¹²

The Authority proposes defining bypasses as:

Bypasses are discharges where the wastewater is not fully treated due to inlet flow rates exceeding the design capacity of a wastewater treatment plant, and then discharged into a receiving environment.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- Is the current definition of overflow fit-for-purpose, and if not, what changes do you suggest?
- Does the proposed definition of bypasses adequately cover these situations, and if not, what changes do you suggest?

Wastewater Network Risk Management Plans

The Authority proposes that wastewater network risk management plans will be required for all wastewater networks, to ensure network operators identify how risks and hazards from both the network and treatment plants, including overflows, will be managed.

The Authority will issue requirements under section 138 of the Water Services Act 2021 about what should be covered in the overflow section of wastewater network risk management plans. In the first instance, plans should include:

- (a) a map of controlled and uncontrolled overflow points across a network: understanding where these points are in a network is critical to developing approaches to manage overflows. It will also form the basis of monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- (b) a list of all overflow points in the network, that are categorised based on a risk framework: the risk framework looks at the likelihood and potential impact of an overflow and allocates a corresponding level of priority.

- (c) the arrangements relating to any bypass overflows for a wastewater treatment plant, with a risk assessment of these arrangements;
- (d) a summary of approaches taken by the network operator to manage, control, monitor or eliminate risks: approaches for managing overflows are likely to differ depending on the size, scale and complexity of the wastewater network, as well as the resourcing and funding available to the network operator.

In developing wastewater network risk management plans, network operators will be expected to engage with communities, including mana whenua, to understand where risks of overflows are, and how they should be managed, controlled, monitored or eliminated. The plans should demonstrate this engagement has happened and how it has influenced approaches to manage, control, monitor or eliminate risks.

There are existing examples of overflow management plans throughout the country, for example those developed by WaterCare or required by Greater Wellington Regional Council. Once finalised, the plans will need to be shared on a publicly available website and provided to regional councils and other interested parties, such as iwi and hapū.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- How should Wastewater Risk Management Plans relate to existing risk management planning tools, and if the Local Government (Water Services) Bill proceeds, stormwater risk management plans?
- What should be covered in guidance to support developing wastewater risk management plans?
- We understand wastewater risk management plans are already required in some regions – what approaches have worked well and where is there room for improvement?
- How should Wastewater Risk Management Plans interact with the proposed consenting pathways for overflows and bypasses?

Making wastewater network overflows and bypasses a controlled activity

The Local Government (Water Services) Bill proposes to amend the Water Services Act and Resource Management Act to allow the Authority to set resource consent activity status, for activities performance in accordance with the standards. Subject to enactment, the Authority is proposing to make all overflows from wastewater networks, together with bypasses from a wastewater plant, a controlled activity as part of this wastewater standard. Making overflows a controlled activity means that all wastewater overflows and bypasses will need to be consented.

¹² [Network Environmental Performance Measures and Guide 2024](#).

This is a significant change from the current approach to consenting wastewater network overflows for some regions. A consistently applied controlled activity creates a standard consenting pathway to ensure overflows are recorded and reported, which will increase visibility over time and improve our understanding of network performance. Specific approaches to reducing the impact and frequency of overflows can then also be set by consenting authorities through consent conditions.

An example of a controlled activity rule for network overflows from the Auckland Unitary Plan is provided below.

Example of controlled activity for network overflows from the Auckland Unitary Plan:

The discharge of untreated wastewater overflows onto or into land and/or into water from an existing separated wastewater network servicing existing urban areas (excluding wastewater treatment plants) is a Controlled Activity.

Controlled Activity Standards

- (1) A programme must be in place to reduce network overflows to an average of no more than two events per discharge location per annum by 2040.
- (2) Emergency overflow points must be designed and located so that any discharges minimise nuisance, damage, public health risk, and ecological effects and do not cause scouring and erosion at the point of discharge.
- (3) A wastewater network operations plan must be prepared, and implemented, which provides all of the following:
 - (a) a description of the wastewater network;
 - (b) maintenance procedures and levels of service for key elements of the network;
 - (c) operational procedures including response to system failures, incidents and significant overflow events; and
 - (d) monitoring and reporting procedures.
- (4) All pump stations must be continuously monitored by telemetry so that the wastewater network operator is immediately informed of any pump station failure or fault that may result in an overflow.
- (5) The wastewater network must be operated to prevent dry weather overflows during normal operation of the network, and the network operator must have an operational and maintenance programme in place that minimises unforeseen dry weather overflows to the environment.

Matters of Control

- (1) for the discharge of untreated wastewater overflows onto or into land and/or into water from an existing separated wastewater network servicing existing urban areas (excluding wastewater treatment plants):
 - (a) the implementation of the overflow reduction programme;
 - (b) the mitigation of any adverse effects associated with the discharges, including effects on potable water supplies and public health;
 - (c) the implementation of the wastewater network operations plan and the operations and maintenance programme;
 - (d) associated monitoring and reporting; and
 - (e) the duration of the consent and the timing and nature of reviews of consent conditions.

Assessment Criteria

- (1) for the discharge of untreated wastewater overflows onto or into land and/or into water from an existing separated wastewater network servicing existing urban areas (excluding wastewater treatment plants):
 - (a) the extent to which the overflow reduction programme, the network operations plan and operational and maintenance programme:
 - (i) set out the best practicable option for preventing or minimising adverse effects;
 - (ii) adequately address wastewater discharges generated as a result of potential urban growth, urban redevelopment, and land use intensification within the wastewater catchment, taking into account the growth and intensification provisions of the Plan; and
 - (iii) prevent or minimise adverse effects of wastewater overflows on public health, potable water supplies, freshwater and coastal waters.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- Do you support setting all wastewater network overflows as controlled activity?
- What matters of control should remain with consenting authorities to reduce the impact and frequency of overflows and bypasses?
- Are there examples of existing approaches to managing overflows that would work well as matters of control?
- What other factors need to be considered when making overflows and bypasses a controlled activity? What matters would be helpful to address through guidance?
- What transition arrangements should apply for scenarios where Regional Councils already have consenting pathways for overflows?

Monitoring and reporting requirements

The Authority is also proposing to create a wastewater standard, under section 138 of the Water Services Act 2021, that will set out what monitoring and reporting requirements apply for overflows from wastewater networks.

Monitoring

Monitoring arrangements depend on the type of overflow point. As a minimum, operators would be required to have telemetric monitoring for:

- all engineered overflow points or discharge points that are classified as high risk in wastewater risk management plans;
- all new constructed overflow points and pump stations; and
- all uncontrolled discharge points (using manhole sensors) where there are high frequency overflows.

While installing telemetry at all overflow points is best practice, this may not be immediately feasible from a financial and practical perspective. To reflect this, the Authority proposes staggering the telemetry installation requirements, with high-risk overflows requiring monitoring to be installed sooner.

Reporting requirements are also influenced by the risk assessment of overflows. Public reporting – particularly following overflow events – is critical to improving public transparency through having readily accessible information about overflows and the impacts on recreation and food gathering. Longer-term, after-the-fact reporting supports regional councils, alongside the Authority, to understand where overflows occur and what causes them. In the longer term, this information may be used to set targets, to compel network operators to reduce overflows over time.

Reporting

Reporting is separated into first response and follow-up reporting.

First response reporting refers to the information that is important for the public health of the community immediately affected by the overflow. This includes information about the time and extent of the overflow, alongside any public health warnings. To ensure the information is available to the affected community at the time they need it, this information should be shared on a publicly accessible website such as the council's website or an online platform such as SafeSwim. This information should be accompanied by public health information (for example, signage) at the site of the overflow, as well as engaging with the local Medical Officer of Health. The following timeframes apply for first response reporting:

- For overflows categorised as high risk: within 2 hours of the event.
- For overflows categorised as medium risk: within 24 hours of the event.
- For overflows categorised as low risk: within 48 hours of the event.

Follow-up reporting is intended to demonstrate how the overflow was managed. This also includes an assessment of the public health and environmental impact of the overflow. As with first response reporting, this should be shared on a publicly accessible website. It should also be provided directly to the relevant regional council, alongside mana whenua and any community groups with a direct interest. This reporting must be completed within two weeks of the overflow event being resolved. If an overflow event lasts more than two weeks, then updates are required to be provided every two weeks following the approach outlined under the first response reporting.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- What matters should be covered in guidance material to support monitoring and reporting requirements?
- Do you support establishing a framework that determines how overflows are managed based on risk?

10. Arrangements for wastewater treatment plants operating on expired consents under section 124 of the Resource Management Act 1991

Approximately 20 percent of wastewater treatment plants are operating under expired consents. Treatment plants can do so for an undefined period under section 124 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), provided an application to renew their consent was lodged within a specified timeframe.

Plants currently operate on an expired consent for an average of five years, with one operating on an expired consent for 24 years.

The Local Government (Water Services) Bill includes changes to the RMA which, if enacted, would allow a time limit to be placed on the period that a wastewater treatment plant may operate on an expired consent under section 124. This is because once wastewater standards are set, the treatment requirements for a plant will be certain and the network operator will be able to engage with its community about the options, plan for, and fund any necessary upgrades.

The Authority proposes that a wastewater treatment plant may only operate on an expired consent under section 124 for a maximum of 2 years. The standards would specify that this arrangement will not commence for 5 years, to give those territorial authorities with plants on expired consents time to plan for and fund the necessary upgrades.

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

- How long should wastewater treatment plants be able to operate under section 124 of the RMA once wastewater standards have been set?

Appendix One: Glossary

Term	Definition and Source
Application Method	<p>The specific technique or approach used to apply a substance, treatment, or technology to a wastewater system. This includes the methods, equipment, and procedures employed to achieve the desired treatment or effect, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with relevant Standards. Application methodologies may vary depending on the treatment type, such as chemical addition, filtration, or biological processes, and are designed to optimize the removal or reduction of pollutants.</p> <p>Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency</p>
Assimilative Capacity	<p>The maximum loading rate of a particular pollutant that can be tolerated or processed by the receiving environment without causing significant degradation to the quality of the ecosystem and hence the community values it supports.</p> <p>Source: Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality</p>
Baseline Assessment	<p>An initial evaluation or desktop exercise conducted to identify and assess potential sites suitable for the application of treated wastewater. This assessment typically involves reviewing high level existing environmental, geological, and land use information to determine the suitability of land parcel for wastewater discharge, without the need for immediate site-specific assessment that would require fieldwork i.e. a first qualitative base for a proposed/potential site.</p> <p>Source: Discharge to Land Technical Report (2025)</p>
Biosolids	<p>Solids or semi-solids (sludge) from the wastewater treatment process, which have been physically and/or chemically treated to produce a semi-solid, nutrient-rich product.</p> <p>Source: Network Environmental Performance Measures and Guide 2024</p>
Bypass	<p>Proposed definition</p> <p>An intentional diversion of partially treated wastewater from a portion of the treatment facility. A bypass may also occur in a controlled way if operators need to release to shut down equipment for repairs, and there is no way to reroute the wastewater. Consents may provide specific timings, frequencies, circumstances and reporting requirements.</p>
Contaminant	<p>Any substance (including heavy metals, organic compounds and micro-organisms) that, either by itself or in combination with other substances, when discharged onto or into land or water, changes or is likely to change the physical, chemical or biological condition of that land or water.</p> <p>Source: Resource Management Act 1991</p>
Controlled Activity	<p>Activities described by section 87A(2) of the RMA which require a resource consent from the Regional Council.</p> <p>Source: Resource Management Act 1991</p>
Discharge	<p>Volume of treated wastewater that is released from a wastewater treatment plant into the receiving environment.</p> <p>Source: Discharge to Land Technical Report</p>
Dilution Ratio	<p>Ratio of receiving environment flowrate/volume to wastewater discharge flowrate/volume. A measure of extent of dilution that takes place within the receiving environment.</p> <p>Source: Discharge to Water Technical Report</p>

Overflows	<p>Proposed definition</p> <p>Instances where untreated or partially treated wastewater (or stormwater contaminated with wastewater) spills, surcharges, discharges or otherwise escapes from a wastewater network to the external environment. This may be due to different causes and may be released via either constructed (engineered) or unconstructed overflow points. Engineered overflow points are designed and intended to act as an emergency relief valve during instances of capacity overload in the network, whereas unconstructed overflow points are not (but inadvertently performs this function).</p> <p>Source: Network Environmental Performance Measures and Guide 2024</p>
Pathogens	<p>Disease-causing micro-organisms such as certain bacteria, viruses and parasites.</p> <p>Source: Discharge to Water Technical Report</p>
Periphyton	<p>A group of organisms in aquatic environments specialised to live on and exploit much larger (usually inert) surfaces. Groups of organisms include fungi, bacteria, protozoa, and algae. The most conspicuous group is the algae and this group is usually the focus of most studies of periphyton.</p> <p>Source: New Zealand Periphyton Guideline 2000</p>
Primary treatment	<p>The separation of suspended material from wastewater in septic tanks, primary settling chambers, or other structures, before effluent discharge to either a secondary treatment process, or to a land application system.</p> <p>Source: AS/NZS 1547:2012</p>
Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment	<p>A quantitative way of estimating the health risk to people who are swimming in and consuming raw shellfish harvested from waters which are near sources of microbial contamination such as river plumes and wastewater outfalls.</p> <p>Source: NIWA Microbial Monitoring factsheet</p>
Receiving Environment	<p>Any waterbody receiving discharge from a wastewater treatment plant.</p> <p>Source: Adapted from the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management</p>
Secondary treatment	<p>Aerobic biological processing and settling or filtering of effluent received from a primary treatment unit.</p> <p>Source: AS/NZS 1547:2012</p>
Wāhi tapu	<p>Sacred place, sacred site – a place subject to long-term ritual restrictions on access or use, i.e. a burial ground, a battle site or a place where tapu objects were placed</p> <p>Source: Te Aka Māori dictionary</p>

Appendix Two: Relationship with Local Water Done Well and Local Government (Water Services) Bill

As part of its Local Water Done Well policy programme, the Government has introduced the Local Government (Water Services) Bill (the Bill) into Parliament to propose changes to how water services are delivered in New Zealand. You can find more detail about the Bill [here](#).

This Bill includes proposals to change the legislative arrangements that apply to wastewater standards in both the Water Services Act 2021 and the Resource Management Act 1991. The main proposed areas of change that relate to this discussion document are:

Area of Change	Description
A single national standard to be applied in resource consents (with a limited set of exceptions)	<p>Changes are proposed to the Resource Management Act 1991 providing that, where a wastewater environmental performance standard is made, a consent authority (regional council) may not grant a resource consent contrary to the standard and must include conditions that are <i>no more or less restrictive</i> than is necessary to give effect to the standard unless an “exception” applies. This establishes an absolute standard, for the matters that the standard covers.</p> <p>Regional councils will continue to be responsible for wastewater discharge consenting but will be required to apply the wastewater standards through consent conditions and be responsible for enforcing consent compliance.</p>
Exceptions regime	<p>While wastewater standards are intended to create certainty and national consistency, there will be cases where a national standard may be inappropriate. Exceptions (for example, the discharge to water standard not applying for discharges to natural wetlands) will be a component of a standard and developed and enacted through the same process as wastewater standards. In situations where an exception applies, the existing resource consent process is reverted to. This means regional councils determine consent conditions, as well as monitoring and reporting requirements, alongside consultation with the community.</p>
Minimum consent duration	<p>Shorter consent timeframes create uncertainty and can compromise the ability to take an affordable long-term investment approach. Where wastewater infrastructure has been renewed or upgraded to meet the new wastewater standards, it is proposed that a 35-year consent duration will apply.</p>
Periodic review of standards	<p>Wastewater standards will require periodic review to enable risks to receiving environments or people to be managed, and to take advantage of new technology. Changes to standards will apply at the start of the new consenting cycle.</p> <p>The Bill proposes changes to section 128 of the Resource Management Act 1991, so that the making or amendment of a wastewater environmental performance standard is a potential trigger for a review of resource consent conditions.</p>
Standards may include activity status	<p>Wastewater standards will be able to set the consenting status of an activity – for example, that aspects of wastewater management are a discretionary or controlled activity. This is intended to create a consistent approach to how consenting authorities consider certain activities or discharges from wastewater networks.</p>
Standards will take precedence over national directions and plans	<p>Where there is any inconsistency between a wastewater standard and a national direction or plan made under the RMA, the wastewater environmental performance standard will prevail.</p>
Standards will be made by Order in Council	<p>Wastewater standards will be enacted through regulations made by Order in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Local Government. A Regulatory Impact Statement is prepared and considered alongside proposed wastewater standards, to ensure the costs and benefits are clearly understood.</p>

Change in approach to Te Mana o te Wai	Existing requirements in the Act for decision-makers to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai will be replaced with a requirement to take account of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and other relevant national directions and regional plans that relate to freshwater when exercising their functions.
Infrastructure design solutions	<p>The Authority will be able to set infrastructure and operating requirements for wastewater treatment plants that, if met, will result in faster consenting processes (for example, via controlled activity status).</p> <p>An infrastructure design solution would specify most of the consent requirements for the infrastructure, and function as a design solution. Over time, this will enable network operators to standardise the design and procurement of infrastructure, and enable modular, off-the-shelf solutions to be installed.</p> <p>Proposed law changes will enable the Authority to develop infrastructure design solutions as part of the implementation of wastewater standards. These are initially likely to focus on small treatment plants. Proposals for infrastructure design solutions will be publicly consulted on.</p>

The Bill was introduced in December 2024 to implement the proposed changes and is progressing through the select committee process. On current timing, the Bill is expected to be enacted in mid-2025. Feedback that relates to the proposed changes to legislation governing wastewater standards should be separately directed through the select committee process, which is led by the Department of Internal Affairs.

Arrangements for resource consents expiring in the short-term

Many territorial authorities will have wastewater treatment plants with resource consents that will expire in the period following enactment of wastewater standards. The Bill includes arrangements to extend existing resource consents, to expire two years following the commencement of the Bill. This will give councils time to plan for how standards will affect re-consenting decisions for wastewater infrastructure, alongside any required upgrades or renewals.

The detail about transition arrangements for wastewater standards is outlined in the Bill and complementary documents.

Appendix Three: Consultation questions

We would like your feedback on the following questions:

General

- Do you agree with the areas the first set of standards are proposed to cover?
- What areas should we prioritise to introduce wastewater standards in future?
- What topics should we cover in the guidance material to support implementation of the standards?
- Are there particular groups we should work with to develop guidance and if so, who?
- How should factors such as climate change, population growth, or consumer complaints be addressed when considering a 35-year consent term?

Discharge to Water

- How should we consider checks and balances to protect against situations where the degree of microbial contamination may change throughout the duration of a consent.
- Are the areas for exceptions appropriate to manage the impacts of discharges and do you anticipate implementation challenges?
- How should the exceptions be further defined to ensure there are no unintended consequences?
- Are the treatment limits, and monitoring and reporting requirements proportionate to the potential impacts of the different discharge scenarios?
- What benefits and challenges do you anticipate in implementing the proposed approach? Are there particular matters that could be addressed through guidance material?
- How should we define small plants and what changes to the default standards should apply to them?
- What feedback do you have for managing periphyton in hard bottomed or rocky streams or rivers?
- What detail should be covered in guidance to support implementing this approach for managing periphyton?

Discharge to Land

- Are the proposed parameters appropriate to manage the impact of wastewater discharges to land?
- What benefits and challenges do you anticipate in implementing the proposed approach? Are there other particular matters that could be addressed through guidance material?
- Are the monitoring and reporting requirements proportionate to the potential impacts of the different discharge scenarios?

Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids

- What matters of control or restricted discretion should sit with consenting authorities to manage the reuse of biosolids?
- What should the permitted activity standards include?
- How should contaminants of emerging concern in biosolids be addressed in the short-term?

Overflows and Bypasses

- Is the current definition of overflow fit-for-purpose, and if not, what changes do you suggest?
- Does the proposed definition of bypasses adequately cover these situations, and if not, what changes do you suggest?
- How should Wastewater Risk Management Plans relate to existing risk management planning tools, and if the Local Government (Water Services) Bill proceeds, stormwater risk management plans?
- What should be covered in guidance to support developing wastewater risk management plans?
- We understand wastewater risk management plans are already required in some regions – what approaches have worked well and where is there room for improvement?
- How should Wastewater Risk Management Plans interact with the proposed consenting pathways for overflows and bypasses?
- Do you support setting all wastewater network overflows as controlled activity?
- What matters of control should remain with consenting authorities to reduce the impact and frequency of overflows and bypasses?
- Are there examples of existing approaches to managing overflows that would work well as matters of control?
- What other factors need to be considered when making overflows and bypasses a controlled activity? What matters would be helpful to address through guidance?
- What transition arrangements should apply for scenarios where Regional Councils already have consenting pathways for overflows?
- What matters should be covered in guidance material to support monitoring and reporting requirements?
- Do you support establishing a framework that determines how overflows are managed based on risk?

Arrangements for wastewater treatment plants operating on section 124, Resource Management Act 1991

- How long should wastewater treatment plants be able to operate under section 124 of the RMA once wastewater standards have been set?

Appendix Four: Detail of the proposed approach for discharges to land

This section sets out detail of the proposed framework for discharging treated wastewater to land, including matters to be considered when determining whether to discharge to a proposed site and the numeric limits for the parameters covered by the proposed standard.

Further detail on how to implement the discharge to land standard will be set out in guidance material, to be released by the Water Services Authority once standards are enacted. Guidance will be tailored to support wastewater treatment plant operators as well as consenting authorities.

To determine whether treated wastewater can be discharged to land and what aspects of the discharge to land standard apply, the following process must be followed:

1. **Baseline assessment:** specific requirements will be set out in guidance to accompany the standards and are including but not limited to:
 - a. Soil moisture assessment (e.g., to assess field capacity and seasonal variability)
 - b. Existing desktop information:
 - i. Site physical attributes (e.g., topography and whether a sufficient area of land is available)
 - ii. Existing groundwater data and models (to understand depth, quality, flow direction, seasonal variation and sensitivity)
 - iii. Available soil data (to understand soil type and drainage capacity)
 - iv. Underlying geology
 - v. Site contamination history
 - vi. Current and proposed land use with the application area
 - vii. Potential receptors, proximity and sensitivity (including environmental, social, cultural and to the built environment)
 - c. Where insufficient information is available via desktop research, conduct a field-based investigation.
2. **Risk screening, to assign a corresponding risk category:** this involves applying a qualitative risk assessment tool, to identify pathways for contaminants (Total nitrogen, Total phosphorous and *E. coli*) to reach a receptor as a result of the discharge. Guidance accompanying the standards (to be published once the standards are enacted) will include a list of pathways for contamination to ensure the quality of risk assessments is consistent. This includes considering:
 - a. Environmental risk: groundwater depth and its proximity from the site boundary, and the nature of receptors within 100m of a site boundary.
 - b. Public health risk: whether the site is near –
 - i. a primary contact recreation within immediate receiving water (surface water)
 - ii. an area people can walk past an application area with sub-surface drip irrigation
 - iii. a drinking water protection zone
 - iv. a location of domestic private bores.
 - c. Social risk: primarily, amenity values and cultural considerations.

3. **Site-specific assessment:** this involves a site-specific check of key factors, to understand the capability of the site and what mitigation measures are appropriate. This includes considering:
- a. the application method (for example, whether a sub-surface drip irrigator or low-pressure spray)
 - b. the degree and type of vegetation cover
 - c. a groundwater assessment: to confirm the flow direction, quality and depth of groundwater, and to install groundwater monitoring wells
 - d. a soil assessment: undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced person, to address the following –
 - i. hydraulic conductivity
 - ii. water holding capacity
 - iii. high risk soils, or soils classified as Category 5 and 6 in AS/NZS1547:2012
 - iv. Existing nutrient concentrations and potential cumulative effects including but not limited to: Total Phosphorus, Olsen P, Total nitrogen, TKN, ammonium-N, Nitrate-N, Exchangeable cations, pH.

The site-specific assessment should also involve considering what mitigation or management approaches are necessary to reduce risk, for example:

- a. buffer zones and planting
- b. monitoring discharge volumes and quality
- c. irrigation scheduling
- d. management of spray draft/odour
- e. vegetation management and monitoring
- f. public access requirements
- g. irrigation system maintenance
- h. contingency plans
- i. receiving environment monitoring
- j. periodic Operation and Maintenance Plan reviews
- k. alternate potable well supply.

The table below outlines how factors are considered in the site-specific assessment and what risk category corresponds with. Where between categories, it is recommended the most conservative (highest) category is applied to the loading rate matrix.

Factors considered in the site-specific assessment for potential discharges to land:

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
Hydraulic conductivity	Moderate	Moderate to rapid	Slow draining	Rapid draining	Poorly drained, saturated soil
Soil type and suitability	Sandy loam, loam, silt loam	Sand, loamy sand	Fine grained – clay loam, silty clay loam	Course granular soil	High risk soils, i.e., heavy clays, peat, soils classified as Category 5 and 6 in AS/NZS 1547:2012
Land use	Suitable for nutrient removal by cropping	Suitable for nutrient removal by cropping	Permanent ground cover	Permanent ground cover	Permanent ground cover
Topography	Low relief <10-degree slopes	Low relief <10-degree slopes	Slopes up to 17 degrees	Slopes up to 17 degrees	Slopes > 17 degrees
Depth to groundwater	>10m	>10m	Between 5 and 10 m below ground level	Between 1 and 5m below ground level at times	Shallow /at ground level, <1m below ground level
Natural hazards (e.g., flooding, land instability)	Negligible risk	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	Very high

9. Confidential Business

Section 48, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Resolution to exclude the public

His Worship to move that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting.

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:

<i>General subject of each matter to be considered</i>	<i>Reason for passing this resolution</i>	<i>Ground(s) Under Section 48(1) for the passing of the resolution</i>
<p><i>4.1 Confirmation of the minutes of the public excluded Council meeting held on Tuesday 18 February 2025</i></p> <p><i>4.2 Confirmation of the minutes of the public excluded meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, held on Tuesday 11 February 2025.</i></p>		<p><i>The public conduct of this part of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which there is good reason for it being withheld. Section 48(1)(a)</i></p>

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 6 or section 7 of that Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public.

AND THAT those in attendance be permitted to remain at the meeting.

10. Meeting closed

Council Mission
Ensuring a sustainable environment for future generations
Encouraging participation by the people
Providing efficient quality services and facilities that meet the affordable needs and aspirations of the people