



AGENDA

Development and Growth Committee Meeting Tuesday, 9 June 2026

Date Tuesday, 9 June 2026

Time 9:00 am

Location Council Chambers
Timaru District Council
King George Place
Timaru

File Reference 1847389

Timaru District Council

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Development and Growth Committee will be held in the Council Chambers, Timaru District Council, King George Place, Timaru, on Tuesday 9 June 2026, at 9:00 am.

Development and Growth Committee Members

Clrs Scott Shannon (Chairperson), Peter Burt, Owen Jackson, Chris Thomas, Philip Harper and Mayor Nigel Bowen

Quorum – no less than 3 members

Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968

Committee members are reminded that if you have a pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda, then you must declare this interest and refrain from discussing or voting on this item, and are advised to withdraw from the meeting table.

Nigel Trainor
Chief Executive

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- 1 Apologies**
- 2 Identification of Items of Urgent Business**
- 3 Identification of Matters of a Minor Nature**
- 4 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

5 Confirmation of Minutes

5.1 Minutes of the Development and Growth Committee Meeting held on 12 May 2026

Author: Meghan Taylor, Acting Democracy Services Lead

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Development and Growth Committee Meeting held on 12 May 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting and that the Chairperson's electronic signature be attached.

Attachments

- 1. Minutes of the Development and Growth Committee Meeting held on 12 May 2026**



MINUTES

Development and Growth Committee Meeting Tuesday, 12 May 2026

Ref: 1847389

**Minutes of Timaru District Council
Development and Growth Committee Meeting
Held in the Council Chambers, Timaru District Council, King George Place, Timaru
on Tuesday, 12 May 2026 at 9:00 am**

Present: Mayor Nigel Bowen, Clrs Scott Shannon (Chairperson), Peter Burt, Owen Jackson, Chris Thomas, Philip Harper

In Attendance: **Councillors:** Stu Piddington, Graeme Wilson

Community Board Members: Leanne Fifield (Pleasant Point), Andy McKay (Geraldine), Charles Scarsbrook (Temuka).

Officers: Nigel Trainor (Chief Executive), Stephen Doran (General Manager Corporate), Andrew Dixon (General Manager Assets and Infrastructure), Aaron Hakkaart (Planning Manager), Rachel Leitch (Communications Team Leader), Elliot Higbee (Legal Services Manager), Steph Forde (Corporate and Strategic Planner), Claire Copeland (Executive Assistant Regulatory and Land Transport), Maddison Gourlay (Marketing and Communications Advisor), Meghan Taylor (Acting Democracy Services Lead).

Public: Nigel Davenport (Venture Timaru),

1 Apologies

No apologies were received.

2 Identification of Items of Urgent Business

No items of urgent business were received.

3 Identification of Matters of a Minor Nature

No matters of a minor nature were raised.

4 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

5 Confirmation of Minutes

5.1 Minutes of the Development and Growth Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2026

Last line of minutes relating to item 6.4 Update on Waitarakao/ Washdyke Catchment Projects - Underway and Potential to be removed to avoid confusion.

Resolution 2026/15

Moved: Mayor Nigel Bowen

Seconded: Clr Chris Thomas

That the Minutes of the Development and Growth Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2026 be confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting and that the Chairperson's electronic signature be attached.

Carried

6 Reports

6.1 Actions Register Update

The purpose of this report is to provide the Development and Growth Committee with an update on the status of the action requests raised by Councillors at previous Committee meetings.

- **Utilisation of AI & Training** - This report to come to the next Development and Growth Committee meeting on 9 June 2026.

Resolution 2026/16

Moved: Clr Scott Shannon

Seconded: Clr Peter Burt

That the Development and Growth Committee receives and notes the updates to the Actions Register.

Carried

6.2 Spatial Plan Scoping and Proposed Work Program

The purpose of this report is to provide the Development and Growth Committee (the Committee) with a proposed scope, indicative timeline, cost estimate, and internal resourcing requirements for the preparation of a Timaru District Spatial Plan.

The Planning Manager and Legal Services Manager spoke to the report and expanded on the executive summary within it.

It was noted that the national planning framework is undergoing legislative reform, with a Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) required following enactment of the Planning Bill. The Committee discussed the importance of positioning Council to effectively contribute to, and influence, this regional process.

The Planning Manager recommended reframing the proposal from a "Timaru District Spatial Plan" to a "spatial framework" to ensure alignment with, and flexibility to support, the forthcoming RSP. The proposed approach focuses on a sequential work programme, particularly Phases 1 (evidence building) and 2 (strategic direction), to establish a robust evidence base across Council functions, including infrastructure strategy and asset management planning.

It was highlighted that, given legislative uncertainty, Council must prepare for a range of potential outcomes. Both the Planning Manager and Legal Services Manager emphasised the need for a strong, district-owned evidence base to effectively advocate for local interests within the regional spatial planning process.

The Chief Executive outlined the broader reform context, including the introduction of new planning and natural environment legislation and the requirement for a collaborative regional spatial plan involving all territorial authorities and Environment Canterbury. The proposed process

will require significant coordination, governance arrangements, and collective approval across councils.

The Committee discussed the relationship between the spatial plan and the District Plan, noting that the spatial plan will provide higher-level strategic direction supported by more integrated and comprehensive evidence, particularly in relation to infrastructure and growth sequencing.

Members noted that while Council has recently completed a District Plan review, gaps remain in the integration of infrastructure planning and growth assumptions. The proposed work programme would address these gaps, including the Future Development Areas, by developing the necessary evidence to support future decision-making.

The risks of not progressing this work were noted, including limited ability to influence the regional spatial plan and insufficient evidence to support growth and infrastructure decisions.

The Committee discussed timeframes, noting the ambitious statutory timeframe (approximately 14–15 months) for delivery of the RSP once legislation is enacted, and the need to align this work with the Long Term Plan and asset management processes.

Resourcing and funding implications were acknowledged. It was noted that additional funding will be required both locally and at a regional level, with proposals to reprioritise existing budgets. Further reporting on funding requirements is expected.

Members discussed the level of uncertainty associated with the reform programme and associated costs. Officers advised that the proposed phased approach provides value regardless of legislative outcomes, as it supports existing District Plan implementation and infrastructure planning requirements.

It was noted that Phases 1 and 2 align with best practice for evidence gathering and strategic planning, providing a foundation for subsequent decision-making.

Resolution 2026/17

Moved: Mayor Nigel Bowen

Seconded: Clr Peter Burt

1. That the Development and Growth Committee receive the Spatial Plan Scoping and Proposed Work Program report.
2. That the Development and Growth Committee endorse the proposed approach for consideration at the next Timaru District Council, Council Meeting.

Carried

6.3 Overview of Council delegated workstreams for development of Long Term Plan 2027-37

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the Council delegated workstreams to assist the organisation in the development of the Long Term Plan (LTP) 2027-37.

The Corporate and Strategic Planner and the Legal Services Manager with support from the General Manager Corporate, outlined Council's previous resolution to delegate key LTP workstreams to committees, with this Committee responsible for the Infrastructure Strategy and oversight of Asset Management Plans (AMPs). The importance of these workstreams in supporting the Infrastructure Strategy, LTP, spatial planning, and future water services arrangements was noted.

It was confirmed that legislated requirements necessitate inclusion of roading and footpaths within the Infrastructure Strategy.

In response to questions, officers advised that the current LTP cycle is more complex due to multiple concurrent workstreams, including water services reform. These require aligned, evidence-based development across AMPs, the Infrastructure Strategy, and the future water services strategy, without duplication.

Clarification was provided that water services AMPs are being progressed to inform the future water services strategy, in line with existing commitments and coordinated with neighbouring councils, while maintaining clear separation of responsibilities.

The Chief Executive noted the timing challenges associated with establishment of the future water services entity, requiring preparatory work to be progressed in advance. Officers confirmed that updates to water-related AMPs are underway.

Officers also advised that, while infrastructure approaches vary across neighbouring councils, current focus remains on delivery of the LTP within statutory timeframes, with alignment considerations to be addressed as reform progresses.

Resolution 2026/18

Moved: Cllr Scott Shannon

Seconded: Mayor Nigel Bowen

That the Development and Growth Committee:

1. Receive the Overview of Council delegated workstreams for development of Long Term Plan 2027-37; and
2. Endorse Roading and Footpaths and Waste Management Activity Groups as the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy for Long Term Plan 2027-37.

Carried

7 Consideration of Urgent Business Items

No items of urgent business were received.

8 Consideration of Minor Nature Matters

No matters of a minor nature were raised.

The meeting closed at 9.55am

.....
Clr Scott Shannon
Chairperson

6 Reports

6.1 Actions Register Update

Author: Jessica Kavanaugh, Democracy Services Lead

Authoriser: Stephen Doran, Acting Chief Executive

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee receives and notes the updates to the Actions Register.

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Development and Growth Committee with an update on the status of the action requests raised by Councillors at previous Committee meetings.

Assessment of Significance

- 2 This matter is assessed to be of low significance under the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy as there is no impact on the service provision, no decision to transfer ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from Council, and no deviation from the Long Term Plan.

Discussion

- 3 The actions register is a record of actions requested by Councillors. It includes a status and comments section to update the Development and Growth Committee on the progress of each item.
- 4 There are currently five items on the actions register.
- 5 One item is marked as ongoing.
- 6 One item is marked as completed and is proposed to be marked as removed at the next meeting.
- 7 Three items are marked as removed and will be taken off the list at the next meeting.

Attachments

1. **Development and Growth Committee Actions Required** [!\[\]\(eec90dedce9992be2b834412b43677b2_img.jpg\)](#) 

Information Requested from Councillors (Development and Growth Committee)

Key ■ = Completed, for removal ■ = 60+ Days ■ = 90+ Days ■ = Removed

Information Requested	Flood and stop bank protection work by ECan		
Date Raised:	10 March 2026	Status:	Complete
Issue Owner	Planning Manager / Climate Change Advisor	Completed Date:	14.04.2026
<p>Background: It was noted that the Government has announced \$6 million in funding for flood and stop bank protection across Canterbury, with a portion being applied along the coastline from Waitarakao to north of the oxidation ponds. It was suggested that ECan be invited to present to the DNG Committee on this work.</p> <p>April 2026 Update: This report is included in the 14 April 2026 Committee agenda. This item is complete and can be closed.</p>			

Information Requested	Share the Climate Change priorities work journey		
Date Raised:	10 March 2026	Status:	Complete
Issue Owner	Climate Change Advisor	Completed Date:	14.04.2026
<p>Background: Share the Climate Change Priorities work journey with the new elected members.</p> <p>April 2026 Update: Climate Change Priorities work journey shared with the new elected members via email on 23 March 2026. This item is complete and can be closed.</p>			

Information Requested	Build on the connection between Timaru District Council & MacKenzie District Council		
Date Raised:	10 March 2026	Status:	Complete
Issue Owner	Building Control Manager / General Manager Regulatory Development and Growth	Completed Date:	01.04.2026
<p>Background: Look to re-establish the connection and build the relationship between Timaru District Council & Mackenzie District Council and the move towards collaboration.</p>			

#1808476

April 2026 Update: The TDC General Manager Regulatory Development and Growth met with the MDC Regulatory Manager to discuss ways of working together.

Information Requested	Utilisation of AI & Training		
Date Raised:	10 March 2026	Status:	Complete
Issue Owner	Chief Information Officer (CIO)	Completed Date:	04.06.2026
<p>Background: Prepare and present a report to the Development and Growth Committee on the planned utilisation of AI tools and the strategic development of their use across Council operations, within the next 6 months.</p> <p>April 2026 Update: A report has been prepared by the CIO which is currently being reviewed by the Chief Executive, for feedback.</p> <p>May 2026 Update: The report has been internally reviewed and required more information to be gathered before being presented to the Committee.</p> <p>June 2026 Update: The report is included within the agenda. This action is complete and can be removed from the register.</p>			

Information Requested	Development and Growth Committee Work Program		
Date Raised:	14 April 2026	Status:	Ongoing
Issue Owner	Planning Manager, and the Legal Services Manager	Completed Date:	
<p>Background: The Planning Manager presented the Development and Growth Committee Work Programme that was adopted at the Committee’s inaugural meeting. An update was provided on progress to date. That Mayor Nigel Bowen, Clr Scott Shannon, the Planning Manager, and the Legal Services Manager are to develop an updated work programme and report back to the Committee.</p>			

#1808476

6.2 Utilisation of AI Tools and Training Across Council

Author: Justin Bagust, Chief Information Officer

Authoriser: Nigel Trainor, Chief Executive

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee receive and note the Utilisation of AI Tools & Training across Council report.

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides the Development and Growth Committee with an overview of the current utilisation of AI tools and training across Council.

Assessment of Significance

- 2 This matter is not considered significant in terms of Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, as the report is for information only and does not seek a substantive decision at this time.

Discussion

3. Council has begun using AI tools across a range of business areas to improve productivity, reduce manual effort and support staff with routine tasks.
4. Current use is centred primarily on Microsoft Copilot, with more limited use of Claude and ChatGPT where appropriate. Council currently has 70 Microsoft Copilot licences available, representing approximately 20% of staff.
5. Licences are issued on request and monitored to ensure they are being actively used. Where licences are not being utilised, they can be reassigned to staff who are likely to gain greater benefit from them.
6. Early results indicate that AI can provide value in low-risk and structured tasks. Examples include summarising information, drafting documents, preparing meeting notes, improving written communication, and assisting staff to find or organise information more quickly.
7. AI has also been used within IT to support internal problem-solving and reduce costs. In one recent example, AI assistance helped IT staff develop an alternative approach to an existing security product, avoiding the need for a costly renewal and saving Council \$30,000 per year while still maintaining the required outcome.
8. IT has also been using AI coding tools to increase the speed at which software can be integrated, issues can be investigated, and internal problems can be resolved. This has provided practical benefits by reducing development effort and allowing staff to progress technical work more quickly.
9. While the initial results are encouraging, AI is not suitable for all Council activities. AI tools work best where information is structured, data quality is reliable, and the level of risk is low.
10. Areas involving poor-quality data, legal obligations, regulatory decisions, privacy considerations, or high public impact still require significant human oversight. In these

situations, AI can assist staff but cannot replace professional judgement, accountability, or established decision-making processes.

11. To support safe use, Council has issued an AI guidance document to all staff outlining appropriate use, limitations, and key “dos and don’ts”. Staff have also been provided with links to online training, webinars, and other learning resources.
12. A regular group of AI champions has also been established and is now meeting weekly with IT. This group provides a practical forum to share learning, identify opportunities, discuss risks, and support wider staff capability as AI use develops across the organisation.
13. Council is also exploring the use of AI agents to assist teams with specific workloads. This includes creating controlled sources of authorised Council information that can be accessed by AI systems to support staff with accurate and consistent information retrieval.
14. As an example, an MCP database of authorised Council data has been created and linked into Council’s AI systems. This includes key documents such as the Long Term Plan, Annual Plan, Privacy Act, bylaws, District Plan, Local Government Acts, and Council policies. This enables staff to reference approved Council information directly, rather than relying on general internet-based responses or unverified sources.
15. Corporate Planning intends to use this capability to help provide feedback and answer questions from public submissions on the new Long Term Plan. Planning staff are also working on AI tools to assist with faster responses to submissions made for planning consents. These examples demonstrate how AI can support staff in managing high-volume information and improving response times, while still requiring appropriate review and professional oversight.
16. The current approach is to encourage targeted and practical use of AI, while maintaining appropriate governance and building staff capability over time.
17. Over the next six months, the focus will be on:
 - 17.1 expanding AI use to additional staff and business areas where there is a clear benefit;
 - 17.2 supporting the AI champions group to identify practical use cases and share learning across the organisation;
 - 17.3 further developing authorised Council data sources and AI agents to support staff with reliable information retrieval;
 - 17.4 measuring the value achieved through time savings, improved quality, reduced manual effort, and faster response times;
 - 17.5 running further pilot activities in selected business areas, including Corporate Planning, Legal services and District Planning;
 - 17.6 continuing staff training and awareness activities; and
 - 17.7 strengthening governance arrangements to support safe and responsible use.
18. The intended outcome is a safe, practical, and scalable approach to AI adoption across Council, with AI used to support staff productivity and service delivery while maintaining appropriate human oversight, accountability, and public trust.

Attachments

Nil

6.3 Asset Management Plans Update

Author: Steph Forde, Corporate and Strategic Planner
Andrew Dixon, General Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Susannah Ratahi, General Manager Land Transport
Andrew Lester, General Manager Drainage and Water
Aaron Hakkaart, Planning Manager

Authoriser: Stephen Doran, General Manager Corporate

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee receives and notes the Asset Management Plans Update report.

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the review and development of Council's Asset Management Plans (AMPs).

Assessment of Significance

- 2 This report is assessed as being of low importance under Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, as there are no decisions being sought in relation to Strategic Assets, Levels of Services, or additional funding.

Background

- 3 As mentioned in prior reports to this Committee and Council, the AMPs are a key contributing document for the evidentiary basis underpinning Long Term Plan development and Water Organisation establishment.
- 4 Following the update provided to the Committee on 12 May 2026 (agenda item 6.3) Officers have continued work on reviewing and developing AMPs for asset owning activities.
- 5 The asset owning activities covered in this update are Water Supply, Wastewater, Stormwater, Roding and Footpaths, Waste Management, Parks, and Property.
- 6 Property is split into two categories being:
 - Recreation and Leisure Facilities
 - Community and Corporate Facilities
- 7 The following sections of this report are status updates by activity provided by the relevant managers who will be available at the meeting to provide further information and answer any questions the members may have. There is also an update on the growth projections work being undertaken by Rationale which is a key information piece for all AMPs.

Water Supply, Wastewater and Stormwater

- 8 The AMPs for all three waters have been updated to address the feedback from an earlier external review undertaken by Waugh Infrastructure Management and further updates will also include the outcomes of the latest revaluation.

The plans are now awaiting the updated growth projections from Rationale, which will enable the growth components to be incorporated.

Once this work is complete, the Timaru District Council and Mackenzie District Council AMPs will be updated conjunctively to establish a consistent baseline to inform the preparation of the Water Services Strategy, and Water Organisation establishment.

Roading and Footpaths

- 9 The Roothing and Footpaths Asset Management Plan is currently being updated, with work focused on refreshing asset condition information, performance data, lifecycle forecasts, and the proposed maintenance, operations, and renewals programme.

The existing AMP framework is considered mature and has previously been positively reviewed through NZTA and Road Efficiency Group processes. The current review is focused on updating and refining the existing AMP rather than undertaking a full redevelopment.

The principal information gap remaining relates to future growth and demand forecasting. Officers are awaiting the outcomes of Council's growth projections work, which will inform future demand assumptions and assist in identifying where additional investment or changes to levels of service may be required over time.

Overall, good progress is being made on the AMP update, with the remaining growth information expected to assist in finalising future network planning assumptions.

Waste Management

- 10 In preparation for LTP 2027-37, the Waste Management Asset Management Plan was reviewed in March 2026, where a key focus was assessing the impact of climate change on Waste Operations Infrastructure and identifying challenges, both operational and financial, to operational and closed landfills.

Another key focus has been further investigation of the assets owned by the Waste Operations Team. An independent assessment has been completed for the Geraldine Transfer Station assets, however assessments of other sites are being undertaken by officers, rather than independents, due to budget constraints.

These investigations include inspecting, photographing and cataloguing each asset, then assessing the dollar value and remaining useful life and updating the data base as necessary.

The investigations will be ongoing, and the findings will be reflected in further updates to the Waste Management AMP alongside outcomes of the growth projections work.

Parks

- 11 The Parks Asset Management Plan is currently being developed in alignment with the structure recommended by the International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM). Asset data and supporting information are being systematically collated, verified, and consolidated to support plan development and improve the overall quality and confidence of asset information.

Property

- 12 The Property Asset Management Plan is also under development following the IIMM-recommended structure. Asset data and associated information are currently being collated and consolidated to inform the plan.

This work is being undertaken across the following Property AMP categories:

- Recreation and Leisure Facilities
- Community and Corporate Facilities

The tables below provide further detail on the subcategories and associated properties that will be included in each AMP.

Recreation and Leisure Facilities AMP		
Swimming Pools	Event Sports Centres	Cultural and Learning Facilities
CBay	Aorangi Stadium	Aigantighe Art Gallery
Temuka Pool	Geraldine Pavilion	South Canterbury Museum
Geraldine Pool	Temuka Alpine Energy Centre	Timaru Library
Pleasant Point Pool	Washdyke Community Hall and Sports Centre	Theatre Royal
		Community Halls

Community and Corporate Facilities AMP		
Community Facilities	Council Housing	Corporate Facilities
Cemeteries	Social Housing	Corporate Buildings and Service Centres (includes Geraldine and Temuka Libraries)
Public Toilets	Other Housing	Investment Property
Airport		Forestry
Fishing Huts and Motor Camps Properties (within Parks AMP)		Depot/ Yard
		Endowment land and miscellaneous vacant land
		Utilities, Waste Management and Land Transport properties (if not covered in the respective AMPs)

Growth Projections

13 The growth projections workstream being undertaken by Rationale is progressing well and on schedule to be received as per the project plan. The internal working group will be receiving an update at a meeting next week on the population model being developed, and key discussion topics will be:

- Understanding whether the projections are in-line with the trajectory Council realistically expects for each area going forward; and
- Determine potential employment or migration drivers in the future (i.e. Fast Track proposals, other employment/education facilities etc.)

Consultation

14 There are no consultation requirements related to receiving this report.

Relevant Legislation, Council Policy and Plans

15 Timaru District Council Long Term Plan 2024-34

16 Local Government Act 2002

17 Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025

Financial and Funding Implications

18 At the time of writing this report, no unbudgeted financial or funding implications have been identified for the development of the Asset Management Plans.

Other Considerations

19 As noted in previous reports to the Committee, the AMP workstream informs the Infrastructure Strategy which is a requirement of the Long Term Plan. A separate report is being presented at this meeting on the development of the Infrastructure Strategy.

Attachments

Nil

6.4 LTP 2027-37 Infrastructure Strategy Update

Author: Steph Forde, Corporate and Strategic Planner

Authoriser: Stephen Doran, General Manager Corporate

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee:

1. Receive the Infrastructure Strategy Update Report; and
2. Endorse the addition of activity groups detailed in paragraph 14 to the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy for the 2027-37 Long Term Plan

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Committee on the development of the 2027-37 Long Term Plan (LTP) Infrastructure Strategy and seek endorsement for the addition of activity groups detailed in paragraph 14 in light of a proactive release related to the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill and wider Simplifying Local Government reform programme.

Assessment of Significance

- 2 This report is assessed as being low when considering Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, as there are no decisions being sought in relation to Strategic Assets, Levels of Services, or additional funding.

Background

- 3 At the meeting on Tuesday 12 May 2026, the Committee resolved that the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy for 2027-37 LTP be the Roding and Footpaths and Waste Management Activity Groups, in line with the requirements set out in section 101B(6)(a) of the Local Government Act 2002(LGA).
- 4 As noted in paragraph 8 of that report, this recommendation was based on legislation and best information available at that time.
- 5 On Wednesday 13 May 2026, the Minister of Local Government proactively released Cabinet Economic Policy Committee minute from the 25 March 2026 meeting relating to '*Regulations for groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting*' – see Attachment 1.
- 6 The decisions in the Cabinet minute release are as follows:
noted that in November 2024 and April 2025, Cabinet agreed to proposals for inclusion in a Local Government (System Improvements) Bill, which included shifting groups of activities that council's must report on from primary to secondary legislation [ECO-24-MIN-0257, EXP-25-MIN-0038];
noted that the Minister of Local Government (the Minister) proposes eight new groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting, as set out in the paper under ECO-26-SUB-0039;
invited the Minister to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office for regulations for the new groups of activities noted above;

approved the release of an exposure draft to councils and other interested parties for consultation in early June 2026.

- 7 At the time of writing this report the exposure draft has not been released, however when reading the proactive release in the context of the wider Local Government Reform programme, and the System Improvements Bill being at second reading, the direction of travel is unlikely to deviate significantly from what is being proposed.

Summary of proactive release and practical implications on Infrastructure Strategy

- 8 The proposed changes shift councils from a fragmented, and to an extent self-determined reporting approach to a nationally consistent framework that gives ratepayers, communities, and central government meaningful and comparable information about how councils are performing and spending public money.

- 9 It is envisaged this will be achieved through the following:

9.1 **Transparency and Accountability** - Standardised reporting across all councils will allow communities to clearly see and compare what their council spends ratepayer money on, and will create a clearer distinction between core and non-core council spending

9.2 **Better Data Quality** - Consistent reporting will improve data quality across several functions, including the Auditor-General's auditing work, the Infrastructure Commission's analysis, the rates capping regulatory system, and the future Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport's stewardship role

9.3 **Performance Measurement Framework** - The new groups form part of a broader performance framework modelled on New South Wales, which will enable councils to be measured and benchmarked against each other and over time across financial performance, asset management, service delivery, and governance, with results published publicly on the DIA website.

9.4 **Central Government Oversight** - Standardised council reporting will give central government reliable, comparable data to support its oversight functions, including monitoring compliance with the rates capping system.

- 10 The proposed new groups of activities are

- Roading and transport;
- Waste management and minimisation;
- Adaptation and emergency management;
- Public regulatory services;
- Governance, planning and reporting;
- Community and recreational facilities;
- Parks and reserves; and
- Other.

Practical Implications for the Infrastructure Strategy

- 11 The risk of waiting for the Local Government (Systems Improvement) legislation and groups of activities regulations to be passed will put meeting the requirements of Local Government

Act s101B (Infrastructure Strategy) at risk, as the time remaining will be insufficient to meet the planned Audit final draft submission deadline of 16 November.

- 12 The exposure draft is scheduled for consultation in early June 2026, with regulations dependent on the Bill passing, leaving an extremely narrow window to complete the additional infrastructure strategy work required. Of the eight proposed activity groups, four are relevant to the Infrastructure Strategy requirements — Roading and Transport, Waste Management and Minimisation, Parks and Reserves, and Community and Recreational Facilities — and all four will need to be addressed to meet s101B obligations under the incoming framework.
- 13 The council's LTP 2027-37 Infrastructure Strategy scope has previously been endorsed as covering Roading and Footpaths and Waste Management. While this aligns with two of the four relevant proposed groups, Parks and Reserves and Community and Recreational Facilities are not currently included in the endorsed scope and will need to be added to meet the requirements of the incoming framework.
- 14 It is therefore recommended that officers extend the previously endorsed scope of the LTP 2027-37 Infrastructure Strategy to also include Parks and Reserves and Community and Recreational Facilities. This approach is consistent with the direction signalled by Cabinet and the Minister of Local Government and will ensure the organisation is well placed to meet both audit requirements and the obligations of the incoming reporting framework.
- 15 A key dependency in delivering this expanded scope is that Parks and Property — covering the Parks and Reserves and Community and Recreational Facilities activity groups — are currently developing their first edition Asset Management Plans. Given that these activities are proposed as regulated groups under the incoming framework and will therefore need to give effect to the s101B Infrastructure Strategy requirements, the completion of these Asset Management Plans must be treated as a priority workstream to ensure the Infrastructure Strategy can be completed to the standard required within the available timeframe. A report on the Asset Management Plan development programme is also presented to this committee on today's agenda.
- 16 Proceeding on this basis carries minimal risk given the level of central government commitment to these groups, while the alternative — waiting for regulations to be formally passed — would very likely result in the council being unable to meet the planned 16 November deadline.

Options and Preferred Option

Option One (preferred)

- 17 That the Development and Growth Committee:
 - Receive the Infrastructure Strategy Update Report; and
 - Endorse the addition of activity groups detailed in paragraph 14 to the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy for the 2027-37 Long Term Plan

Option Two

- 18 That the Development and Growth Committee:
 - Receive the Infrastructure Strategy Update Report;

Do not endorse the addition of activity groups detailed in paragraph 14 to the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy for the 2027-37 Long Term Plan; and

Direct officers to prepare alternative options for consideration at the July Committee meeting.

Consultation

19 There are no consultation requirements relating to the Committee receiving this report.

Relevant Legislation, Council Policy and Plans

20 Local Government Act 2002

21 Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill

Financial and Funding Implications

22 At the time of writing this report, no unbudgeted financial or funding implications have been identified for the development of the Infrastructure Strategy.

Other Considerations

23 Due to the current reform environment, there may be further changes to the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy. Officers will keep the Committee and Council informed as more detail is released and the System Improvements Bill moves through parliamentary process.

24 Should the outcomes of the Simplifying Local Government reform programme and recent Head Start announcements result in regional council functions being transferred to territorial authorities, the scope of the Infrastructure Strategy may need to be further extended to include Adaptation and Emergency Management (incorporating flood protection and control works) and Roading and Transport (incorporating public transport). Officers will monitor developments in this area and bring a further report to the Committee if and when the reform programme confirms any transfer of functions that would affect the Infrastructure Strategy scope.

Attachments

1. **Cabinet material and minute relating to Regulations for groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting** [!\[\]\(d27e48b2777a47a98adf1cbdde5037b2_img.jpg\)](#) [!\[\]\(2f8a4c03718fd0fb6bdc3eb55e6bbb27_img.jpg\)](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

Hon Simon Watts, Minister of Local Government

Proactive release of Cabinet material and minute relating to *Regulations for groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting*

13 May 2026

These documents have been proactively released:

ECO-26-MIN-0039: Cabinet Economic Policy Committee minute

Cabinet paper: Regulations for groups of activities for council's planning and reporting

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Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Minute of Decision

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Regulations for Groups of Activities for Councils' Planning and Reporting

Portfolio **Local Government**

On 25 March 2026, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:

- 1 **noted** that in November 2024 and April 2025, Cabinet agreed to proposals for inclusion in a Local Government (Systems Improvement) Bill, which included shifting groups of activities that councils must report on from primary to secondary legislation [ECO-24-MIN-0257, EXP-25-MIN-0038];
- 2 **noted** that the Minister of Local Government (the Minister) proposes eight new groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting, as set out in the paper under ECO-26-SUB-0039;
- 3 **invited** the Minister to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office for regulations for the new groups of activities noted above;
- 4 **approved** the release of an exposure draft to councils and other interested parties for consultation in early June 2026.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon David Seymour
Hon Nicola Willis (Chair)
Hon Chris Bishop
Hon Simeon Brown
Hon Brooke van Velden
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Simon Watts
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Penny Simmonds
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Nicola Grigg
Hon Mark Patterson
Hon James Meager
Hon Scott Simpson
Simon Court MP

Officials present from:

Officials Committee for ECO

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Office of the Minister of Local Government

Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Regulations for groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting

Proposal

- 1 This paper asks that Cabinet notes the proposed new groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting and gives approval to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office. The regulations will enable consistent data collection across a broad range of council activities for all councils.
- 2 This paper also seeks approval to release an exposure draft to councils and other interested parties for consultation in early June 2026.

Relation to government priorities

- 3 The Government is focused on economic growth, reducing the cost of living and delivering better public services. This includes enabling local government to do the basics brilliantly. Establishing clearer groups of activities will enable better measurement of council performance and strengthen accountability.

Executive Summary

- 4 As part of the Government's work programme for Local Government System Improvements I am committed to developing a new performance measurement framework for councils, which models that in New South Wales. Legislative changes are required to compel councils to report in new ways to create this framework.
- 5 The Local Government (System Improvements) Bill is the legislative vehicle that enables regulations to be set to establish new groups of activities for council planning and reporting. It also enables other parts of the performance framework to develop, including wider benchmarking of council services and reviewing of existing performance measures.
- 6 The current requirements for reporting on groups of activities are not fit for purpose, because there are not enough mandatory groups that councils must report on. Councils are only required to report on five groups of activities including the three water services, flood protection, and roads and footpaths. Councils report on other activities in a way that suits them individually.¹

¹ Councils report to their communities under the Local Government Act 2002. Councils also report to various government agencies as part of their statutory functions.

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- 7 This approach has led to a wide variety of reporting. Consequently, both central government and local communities find it difficult to understand what councils are spending on.
- 8 I propose eight new groups of activities that all councils must report on. They cover all the services, facilities and functions that councils undertake. The proposed groups will make sense to communities and are familiar for councils. They will provide communities with easily accessible information that can be compared across different councils.
- 9 Establishing a more consistent reporting framework will support better data quality for the operation of the rates capping regulatory system. Better data quality will also improve the Office of the Auditor General's auditing function, the future Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport's local government stewardship function and the Infrastructure Commission's analysis and advisory role.
- 10 There will be a one-off cost for councils to update their financial systems and processes. Implementation of the expanded mandatory groups of activities will likely result in some change for smaller councils because they tend to report on a smaller number of groups of activities than larger councils. This may increase their reporting costs, but I consider this balanced with the increased transparency afforded to ratepayers.

Background

The Prime Minister's speech at the Local Government New Zealand Conference in August 2024 began the reform programme

- 11 In August 2024, the Prime Minister spoke at the Local Government New Zealand Conference. He set out the programme of work that needed to be undertaken to ensure councils get back to focusing on the basics and doing them brilliantly. Including:
 - 11.1 investigating performance benchmarks for local councils;
 - 11.2 streamlining the purpose provisions in the Local Government Act 2002;
 - 11.3 investigating options to limit council expenditure on "nice-to-haves"; and
 - 11.4 reviewing the transparency and accountability rules that apply to councils.

The new performance measurement framework follows the New South Wales model

- 12 The New South Wales model was used as a starting point for considering how to develop a new performance framework. In New South Wales, council performance data is gathered and made publicly available to help the local government sector, government regulators, and the public understand how well local government is performing. It also demonstrates how individual

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councils are performing over time and how they are performing in comparison to similar councils.

- 13 The New South Wales model includes a broad range of performance measures across four areas. They are:
 - 13.1 financial performance;
 - 13.2 asset management;
 - 13.3 service delivery; and
 - 13.4 governance performance.
- 14 In November 2024, Cabinet approved proposals which would enable performance measurement for councils similar to the New South Wales model. This included:
 - 14.1 shifting groups of activities from primary to secondary legislation so these can be reviewed and updated to inform the wider range of benchmarks;
 - 14.2 an expanded regulation-making power to benchmark councils beyond financial performance, in the areas of service delivery, asset management and governance; and
 - 14.3 requiring councils to report on their use of contractors and consultants.
- 15 The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill enables the implementation of these three proposals.

Council performance information was published in July 2025

- 16 Alongside legislative changes, in July 2025 the first publication of council performance measurement was published on the Department of Internal Affairs' website. Council profiles focused on financial performance including data about debt, rates, capital and operational expenditure taken from long-term plans, annual plans, and annual reports. The profiles also published information regarding the five mandatory groups of activities.

The current requirements for reporting council activities are not fit for purpose

- 17 Councils provide a wide range of services and facilities and undertake many statutory functions for their communities, known as 'activities'. Activities range from maintaining parks, issuing resource consents, constructing roads, to providing flood protection.
- 18 Despite the numerous activities councils undertake, under existing legislation councils are only required to plan for and report on five mandatory groups of activities. They are:
 - 18.1 water supply;

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- 18.2 sewerage and the treatment and disposal of sewage;
- 18.3 stormwater drainage
- 18.4 flood protection and control works; and
- 18.5 the provision of roads and footpaths.
- 19 Outside of these activities councils report in a way that suits them individually, although there are many similarities in the way many councils choose to report on the other activities they undertake.
- 20 **Appendix A** attached shows the variety of groups of activities amongst a selected group of four councils with differing characteristics:
- 20.1 Marlborough District Council (unitary);
- 20.2 Carterton District Council (small provincial and rural);
- 20.3 Dunedin City Council (large metro); and
- 20.4 Rotorua Lakes Council (small metro and large provincial).
- 21 Across the four councils there are 36 different groups of activities. There are many similar groups of activities and some groups contain the same types of activities but are titled differently. Out of all 36 groups not one of them has the same name across all four councils. Further, “water supply” is the only group that is shared by three out of four councils.
- 22 **Appendix A** highlights the difficulty in trying to present consistent information on groups of activities at a national level, and clearly and concisely for communities. Aside from the number and variety of groups, many of the groups overlap with others, and some groups are disparate and too specific due to the flexibility allowed in reporting outside of the five existing mandatory groups. This emphasises the need for a smaller, mandatory group of activities that all councils must report on.

I am proposing eight new groups of activities

- 23 I am proposing that regulations set out eight new groups of activities that all councils must report on that cover all the services, facilities and functions that councils undertake.
- 24 The eight proposed groups of activities, and what they include, are listed in **Table 1**. Water supply, wastewater and stormwater are now reported on as part of the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025, so they are not proposed as groups of activities.

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Table 1

#	Activity group	Includes
1	Roading and transport	Roading construction and maintenance, roading operations, all public transport services and construction, maintenance, operations of all public transport infrastructure, and parking services
2	Waste management and minimisation	Collection and disposal of waste: aftercare, landfill operations, street and kerbside rubbish bins, recycling collection and resource recovery centres, reusable materials depots, kerbside recycling, and transfer stations
3	Adaptation and emergency management	Flood protection and control works, adaptation and climate-related planning and actions eg. drought and fire protection. Emergency management
4	Public regulatory services	Building control, resources consent/planning compliance, environmental health, animal and dog control, bylaw enforcement, alcohol licensing, hazardous substances, nuisance complaints; Environmental protection: Air and water quality, pest management, biodiversity and biosecurity
5	Governance, planning and reporting	Council, committees, and financial matters related to the elected council and community boards. Long-term plans, infrastructure and management strategies, district and regional plans, financial and funding strategies, community and economic development plans, water services strategies, other Government mandatory reporting requirements
6	Community and recreational facilities	Libraries, museums, galleries, cemeteries and crematoria, recreational and sport facilities, including swimming pools and indoor sports centres. Community, heritage and village halls, community centres, public toilets
7	Parks and reserves	Parks and reserves and land-based functions associated with the reserve or park (may include sports fields, camping groups, walkways, playgrounds, etc)
8	Other	Community and economic development, grants, forestry, social housing, commercial and heritage property, community development and grants, marketing and communication, sustainability, international relations, events and festivals

These groups of activities reflect how communities understand the work that councils undertake

- 25 Councils are held accountable by their communities based on the information provided in planning and reporting documents like long-term plans.

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The proposed groups of activities reflect the areas that communities expect their councils to be providing and how communities view the services provided for them. Also, as a set of categories they are already reasonably familiar for councils. Many councils already report on these groups of activities, or similar groupings. Deciding on groups of activities that are already widely used will make the transition easier and provide a degree of consistency for councils and the public based on what they are already familiar with.

- 26 In setting the groups I have ensured there is a clear separation between core and non-core spending by councils. For example, the "other" group is comprised of activities that councils undertake at the interest and expectation of their communities, such as festivals and events, or property entrusted to them.
- 27 I have focused on making groups of activities that are logical and future focused. For example, it makes sense to combine adaptation activities with emergency management given the close links between them. Parks and reserves are together in a separate group to enable ease of reporting for the move to development levies, under the Government's Going for Housing Growth programme.
- 28 The groups will be able to be applied to all types of councils. Whether unitary, regional, metro, provincial, or rural, most councils are likely to be involved in activities in these eight groups in some way. Enabling groups that fit easily for all councils also helps with any structural changes to local government that may arise (including the proposed simplifying local government programme).
- 29 Further, the rates capping project currently underway has close ties to the development of these regulations. The monitoring system for rates capping will rely heavily on consistent, accurate, and clear council reporting, emphasising the importance of establishing comprehensive groups of activities.
- 30 The Department of Internal Affairs will issue guidance for councils that defines what each group includes and provide advice to councils on any potential reporting overlaps. I expect the quality of data collected will improve over time as the new reporting groups bed in.

Options that were considered but ultimately dismissed

- 31 Councils are required to report to Statistics New Zealand (StatsNZ) for the Local Authority Financial Statistics (LAFS) as part of government accounting and to meet international statistical standards. There are 15 groups used for this reporting covering the relevant areas.
- 32 I considered using the categories from the LAFS reporting but decided that broader categories and fewer groups better helped communities understand how their rates were being spent.

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Councils will need to publish funding impact statements for each group of activities and update their planning and reporting systems

- 33 For each group of activities councils are required to produce funding impact statements (FIS) that are included in long-term plans, annual reports and plans.² The information contained in a FIS includes the sources and amounts of funding used for a particular group of activities, as well as rating and charges information.
- 34 Setting eight mandatory groups of activities will mean some councils will need to reorganise the groups they currently report on, as many councils report on a greater number of groups than the mandatory five. Smaller councils, which tend to have a smaller number of groups of activities, may need to expand the number of groups they report on.
- 35 Requiring FISs for each group of activities means the data provided is audited and the quality is assured for its use as part of the rates capping programme.
- 36 Each council already has established processes for planning and reporting in relation to long-term plans, annual plans and annual reports. Councils will need to update their planning and reporting to align with the new mandatory groups of activities implemented in this policy.

Regularly collating and publishing the data reported by councils will be an ongoing process

- 37 Once new groups of activities are established and set in regulations, more easily accessible, clear and consistent information on councils will be available for the public. As data becomes available from councils' 2027 long-term plans, it will be included in council profiles on the Department of Internal Affairs' website. The next publication of council performance metrics is scheduled for July 2026. Reporting on new groups of activities as planned expenditure will be available in July 2027 and as actual expenditure in Annual reports in 2028. This will expand the areas of reporting to more closely resemble the New South Wales model.

Financial Implications

- 38 There will be a one-off cost for all councils to update their financial systems and processes. Implementation of the expanded mandatory groups of activities will likely result in some change for smaller councils because they tend to report on a smaller number of groups of activities than larger councils. This may increase their reporting costs, but I consider this balanced with the increased transparency afforded to rate payers.

Legislative Implications

- 39 I intend for the groups of activities to be set in regulations, as provided for in the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill once passed.

² Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 sets out the information that must be included in long-term plans, annual plans, annual reports and pre-election reports, including funding impact statements.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

- 40 The Ministry for Regulation has determined that this proposal is exempt from the requirement to provide a Regulatory Impact Statement on the grounds that it has no or only minor economic, social, or environmental impacts.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

- 41 The Climate Implications of Policy Assessment (CIPA) team has been consulted and confirms that the CIPA requirements do not apply to this policy proposal, as the threshold for significance is not met.

Consultation

- 42 As part of developing the proposed groups of activities officials tested policy proposals with a working group (consisting of experts from the local government sector).
- 43 I have consulted with Statistics New Zealand, the New Zealand Transport Agency, the Ministry for the Environment, the Infrastructure Commission, the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General and the Parliamentary Counsel Office. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet were informed.
- 44 The Minister for the Environment noted the importance of avoiding duplication of existing reporting requirements councils are subject to across other legislation, including the Waste Minimisation Act reporting on the waste levy spend.
- 45 The Department agrees that duplication of reporting should be avoided. It notes that councils are primarily responsible and accountable to their communities and ratepayers and the purpose of setting new groups of activities is to present information in a way that is accessible and understandable for them.
- 46 I seek approval to release an exposure draft of the regulations to councils and interested parties, such as local government peak bodies, in early June 2026. Targeted consultation will enable officials to assess any technical difficulties. It will also signal to the local government sector what will be required of them as they prepare their 2027 long-term plans, to ensure data is as high quality as possible.

Communications

- 47 I intend to issue a press release signalling these changes alongside the release of the Cabinet paper.

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Proactive Release

- 48 I intend to proactively release this Cabinet paper within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet, unless there is a good reason not to publish all or part of the material.

Recommendations

- 49 The Minister of Local Government recommends that the committee:
- 49.1 note the proposed new groups of activities in Table 1;
 - 49.2 approve the issuing of drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office for regulations for new groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting; and
 - 49.3 approve the release of an exposure draft to councils and other interested parties for consultation in early June 2026.

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Local Government

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Appendix A – Comparison of council groups of activities

Groups of activities (36 groups)	Marlborough District Council (12 groups)	Carterton District Council (9 groups)	Dunedin City Council (12 groups)	Rotorua Lakes Council (9 groups)
Administration and support services				
Community and planning				
Community facilities				
Community leadership				
Community safety				
Community support				
Corporate services				
District growth and development				
Economic development				
Environmental management				
Flood protection and control works				
Galleries libraries and museums				
Governance				
Governance and support services				
People				
Property				
Regional Development				
Regulatory				
Regulatory and planning				
Regulatory services				
Reserves and				

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Groups of activities (36 groups)	Marlborough District Council (12 groups)	Carterton District Council (9 groups)	Dunedin City Council (12 groups)	Rotorua Lakes Council (9 groups)
recreational facilities				
Roading and footpaths				
Roads and footpaths				
Sewerage and sewage				
Sewerage including treatment and disposal				
Solid waste management				
Spaces, places and recreation				
Stormwater				
Stormwater drainage				
Transportation				
Transport infrastructure				
Wastewater				
Waste and sustainability				
Waste management				
Water				
Water supply				

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6.5 Current Options for Managing Urban Expansion and Zone Issues

Author: Aaron Hakkaart, Planning Manager

Authoriser: Paul Cooper, General Manager Regulatory Development and Growth

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee receive and note the Current Options for Managing Urban Expansion and Zone Issues report.

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report outlines the options available to Council for addressing queries that seek to achieve large scale development that do not align with the underlying zoning of the Proposed District Plan (PDP). This report is framed around a potential 'residential' development on a 'rural' zoned site. It is noted that the same general approach can be applied to situations where an activity is proposed that does not meet the underlying intentions of the site as described in the District Plan.

Assessment of Significance

- 2 This report is not considered significant as it seeks no decisions and simply provides a discussion of available options for addressing development that is not anticipated by the current planning framework.

Discussion

Context

- 3 When considering a proposal that does not fit within the zoning framework provided for a specific site the usual approach is for the developer/ applicant to seek a resource consent from Council. When the proposal is of a scale or type that will have effects that are minor or more than minor this may result in the consent being limited or publicly notified.
- 4 Whilst this is common practice, in some instances the proposal may be of such a scale or be so contrary to the intention of the sites underlying zoning the progression through a consent process may be viewed as not worthwhile; in these instances, other avenues to realise a development can be explored.
- 5 Council has been in discussions with the development community about the perceived constraints of the PDP for our given topography, the restricted typology of housing in the Timaru District, and the community driven desire for more greenfield development to be made available.

When a Resource Consent is not Appropriate

- 6 An example of such a development would be a 200-allotment residential subdivision, on a site zoned for rural uses. Subdivision of the density proposed would be a non-complying activity in the General Rural Zone (GRUZ) (as the minimum density is 40ha in area). While an application could be made, it is unlikely that consent would be granted, because as a non-complying activity, one of the tests in s104D of the Resource Management Act (RMA) would

need to be met, being that the effects on the environment are no more than minor; or the activity is not contrary to the objectives and policies of the PDP.

- 7 On face value such a proposal would not pass either threshold, given there are an array of effects arising from urban development that are not anticipated under a rural zoning. In terms of objectives and policies, the density of development proposed would be contrary to SUB-O3:

SUB-O3 - Rural subdivision

Subdivision in the rural zones will:

- 1. avoid the fragmentation of productive land in the General Rural Zone; and*
- 2. maintain the low density open character of the General Rural Zone; and*
- 3. maintain a contrast between the rural environment and adjoining urban, Rural Lifestyle Zone and Settlement Zone; and*
- 4. avoid where possible, and otherwise minimise reverse sensitivity effects on primary production.*

- 8 Such a proposal would result in fragmentation of productive land in the GRUZ, would not maintain a low-density open character, nor maintain a contrast between the GRUZ and adjoining urban area.

- 9 It would similarly be contrary to SUB-P14:

SUB-P14 - Rural allotments

Avoid subdivision that creates allotments that are less than the required minimum allotment size within the General Rural Zone and Rural Lifestyle Zone unless:

- 1. the subdivided allotments are solely for the purpose of network utilities, esplanade reserves or esplanade strips, roads, walkways, cycleways or access; or*
- 2. the non-compliance is minor and the subdivision maintains the residential unit density anticipated for the zone; or*
- 3. the subdivision is necessary for natural hazard mitigation works; or*
- 4. the subdivision is necessary to protect the values of sensitive environments.*

- 10 Such a proposal would not avoid subdivision of allotments less than the required minimum allotment size, nor meet the 'exceptions' to this set out in that policy. It would also be contrary to the objectives and policies in the GRUZ Chapter, in that residential development does not align with the purpose (in GRUZ-O1); or the character and qualities anticipated for the zone (in GRUZ-O2).

- 11 Therefore, attempting to progress the type of residential development of the site that is envisaged, through a resource consent application under the current zoning, would be unlikely to succeed, and is therefore not a suitable option to facilitate such development.

Plan Change Process Options

- 12 When a resource consent is not considered an appropriate option, a further option is investigating a plan change which would alter the zoning to align with the intended development. There are two options for proceeding with a plan change:

- A private plan change, initiated by the applicant; or
- A Council-initiated plan change.

- 13 For a private plan change, the details of the proposal are put forward by the applicant, who also have control of the timeframe within which the application is prepared. The costs associated with the plan change are also borne by the applicant. Private plan changes are also automatically exempt (and therefore there is no barrier to them being undertaken) from the government’s recent changes to the RMA (“plan stop” legislation).
- 14 For a Council-initiated change, while working with the landowner/developer, the Council would ultimately determine the detail of the proposal and the timeframe for preparing the proposal. The costs associated with the plan change are also borne by the Council, albeit a cost sharing agreement could be negotiated to recoup some of the costs from the applicant.
- 15 The Council would also have to apply to the Minister for an exemption to the plan stop legislation before the plan change could be proposed. This is reliant on the Minister being satisfied that the proposed Plan Change enables work to be progressed that he or she “*considers appropriate*”. This creates an additional step in the process (and associated time) and a level of uncertainty as to whether an exemption will be granted.

Plan Change Process Requirements

- 16 The success of a plan change (whether privately or Council-initiated) is reliant on it being determined that this zoning is the most appropriate option for achieving the objectives of the PDP. This would ultimately turn on the effects of the rezoning and whether/how these could be managed and weighing up the costs and benefits of the rezoning, and overall efficiency and effectiveness of the rezoning in achieving the PDP objectives.
- 17 In my experience, the following technical assessments would be required to support the rezoning:

Assessment	Relevance
Landscape	Consideration of the effects of urban-scale development from a visual and landscape character perspective. Necessary to confirm whether the visual changes arising from the development are suitable in the context of the site and surrounding area.
Urban Form	Consideration of the suitability of the site for an expansion of the urban area, and how it would fit into the overall ‘form’ of the Timaru Township. As shown in Maps 1 & 2, the site is adjacent to the current urban boundary, but separated by some distance from the township’s current residential areas, and commercial areas that serve residential needs. This assessment would need to consider whether this is appropriate.
Economic	Confirmation that the additional development is required to provide for expected demand. This is necessary to understand if there is a market for the type of development proposed and that the development facilitated by the zoning is likely to be realised (i.e. to avoid inefficiencies arising from the land being rezoned, but sitting undeveloped for a long period).
Servicing	High-level information on how the site would be serviced from a water, wastewater and stormwater perspective. The purpose of this is to confirm that the site is able to be appropriately serviced, and therefore that the type of development facilitated by the zoning is able to be realised.
Geotechnical and Hazards	Assessment of any potential hazards affecting the site, and whether these make the site unsuitable for residential-scale development, or how they might be addressed. For example, the site is identified as being within a flood assessment area, so assessment of this potential hazard and whether flooding risk can be appropriately managed would be required. This would also include a preliminary

	geotechnical assessment to evaluate the soil and ground conditions of the site, including soil composition, bearing capacity and groundwater levels.
Integrated Transport Assessment	Consideration of the traffic effects arising from the rezoning and the capacity of the surrounding transport network to absorb these impacts. This would include identification of any upgrades required to ensure the increased traffic is able to be accommodated into the network in a safe and efficient manner. Given the location of the site adjoining a state highway, this will require engagement with the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.
Preliminary Site Investigation	Assessment of the potential for the site to contain contaminated soils, and the potential risk to human health arising from the change of use. Where there are potential contamination issues, this would include recommendations for how these might be able to be managed such that the contamination need not preclude the rezoning.

- 18 Without knowing further details about ‘the site’ and its history, there is also a possibility that other technical assessments might be required, for example:
- 18.1 An archaeological assessment would be required if it is likely that archaeological material is present within the site.
 - 18.2 A noise assessment would be required if there are established activities in the area creating an existing level of noise that could give rise to reverse sensitivity effects from residential activities being established on the site.
 - 18.3 An ecological assessment would be required if there is indigenous vegetation on the site that could be impacted by the proposed development.
- 19 It is also important (and required under the RMA) that the proposed rezoning is discussed with rūnanga at an early stage, to identify any potential effects on cultural values and how these might be able to be managed. This might also require a cultural impact assessment to be undertaken.
- 20 Therefore, a plan change provides a suitable process to facilitate the type of residential development that is being discussed. However, the success of any specific plan change proposal is dependent on technical assessment being able to be obtained that confirms that the site is both suitable for residential development, and that the effects of this type of development are able to be appropriately managed.
- 21 A key consideration for this example is the appropriateness of the urban form that the rezoning would result in, and whether the location proposed would integrate with existing urban form to produce a well-functioning urban environment.
- 22 Two of the key benefits of using this pathway are that it is likely to be quicker than waiting for reform to enable on-the-ground development to occur; and it is more focussed on the suitability of the site for residential development compared with continued rural use, rather than a comparison of the residential development of this site against other locations for such development.

Reform and Spatial Planning

- 23 The proposed Planning Act includes a requirement for each region to create a long-term Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This process is intended to identify sufficient future urban development areas, and integrate this urban growth with infrastructure planning, and with environmental or other constraints. The proposed Planning Act would see RSS’ notified within

15 months of the Planning Act coming into force (noting that this may change depending on the final form of the Planning Act).

- 24 The RSS process would allow for areas within the Timaru District to be identified for future urban growth. The process for identification of areas within the District would be led by the Council, and occur ahead of, and in order to feed into, the notification of the RSS. This will require some technical assessment, but that this would generally be at a higher more strategic level, and/or would include consideration and assessment of multiple options/areas for growth (and as such, the costs of the assessment would be spread).
- 25 Land use plans (the equivalent of the district plan) would then be required to implement the RSS; and therefore, areas identified for growth in an RSS would need to be subsequently identified as such in a land use plan. However, some additional technical assessments would still be required, to feed into the land use plan. For example, more specific assessments of effects of development and how these might need to be mitigated (for example, more detailed transport assessments and whether specific intersection upgrades are required).
- 26 If a site is identified in the RSS for future residential growth, this would provide certainty that the development proposed will be facilitated, with the land use plan process being more about the details of how this is managed (rather than whether this is appropriate).
- 27 Although the details of spatial planning are yet to be worked through, the key benefits of using this pathway are that inclusion in the RSS provides a greater level of certainty to facilitate the development, and the costs of assessing the suitability of the site at the RSS level are likely to be much lower than those associated with a plan change. However, there is still uncertainty as to what sites (if any) would be included in the RSS, and the process is likely to be longer than a plan change would take. Another key consideration is that the RSS process would consider multiple locations for residential development and likely compare their suitability.

Attachments

Nil

6.6 Consultation Options for developing an Evidence Base

Author: Aaron Hakkaart, Planning Manager
Elliot Higbee, Legal Services Manager

Authoriser: Paul Cooper, General Manager Regulatory Development and Growth

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee receive and note the Consultation Options for Developing an Evidence Base report.

Purpose of Report

- 1 Long-term public interest planning requires social licence. Generating social licence requires disciplined and planned stakeholder and community engagement. The Planning Bill¹ is changing how New Zealand plans, and regional spatial plans (RSP) are foundational to that change. The RSP's will set Canterbury's strategic direction for development and public investment priorities for at least 30 years.
- 2 The new planning system's top-down approach means that Council's "land use plans"² and long-term plans are required to "implement"³ the RSP, whilst regional land transport plans are required to be "consistent"⁴ with the RSP.
- 3 Public input into this process is intentionally "funnelled": the RSP is drafted using targeted sectoral and community involvement⁵, and then the draft RSP is determined through an Independent Hearing Process (IHP) which receives public submissions on the draft RSP⁶.
- 4 As Council prepares for the requirement to develop a Regional Spatial Plan (RSP), it is important to understand how to best engage with stakeholders and the community to support their involvement in the *drafting* of the RSP. This report acts as a starting point for this discussion.

Assessment of Significance

- 5 This report is not considered significant. No decisions are sought and further work will be carried out in accordance with Council's significance and engagement policy.

Background

- 6 New Zealand is moving into a new era of planning. With the shift from the Resource Management Act to the new planning framework: demand and growth, infrastructure, and environmental management will be considered in a more connected way. Central to this approach are RSP's, which relevantly "must":

¹ Currently before select committee, to be reported back to Parliament on 26 June 2026, and intended to pass into law shortly after. Budget 2026 allocates more than \$261M over three years to implementing the new Planning System.

² What are currently called "District Plans"

³ See cl 68(1)(a) and (e) of the Planning Bill

⁴ Cl 68(1)(c)

⁵ Cl 69(1)(g):

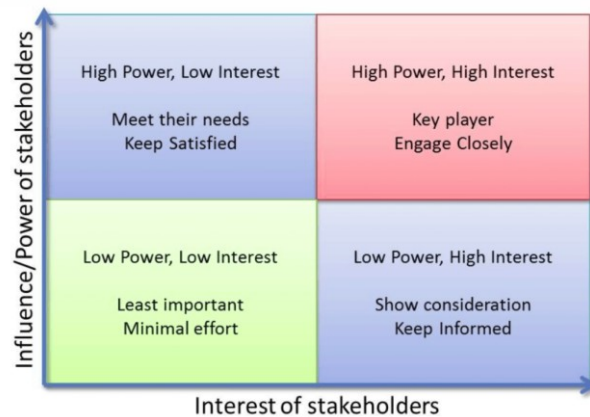
⁶ Schedule 2, subparts 3 and 4

- 6.1 “set the strategic direction for development and public investment priorities in a region for a time frame of not less than 30 years”; and
- 6.2 “support a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure funding and investment by central government, local authorities, and other infrastructure providers”; and
- 6.3 “promote integration of development planning with infrastructure planning and investment.”⁷
- 7 Because subordinate plans, like land use plans, and long-term plans must “implement” the RSP, it will in effect set the long-term priorities for the Timaru District and show where development and investment can happen.
- 8 RSP’s bring together land use, infrastructure, and environmental considerations into a long-term framework. For the community, developers and infrastructure providers this offers opportunities to shape the direction of our community, how its grows and responds to demand changes.
- 9 Early engagement in a spatial plan development gives insight, aligns projects with regional priorities, and creates clarity for decision-making. Waiting until the public hearing process maybe too late, by then the draft RSP will have been set which will largely anchor the scope of what can be then changed, and the process will be undertaken by, and through the IHP.
- 10 The process of preparing the draft RSP requires the local authorities of the region to agree on the following matters, with stakeholder and community involvement bolded:
- (a) the key geographical areas, issues, and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on:
 - (b) the roles of each local authority in the process, including how the local authorities will work together:
 - (c) how the local authorities will work with central government, including relevant agencies and Crown entities:
 - (d) how the local authorities will work with other local authorities in adjacent regions:
 - (e) how each local authority will ensure that its obligations or agreements under iwi participation legislation or agreements under that legislation, existing joint management agreements, or existing or initiated Mana Whakahono ā Rohe are upheld during the process:
 - (f) how the spatial plan committee will consult iwi authorities in the region:
 - (g) **how the local authorities will work with infrastructure providers, development and sector groups, others with a strong interest in spatial planning, and communities.**
- 11 This report recommends, based on feed back of the most recent district plan, that sector groups and community aspirations for the district need to be identified and used in setting strategic direction prior to any statutory hearing process. In other words, this council needs to identify now how it will work with infrastructure providers, development and sector groups with a strong interest in spatial planning, and its communities on what they want out of the RSP [based on indicative timeframes, the statutory process may begin by August 2026].
- 12 One way of framing the question is: What is the district’s strategic direction for public investment and development over the next 30 years, and how should it be captured and expressed to demonstrate social licence to inform the drafting of the RSP?

⁷ Cl 67 – along with integrating strategic decision making, and implementing national direction

Stakeholder Engagement

- 13 There are many different methods and channels for community engagement, and Council will need to ensure the community engagement component of the program is complementary to the range of other engagement work that occurs within the district.
- 14 The below matrix identifies a framework for identifying stakeholder groups and audiences. It is proposed that this will be built on, populated, and refined as part of the evidence building phase of this work, which is currently underway.




- 15 A key element in stakeholder engagement is also managing expectations. As with any Council led process, decisions will have to be made. There will be legislative constraints, and concepts that need to be factored in. This creates the need for clear processes around key decisions and outputs so that all those involved are clear from the beginning at to the process and constraints being considered, and the product is fit for purpose.

Options for Directly Engaging Stakeholders and the Community

- 16 It is firstly important to be clear that there will be a decision under cl 69(1)(g) by the local authorities of the region agreeing on how they will work with stakeholders and the community in preparing the draft regional spatial plan. On the basis this decision will be better if it is informed, Officers have started thinking through how this might occur.
- 17 Practical steps have been taken, with officers utilising an informal meeting with an industry stakeholder group where a high-level discussion was held around the reforms that are occurring and how these may impact our communities. This initial discussion was at the request of existing group. The discussion was well received, provided a useful insight into how the community can be engaged with, and resulted in a request for a similar meeting with a different stakeholder group. The group appeared very keen to see the Timaru District get the most from the new planning system.
- 18 Moving forward there is a need to develop an approach to engagement that informs participants so that their aspirations are expressed and captured in a way that supports Timaru District's vision in the draft RSP. The approach needs to talk the new planning language. Officers are exploring simple survey tools to support this type of engagement as well as summary templates.
- 19 The concept of meeting with stakeholder groups could also be extended to the formation of reference groups, allowing for officers to test the data and feedback with a broader array of stakeholders and community members. As noted above the key to successfully including this type of data is having well thought out and developed methods to record the feedback; whilst ensuring the RSP process has been set up to consume this information.

Options for Broader Engagement

- 20 To support the collection of additional data to inform the evidence, it is also important to create ways of speaking to the community on their terms, and at their locations, that are convenient for the people the process is trying to reach. Reaching the people that are hard to reach is a key component for any engagement process, as it is often the same people who take the time to engage in public processes time and again, meaning that the silent majority's voice is often missed.
- 21 An important aspect for engagement is informing the reference group, to ensure that views are grounded in a coherent information set.
- 22 Options include wide reaching surveys that can quickly gather information and create the opportunity to engage in a more detail focussed way. Such data gathering exercises can also be helpful in informing the requirements for additional technical reporting to test the information that the community is directly providing. The level to which this occurs will be informed by the participation goals and the known impacts of the decision, which are still subject to legislative processes:

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Source: [IAP2 Australasia](#)

Building the Engagement Plan

- 23 As part of the project to prepare for the RSP an engagement plan will be developed. This will include responses to the feedback received from the community to date, and the direction received from this Committee and Council as a whole. It is intended that any engagement plan will be developed in conjunction with in-house expertise, utilising best practice tools. As technical information becomes available this will be able to inform this process resulting in an overall strategy for Council to engage with the requirements of this new legislative process.
- 24 Although there are strong steers as to what the planning language will be, such as the recent Central Government announcement that the asset management approach for all Council

activities will occur within the infrastructure strategy, which requires demand response planning⁸ – national direction on the RSP is still pending.

Attachments

Nil

⁸ See the proactive release of the Cabinet minute and paper: *Regulations for groups of activities for councils' planning and reporting* link: [here](#) and s 101B(3)(b) which will now require the Council's infrastructure strategy to outline how all activities' assets are managed "taking into account the need to ... respond to growth or decline in the demand for services reliant on those assets".

6.7 Draft Information Disclosure on Council's Policy for funding Growth

Author: Elliot Higbee, Legal Services Manager

Authoriser: Stephen Doran, General Manager Corporate

Recommendation

That the Development and Growth Committee:

1. Receives and notes this report and the draft disclosure for the Commerce Commission on the Council's Policy for Funding Growth; and
2. Provides comment, noting the disclosure will go to Council on 30 June 2026 for adoption, and then be provided to the Commerce Commission.

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the draft disclosure to the Commerce Commission on the Council's Policy for Funding Growth, before Council authorisation on 30 June 2026. The disclosure will then be provided to the Commerce Commission as required under Information Disclosure requirements.

Assessment of Significance

- 2 The significance is minor as the disclosure simply restates Council's current position.

Background

- 3 Central Government's water reform policy programme includes economic regulation, and specifically Information Disclosure (ID) which apply to water service providers such as Timaru District Council (TDC).
- 4 On 14 April 2026 this committee was provided with a background paper to these ID requirements.
- 5 One of those requirements relates to TDC's funding for growth policy settings. These policy settings are currently located in three different places: the long-term plan, along with the Revenue and Financing Policy sets the overall approach. The district plan then sets the technical rules for financial contributions. Then the fees and charges schedule sets the costs for connection charges.
- 6 These documents are on different review cycles, and do not benefit from clear integration. It is not proposed to undertake a synthesis of these disparate funding approaches. As previously noted to this committee, the first issue to resolve with recovering growth capital costs is that Asset Management Plans do not factor this component.

Discussion

- 7 The relevant ID rules are:

4.7 Policy for funding growth

- (1) A regulated supplier must disclose the information specified in this clause on the regulated supplier's policy relating to funding growth.

- (2) The information is—
 - (a) an explanation of the regulated supplier’s approach to funding growth; and
 - (b) the regulated supplier’s reasons for taking that approach, which must include a statement of whether, and if so, a demonstration of how,—
 - (i) growth is self-funded; and
 - (ii) projects that are attributed to growth as well as renewal or improvement to the level of service are at least partially funded by connection charges or growth charges (or both).
- (3) The information must include—
 - (a) every type of charge or obligation that is related to new connections or other type of growth and that is or may be payable to the regulated supplier, or to a related party of the regulated supplier; and
 - (b) the circumstances in which each charge or obligation applies (for example, in the case of a subdivision).
- ...
- (5) ... subclause (3)(a) and (b) applies to a charge or obligation regardless of the form or mechanism by which the charge or obligation is imposed (for example, self-payment and vesting, or financial contributions under the Resource Management Act 1991).
- (6) The regulated supplier must disclose the information at the single service level.
- (7) A regulated supplier that adopts a new policy or amends its policy must disclose the information specified in this clause within 10 working days of the date on which the policy was adopted or amended.

8 The disclosure is meant to challenge the narrative that “growth pays for growth”, when it is notorious that this is not the case. Central Government’s reform of local government includes the enactment of development levies which will drive significant transparency on cost recovery for growth capex. This ID is a step on that journey.

Options and Preferred Option

9 The disclosure is mandatory. There are options about the style and structure of the content, but the source material (the underlying policies) has been set using different statutory procedures that would need to be utilised for any material change to the content. There is limited time to undertake these before disclosure, however changes could be requested and programmed into a Council workstream.

Consultation

10 The disclosure has been internally consulted with relevant officers.

Relevant Legislation, Council Policy and Plans

- 11 Local Government Act 2002
- 12 Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025
- 13 Commerce Act 1986
- 14 Water Services Disclosure Determination 2026 [2026] NZCC 3
- 15 Timaru District Council’s Long-term Plan
- 16 Timaru District Council’s Revenue and Financing Policy
- 17 Timaru District Council’s Fees and Charges Schedule
- 18 Timaru District Council’s District Plan

Other Considerations

- 19 There is an ongoing obligation on Timaru District Council, as a water service provider, to update the Commerce Commission if the policy settings for growth capital charges applying to water supply, and wastewater change.
- 20 Oral updates on the balance of ID disclosure (dividends, charging and minor aspect supplier) will be provided at the committee meeting.

Attachments

1. **Draft ID disclosure_policy for funding growth (June 2026)** [↓](#) 



XX June 2026

DRAFT

XXXX
Head of Water Regulation
Commerce Commission | Te Komihana Tauhokohoko
PO Box 2351
Wellington, 6140

By Email: XXXX@comcom.govt.nz

Dear XXXXX

Economic Regulation of Water – Policy for Funding Growth and information about charges

1. Timaru District Council confirms it implements a suite of policies, along with fees and charges, for funding growth, which this disclosure restates for the purposes of the Water Services Disclosure Determination 2026 [2026] NZCC 3 (the Determination).

Explanation for Council's approach to funding growth (cl 4.7(2)(a))

2. Council provides water supply and wastewater services, and recovers the growth charge for changes in demand for these services through, as appropriate:
 - a. Financial contributions
 - b. Development agreements or vested asset arrangements
 - c. Connection charges
3. Council has adopted an approach where growth largely pays for growth through one of the three identified funding methods. Capital costs not able to be recovered through one of these funding methods would likely be debt funded.
4. Administrative costs in processing applications to connect to the water supply, or wastewater network are recovered through "Infrastructure Group Administration Fees"; for completeness this disclosure includes these fees.
5. Council does not use development contributions, or IFF levies.

The reasons for this approach (cl 4.7(2)(b))

6. The reason for this approach is the exacerbator principle,¹ and the low levels of growth the Council has which often “can be managed within the existing levels of service”². This is demonstrated by Council’s approach where a connection charge is generally sufficient to account for increased service demand, allowing financial contributions or negotiated arrangements to manage more bespoke growth impacts on the networks.

What are the charges or obligations that relate to a new connection or other type of growth that may be payable, and what are the circumstances they are imposed? (cl 4.7(3)(a) and (b))

7. As noted above these are financial contributions, development agreements / vested assets, or connection charges. These contributions are recovered at the time someone wants to connect to the water supply, or wastewater network. This is a “services consent”, which is typically progressed through a resource consent or a building consent application.
8. The following links provide the policy and fees and charges details:
- a. Financial contributions³:
 - i. [Proposed District Plan Financial Contributions Objectives, Policies and Rules](#)
 - ii. [Proposed District Plan Financial Contributions Appendix](#)
 - b. Long-term Plan: [Long-term Plan 2024-34](#)
 - c. Revenue and Financing Policy: [Revenue and Financing Policy](#)
 - d. Connection charges:
 - i. [Infrastructure Administration Fees](#)
 - ii. [Water Supply Fees](#)
 - iii. [Wastewater Fees](#)

Yours faithfully

Nigel Trainor
Chief Executive

e. nigel.trainor@timdc.govt.nz
p. 03 687 [Ext]

¹ See s 101(3) of the LGA 2002, and the Revenue and Financing Policy

² See LTP growth assumption at page 207

³ Note the final decision on the proposed district plan was made 19 March 2026, and no appeals on the financial contribution policy framework have been received and therefore these provisions are operative.

7 Consideration of Urgent Business Items

8 Consideration of Minor Nature Matters