



Our key decisions

Ngā whakataunga matua





Decisions on key issues

Ngā whakataunga matua

Council consulted on the Long-term plan between 29 February and 2 April 2024.

We asked the public about seven key areas:

- Funding Elderly Persons Housing
- Climate Change - Investing in emissions reduction
- Introducing separation for glass recycling
- Other plans to support social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing
- Our Roadmap to Renewal programme, plans for Three Waters and our Infrastructure Strategy
- Our plans for rates and the Financial Strategy
- Our proposed changes to the Rating Policy and other policies
- Our proposals to change the way we rate

People also shared their views on a range of other topics, which Council considered.





Elderly Persons Housing

We have started a programme to renew and, where necessary, replace our housing units.

We want to ensure this important service continues to be available as our population ages. We also know by having quality options available for older people this increases the number of other houses available for families. We have completed heatpump installations for all 216 of our units and are half way through a programme to provide double glazing to increase energy efficiency. Four new build units in Stirrat St have just been completed. To continue this work we need to change how housing is funded. Previously, rent from the tenants pays all the costs of maintenance of housing. To build replacement houses faster we would need to pay some of the cost from general rates.



What we proposed

To matou tono

The following options were consulted on:

Option One

Provide some funding from general rates to help replace aging houses faster.

- Additional \$7.7 million capital expenditure
- 0.08% rates increase in 2024/2025 with additional annual increases adding to a total 0.61% by 2030/2031
- Level of service increase
- Debt increase
- Cost to ratepayer - Total \$1.2m yearly from 2025/2026 onwards
- Average rates increase = \$47.23 (year) - \$0.91 (week)

Option Two

Maintain the current funding policy and reduce the speed of replacement of houses.

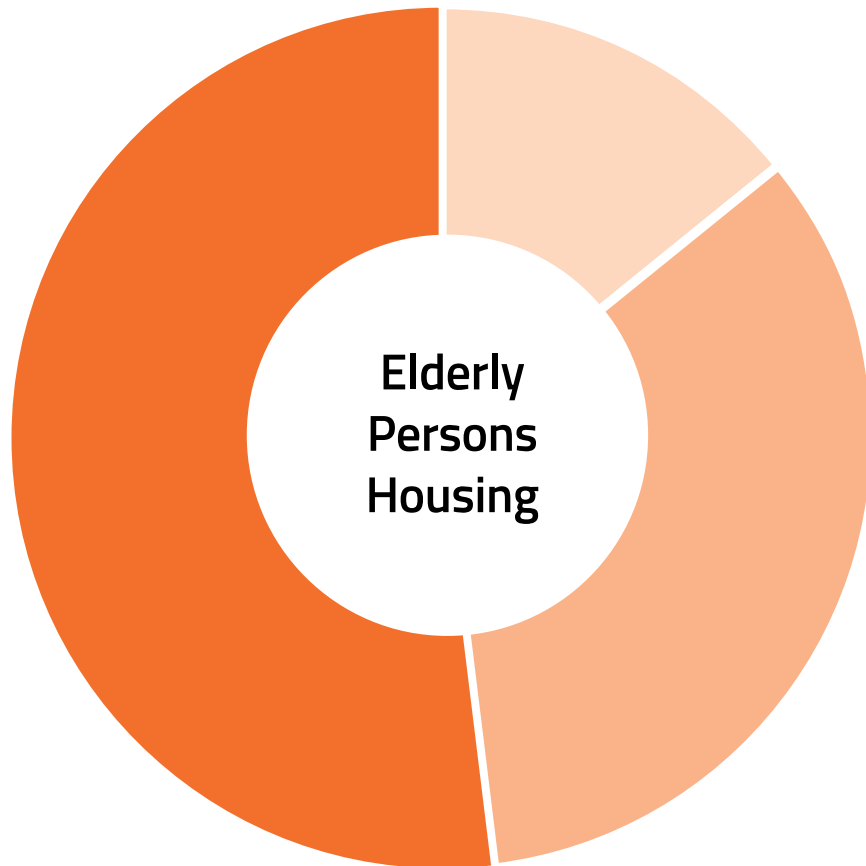
- Rating impact - No impact on rates
- No level of service increase
- Debt increase



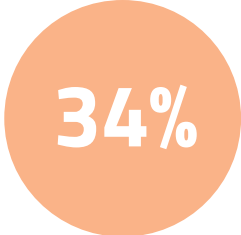
What you told us

Ā koutou kōrero

One hundred and forty two (142) people submitted on the elderly persons housing issue.



52% of 142 submissions on this topic were in favour of Option one.



34% believed Council should invest in Option two.

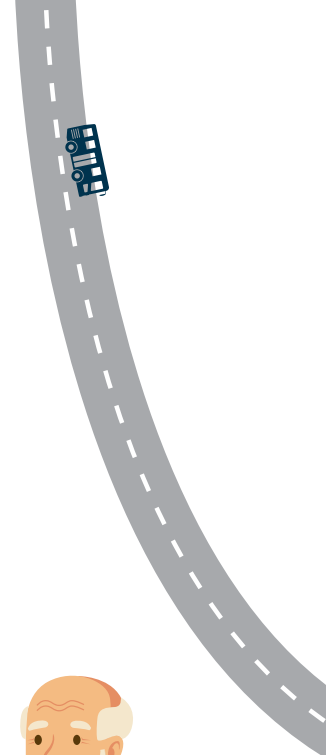


14% believed Council should do nothing.

Many submitters agreed with Council that housing was an important issue but there was disagreement on the best approach for Council to take.

Some noted the social importance of housing for vulnerable elderly people and as a result supported Council investing rates funding. A few submitters wanted Council to focus on inclusive accessible design and do more to make quality housing available to a broader group in the community, including considering papa kianga housing.

Others such as the Chamber of Commerce and other submitters believed that this was not a core issue for Council and on balance managing costs across Council was more important. Some submitters thought that if Council was going to act on housing, focusing on the District Plan regulations and forging partnerships with private sector developers would be a better approach.



Our decision

Te whakataunga

Council has opted to proceed with its preferred option by allocating an additional \$7.7 million in capital expenditure to replace aging housing. The budget allocated for this initiative, as consulted, will enable Council to undertake further maintenance on existing elderly housing units and develop a small number of additional units. While social housing provision primarily falls under the responsibility of the Central Government, this initiative aligns with the Council's social wellbeing framework and aims to support elderly citizens facing challenges in finding suitable housing in the current market.





Climate Change – Investment in Emissions Reduction

We have worked with Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama to develop a draft Regional Climate Change strategy. This shows how we will work together to reduce carbon emissions and to adapt to climate change as a region.

We have been working on a range of ways to reduce our emissions, including converting the Splash Palace boiler from lignite to wood pellets, converting small parks maintenance equipment to electric, switching our street lights to LED, changing our vehicle fleet to hybrid and planting more trees. For this LTP we are proposing setting targets for the first time, with the goal of reducing our emissions by a further 5% by 2027. We are planning for the impacts of climate change – increased flooding, drought and sea level rise. Examples of this include investment in larger stormwater pipes, the Stead St stopbank upgrades and installation of rain gardens, to reduce flow

into the stormwater system during heavy rain in Esk and Don St, as well as utilising newly available data for our Sandy Point Masterplan. We need to understand more about future impacts of climate change to help us make key decisions about infrastructure and update our District Plan hazard management approaches. We are working with Environment Southland, who have developed a plan to ensure we'll have the information we all need to support decision making over the next few years. We wanted to know what you think about the proposed Regional Climate Change Strategy and our plans to support its implementation.



What we proposed

To matou tono

The following options were consulted on:

Option One

Allocation of \$200,000 a year for Council to use to implement carbon emission reduction initiatives.

- Level of Service increase
- Equivalent to 0.28% of rates increase
- Increase in debt \$0.91 (week)

Option Two

No change to the current approach of ad-hoc carbon reduction initiatives from existing budgets, noting that many of the easier reduction initiatives have already been implemented so this may slow progress.

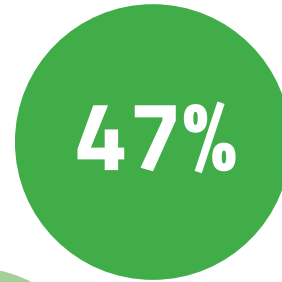
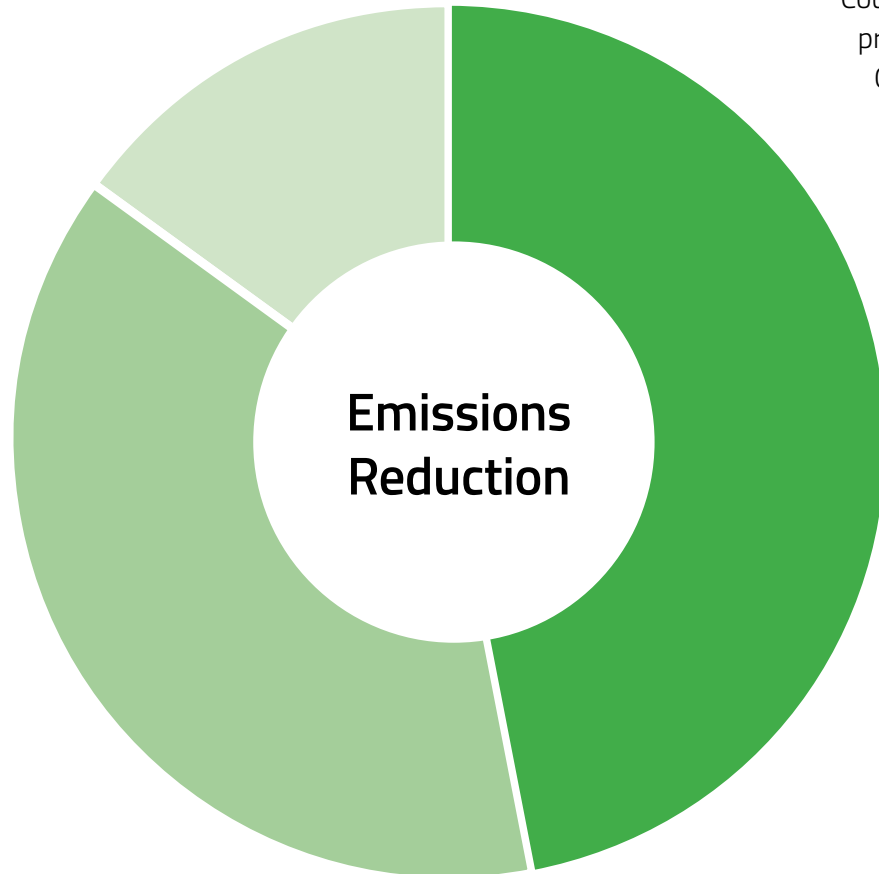
- No change to the level of service
- No impact on rates
- No impact on debt



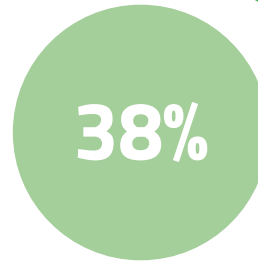
What you told us

Ā koutou kōrero

One hundred and thirty six (136) people submitted on the emissions reduction issue.



47% of 136 submissions on this topic were in favour of Option one.



38% believed Council should proceed with Option two.



15% believed Council should do nothing.

Those who supported the investment believed it was important that Council show leadership or suggested specific areas for consideration such as changes to lower emissions vehicles or more support for cycling. A few thought the proposals have not gone far enough and significantly more should be invested.

Of those who were opposed to investment most thought that it was not required, either because the issue did not warrant it, that the investment would not be well spent or because it would be better to focus on adaptation to climate change. Some submitters were concerned about the need to spend on this when the cost of living was rising.



Our decision

Te whakataunga

Council's preferred approach for emissions reduction was to establish an annual operational fund of \$200,000, designated for internal initiatives aimed at reducing the Council's in-house emissions.

In response to community feedback, Council decided to reduce the operational fund to \$100,000, acknowledging Council's ongoing evolution in addressing climate change.

This adjustment will still enable Council to progress promising projects to reduce emissions which may not otherwise have been possible. The lower level of funding available may mean that targets to reduce emissions are achieved at a slower pace.





New glass recycling bin

The options were:

Option One

This option would mean a new bin for every property that currently receives recycling services. As well as new bins, the cost of the service will need to cover the new trucks needed to collect waste from these bins. Council anticipates under this new system about 90% of glass would be able to be reused within aggregate products, such as road surface, and there will be a reduction in contamination. There will be improvements in health and safety for people processing the waste and improved sustainability from less waste being sent overseas.

The average annual targeted rate for this service will increase by \$29.72 in 2025/2026 to \$271.73 (GST excluded). This represents a 0.84% increase in the total rates in 2025/2026.

Level of Service increase.

Option Two

We would provide eight new bottle banks around the city (six in Invercargill and two in Bluff) for those who want to continue to recycle glass.

Glass picked up from houses would need to be placed into red bins and would go to landfill. We anticipate under this option most glass would end up in landfill, which would increase collection costs and significantly impact Council's waste reduction targets. Council may need to review this decision if the Ministry for the Environment require a blue bin glass system in the future.

The average targeted rate would increase by \$12.57 in 2025/2026 to \$254.58 (GST excluded).

This represents a 0.34% increase in the total rates in 2025/2026.

Level of service reduction.

What we proposed

To matou tonu

The following options were consulted on:

Option One

Preferred Option - Introduce a new 140 litre fortnightly blue glass recycling bin collection service

- \$1.65 million investment into purchase of additional bins for glass collection in 2024/2025
- \$0.65 million ongoing operational costs from 2025/2026
- Level of service increase from 2025/2026
- Level of debt increase.

Option Two

Current Recycling System – supported by Bottle banks

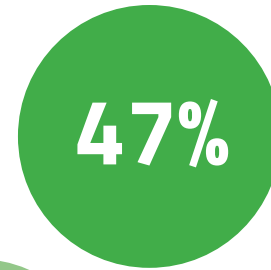
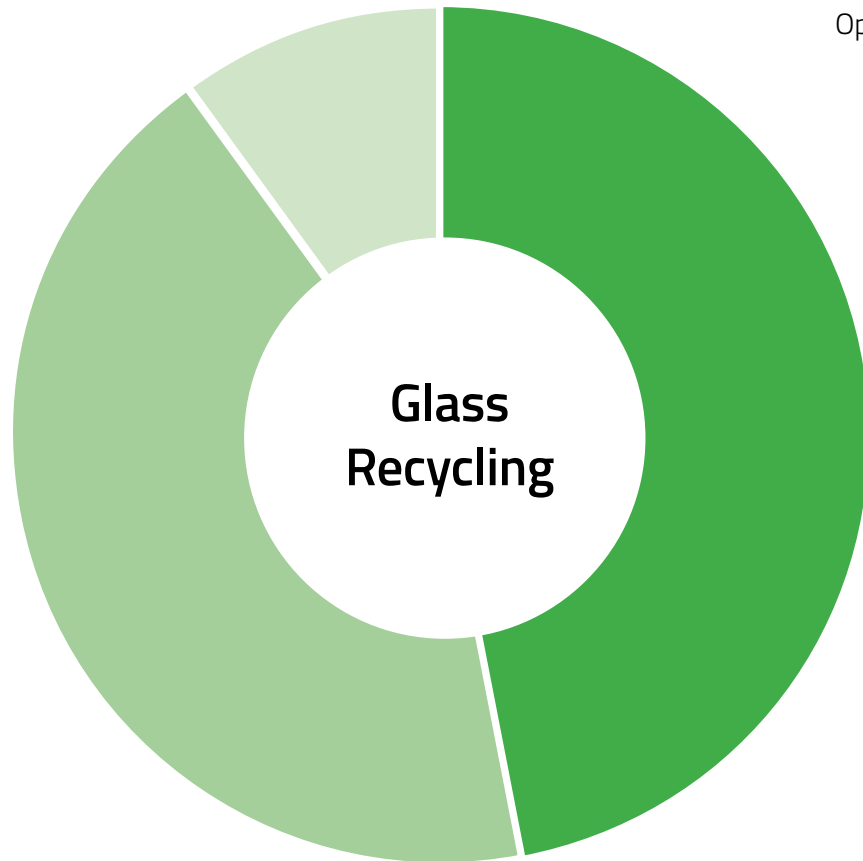
- Level of debt increase
- \$47,821 investment in new bottle banks
- \$276,635 annual operational costs increase.



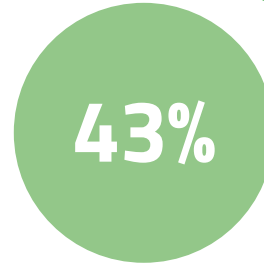
What you told us

Ā koutou kōrero

One hundred and thirty six (136) people submitted on the glass recycling issue.



47% of 136 submissions on this topic were in favour of Option one.



43% believed Council should invest in Option two.



10% believed Council should do nothing.

Some people wanted more flexibility in how often red and yellow bins are picked up with some wanting greater frequency and some less. Some wanted the option to opt out. Others believed that the red bin size should be increased as a more immediate priority. Some raised a preference for green bins for compostable waste.

Those who were opposed to a new bin were opposed to the cost, opposed to complicated multiple bins, or believed they did not personally have enough glass recycling to warrant it or believed green waste was more important. Some were concerned that good use is not now being made of glass collected as it was and this was unlikely to change.

Some submitters thought that bottle banks were a step backwards and that few people would make the effort to take their glass there, with the result of more ending up in landfill. Others believed an incentive was needed. Some mentioned the Australian system of payment for returned bottles/cans.



Our decision

Te whakataunga

After considering all the issues, the Council decided not to proceed with the proposed glass recycling options due to uncertainty about the best option for the region. Instead, they requested WasteNet to explore more glass recycling options during contract renewal within three years.



Our other plans to support social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing

What you told us

Some people wanted Council to focus on the basics, get that right and focus on keeping rates down.

Buses were raised by many submitters including young people. People were supportive of the extension of the service at the start and end of the day. There were many suggestions for improvement of the route or service, including new routes either within town or connecting other areas in Southland or improvements to bus stops. A new route to and from the airport was mentioned by a number of submitters.

The low mow pilot and/or high levels of grass or weeds was an important issue to many.

Many submitters raised ideas for different options for play, including playground equipment, games and other ideas. These will be considered by the team as part of the development of a Play Strategy for the city.

Some submitters wanted to explore new ways of sports working together in the city.

Some submitters were concerned about potential plans to sell some parks and reserves land. A smaller number thought this could be a good idea if it could keep rate increases down.

Some submitters raised issues at Elizabeth Park and/or were supportive of Council creating a strategy for this park or wanted work to commence earlier.

The new changing rooms at Splash Palace were supported by some submitters with a number mentioning that this would reduce the time they needed to wait with their families to change. A smaller number were opposed on grounds of cost.

Heritage NZ submitted on the importance of maintaining heritage values.

A number of submitters were supportive of investment in the Welcoming Communities programme to support Invercargill retaining more people who move to the city. Where there was opposition this was linked to believing this was better done by the many charities operating in this area.

Our Decision

It was decided the introduction of a longer day for the bus service should wait until after a further review.

The increase in grants funding for heritage was reduced and the funding increase to Great South for regional development was reduced.

The Low Mow pilot has ended early in response to community feedback.

Our Roadmap to Renewal programme, plans for three waters and our Infrastructure Strategy

What you told us

Urban play was mentioned by a few submitters. Some submitters argued that it was not essential but a “nice to have” and that there were enough play areas in other parts of the city.

A few submitters mentioned the city centre investment and believed more projects like ICL should be supported. Several were proud the direction the city was moving in.

Art was an important issue to many submitters. Some submitters were concerned that Arts and Creativity Invercargill had been removed from the Roadmap and that this could risk a future arts project. Other submitters did not support further investment in arts as a “nice to have”. Some preferred that arts return to the Museum site in the park.

A few submitters questioned the need for another pool, including where it would physically be located.

A few submitters raised the possibility of a combined facility for different sports at Rugby Park or questioned why Council was supporting this project.

A number of submitters were supportive of Council’s projects in Bluff, with many supporting prioritising delivery of a safe swimming solution.

Our Decision

Council determined to stop work on Rugby Park following completion of the currently contracted work in order to give time for work on the scoping study for a new multi-use solution to be developed.



Core Infrastructure and the Infrastructure Strategy

What you told us

A number of submitters said that the city is benefiting from the investment which has been made over the years in infrastructure and that it was important to maintain investment in this area.

Many supported the Council's planned water infrastructure programme; others were concerned about whether it was necessary. Some were concerned that more needed to be done to improve environmental outcomes, including in the estuary.

Some submitters raised the issue of cycling, with the majority wanting more investment in cycle paths to connect the city and other measures to promote safe cycling. This was a priority to Youth Council.

Safety was a priority for many, including outside schools and for people with disabilities.

Some submitters raised concern about footpath maintenance. Some areas of focus included Bluff and South Invercargill.

Some submitters raised that more investment was needed to be made in road maintenance to reduce the number of potholes. A number of submitters raised the condition of state highways including the road to Bluff. A few submitters raised sealing of gravel roads.

Our Decision

No significant changes to the core infrastructure programme and the strategy were made in response to submissions, although a school safety initiative was prioritised within existing budgets in response to the safety issues raised. Some changes were made in order to make savings, including the delay of non-critical work of painting the Doon St reservoir roof.

A change was made to the funding of depreciation reducing funding of all categories of assets by 5% in 2024/2025.



Our plans for rates and the Financial Strategy

What you told us

Some submitters were concerned about the levels of rates, particularly in relation to challenges with the cost of living.

A number of submitters were concerned about the increase in debt and what the plan would be to repay this debt. Others noted that they believed this was a fair way to spread the cost across today's and future generations.

A request was made to change the farming rating differentials and Uniform Annual General Charge.

Our Decision

As a result of economic conditions a number of changes were made to the financial strategy, including to the inflation and interest rates assumptions and to the approach to depreciation.

No change was made to the Uniform Annual General Charge and Farming Rating Differentials.

