

Gore District Council Local Government Statement February 2026

1.0 What is a Local Governance Statement?

The Gore District Council's (the Council) Local Governance Statement provides information about the processes through which it engages with its residents, outlines how the Council makes decisions, and provides guidance about how citizens can influence those processes.

This Statement helps support the purpose of local government by promoting local democracy. The Statement does this by providing the public with information on the ways to influence local democratic processes.

The Council's Governance Statement is required under Section 40 of the Local Government Act 2002. The Council is required to produce a new Governance Statement within six months after each triennial election. In addition, the Council may update its Governance Statement during the triennium if it is deemed appropriate.

1.1 Content of Local Governance Statements

The Council's Local Governance Statement contains information about:

- The functions, responsibilities and activities of the Council.
- Any local legislation that confers powers on the Council.
- The electoral system and the opportunity to change that system.
- Representation arrangements, including the option of establishing Māori wards or constituencies, and the opportunity to change them.
- Members' roles and conduct (with reference to the Code of Conduct and any statutory requirements as to members' roles and conduct).
- Governance structures and processes (including the membership and delegations to any subordinate decision-making structures such as Council Committees).
- Meeting processes (including the relevant provisions of the LGOIMA and any Standing Orders).
- Consultation policies.
- Policies for liaising with Māori and any memoranda or agreements with Māori (and specifics on how the Council intends to discharge its obligations to Māori under Sections 14, 81 and 82).
- The management structure and the relationship between management and elected members.
- The Council's Equal Employment Opportunities Policy.
- Key approved planning and policy documents and the process for their development and review.
- Systems for public access to the local authority and its elected members.
- Processes for requests for official information.

1.2 Access to Local Governance Statement

The Council shall make its Local Government Statement available to any member of the public who requests a copy of it, without fee. In addition, it will be available on the Council's website (www.goredc.govt.nz), at its civic administration office, public libraries in Gore and the Maitua Service Centre/Library.

2.0 Contents of the Local Governance Statement

2.1 Functions, responsibilities and activities

Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states that the purpose of local government is to:

- enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, local communities, and
- promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future.

The Council is accountable to the citizens of the Gore District for the planning, direction, and management of resources to meet the present and future needs of the District.

The Council has adopted the following vision statement:

Ensuring a sustainable future by growing the Gore District's economy through innovation, good planning and responsible financial management.

Achieving this vision will result in the following outcomes:

Outcome One – Our communities have access to a range of quality facilities and services.

Outcome Two – Our District is supported by an innovative and diversified economy with local opportunities.

Outcome Three – Our urban and rural environments are people friendly, well planned and sustainably managed.

Outcome Four – Our communities have opportunities to celebrate and explore their heritage, identity and creativity.

3.0 Local legislation

The Council has no local legislation applying to it.

4.0 Bylaws

The Council has approved the following bylaws:

- i. **Alcohol Ban Bylaw 2017**
General description: Control of liquor consumption in the Central business districts of Gore and Mataura.
Commencement date: 1 August 2017
- ii. **Cemeteries Bylaw 2022**
General description: Control and set standards for the operation of cemeteries.
Commencement date: 1 August 2022
- iii. **Dog Control Bylaw 2025**
General description: Control and regulation of dogs in the District.
Commencement date: 14 May 2025
- iv. **Keeping of Animals, Poultry and Bees Bylaw 2022**
General description: Control of animals in localities where they could be a nuisance or threat to public health or safety.
Commencement date: 1 July 2022
- v. **Long Grass and Overhanging Foliage Bylaw 2018**
General description: Controlling long grass and noxious plants and overhanging foliage on footpaths in specified urban areas.
Commencement date: 1 September 2018
- vi. **Roading Bylaw 2025**
General description: Regulation of Council roads and footpaths by setting speed limits for vehicles, parking controls, management of stock movements on roads and providing requirements for the construction, maintenance and use of crossings.
Commencement date: 1 July 2025
- vii. **Skateboard Ban Bylaw 2018**
General description: Prohibition of riding skateboards in the commercial/retail area of Gore.
Commencement date: 1 May 2018
- viii. **Solid Waste Bylaw 2020**
General description: To provide for collection and disposal of refuse in an efficient and cost-effective manner, serving the interests of public health, enhancing the amenity of the residential and business environment and protecting the natural environment while at the same time ensuring that any impact on the road network in the district is kept to a minimum.
Commencement date: 1 July 2020

ix. Subdivision and Land Development Bylaw 2019

General description: Sets out the Council's standards which are required to be adopted when undertaking subdivision or land development.

Commencement date: 4 June 2019

x. Trading in Public Places Bylaw 2018

General description: Licensing of hawkers, mobile shops and street stalls.

Commencement date: 1 July 2018

xi. Trade Waste Bylaw 2016

General description: The regulation of trade waste to the Council's sewerage systems, in order that the Council can meet its commitments for resource consents held for the discharge of treated sewerage.

Commencement date: 19 December 2016

xii. Water Bylaw 2015 – Amendment 1, 2018

General description: The protection of the water supply and imposition of conditions on usage.

Commencement date: 15 January 2019

5.0 Electoral systems

The Gore District Council currently operates its elections under the first past the post electoral system. This form of voting is used in parliamentary elections to elect Members of Parliament to constituency seats. Electors vote by indicating their preferred candidate(s), and the candidate(s) that receives the most votes is declared the winner regardless of the proportion of votes that candidate(s) obtained.

The other option permitted under the Local Electoral Act 2001 is the single transferable vote system (STV). A small number of Councils use STV. Electors rank candidates in order of preference. The number of votes required for a candidate to be elected (called the quota) depends on the number of positions to be filled and the number of valid votes. The number of candidates required to fill all vacancies is achieved:

- By counting elector's first preferences and the election of those who reach the quota.
- Then by a transfer of 'spare' votes (over the quota from those candidates proportionally to all their voters' second preferences.
- Then by the exclusion of the lowest polling candidates and the transfer of these votes in accordance with voters' second preferences.
- These steps continue until enough candidates have reached the quota and have been elected.

5.1 Deciding on which electoral system to use

Under the Local Electoral Act 2001

- The Council can resolve to change the electoral system to be used at the next two elections without a poll;
- The Council can resolve to conduct a binding poll of eligible electors on which electoral system to use; or
- Electors can demand that a binding poll be undertaken.

A poll can be initiated by at least 5% of electors signing a petition demanding that a poll be held. Once changed, an electoral system must be used for at least the next two triennial general elections.

5.2 The voting system for the Council's triennial elections

The Council's last review of electoral systems was completed in 2024.

6.0 Representation arrangements

6.1 Wards

The Gore District is divided into three Wards as follows:

Gore Ward	5 Councillors
Rural Ward	2 Councillors
Mataura Ward	1 Councillor

Three Councillors are elected at large across the District.

The Mayor is elected at large across the District.

6.2 Community Board

Community Boards are constituted under Section 49 of the Local Government Act 2002 to:

- Represent and act as an advocate for the interests of their community.
- Consider and report on any matter referred to it by the Council and any issues of interest or concern to the Community Board.
- Make an annual submission to the Council on expenditure in the community.
- Maintain an overview of services provided by the Council within the community.
- Communicate with community organisations and special interest groups in the community.
- Undertake any other responsibilities delegated by the Council (currently the Council has not delegated any such responsibilities).

The Gore District has one Community Board – the Mataura Community Board, which was established in August 2003. The Board has five members elected from the Mataura Ward.

The Community Board elects its own chairperson at its first meeting after election. There are at present no electoral subdivisions within Wards for the purpose of electing Community Board members. Accordingly, the electors of the Ward elect all the members for their Board.

At its last Representation Review in 2024, the Council resolved that the Maitāhara Community Board remain unchanged with five members.

6.3 Review of representation arrangements

The Council is required to review its representation arrangements at least once every six years. The review must include the following:

- The number of elected members (within the legal requirement to have a minimum of six and a maximum of 30 members, including the Mayor).
- Whether the elected members (other than the Mayor) shall be elected by the entire District (ie at large) or whether the District will be divided into Wards for electoral purposes, or whether there will be a mix of “at large” and “Ward” representation.
- If election by Wards is preferred, to determine the boundaries and names of those Wards and the number of members that will represent each Ward.
- Whether or not to have separate Māori Wards.
- Whether to have community boards and if so, how many, their boundaries and membership, and whether to subdivide a community for electoral purposes.

The Council must follow the procedure set out in the Local Electoral Act 2001 when conducting this review and should also follow guidelines published by the Local Government Commission. The Act gives residents the right to make a written submission to the Council, and the right to be heard.

Residents also have the right to appeal any decisions on the above to the Local Government Commission, which will make a binding decision on the appeal. Further details on the matters that the Council must consider in reviewing its member and basis of election can be found in the Local Electoral Act 2001.

The Council reviewed its representation arrangements in 2024. Changes included:

- the Kaiwera-Waimumu and the Waikaka Wards amalgamated to form an enlarged single rural ward, from which two Councillors will be elected. This change reflected a singular community of interest in rural issues and will provide more choice for voters in the composition of the Council.
- meshblock 3052402, in which the Bupa Retirement Village is situated, transferred from the current Kaiwera-Waimumu Ward to the adjoining Gore Ward, due to the urban characteristics of the majority of the population within that meshblock.

- the Gore Ward, with the addition of meshblock 3052402, is represented by five Councillors

6.4 The reorganisation process

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

- Make changes to the boundaries of the District.
- Create one or more new territorial local authorities (City or District Councils).
- Create a unitary authority, ie transfer the functions of the Southland Regional Council to the Gore District Council.
- Transfer a particular function or functions to another Council.

The procedures for resolving each type of proposal are slightly different. In general, they begin with an application being made to the Local Government Commission by any person or group which may include one or more effected local authorities or the Minister of Local Government.

Any application must include information that demonstrates that the application has community support in the district of each affected territorial authority. Evidence of community support may include (but is not limited to): a petition of affected electors; questionnaires or surveys of residents; submissions or other correspondence about existing or proposed local government arrangements; and meetings with community members or their representatives in which views on the existing or proposed local government arrangements are expressed.

The Local Government Commission (the Commission) must be satisfied that any preferred option will best promote in the affected area, the purpose of local government and facilitate improved economic performance.

Once a draft proposal is developed the Commission must give public notice and invite submissions. Submitters have the right to appear before the Commission at a hearing.

Once a final proposal by the Commission is publicly notified, it becomes final unless 10% or more of affected electors enrolled in one of the affected districts demand a poll within 60 working days of the first public notification of the proposal. A crucial change from previous legislation is that any poll is determined by the total votes cast in the total affected area subject to the proposed reorganisation. If more than 50% of valid votes cast in the poll are in favour of a final proposal then it proceeds.

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

Sections 19Z and 19H of the Local Electoral Act 2001 give the Council the ability to establish separate wards for Māori electors.

7.0 Members' roles and conduct

The Mayor and the Councillors of the Gore District Council have the following roles:

- Setting the policy direction of the Council.
- Monitoring the performance of the Council.
- Representing the interests of the District (on election all members must make a declaration that they will perform their duties faithfully and impartially, and according to their best skill and judgment in the best interests of the District).
- Employing the Chief Executive (under the Local Government Act, the local authority employs the Chief Executive, who in turn employs all other staff on its behalf).

7.1 Mayor

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

- Provide leadership to other elected members and to the people of the District.
- Presiding member at Council meetings. The Mayor is responsible for ensuring the orderly conduct of business during meetings (as determined in standing orders).
- Advocate on behalf of the community. This role may involve promoting the community and representing its interests. Such advocacy will be most effective where it is carried out with the knowledge and support of the Council.
- Ceremonial head of the Council.

In addition, the Mayor has the following specific powers:

- Appointment of the Deputy Mayor.
- Establishment of committees.
- Appointment of chairpersons of each committee.

7.2 Deputy Mayor

The Deputy Mayor is elected by the members of the Council at the first meeting of the Council. The Deputy Mayor exercises the same roles as other elected members. In addition, if the Mayor is absent or incapacitated, or if the office of Mayor is vacant, then the Deputy Mayor must perform all of the responsibilities and duties, and may exercise the powers of the Mayor (as summarised above).

The Deputy Mayor may be removed from office by resolution of the Council. The Council may create one or more committee(s) of the Council. A committee chairperson is responsible for presiding over meetings of a committee, ensuring that the committee acts within the powers delegated by the Council, and as set out in the

Council's Delegations Manual. A committee chairperson may be removed from office by resolution of the Council.

7.3 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is appointed by the Council in accordance with Section 42 and Clauses 33 and 34 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002. The Chief Executive implements and manages the Council's policies and objectives within the budgetary constraints established by the Council. Under Section 42 of the Local Government Act 2002, the responsibilities of the Chief Executive are:

- Implementing the decisions of the Council.
- Providing advice to the Council and Community Board.
- Ensuring that all responsibilities, duties and powers delegated to the Chief Executive or to any person employed by the Chief Executive, or imposed or conferred by any Act, regulation or bylaw are properly performed or exercised.
- Managing the activities of the Council effective and efficiently.
- Maintaining systems to enable effective planning and accurate reporting of the financial and service performance of the Council.
- Providing leadership for the staff of the Council.
- Employing staff (including negotiation of the terms of employment for the staff).

7.4 Conduct of elected members

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

- Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002, which includes obligations to act as a good employer in respect of the Chief Executive and to abide by the current Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.
- The Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 which regulates the conduct of elected members in situations where there is, or could be, a conflict of interest between their duties as an elected member and their financial interests (either direct or indirect).
- The Secret Commissions Act 1910, which prohibits elected members from accepting gifts or rewards which could be seen to sway them to perform their duties in a particular way.
- The Crimes Act 1961 regarding the acceptance of gifts for acting in a certain way and the use of official information for private profit.
- Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013 which places elected members in the same position as company directors whenever the Council offers stock to the public. Elected members may be personally liable if investment documents such as a prospectus contain untrue statements and may be liable for criminal prosecution if the requirements of the Act are not met.

- The Health and Safety Act at Work Act 2015 which aims to create a new culture towards health and safety in workplaces. A Council is termed a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) - all involved in work, including elected members, are required to have a duty of care. Elected members are “officers” under the Act and officers are required to exercise due diligence to ensure that the PCBU complies with its duties.
- The Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015 which helps people dealing with serious or repeated harmful digital communications. The Act covers any harmful digital communications (such as text, emails or social media content) which can include racist, sexist and religiously intolerant comments – plus those about disabilities or sexual orientation and sets out ten communication principles for guiding communication online.
- The Local Government (Pecuniary Interests Register) Act 2022 requiring a local authority to keep a register of the pecuniary interests of their members, including Community Board members. The purpose of the register is to record members’ interests to ensure transparency and strengthen public trust and confidence in local government processes and decision-making.

7.5 Code of Conduct

All elected members are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct. Adopting such a Code is a requirement of the Local Government Act 2002. Once adopted, such a Code may only be amended by a 75% or more vote of the Council. The Code sets out the Council’s understanding and expectations of how the Mayor and Councillors will relate to one another, to staff, to the media and to the general public in the course of their duties. It also covers disclosure of information that is received by or is in the possession of elected members, and contains details of the sanctions that the Council may impose if an individual breaches the Code. Copies of the full Code of Conduct may be obtained from the Council office or from the website www.goredc.govt.nz.

The Gore District Council’s Code of Conduct provides guidance on the standards of behaviour expected of elected members in their dealings with:

- Each other
- The Chief Executive
- Staff
- The media
- Members of the public

The objective of the Code is to enhance:

- The effectiveness of the Council as the autonomous local authority with statutory responsibilities.
- Local government of the Gore District.
- The credibility and accountability of the Council within its community.

- Mutual trust, respect and tolerance between the elected members as a group and between the elected members and management.

8.0 Governance structures and processes

The following is a list of members of the Gore District Council:

Mayor

Mr Ben Bell
Email: bbell@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 021 962 883

Deputy Mayor

Cr Joe Stringer (District Wide)
Email: jstringer@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 021 168 2532

Councillors

Cr Andy Fraser (Gore Ward)
Email: afraser@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 695 5451

Cr John Gardyne (Rural Ward)
Email: jgardyne@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 223 3736

Cr Stewart MacDonell (Rural Ward)
Email: smacdonell@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 202 7530

Cr Paul McPhail (Gore Ward)
Email: pmcphail@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 208 7393

Cr Robert McKenzie (Gore Ward)
Email: rmckenzie@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 208 0005

Cr Neville Phillips (District Wide)
Email: nphillips@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 229 9601

Cr Donna Bruce (Gore Ward)
Email: dbruce@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 577 9434

Cr Nicky Coats (Mataura Ward)
Email: ncoats@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 021 224 3282

Cr Torrone Smith (District Wide)
Email: tsmith@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 027 819 4996

Cr Mel Cupit (Gore Ward)
Email: mcupit@goredc.govt.nz
Phone: 022 121 5846

The Council reviews its Committee structures after each triennial election. At the last review, the Council established the following standing Committees:

Risk and Assurance – to provide governance oversight of activities and services including risk management framework, risk management of internal controls, financial risk management, health, safety and wellbeing risk management, information technology, information management and cybersecurity, people and culture, legislative compliance, internal audit and assurance programme, external audit and assurance programme, financial planning, reporting and control, treasury activities, debt funding and interest risk management and insurance policies.

Membership

- His Worship the Mayor Bell
- Ms Giselle McLaughlan (Independent Chair)
- Cr Smith (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Stringer
- Cr McPhail
- Cr Gardyne
- Cr MacDonell
- Cr Fraser
- Cr Cupit

Portfolios

Councillors have also been assigned the following portfolios during the current term:

Regional Relationships

- Cr Phillips (Lead)
- His Worship the Mayor Bell (Co-lead)

Infrastructure and Assets

- Cr Gardyne (Lead)
- Cr MacDonell (Co-lead)

Arts and Recreation

- Cr Fraser (Lead)
- Cr McPhail (Co-lead)

Community and Communication

- Cr Coats (Lead)
- Cr McKenzie (Co-lead)

9.0 Council organisations

The Council has non-controlling interests in numerous Council organisations, by virtue of appointing one or more Board members or Trustees. These are generally not-for-profit bodies and include:

Eastern Southland Gallery
Gore A&P Association Joint Management Committee
Hokonui Heritage Centre Trust
Hokonui Moonshine Museum Trust
Regional Land Transport Committee
St James Theatre Trust
Dolamore Trust Board
Gore Health Inc
Pioneer Women's Memorial Trust
Southland Regional Heritage Committee
Southland Museum and Art Gallery
Community Networking Trust
Great South Joint Shareholders Committee
Welcoming Communities
Southland Warm Homes Trust
Croydon Aviation Heritage Centre
Gore Counselling Centre
Southern Equestrian Park Trust
Creative Communities Assessment Committee
Rural Travel Fund Assessment Committee

9.1 Meeting processes

The legal requirements for Council meetings are set down in the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). All Council and Committee meetings must be open to the public unless

there is reason to consider some item “in committee” (ie these items are deemed to be confidential, and members of the public will be asked to leave the room until discussion on the item has been completed). Although meetings are open to the public, members of the public do not have speaking rights unless prior arrangements are made with the Chairperson of the meeting concerned.

The LGOIMA contains a list of the circumstances where Councils may consider items with the public excluded. These circumstances generally relate to protection of personal privacy, professionally privileged or commercially sensitive information, and the maintenance of public health, safety and order.

The Council agenda is a public document, although parts may be withheld if the above circumstances apply.

The Mayor or Committee Chairperson is responsible for maintaining order at meetings and may, at his or her discretion, order the removal of any member of the public for disorderly conduct, or remove any member of the Council who does not comply with standing orders.

Minutes of meetings must be kept as evidence of the proceedings of the meeting. These must be made publicly available, subject to the provisions of the LGOIMA.

For an ordinary meeting of Council, at least 14 days’ notice of the time and place of the meeting must be given. Extraordinary meetings generally can be called on three working days’ notice.

During meetings the Mayor and Councillors must follow standing orders (a set of procedures for conducting meetings). The Council may suspend standing orders by a vote of 75% of the members present. A copy of the Code of Conduct and standing orders can be viewed on the Council’s website

10.0 Significant engagement

The Council adopted a Significance and Engagement policy at its meeting on 30 June 2025. The aims of the policy are to:

- a) Ensure our community knows how and when they can expect to be engaged in Council decision-making processes.
- b) Provide guidance on the degree of significance to be attached to issues, proposals, assets, decisions and activities.
- c) Guide the Council’s decision-making on consultation and engagement.

The Local Government Act sets out certain consultation principles and a procedure that local authorities must follow when making certain decisions. This procedure, the special consultative procedure, is regarded as a minimum process.

The Council can and does consult outside of the special consultative procedure. When it is adopting its Long-term Plan or District Plan the Council will hold formal meetings with community groups and other interested parties. At these meetings the Council will seek views on matters the Council considers to be important and identify issues of concern to the community. The special consultative procedure consists of the following steps:

- **Step one: Preparation of a statement of proposal and a summary**

The Council must prepare a description of the proposed decision or course of action. The statement must be available for distribution throughout the community and must be available for inspection at the Council office and may be made available elsewhere. The Council also has to prepare a full and fair summary of the proposal which must be distributed as widely as the Council considers to be reasonably practicable. That statement must be included on an agenda for a Council meeting.

- **Step two: Publish the statement**

The Council must publish a notice in one or more daily newspapers, or in other newspapers of equivalent circulation, of the proposal and of the consultation being undertaken

- **Step three: Receive submissions**

The Council must acknowledge all written submissions and offer submitters a reasonable opportunity to make an oral submission. The Council must allow at least one month (from the date of the notice) for submissions.

- **Step four: Deliberate in public**

All meetings where the Council deliberates on the proposal or hears submissions must be open to the public (unless there is some reason to exclude the public under the LGOIMA). Submissions must be made available unless there is reason to withhold them under LGOIMA.

- **Step five: Follow up**

A copy of the decision and a summary of the reasons must be provided to submitters. There is no prescribed format for such a summary. By law, the Council must follow the special consultative procedure before it:

- Adopts a Long-term Plan (LTP)

- Amends an LTP.
- Adopts, revokes, reviews or amends a bylaw.
- Changes the mode of delivery for a significant activity (for example from the Council to a Council-controlled organisation or from a Council controlled organisation to a private sector organisation) if that is not provided for in the LTP.

The Council may be required to use the special consultative procedure under other legislation, and it may use this procedure in other circumstances if it wishes to do so.

11.0 Policies for liaising with, and memoranda or agreements with, Māori

Māori and the Gore District Council

The Local Government Act provides principles and requirements for local authorities that are intended to facilitate participation by Māori in local authority decision-making processes. This is to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to take appropriate account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision-making processes.

These principles and requirements are outlined as follows:

- Local authority decision-making – where, in the course of the decision-making process, a significant decision relates to land or a body of water, the Council will take into account the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites, wāhi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga.
- Contributions to and involvement in decision-making processes – the Council will provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to and be involved in the decision-making processes of the council and will also consider ways to foster the development of Māori capacity. This includes tangata whenua appointments to hearing panels, and appointments on to Standing Committees.
- Consultation with Māori – the Council has in place processes for consulting with Māori which are in accordance with the principles of consultation as set out in section 82 of the Local Government Act.
- Supporting implementation, use and understanding of Te Tangi a Tauira – The Cry of the People - Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Resource and Environmental Management Plan 2008.

- Supporting projects initiated by Māori that involve direct management of the region's natural resources.
- Development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority. These opportunities include:
 - Provision of information to all Māori to underpin processes that assist effective contribution to the decision-making processes of the Council;
 - The Council, where practicable, will continue to make available resources such as maps and GIS services;
 - Building capacity to enable contribution of all Māori to the decision-making processes of the Council. Related to this process is the need for the Council to gain a clear understanding of expectations through hui and ongoing relationships with all Māori to agree and commit to practicable steps to building capacity. This includes shared capacity support for an Iwi Policy Officer position;
 - Support for the development of Independent Hearing Commissioners within tangata whenua;
 - Ongoing consideration on a case-by case basis for the provision of support to assist all Māori with resourcing, opportunities for training and engagement and promotion of matters that are of mutual benefit;
 - Ongoing promotion and education of staff and governors to develop skills in Māori tanga, Tikanga Māori and Te Reo Māori and gain an appreciation of the needs and expectations of all Māori in relation to the Local Government Act and the Resource Management Act;
 - Effective and efficient consultation to improve existing relationships, processes and protocols related to local government and resource management issues.

Tangata whenua and the Gore District Council's relationship

The Council has a Charter of Understanding with Hokonui Runanga which was entered into on 14 December 2021. The Charter provides a framework for the Council and Hokonui Rūnanga to work together on activities and opportunities that enhance their shared aspirations and give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Its foundation is built on respect for each other's roles, responsibilities and mana in their respective takiwa.

Hokonui Rūnanga is represented on the Gore District Plan Sub-Committee to methodically work through a range of policy issues in preparation for notification of a review of the Gore District Plan. A good level of collaboration and respect has been evident in the sterling work performed by the subcommittee, with the Mana whenua chapter of the proposed District Plan being written by Hokonui Rūnanga representatives. This is evident of the Charter of Understanding in operation.

12.0 Management structures and relationships

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

The Chief Executive is Ms Debbie Lascelles. Her contact details are:

Debbie Lascelles
Chief Executive
Gore District Council
PO Box 8
Gore 9740
Email dlascelles@goredc.govt.nz
Phone (03) 209-0330

Council management is organised into four divisions:

1. Critical Services

General Manager: Mr Jason Domigan
Email jdomigan@goredc.govt.nz
Phone (03) 209-0330

Activities covered include roading, 3 Waters, waste disposal, emergency management and climate change.

2. Operations

General Manager: Mr David Bainbridge-Zafar
Email dbainbridge-zafar@goredc.govt.nz
Phone (03) 209-0330

Activities covered include parks and recreation, aquatic services, arts and heritage, District libraries.

3. Chief Finance Office and Governance and Corporate Support

General Manager: Ms Lornae Straith
Email lstraith@goredc.govt.nz
Phone (03) 209-0330

Activities covered include financial management, insurance, debt management, IT, facilities administration, communications, people and culture, customer support, governance and democracy.

4. Business Transformation Manager

Manager: Mrs Mallory Cooper-Tait
Email mcooper@goredc.govt.nz
Phone (03) 209-0330

13.0 Equal Employment Opportunities Policy

The Local Government Act 2002 requires the Council to act as a 'good employer'. This includes a specific requirement to have an equal employment opportunities policy.

The Council's Equal Employment Opportunities Policy is as follows:

Nature and scope

The Gore District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in the recruitment, employment, training and promotion of its employees.

To ensure all personnel policies reflect the fundamental principles of EEO in:

- Recruitment
- Education and corporate training
- Individual training opportunities
- Employment conditions

The organisation will provide:

- A welcoming, positive environment that does not discriminate against any group.
- Good, safe working conditions.

- Opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees.

Objectives and measures

To continue to develop commitment to the principles and objectives of our EEO policy and promote and develop the skills throughout the organisation so that they may realise and pursue their full potential without bias.

Performance measure	Achievement
To provide a wide range of training opportunities to enable staff to develop career opportunities.	Both specific individual and corporate training is provided.

To obtain the best suited person for each vacancy and to provide a workplace free of discrimination, fully supportive and acknowledging the diverse needs of all staff.

Performance measure	Achievement
Maintain awareness amongst staff of EEO principles and their implementation in an importance to the Gore District Council.	EEO principles have been promoted and implemented throughout the organisation.

14.0 Key approved planning and policy documents

The following have been identified as key Council planning and policy documents. To view these plans, please refer to the Council's website (www.goredc.gvot.nz) or contact the Council on (03) 209 0330).

14.1 The Long-term Plan (LTP)

Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2002 requires Councils to prepare a Long-term Plan (LTP) every three years, with an annual plan to be prepared in the intervening years.

The purpose of the LTP is to communicate the Council's objectives and proposed activities, describe the community outcomes of the District, provide integrated decision-making and coordination of the Council and provide a long term focus for the decisions and activities of the Council.

In 2024, the Government allowed councils the option to delay their Long-term Plans due to uncertainties around the Three Waters reform. The Council decided to accept this option, meaning the current Long-term Plan is for a nine-year period (2025-2034) and 2024/25 was covered by the production of an enhanced annual plan.

The Council will move to back a 10-year plan in June 2027.

14.2 Policy manual

The Council's policy manual provides a full list of all policies approved by the Council. The policies provide guidance for staff and Councillors in the areas of discretionary decision-making. Adoption and adherence to the policies enables consistent application of discretion, consistent decision-making by staff and the Council and consistent treatment of the public, service groups and companies. The policies provide a transparent process and criteria. The policy manual is reviewed periodically. Policies can be reviewed, added or deleted at any time through normal Council processes.

14.3 Annual Plan

The Annual Plan is developed from the Long-term Plan, the Council's funding policy and community consultation. It includes information on the Council's policies, actions and funding that are to be undertaken over the coming financial year and provides information in general terms for the following two financial years. Any significant changes from the previous Annual Plan's policies, objectives, significant services and performance measures are explained.

Section 95 of the Local Government Act requires the Council to undertake consultation with the community if the Annual Plan includes significant or material differences from the content of the Long-term Plan.

The Annual Plan must include:

- The nature and scope of the significant services to be undertaken.
- The performance measures and other measures used to monitor, measure, and review Council's performance.
- An outline of the indicative costs (i.e. proposed expenditure) and the sources of funds.
- An outline of Council's funding and financial policies.
- Forecast financial statements for the year, including:
 - An estimated and forecast statement for the beginning and end of the financial year.
 - An operating statement (reflecting forecast revenues and expenses).
 - A statement of cashflows.
- An explanation of changes (variations) between the current Annual Plan and the Long-term Plan.

14.4 Annual Report

After the end of the financial year, the Council publishes an annual report which contains audited accounts for the previous financial year. The annual report must:

- Compare the actual performance with the proposed performance set out in the plan.
- Comment on the performance of all organisations included in the Annual Plan.
- Be produced within four months of the end of the financial year.
- Contain an audited financial statement, set of accounts, and annual financial report which assesses Council's financial performance against its budget.

14.5 Asset Management Plans

Asset Management Plans are blueprint documents for the broad-based funding requirements for the District's infrastructure, and have strong linkages to the production of the funding and financial policy, Long-term Plans and the Annual Plan. These plans focus on asset management, asset service levels, depreciation and replacement of the District's major infrastructural assets. The Council's Asset Management Policy and Plans were reviewed in 2025 during the development of the 2025-34 Long-term Plan.

The Council's Asset Management Plans are:

- Infrastructure asset management – water supply, wastewater and stormwater
- Infrastructure asset management – landfills
- Parks, property and recreation asset management plan
- Roading

14.6 Reserve Management Plans

Reserve management plans	Date of adoption	Due for review
Reserve Management Plan Volume 1: General Policies	10 May 2016	As required
Reserve Management Plan Volume 2: Policies relating to individual reserves	10 May 2016	As required
Reserve Management Plan Volume 3: Town Belt Reserves	1 May 2017	As required
Reserve Management Plan Volume 4: Dolamore Park Scenic Reserve	1 May 2017	As required

14.7 Other existing key Council plans, policies and strategies Include:

Document name	Date of adoption	Due for review
Asset Management Policy	18 March 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Financial Strategy	30 June 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Infrastructure Strategy	30 June 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Investment Policy	18 March 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Liability Management Policy	18 March 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Remission of Rates Policy	18 March 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Significance and Engagement Policy	30 June 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Revenue and Financing Policy	30 June 2025	With the next Long-term Plan review or 1 June 2028, whichever is sooner
Gore District Plan	January 2026	Every 10 years

15.0 Systems for public access

15.1 Contact details for the Gore District Council

Gore District Council
29 Bowler Avenue
PO Box 8
Gore 9740

Phone (03) 209 0330
Email info@goredc.govt.nz
Website www.goredc.govt.nz
www.facebook.com/GoreDC
Through the Antenno app.

15.2 System for requesting Council service

Requests for Council service can be lodged in various ways, including:

- Lodging a customer service request by telephone to the Council office (03) 209 0330, online through the Council website (www.goredc.govt.nz) or via email to info@goredc.govt.nz.
- Visiting, phoning or emailing the Chief Executive or relevant General Manager. Contact details are as shown on pages 17 and 18.
- The Council's main telephone line, (03) 209 0330, is serviced 24 hours a day.

15.3 District Libraries

Copies of key Council policies and plans are located at the District Libraries for public reference and information.

15.4 Opportunities for participation in Council activities

The Council offers numerous opportunities for the community to participate in the decision-making processes throughout the year, culminating in the draft Annual Plan submission process. The projects and programmes outlined in the draft Annual Plan are a result of ongoing public input and consultation with the community.

Advertisements are placed in the local newspapers which include instructions on how to make a submission, and when and where public meetings on the draft Annual Plan and the public hearings are to take place.

In addition, many of Council's key plans and policies are developed using community input. The Council will inform Gore District residents (usually through the local media) when key plans and policies are being developed/reviewed that require community input or feedback.

The Mayor, Councillors, the Chief Executive and General Managers may be contacted throughout the year if you have information to contribute or areas of concern you wish to discuss.

16.0 Procedures for dealing with official information

Under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) any person may request information from the Council. All requests for information are deemed to be a request made under LGOIMA. You do not have to say you are making a request under LGOIMA.

Once a request is made the Council must supply the information unless reason exists for withholding it. The LGOIMA says that information may be withheld if release of the information would:

- Endanger the safety of any person.
- Prejudice maintenance of the law.
- Compromise the privacy of any person.

- Reveal confidential or commercially sensitive information.
- Cause offence to tikanga Māori or would disclose the location of waahi tapu.
- Prejudice public health or safety.
- Compromise legal professional privilege.
- Disadvantage the local authority while carrying out negotiations or commercial activities.
- Allow information to be used for improper gain or advantage.

The Council must answer requests within 20 working days (although there are certain circumstances where this timeframe may be extended). The Council may charge for official information under guidelines set down by the Ministry of Justice.

In the first instance requests for official information should be addressed to the Chief Executive, Gore District Council, PO Box 8, Gore 9740.