

Canterbury Mayoral Forum mid-term achievements 2022-24

1. This report provides a summary of progress and achievements of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum at the mid-point of the 2022-25 local government term.

Regional forums

2. The Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement 2022-25 mandates the work of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Chief Executives Forum, and other regional and sub-regional forums and working groups (see Appendix 1). Regional forums generally meet quarterly.
3. As agreed in the Triennial Agreement, Environment Canterbury hosts a permanent regional forums secretariat to support the work of the Mayoral Forum, resourced from the regional general rate.

Plan for Canterbury

4. In April 2023, the Mayoral Forum launched its 2023-25 Plan for Canterbury. The 2023-25 Plan is a revised and updated version of the plan for the previous triennium, members having agreed that the vision and values of that Plan were still relevant; however the key priority areas and actions required refreshing to account for changes in the economy, government policy, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. The Plan for Canterbury sets out the Forum's priorities for the triennium. It summarises the interests and priorities of local government leaders for Cantabrians, and provides a basis for conversation and partnership with Ngāi Tahu, Central Government, the business sector and the community sectors.
6. As set out in the Plan, the Mayoral Forum's vision is that in Canterbury, all of us together:
 - care for our natural resources to secure both present and future opportunities
 - create shared economic prosperity so no one is left behind
 - nurture caring, hope and kindness, standing strong together to withstand and adapt to challenges and change
 - celebrate our diverse identities – and take pride in our common identity as Cantabrians.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

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7. There are three key priority areas on which the Forum's work is based this term. These are:
 - a. sustainable environmental management of our habitats (land, air, water and ecosystems), focusing on land use and freshwater management
 - b. shared prosperity for all our communities – focusing on building on our economic strengths and developing emerging sectors, growing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, improving the transport network and coordinating strategies for housing our communities
 - c. climate change mitigation and adaptation – reducing our carbon footprint, working together on climate action planning, building community resilience and making our infrastructure as strong as it can be.
8. The Forum has developed an action plan to address these priority areas, where 9 key actions have been identified and make up the work programme for the triennium. Delivery of this work programme is overseen by the Chief Executives Forum, which reports quarterly to the Mayoral Forum.
9. The Forum completed a review of the Plan for Canterbury in early 2024 to ensure it reflected the approach to engage with the new Government and enabled the Forum to be well-prepared for discussions on regional/city deals. As a result of the review, the Plan was refreshed in a number of areas. This included tweaks to the wording of some of the actions, a new action on energy under the shared prosperity priority area, and updates to reflect current government policies (where these had changed from the previous Government) and opportunities for the Mayoral Forum to lead discussions on the drivers for change in Canterbury.

Key achievements this term

10. Key achievements at the mid point of this local government term include:
 - refreshing the Plan for Canterbury to ensure it reflected the current political context following the 2023 General Election and the key priority actions the Forum wished to focus on for the remainder of the term
 - completion of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan
 - day-long meeting with nine government ministers in 2023 to discuss the Plan for Canterbury and advocate for key issues for our communities
 - commencing development of a regional housing strategy
 - commencing work on a regional energy inventory
 - commencing work to identify regional economic development priorities
 - meeting with a number of Ministers in 2024 to raise key issues of interest for Canterbury.
11. Progress on the three key priority areas in the Plan for Canterbury, and the nine actions that sit within them, is set out below.

Sustainable environmental management of our habitats

The Mayoral Forum will continue oversight of the CWMS, taking into consideration the changing national and regional policies, along with the relationship between water, food production and energy security. Oversight of CWMS

12. The Mayoral Forum has maintained active oversight of the implementation of the CWMS, receiving regular and comprehensive reporting on progress.
13. In August 2023 the Forum launched a review into the CWMS, and particularly zone committees, to consider how best to include local leadership in freshwater decision making. The Forum expects to consider the findings of the review and next steps later in 2024.

The Mayoral Forum will continue to support the Te Uru Kahika – Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa’ business case for permanent co-investment from the Government in river management for flood protection, an updated version of which was presented to the Government in 2022.

14. The Forum advocated for the business case at meetings with a range of Ministers in May 2023, and in briefings to the new Government following the 2023 General Election.
15. Some funding to assist with flood resilience work was received by Environment Canterbury as part of Budget 2024, and includes upgrades to critical and aged flood management infrastructure across the region to make it more resilient to the changing climate.
16. Projects in Waitaha that will benefit are Rangitata Flood and Resilience Works – Stage 2; Regional Structure Upgrade and Adaptation Programme; and Waitarakao, Washdyke and Seadown Flood Works.
17. The Forum will continue to advocate with Government that this be permanent co-investment going forward.
18. The Forum met with the Minister of Climate Change in June 2024 and reiterated the importance of co-investment support for the full range of projects in the business case.

The Mayoral Forum will continue to support the Biodiversity Champions as the key conduit for a shared regional approach to biodiversity, facilitating work across the region on the revitalisation of the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy and the development of a regional biodiversity monitoring framework

19. The Mayoral Forum supported the continuation of a working group of Canterbury councillors to increase governance-level engagement on biodiversity issues and opportunities across all Canterbury councils this term. This working group, the Biodiversity Champions, responds to a need for local government to work closely together to implement new national direction for biodiversity and support the revitalisation of the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy. The Biodiversity Champions provide updates to the Forum on its work as required.

Shared prosperity for all our communities

The Mayoral Forum will continue to advocate with the Government for immigration and skills policies that work for Canterbury

20. The Mayoral Forum advocated for skills and immigration policies that work for Canterbury when it travelled to Wellington in May 2023 to meet with a range of ministers. This message was reinforced in briefings to the new Government following the 2023 General Election.
21. Work is under way by one of the regional forums to bring together a range of data collected by councils and economic development agencies to provide insight into the skill needs of Canterbury businesses. The Forum is also working together to identify a set of regional economic development priorities. Both pieces of work will inform some key actions on economic development for the region, and allow the Forum to better target its advocacy on skills and immigration with the Government.

The Mayoral Forum will continue to encourage, support and advocate for research and investment in diversifying and adding value to our agricultural production

22. The Mayoral Forum advocated for investment to add value to our agricultural production when it travelled to Wellington in May 2023 to meet with a range of ministers. This was reiterated in briefings to new Government ministers following the 2023 General Election.
23. The Forum also advocated for investment in new agricultural technologies as part of its submission on the Government's second emissions reduction plan in August 2024.

The Mayoral Forum will support the region to foster partnerships, investigate barriers and harness opportunities to improve our energy security and systems in ways that maximise benefits for our community, economy and environment

24. To ensure our region is prepared to take opportunities on energy, the Forum has begun developing a regional energy inventory for Canterbury. The purpose of the inventory is to:
 - create a shared picture of Canterbury's energy futures to inform more consistent strategic planning, investment, and partnerships across industry, councils, central government, the Mayoral Forum and Greater Christchurch Partnership
 - provide an evidence base to inform regional, sub-regional and local governments energy processes
 - help to identify regional priorities to support discussions about regional or city deals
 - support regional input into central government energy work programmes.
25. The Forum will undertake this work in collaboration with stakeholders. The ultimate outcome of the project is to identify options to progress a regional approach to energy.

The Mayoral Forum will advocate with government to review transport funding legislation to better empower local authorities to develop local funding solutions

26. The Mayoral Forum advocated for a refreshed approach to transport funding when it travelled to Wellington in May 2023 to meet with a range of ministers. This was reiterated in briefings to ministers following the 2023 General Election, and again at a meeting with the Minister of Transport in July 2024.

27. The Forum is also supporting a project being undertaken by the Canterbury Regional Transport Committee to improve the transport planning and funding system for Canterbury and the institutions and mechanisms that support the investments in the Regional Land Transport Plan (local roads, public transport, state highways, and transport planning activities). The main benefit is to improve assurance regarding the certainty of revenue for proposed activities. While the project will not aim to secure funding for specific activities or to increase funding, increased funding may be a secondary subsequent benefit. The project's steering group is currently being set up, and the Forum looks forward to receiving updates as the project progresses.

The Mayoral Forum will develop a regional housing strategy that will identify the range of housing issues affecting communities across the region and a pathway forward to improve them

28. The Mayoral Forum commenced work to develop a strategy in 2023. An officer-level steering group was set up to lead the work. The strategy aims to enable enhancement of the quality, quantity, affordability and accessibility of housing across the region and across the full housing continuum. It will recognise that while local government cannot by itself meet every single community housing need, it is able to identify where housing barriers exist and what options, resources and or agencies are best placed to help resolve them.

29. The strategy and resulting implementation plan will identify the roles and activities the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and partners can play collectively and individually to contribute to better housing outcomes for the people of Canterbury.

30. As at August 2024, a scope of work is being finalised with the expectation that the work will be completed by the end of this triennium.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

The Mayoral Forum will oversee the completion of the Canterbury-wide Climate Change Partnership Plan, which will confirm a collaborative vision for regional adaptation planning, and 'urgency assessment' to support prioritising climate actions, and a funding plan laying out a regional/aligned approach for accessing finance for climate actions in Canterbury

31. The regional Climate Change Working Group established by the Chief Executives Forum in 2017 continues to address climate change adaptation for Canterbury. This local government term, the focus has been to develop the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.

32. To provide governance support for the development of the Plan, the Mayoral Forum established a cross-regional group of councillors, the Canterbury Climate Action Planning Reference Group. This group provided governance advice, input and feedback on the Plan as it developed.

33. The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan is now complete¹, and sets out a vision for a thriving, climate resilient, low-emissions Canterbury. These are the six key outcomes and objectives sought through delivery of ten primary actions and supporting sub-actions. Eight principles have been developed which underpin its implementation. These are the values by

¹ [The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024-2027 \(4MB PDF\)](#)

which we will approach collective climate action in Canterbury. The actions in the Plan are fully funded through councils' Long-Term Plans.

34. A launch event to formally recognise the the Plan and the collaborative work at an officer and governance level that facilitated its success will be held later in 2024.

Other initiatives

35. The regional forums undertake a range of “business as usual” initiatives as well as supporting the Plan for Canterbury. These initiatives include:
- health and safety collaboration
 - collaboration on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water
 - co-ordination of natural hazard risk management
 - continuing to build on the Canterbury Maps shared service
 - collaboration in procurement, contract management and other corporate services
 - collaboration and sharing information on communications and engagement best practice
 - regional leadership and support for strategic information and records management
 - regional economic development
 - collaborating on regional submissions
 - collaborative resource management planning and decision-making.

Standing together for Canterbury

36. Joint advocacy ('one strong voice for Canterbury') has been a strength of the Mayoral Forum. The following table summarises Mayoral Forum engagement and advocacy since local body elections in October 2022.

Date	Audience	Subject
30 Nov 2022	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Advocacy letter to request longer submission period for local government to consider the Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning bills
2 Dec 2022	Ministry for Primary Industries	Submission on National direction for plantation and exotic carbon afforestation
17 Feb 2023	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Submissions on the Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning bills
27 Feb 2023	Minister of Local Government	Letter to advocate for pause in three waters reform until Review into the Future for Local Government is completed
28 Feb 2023	Future for Local Government Review Panel	Submission on the Review
10 Mar 2023	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Hearing to present Mayoral Forum submissions on Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning bills
16 Mar 2023	Minister for the Environment	Letter to advocate for exemptions for councils from paying levies on relocating waste from closed landfills
11 May 2023	Ministers of the Crown	Meetings with 9 Government ministers on the Plan for Canterbury and issues of mutual interest

Date	Audience	Subject
1 Jun 2023	National Party Canterbury-based MPs	Dinner between Mayoral Forum and National Party Canterbury-based MPs
2 Jun 2023	Government Canterbury-based MPs	Lunch between Mayoral Forum and Government Canterbury-based MPs
9 Jun 2023	Ministers of Finance, Regional Development, Local Government and Emergency Management	Letter advocating for central government funding for flood resilience in Canterbury
20 Jun 2023	Climate Change Commission	Submission on draft advice to inform the strategic direction of the second emissions reduction plan
23 Jun 2023	Associate Minister for the Environment	Further letter advocating for exemptions for councils from paying levies on relocating waste from closed landfills
3 Jul 2023	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Letter advising of refreshed Plan for Canterbury and inviting further engagement with the Mayoral Forum
7 Jul 2023	Minister of Transport	Joint letter with Regional Transport Committee advocating for release of GPS Land Transport as soon as possible
24 Aug 2023	ACT Party leader	Dinner between Mayoral Forum and David Seymour
25 Aug 2023	Green Party Canterbury-based MPs	Lunch between Mayoral Forum and Green Party Christchurch-based MPs
14 Sept 2023	Ministry of Transport	Joint submission with the RTC on the draft 2024 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport
19 Oct 2023	Prime Minister	Letter of congratulations and invitation to the Prime Minister to meet with the Mayoral Forum in November
1 Nov 2023	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Submission on the Inquiry into Climate Adaptation
3 Nov 2023	Governance and Administration Committee (Parliament)	Joint submission with the CDEM joint committee on the Emergency Management Bill
9 Nov 2023	Canterbury-based MPs	Letters of congratulation to 18 Canterbury-based MPs following the General Election
1 Dec 2023	Kaiwhakahaere o Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	Letter congratulating Justin Tipa on becoming Kaiwhakahaere and inviting him to attend Mayoral Forum meetings
6 Dec 2023	Minister Simeon Brown	Invitation to meet to discuss regional/city deals for the Canterbury region
8 Mar 2023	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Letter providing update on development of Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan
2 Apr 2024	Ministry of Transport	Joint submission with the RTC on the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024
19 Apr 2024	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Submission on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill

Date	Audience	Subject
31 May 2024	Climate Change Commission	Submission on Aotearoa New Zealand's 2050 emissions reduction target and the fourth emissions budget (2036–2040)
11 Jun 2024	Minister Simon Watts	Meeting to discuss climate change matters
13 Jun 2024	Minister Mark Mitchell	Meeting to discuss emergency management matters
18 Jun 2024	Waka Kotahi NZTA	Joint submission with the RTC on proposed changes to emergency works investment policies
2 Jul 2024	Minister Chris Bishop	Meeting to discuss infrastructure, housing, and resource management reform
12 Jul 2024	Minister Simeon Brown	Meeting to discuss local government and transport matters, including regional/city deals
16 Jul 2024	Finance and Expenditure Committee (Parliament)	Hearing to present Mayoral Forum submission on climate adaptation inquiry with committee members
21 Aug 2024	Ministry for the Environment	Submission on second emissions reduction plan discussion document
30 Aug 2024	Canterbury-based Coalition MPs	Lunch with Government Coalition MPs to discuss issues of mutual interest for Canterbury