Consultation document

DRAFT Annual Plan 2026/27

Year 2 of Buller District Council's 2025-2034 Long-Term Plan

BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera O Kawatiri

BULLER KAWATIRI grounded by community

Let's talk

letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz

Contents

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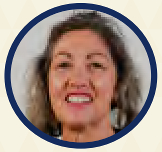

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Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

The Buller District's Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 aims to strike a balance between maintaining those services that our community have told us are important while keeping rates as low as possible. We have done this by reducing costs and increasing non-rates revenue where we can. While the economic environment remains challenging, we believe this plan represents a reasonable and responsible approach that acknowledges the challenges our community is experiencing.

Buller is a unique and special place, defined by its untamed wilderness, resilient spirit, and strong sense of community. Yet, alongside these strengths, the district faces increasingly complex issues.

Infrastructure renewals, critical water upgrades, and the transition to new arrangements under Local Water Done Well present both challenges and opportunities. The Council's role extends beyond providing reliable day-to-day services; we are also tasked with making strategic decisions that will shape the district's future. This involves determining how essential services are funded and delivered, responding to economic pressures, and fostering communities that are both desirable and sustainable for generations to come.

Local government operates within a limited set of mechanisms to deliver services that meet community expectations, comply with regulations, and remain affordable. Within these constraints, the Council believes this Annual Plan achieves a balanced approach.

The year ahead will undoubtedly be difficult, particularly as we navigate the transition of water services to a joint Water Services Council-Controlled Organisation with Grey and Westland District Councils and consider the implications of this change.

Despite these challenges, the Council remains committed to delivering services that enable Buller to grow sustainably and provide opportunities for all residents to enjoy the unique qualities of the district. Ultimately, the success of this plan will be measured at the end of the financial year, when we compare our intentions and planned expenditure with the outcomes achieved. With confidence in our staff, elected members, and community, we look forward to working together to deliver the best possible results for Buller.

Mayor
Chris Russell

CEO
Simon Pickford

Roadmap to the Annual Plan 2026/27

March 2024
Council deferred the Long-Term Plan by one year due to the uncertainty around water legislation.

June 2025
Council adopted the 2025 - 2034 Long-Term Plan.

Nov 2025 - Jan 2026
Council staff worked on the draft budget for the coming financial year (1 July 2026 - 30 June 2027)

February 2026
The draft budget and what Council intends to do over the next financial year were presented to Councillors for direction.

April 2026
Based on Councillors direction the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 was finalised and adopted to go out for community feedback.

7 April - 5 May
The community can provide feedback on the key consultation topic and any other aspects of the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27.

20 May 2026
Hearings and deliberations will be held, during which people can speak to their submission and Councillors will consider the community feedback received.*

30 June 2026
Council will adopt the final Annual Plan 2026/27.

*During the deliberations, Council will make a decision regarding the co-funding required for Westport's stormwater integration.
Read more about the key consultation topic on page 20

What's the draft plan for 2026/27?

The Annual Plan is year 2 of the 2025-2034 Long-Term Plan (LTP). This Draft Annual Plan sets out the organisation's priorities for the 2026-27 FY financial year

The purpose of the plan is to identify any differences between what was proposed in the LTP and what is now planned for the 2026-27 year.

The LTP 2025-2034 is available on Council's website www.bullerdc.govt.nz or in our service centres.

"The budget is a very lean representation of what council needs to provide key services to the community. It doesn't allow big projects to move quickly or for additional work to be done, and it will mean slowing down in certain areas."

What is different to the LTP?

Between drafting the LTP in 2024 and developing the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 in 2025, some circumstances have changed.

Over the last 12-months we have gained a clearer picture of what the next 12-months will look like. Therefore, some things have changed between year two in the LTP and the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27.

We reviewed the budget, reduced costs, and generated additional income across several areas. Areas where costs were able to be reduced were: delaying recruitment, spending less on legal advice, reducing infrastructure repairs and maintenance, reducing vehicle insurance premiums, and undertaking currently contracted-out roading services internally. Ultimately, our costs have increased for the financial year. The cost of energy has increased significantly over the past 12 months and is expected to continue to rise. It has gone up nearly $300k in our budget.

Additional income will be generated by selling vehicles and council property, and by increasing the income paid to council by Buller Holdings Ltd.

We have included the purchase of a new budgeting and reporting tool to replace the current financial modelling system, which is a much-needed step forward to calculate budgets and rates.

Council decided not to set aside approximately $1.3 m for future roading requirements as signalled in the LTP 2025-2034, but to continue with the current process which is to borrow funds whenever that infrastructure (roads, bridges, and pavements) needs work.

Our total rates movement in the LTP was signalled to be a 9.05% increase. Following multiple workshops and key council decisions, the draft total rates movement has changed to 4.4%.

The budget is a very lean representation of what council needs to provide key services to the community. It doesn't allow big projects to move quickly or for additional work to be done, and it will mean slowing down in certain areas.

What's the plan for our infrastructure?

Council is investing year by year into a wide range of infrastructure projects that largely follow the adopted 2025-2034 Long Term Plan.

Optimising our infrastructure upgrades

We have reviewed our project schedules for 2026/27, to assess if we can deliver what we promised in the LTP 2025/2034 and avoid charging ratepayers for work in 2026/27 that we may not deliver within that year.

To minimise rates increases, projects have been phased over multiple years to spread the costs and associated depreciation. Adjusting the timing of spending, on certain projects, means interest and depreciation costs are better aligned with actual planned progress.

As a result of these adjustments, some projects and areas will see a reduction in what we will spend on them in 2026/27, and some projects will see more investment than was stated in the LTP 2025/34.

Reducing our repairs and maintenance

We have reduced the 2026/27 infrastructure repairs and maintenance budget to minimise costs. This will save money for the coming financial year but also increases the risk that the current infrastructure could fail sooner, and that repairs could cost more than proactively fixing it.

What has changed since the LTP in the infrastructure space?

Drinking water

- We have reduced our planned investment on upgrades to the Westport drinking water supply infrastructure by $1.28 m. This is the result of adjusting the timing of this multi-year project over several years and will not affect the project's overall scope or budget. We will continue to develop plans to ensure Westport's water supply security and continuity to serve the town's residents.
- In Reefton, Council will replace some aged and end-of-life pipes that are failing. To carry out these urgent replacements, we have increased the budget by $187,000, bringing it to $528,000.

Wastewater

- The budget to replace old wastewater pipes in Reefton has been increased from $145,000 to $1.45 m.

Stormwater

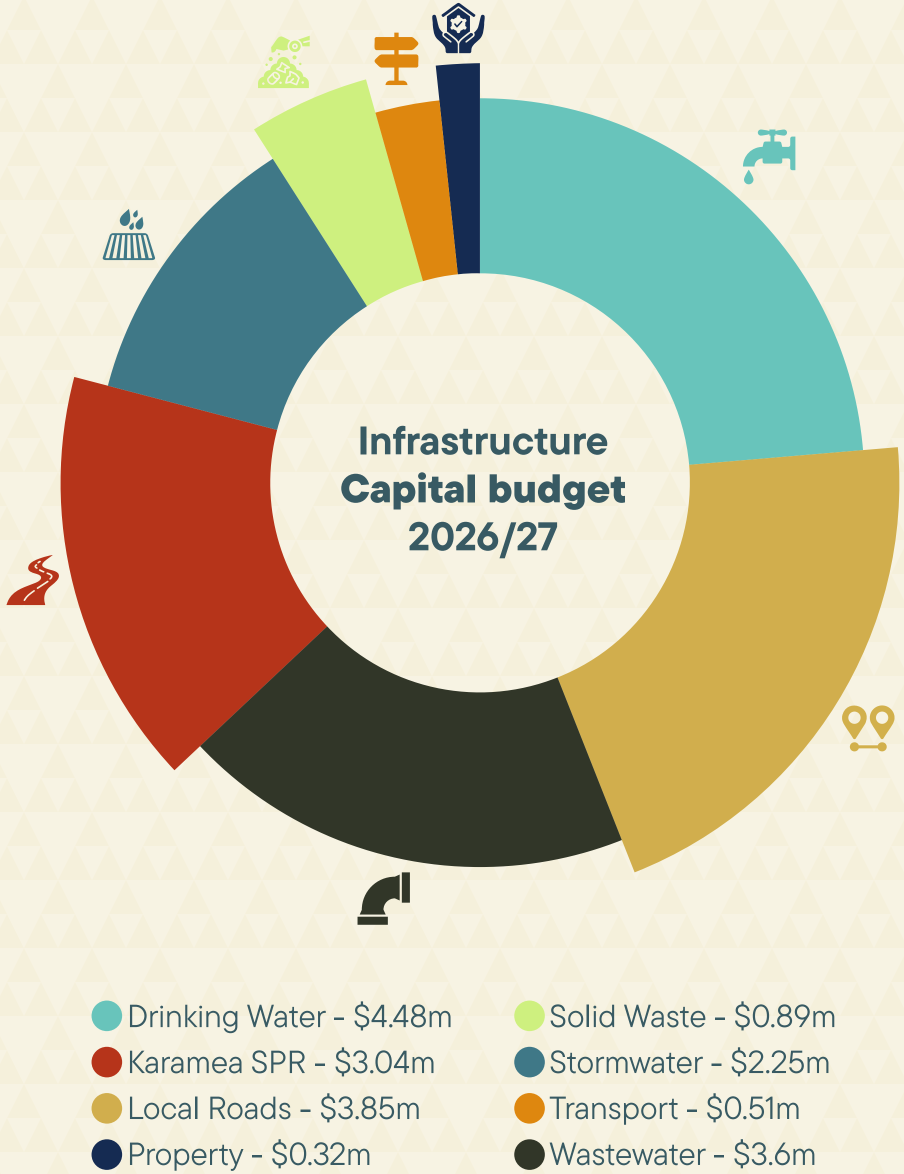
- We plan to spend $2.25 m on improvements to the stormwater management systems in Westport and Reefton, up from the original 2026/27 budget of $1.24 m.

Roading and transport

- Council's investment into our roads is heavily subsidised by Waka Kotahi – NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) with local roads receiving a 75% contribution from NZTA and the Karamea Highway fully subsidised by NZTA at 100%.
- The only significant change from the LTP 2025-2034 is an additional $1.7 m (100% funded from NZTA) for the Karamea Highway Low Cost/Low Risk investment. This increases our roading capital expenditure from $5.70 m to $7.40 m.

Council will invest more in upgrades in some areas in 2026/27, like our drinking water infrastructure, and less in other areas.

However, year by year, Council spends significant amounts on keeping our infrastructure running. A good example is property, where we don't plan to make any large capital improvements, but will spend considerably more, in operating expenses, to maintain these facilities.



The proposed capital expenditure, across all infrastructure, is $18.94 million for 2026/27.

Capital expenditure explained

Capital expenditure is referred to as capex and is project-based.

We use capex for upgrading pipelines, new facilities or new services. At home, capex would be if you installed a new kitchen or added another bedroom to the house.

Continuing with property as an example, for 2026/27 we propose to spend $3.28m on keeping our community facilities maintained, as part of the Infrastucture operating budget.

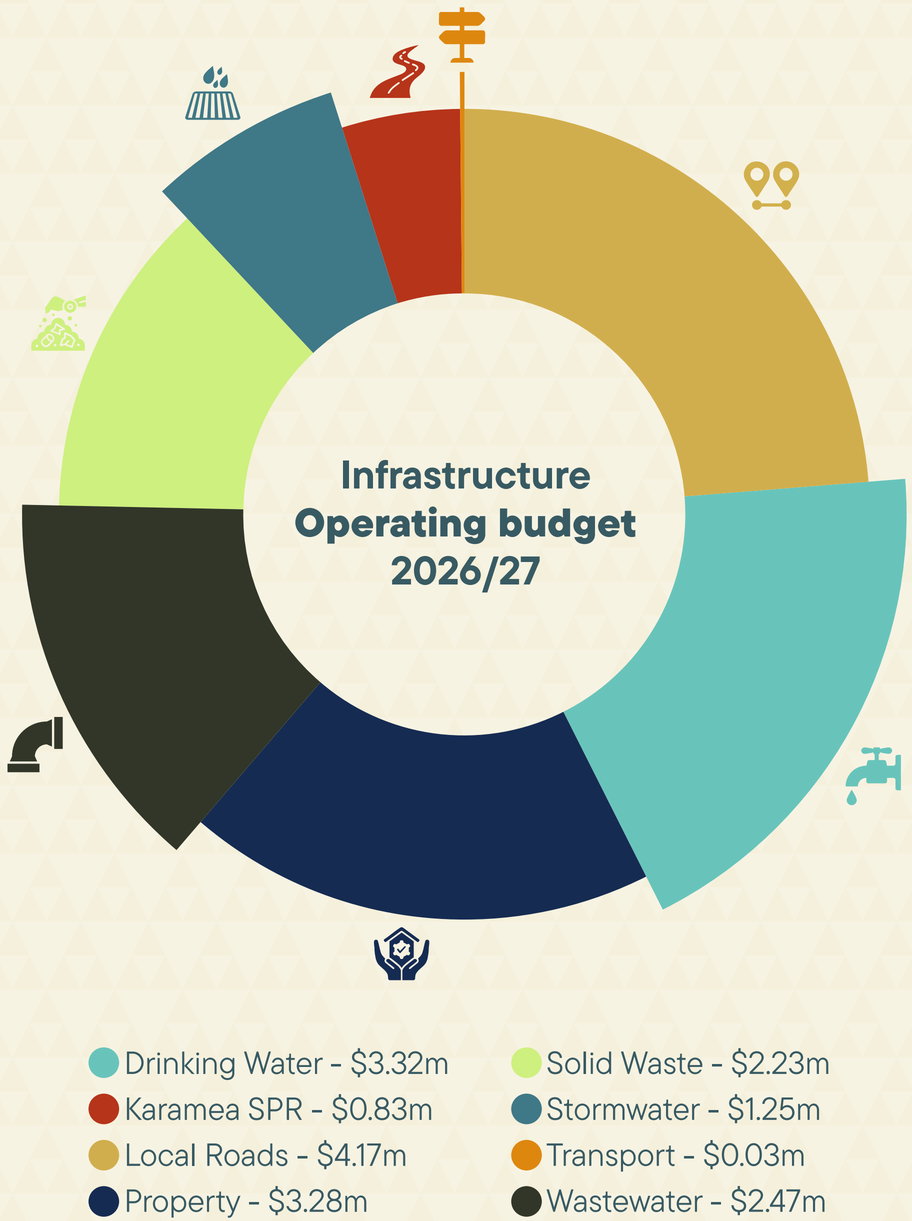
This amount comprises:

- **Parks & Reserves - $1.13m**
- **Public Toilets - $0.37m**
- **Cemeteries - $0.33m**
- **Senior housing - $0.48m**
- **Civic Buildings - $0.71m**
- **Other Property - $0.25m**

The proposed operating expenditure, across all infrastructure, is $17.58 million for 2026/27.

Operating expenditure explained

Operating expenditure is usually referred to as opex. It is used to pay for the day-to-day things like power, fuel, staff costs, interest payments and maintenance. Think about running your house – your opex would be for power, internet, groceries, and rates.



What is the future of our water?

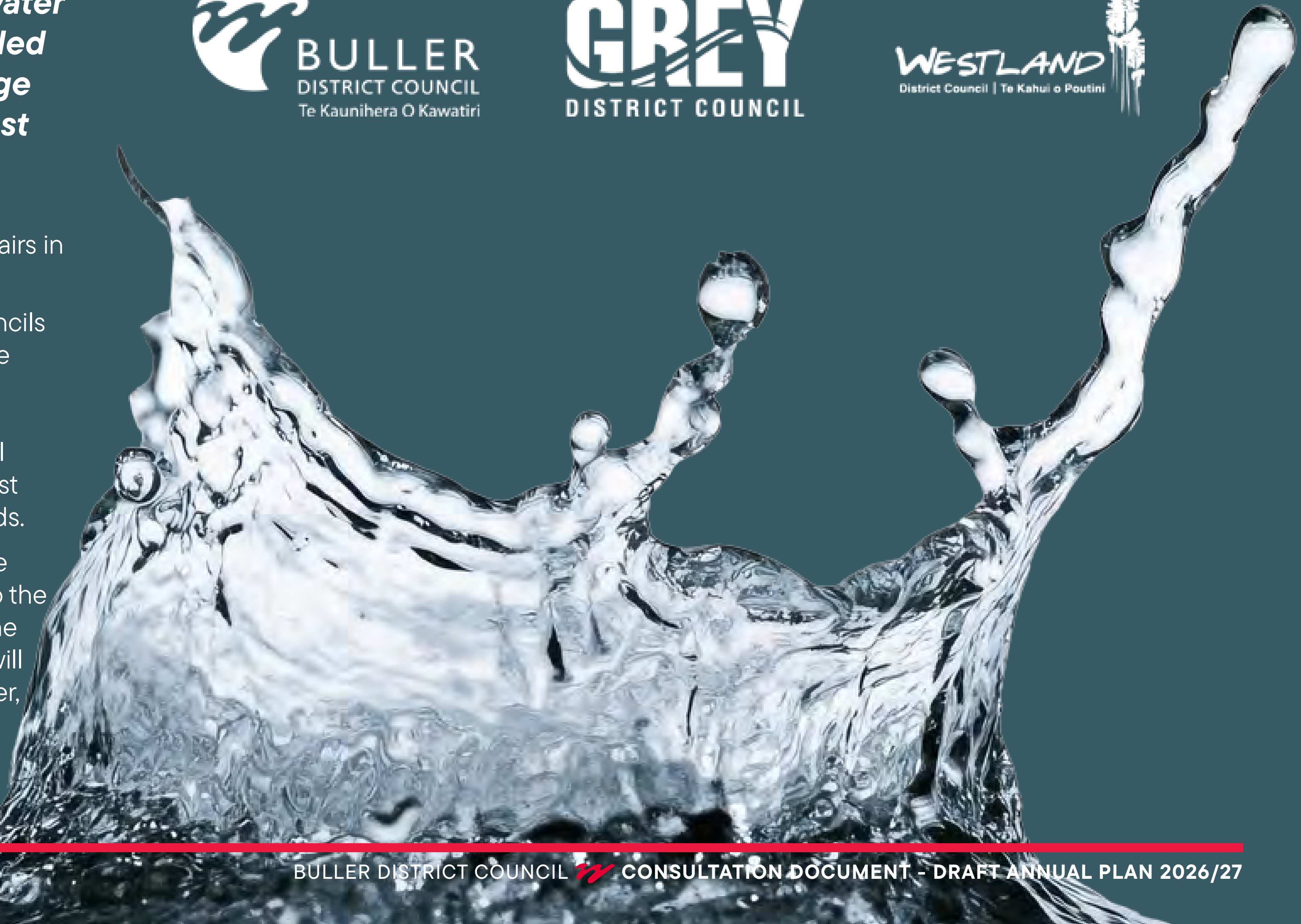
In line with the Local Water Done Well reform, Buller District Council has begun working with Westland and Grey District Councils on the transition phase to establish a water services, multi-council-controlled organisation (WSCCO) to manage all water services across the West Coast.

The joint Water Services Delivery Plan was accepted by the Department of Internal Affairs in November 2025.

The Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils expect to have a governance board in place to oversee the set-up of a new West Coast water organisation by the end of 2026. The expectation is that the new organisation will manage water services on behalf of the West Coast communities from 1 July 2027 onwards.

The transition to the WSCCO is taking place through multiple workstreams leading up to the transfer date to minimise disruption. Until the new organisation is in place, each council will continue to manage their own drinking water, stormwater and wastewater.

You can find further information on Local Water Done Well by visiting:
letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz/local-water-done-well



How much does it cost to run the district?

Every day, the money we collect in rates is used to maintain what we have and make our district a great place to work, live, and play.

Council funds most of its day-to-day expenses through the rates we collect, either targeted or general rates. By collecting rates, we can pay to replace wastewater pipes, grade roads, keep your taps running and your toilets flushing, and ensure our community can access library services or play sport in one of our parks.

Therefore, any changes in operational spending directly affect the level of rates we set. **For the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27, we estimated that we will need to cover a total of $41.93m in operational expenditure. General rates contribute $15.24m to cover these costs.**

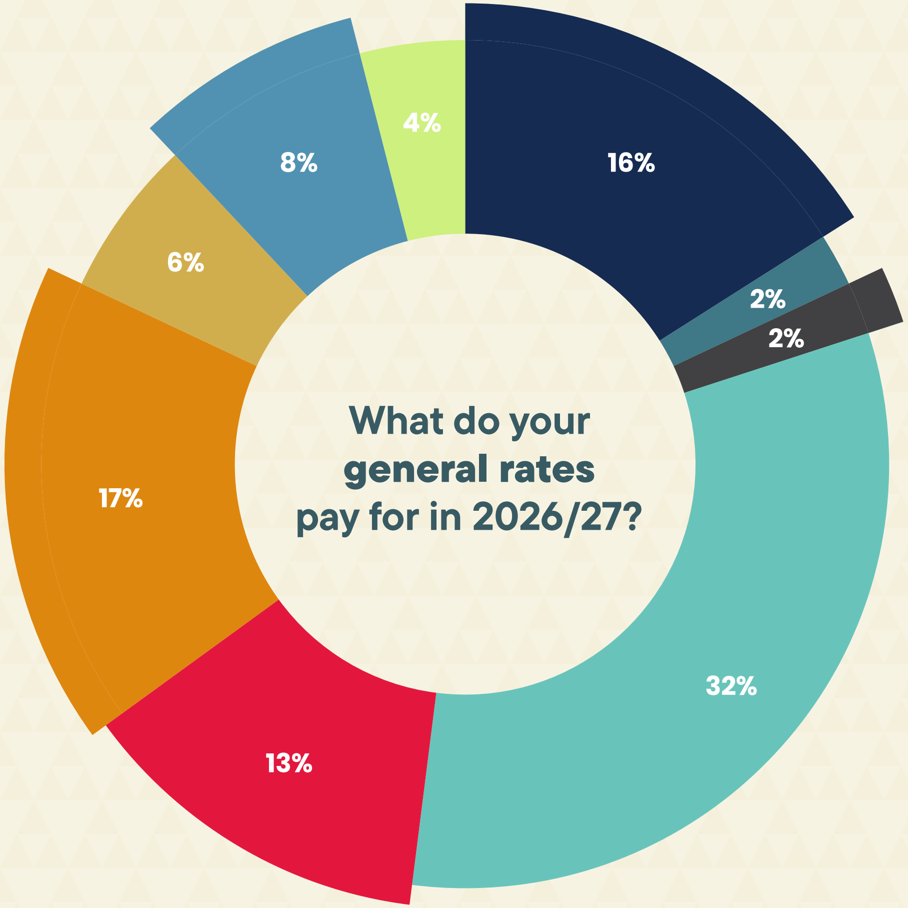
The remainder is paid through targeted rates and other income, such as fees & charges, subsidies and grants, development and financial contributions, investment income, gains, and other income.

General rates

Everybody pays a general rate, which is based on the land value of their property. General rates are value-based, and the amount payable rises in accordance with the land value. General rates are also affected by the use category defined for each property, for example if the property is classified as commercial, rural or suburban. Some categories pay higher rates, and some pay lower rates.

Targeted rates

Targeted rates are payable by properties in a certain geographical area or those deemed to be in receipt of a particular service, like recycling collection, drinking water or wastewater. They can be calculated on a value basis or a uniform basis. In Buller, all targeted rates are calculated on a uniform or flat base.

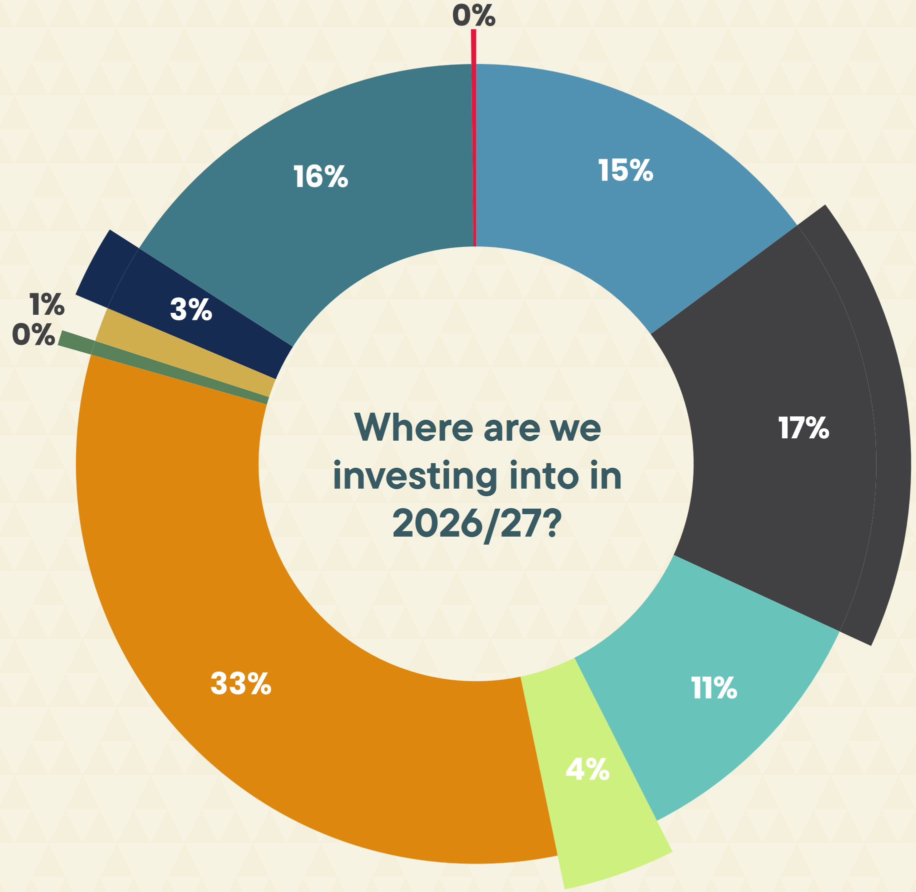


- Governance & Representation - $2.36m
- Commercial Infrastructure - $0.25m
- Customer & Support Services - $0.25m
- Community Services - $4.88m
- Regulatory Services - $2.04m
- Roading & Transport - $2.63m
- Community Facilities - $0.89m
- Stormwater - $1.26m
- Solid Waste - $0.66m

Where are we investing into in 2026/27?

Upgrades to our infrastructure, or capital expenditures, are mainly funded through debt, which is an effective way to ensure the costs of projects that deliver benefits to generations are spread across all beneficiaries.

We estimate total capital expenditure of $21.5m.



- Drinking water - $3.13m
- Wastewater - $3.60m
- Stormwater - $2.25m
- Solid Waste - $0.89m
- Roading & Transport - $6.89m
- Community Services - $0.12m
- Community Facilities - $0.29m
- Customer & Support Services - $0.57m
- Commercial Infrastructure - $3.32m
- Regulatory Services - $0.04m

How will we pay for it?

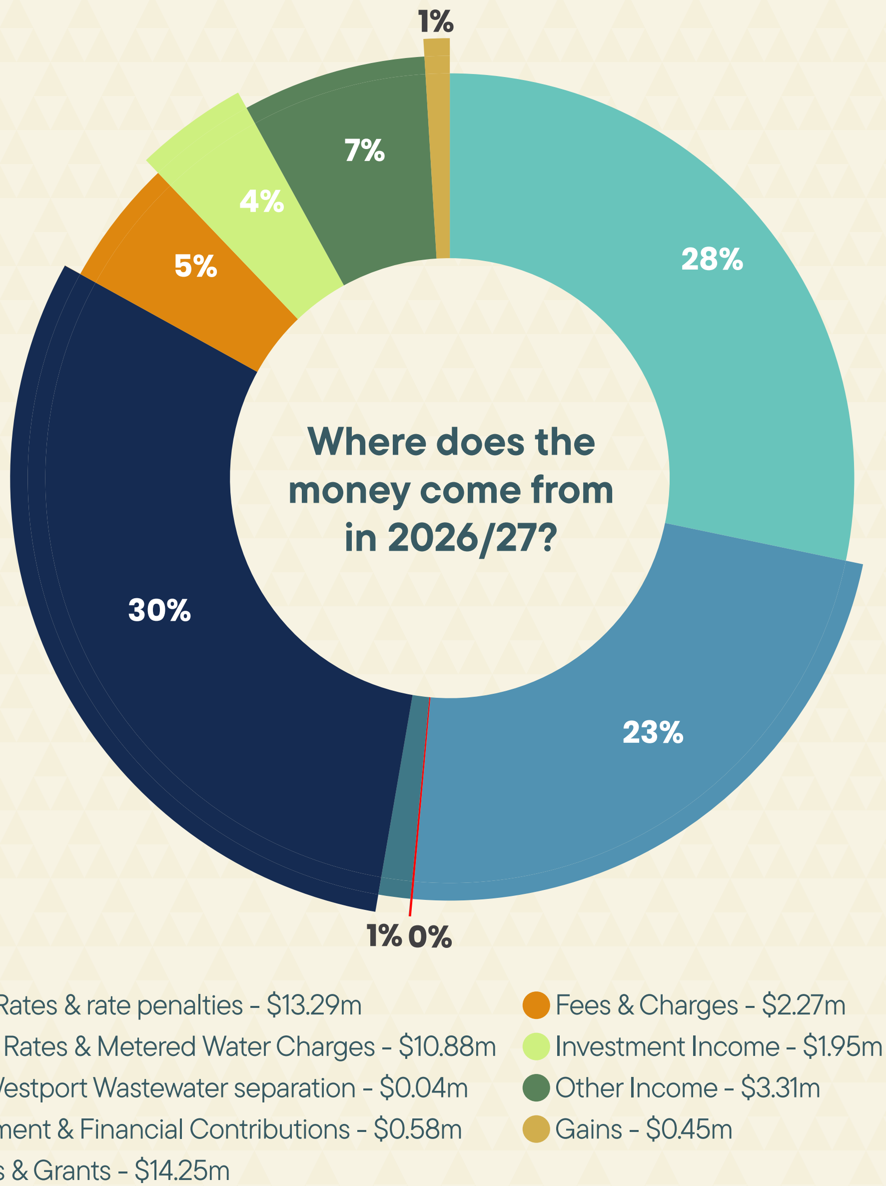
Rates are our primary source of income for the services and facilities we provide to our community.

Rates provide around half of the Council's funding for the services and activities that keep our district running.

In the LTP 2025-34, we proposed an average rate increase of 9.05% for the 2026/27 financial year. This year, we are proposing a 4.4% rate increase for 2026/27, which will help fund essential services, infrastructure renewals, and replacement projects.

Fees and charges, government subsidies, interest, dividends from subsidiaries, and development contributions top up this income.

We borrow to fund a significant portion of the infrastructure programme.



How much will Council borrow?

Council's net debt is expected to be $46.4million at the end of the 2026-27 financial year. The debt is in line with our debt affordability benchmark, which sets a limit of under $57.4m.

What is happening to your rates?

The average proposed rate increase across all ratepayers – households, businesses, and rural properties – is 4.4%. This is significantly lower than the 9.05% rate increase signalled in the LTP.

This aligns with our commitment to keep any increase below 10% each financial year to ensure that rates revenue makes up less than 65% of Council's total revenue.

Key reasons for the significantly lower rate increase than forecasted in the LTP are:

- **in depth budget review**
- **Reduced budgets**
- **Generated further income**
- **Spending less on legal advice**
- **Reduction in repairs and maintenance spending**
- **Moving a significant amount of consulting work in-house**

How do we calculate your rates?

General rates

Everybody pays a general rate, which is based on the land value of their property. General rates are value-based, and the amount payable rises in accordance with the land value. General rates are also affected by the use category defined for each property, for example if the property is classified as commercial, rural or suburban. Some categories pay higher rates, and some pay lower rates.

Targeted rates

Targeted rates are payable by properties in a certain geographical area or those deemed to be in receipt of a particular service, like recycling collection, drinking water or wastewater. They can be calculated on a value basis or a uniform basis. In Buller, all targeted rates are calculated on a uniform or flat base.

Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC)

There is only one target rate that applies to all properties, and this is known as the Uniform Annual General Charge or UAGC. The proposed UAGC for year two of the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 is $600 (GST exclusive).

Total rates

The total rates are a combination of General rates, Targeted rates and the Uniform Annual General Charge.

Example of rate changes

The following provides general guidance on the rates your property will pay. Please note that the rate movements below do not include the option to co-fund Westport's stormwater integration and will increase if this option is chosen.

	Location	Land Value	Rates		Variation	
			2025/26	2026/27	$	%
1	**Res 101 Karamea**	$145,000	$1,092.02	$1,269.69	$177.67	16.27%
2	**Res 103 Little Wanganui**	$125,000	$2,584.12	$3,151.82	$567.70	21.97%
3	**Res 103 Mokihinui**	$90,000	$1,716.71	$2,376.81	$660.10	38.45%
4	**Res 103 Seddonville**	$70,000	$1,049.33	$1,083.52	$34.19	3.26%
5	**Res 104 Hector**	$110,000	$1,523.45	$1,555.80	$32.35	2.12%
6	**Res 104 Waimangaroa**	$80,000	$2,549.28	$2,184.18	-$365.11	-14.32%
7	**Res 106 Brougham Street**	$106,000	$4,638.85	$5,122.69	$483.83	10.43%
8	**Res 106 Russell Street**	$104,000	$4,617.60	$5,101.77	$484.17	10.49%
9	**Res 108 Carters Beach**	$160,000	$4,535.12	$5,020.58	$485.46	10.70%
10	**Res 113 Charleston**	$136,000	$1,413.15	$1,441.64	$28.48	2.02%
11	**Res 114 Punakaiki**	$290,000	$4,057.93	$4,024.24	-$33.69	-0.83%
12	**Res 101 Ikamatua**	$74,000	$996.10	$1,031.13	$35.03	3.52%

	Location	Land Value	Rates		Variation	
			2025/26	2026/27	$	%
13	**Res 115 Reefton**	$100,000	$3,743.18	$3,718.82	-$24.37	-0.65%
14	**Res 101 Springs Junction**	$95,000	$1,233.64	$1,476.64	$243.00	19.70%
15	**Com 131 Karamea**	$350,000	$6,627.75	$6,718.59	$90.84	1.37%
16	**Com 134 Westport**	$265,000	$15,962.58	$16,268.79	$306.22	1.92%
17	**Com 140 Reefton**	$195,000	$5,859.23	$5,801.67	-$57.56	-0.98%
18	**Rur 141 Karamea**	$860,000	$4,564.62	$4,687.82	$123.20	2.70%
19	**Rur 143 Cape Foulwind**	$1,030,000	$4,303.85	$4,328.23	$24.38	0.57%
20	**Rur 141 Mai Mai**	$1,500,000	$7,511.36	$7,444.19	-$67.17	-0.89%
21	**RR 151 Karamea**	$290,000	$1,890.31	$2,055.46	$165.15	8.74%
22	**RR 152 Granity**	$149,000	$1,382.84	$1,411.80	$28.96	2.09%
23	**RR 151 Westport**	$240,000	$1,774.62	$1,797.44	$22.81	1.29%
24	**RR 152 Westport**	$275,000	$1,663.72	$1,647.03	-$16.68	-1.00%

Key consultation topic: **Westport's stormwater integration**

The Resilient Westport Project

The Resilient Westport Project aims to improve Westport's flood resilience over time.

This work involves building structures to physically protect Westport from severe flooding events, enhanced evacuation planning and planning for low-risk future growth.

The programme is funded through $22.9 m from central government, which is administered by the Department of Internal Affairs.

Both the Buller District Council and the West Coast Regional Council play a key role in and have specific responsibilities towards enabling the Resilient Westport Package.

The key project is building physical flood protection around the Westport township. This is being delivered by the West Coast Regional Council.

Future focus and looking at the 'big picture' is the work of Master Planning. This work is being led by Buller District Council.

Enhanced emergency planning is also funded under the Resilient Westport programme. This is being delivered by West Coast Emergency Management.

You can find out more about the various projects that make up the Resilient Westport work by visiting: **resilientwestport.co.nz**

Scan this QR code with your device to visit resilientwestport.co.nz

The Resilient Westport Project, being led by the West Coast Regional Council, will see Westport protected from 1 in 100-year flood events by a series of floodwalls.

The Westport floodwalls aim to protect the town from severe flooding by the Buller River. Most of this protection will come in the form of stop banks or floodwalls, being constructed by West Coast Regional Council. However, a risk, for Buller District Council and the wider Resilient Westport programme of work, is increased surface flooding within Westport during localised heavy rainfall events. Westport's stormwater system needs to be upgraded to handle these events, coinciding with the floodwalls going up. This means stormwater outlet pipes, allowing water to flow out of Westport during severe flooding events, need to be built into the stop banks during construction.

This will provide a pathway to drain stormwater out of the town to avoid it backing up within the township inside the floodwalls. These improvements need to be planned for and funded so that they can take place as the floodwalls are being constructed. This is the most cost-effective way to protect Westport and prevent the costly necessity for retrospective culverts or stormwater outlet pipe installations, which could also decrease the structural integrity of the floodwalls.

Since the West Coast Regional Council began floodwall construction, improving Westport's stormwater network to enable efficient drainage has become an urgent priority for the Buller District Council.

The journey to a better stormwater system for Westport

In 2024, Buller District Council completed a costing exercise to understand the investment required to install fixed pump stations and upgrade stormwater pipes to enable stormwater to drain efficiently and be diverted during heavy rain events past the floodwalls, into the Buller River.

This resulted in an estimate of $56m, with the potential for costs up to $73m. Additionally, the ongoing maintenance costs were estimated at $1.1m per annum, not including depreciation. These costs were clearly unaffordable.

Because this approach was deemed unaffordable, a new strategy was proposed, with three key components:

Upgrade stormwater outlets:
Upgrade aged or undersized outlets in line with the building of the floodwalls by the West Coast Regional Council.

Purchase stationary and mobile pumps:
The stationary pumps are designed to stay in place at designated flood-prone locations . The mobile pumps will be stored off-site and can be deployed as needed across different sites. Currently, mobile pumps are hired when required and are often in high demand, as there are limited numbers of these. They may also be required in other areas of the West Coast at the same time.

Increase the town's stormwater capacity:
Constructing passive stormwater systems through high risk areas. These act like a 'sponge' and reduce the demands on the stormwater network during high rainfall events.

This approach came in at a significantly lower estimated cost . In December 2024, to fund this work, Buller District Council applied to the Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) for $17.5m to carry out the work and purchase the pumps to mitigate surface flooding during heavy rainfall events.

While this application was being prepared and submitted, Buller District Council drafted its 2025-2034 Long-Term Plan. A key assumption for this document was that the work was to be solely funded through the RIF, as the required investment of $17.5 m is significant and unaffordable for Buller residents to self-fund through rates.

In October 2025, Kānoa, the Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit that administers the RIF funding, decided in principle to support the upgrade of stormwater outlets and the purchase of mobile and stationary pumps only. This reduced the project cost to $8.76m.

Rather than a grant, Kānoa offered to support the project with 60% funding, a contribution of $5.27 m, if Buller District Council contributes the remaining 40%, of $3.49m. Buller District Council must inform Kānoa by June 2026 of the direction it wants to take.

This is a significant variation from the LTP and means Buller District Council has to decide to either co-fund the 40% and do the work or decline the offer and not upgrade the stormwater system.

This map shows key stormwater catchment areas, the proposed locations of stationary pumps and the outline of the floodwalls.

Key

Floodwalls

Catchments

Stationary pumps

The map identifies catchment areas where heavy rain events regularly cause surface flooding, which will be addressed by stationary pumps. The final locations of the stationary pumps will be confirmed once a supplier is chosen and further stormwater data has been evaluated.

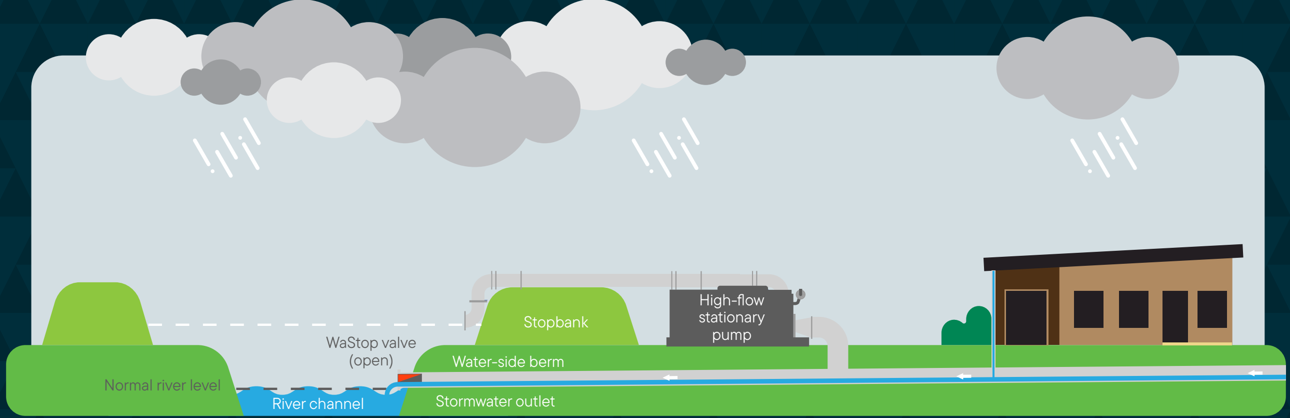
Mobile pumps will manage other areas of surface flooding and these catchment areas are not shown on the map.

Stormwater outlets to be upgraded are not shown due to scale-limitations.

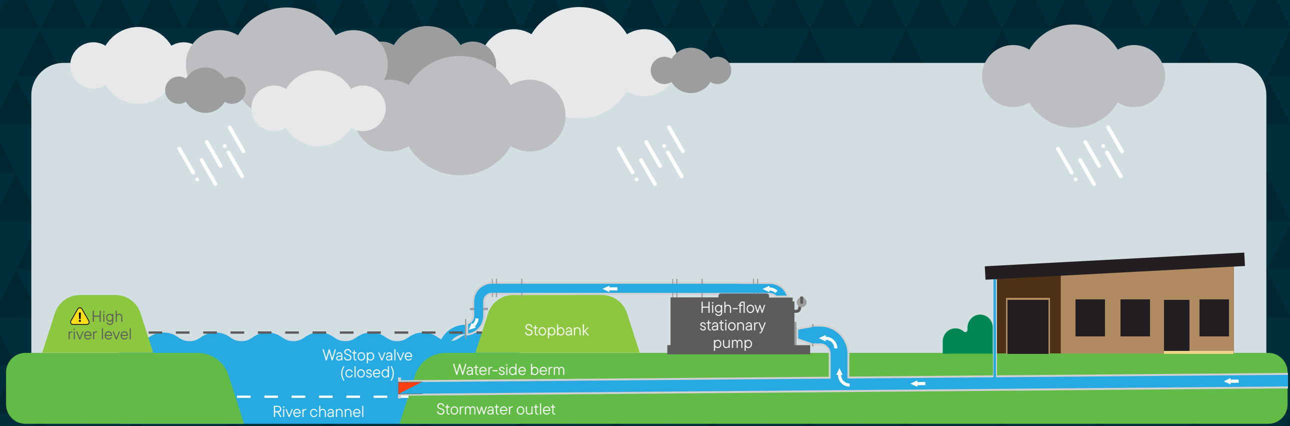
Scan this QR code to view our interactive map on: **letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz**

Westport's stormwater system explained

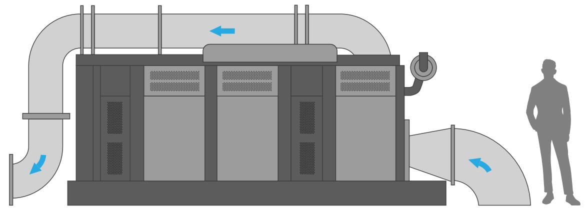
On a normal day, when the Buller and Orowaiti Rivers are at their usual levels, stormwater drains easily out of town. The water in the rivers is lower than the water in the pipes, so stormwater can flow out through the outlets into the rivers.



But when the rivers are running high - after heavy rain or during high tides - the stormwater system struggles. The river levels exceed the level of the stormwater network. When that happens, stormwater can't drain away, and it backs up. This leads to surface flooding around town.



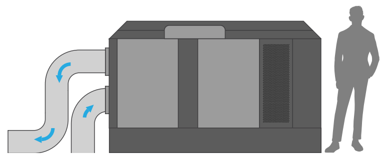
To help in these situations, stationary pumps can be switched on to pump stormwater over the stopbanks and into the rivers. This helps the town's stormwater pipes to drain and reduces surface flooding. These pumps stay in place near major stormwater outlets. Mobile pumps would be deployed where needed.



Stationary pump station

Sound level	65 dB(A) at 10m
Weight	6300 kg
Max. flow	3200 m3/hour *

That's roughly the volume of PERC's 25 m lap pool emptied in 9 minutes and 26 seconds!



Mobile pump unit

Sound level	67 dB(A) at 10m
Weight	2150 kg
Max. flow	780 m3/hour *

That's roughly the volume of PERC's 25 m lap pool emptied in 49 minutes!

Scan to visit

Scan this QR code to watch our explainer video

Options for consultation

To assist Council in this decision-making process, the community is invited to give their feedback on the two options. These are either to co-fund the 40% and upgrade of the stormwater network, in line with the construction of the floodwalls, or not to co-fund and not upgrade the stormwater network prior to the floodwalls being constructed.

Option 1: Co-fund the upgrade of the stormwater system

This option would mean that Buller District Council upgrades the stormwater system in line with the construction of the stop banks and co-funds 40% of the cost, totalling $3.49 m.

Advantages

- $5.27 m of external funding will be received to upgrade the stormwater system, which would otherwise be funded out of rates.
- Replacing old and undersized stormwater outlets and installing backflow devices in conjunction with the construction of the floodwalls will be the most cost-effective and efficient way of delivering the necessary upgrades.
- Purchasing mobile pumps will enable Buller District Council to use them in emergencies and avoid having to hire pumps in heavy rain events across the district.

Disadvantages

- Council must take out a loan based on 3.5% interest over a 30-year period, to fund the interest and repayments. This will impact rates since stormwater infrastructure is funded through a general rate. Costs are estimated to be $142,000 in Year 1 of the project (2026/27), $236,000 in Year 2 (2027/28) and $323,000 for each subsequent year from Year 3 onwards.

Option 2: No stormwater system upgrades

This option would mean that Buller District Council does not carry out any upgrades or replacements of stormwater outlets and does not purchase mobile and stationary pumps prior to the construction of the floodwalls.

This means council does not have to invest $3.49 m out of general rates to receive the RIF funding. ***It should be noted that, at some later stage, these upgrades will need to be carried out as part of routine maintenance to keep the stormwater system functioning, at a significantly higher cost and risk to the integrity of the floodwalls.***

Advantages

- Council does not have to take up a loan to fund the 40%, and therefore, no interest or repayments have to be financed out of rates.

Disadvantages

- Additional external funding of $5.27 m will not be received.
- Construction of the floodwalls will continue around Westport with undersized and old outlets left in place, and upgrading these later will incur higher costs.
- Future replacement not coordinated with the installation of the floodwalls will require the floodwalls to be rebuilt above and around the outlet itself. The impact on the floodwalls is unclear and could cause weaknesses in the floodwalls.
- Mobile pumps will not be purchased, and during heavy rain events, pumps will continue to be hired. This will incur ongoing ad hoc costs and continue the unreliability associated with the need to have mobile pumps available.

Next steps

The community is invited to submit their feedback on the preferred option during the Annual Plan 2026/27 consultation. Councillors will consider the submissions during the hearings and deliberations in May.

Councillors will make a decision at the end of May 2026. If the co-funding option is selected, the next steps will be to finalise the specifications for the outlets and pumps. These specifications will serve as the basis for going to market through a procurement process, requesting proposals from suppliers.

Key dates

7 April 2026
Consultation opens for feedback

5 May 2026
Consultation closes

20 May 2026
Hearings

20 May 2026
Deliberations

30 June 2026
Council adopts its final Annual Plan 2026/27

Have your say on the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27

We would like your feedback on our plan for the coming year, and how we should move forward regarding Westport's stormwater integration.

Let's talk

Share your feedback from Tuesday 7 April to 4:30 pm Tuesday 5 May 2026 via these channels:

Online:

Visit **letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz** where you will find all the information about the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27, including an easy-to-navigate online feedback form.

Scan this QR code with your device to visit letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz

Paper form:

Pick up and drop off a paper form at Council's offices in Westport or Reefton, Buller District Libraries, the Ngakawau Community Centre, or the Karamea Information Centre.

Mail:

Post your paper form to Buller District Council, PO Box 21, Westport 7866.

Email:

Send your submission (scanned or as an attachment) to **submissions@bdc.govt.nz**
photos of submission forms will not be accepted.

Information evenings:

Information evenings will be held in Westport, Karamea and Reefton, providing the community with an opportunity to speak with our stormwater experts and ask questions about the Draft Annual Plan 2026/27. Find dates and locations on letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz

Got a burning question?

You can email your questions to: annualplan@bdc.govt.nz, send them our way via Let's talk, or drop your questions off at Council's offices in Westport or Reefton, Buller District Libraries, the Ngakawau Community Centre, or the Karamea Information Centre until 19 April 2026.

We will collate these, subject to our guidelines, and answer them in our Annual Plan Q&A session, which will be available online - submitters will remain anonymous. If you still have a question after this date, feel free to send us an email and we will answer it directly.

Hearings and Deliberations:

Hearings are meetings where people can have their say. It's your chance for Council to listen to what you think. This is where you can talk about your submission to Council, either in person or via Zoom.

The public hearings are scheduled for 20 May 2026.

Deliberations happen after the hearings. This is when Council discusses the feedback they've heard or received in writing and decides what to do.

During the deliberations, Council will make a decision regarding the co-funding required for Westport's stormwater integration to provide a decision to Kānoa by 10 June 2026. Read more about the key consultation topic on page 16.

The Draft Annual Plan 2026/27 deliberations are scheduled for 20 May 2026.

You are welcome to join these public events or watch them via our YouTube livestream.

@bullerdistrictcouncil173

How submissions impact decisions

Submissions are one of the most powerful ways communities in New Zealand can shape local government decisions.

Every submission adds real-world insight to council deliberations, helping elected members understand how proposals affect the people who live and work in their districts. When councils receive submissions, they gain a broader, more nuanced picture, far beyond reports, data, and technical assessments.

Submissions strengthen informed decision-making by highlighting lived experiences, bringing unintended consequences to the surface, and drawing attention to opportunities or challenges that may otherwise be missed. They also support public engagement, ensuring councils remain transparent and accountable to the communities they serve.

Importantly, submissions often influence policy development. When residents or organisations share clear, constructive feedback, councils can refine or redesign policies to better match community needs and priorities. Over time, this feedback loop helps improve services, guide advocacy efforts, and ensure that strategic decisions reflect the voices of real people rather than assumptions on paper.

Through active participation, submissions transform public decision-making into a collaborative process - one where councils and communities work side by side to shape a better future.

Why community and non-profit organisations should make submissions

For community and nonprofit organisations, making submissions is more than a right - it's a strategic opportunity.

Councils regularly make decisions that affect the people you serve, yet what's often missing is the firsthand knowledge only community-facing organisations can provide. Submissions allow you to bring that lived experience directly to the table.

Beyond influencing outcomes, submissions build your organisation's visibility and credibility. Regular participation helps establish you as a trusted voice, strengthening relationships with council staff and elected members. Over time, this can lead to earlier engagement, deeper collaboration, and better alignment between council decisions and community needs.

A strong submission is concise, balanced, and provides authentic insight. Storytelling - paired with clear facts - helps your message resonate amid many competing voices. Every submission you make strengthens the connection between your organisation and local government, ensuring decisions reflect the real needs of your community.

Your voice matters. Make it count.

Submissions are public information.
Submissions are a public record and part of the public consultation process. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted. Submissions, including names, are published on our website and in official documents, so please do not include any personal information in the content of your submission that you would prefer to be kept private.

While contact details (address, phone number and email) are provided to elected members, along with your feedback to be considered when making their decisions, contact details will not be made publicly available on the Council's website or in official documentation.

Please refer to Council's website: ***bullerdc.govt.nz/privacy-statement*** *or contact Council for a copy of our Privacy Statement.*

Let's talk

DRAFT

Annual Plan 2026/27

Year 2 of Buller District Council's 2025-2034 Long-Term Plan

BULLER DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera O Kawatiri

BULLER KAWATIRI grounded by community

letstalk.bullerdc.govt.nz