

Head Start Organising Principles Pulse Survey

Monitoring & Research

July 2026

Who did we hear from?

Community Board*	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Not Stated***	6	0.1%
Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Banks Peninsula	212	4%
Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood	801	14%
Waipuna Halswell-Hornby-Riccarton	904	16%
Waimāero Fendalton-Waimairi-Harewood	1,012	18%
Waipapa Papanui-Innes-Central	850	15%
Waihoru Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote	1,362	24%

Ward*	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Not Stated***	6	0.1%
Banks Peninsula	212	4%
Burwood	221	4%
Cashmere	672	12%
Central	266	5%
Coastal	351	6%
Fendalton	334	6%
Halswell	468	8%
Harewood	383	7%
Heathcote	435	8%
Hornby	158	3%
Innes	399	7%
Linwood	229	4%
Papanui	185	3%
Riccarton	278	5%
Spreydon	255	5%
Waimairi	295	5%

*Indicative only. These numbers have been prepared using the suburb information provided by respondents.

***Not stated includes respondents who live in Christchurch but did not provide which suburb they live in.

Who did we hear from?

Location	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Elsewhere in Canterbury	433	8%
Selwyn	255	5%
Waimakariri	144	3%
Hurunui	20	0.4%
Ashburton	12	0.2%
Waitaki	1	0.02%
Elsewhere in New Zealand	23	0.4%
Auckland	2	0.04%
Buller District	1	0.02%
Dunedin	1	0.02%
Manawatu	2	0.04%
Marlborough	4	0.1%
Nelson City	1	0.02%
Queenstown-Lakes	2	0.04%
Southland	1	0.02%
Tasman	2	0.04%
Tauranga	1	0.02%
Wellington	5	0.1%
Westland	1	0.02%
Outside of New Zealand	10	0.2%
Australia	5	0.1%
Canada	2	0.04%
United Kingdom	3	0.05%

Who did we hear from?

Number of Respondents by Age

Age	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Not Stated	61	1%
Under 18 years	6	0.1%
18 – 24 years	63	1%
25 – 34 years	410	7%
35 – 49 years	1,157	21%
50 – 64 years	1,732	31%
65 – 79 years	1,879	33%
80 years and over	320	6%

Number of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Not Stated	92	2%
Male	3,012	54%
Female	2,490	44%
Non-binary / another gender	34	1%

Number of Respondents by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Not Stated	97	2%
NZ European	4724	84%
Māori	311	6%
Pacific Peoples	45	1%
Asian	213	4%
Middle Eastern, Latin American & African	56	1%
Other European	427	8%
Other	377	7%

Number of Respondents by Time Living in Christchurch

Time living in Christchurch	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Not Stated	22	0.4%
Less than a year	26	1%
1 – 3 years	157	3%
4 – 5 years	204	4%
6 – 9 years	414	8%
10 – 20 years	917	18%
More than 20 years	3407	66%

Number of Respondents by Submitter Type

Submission Type	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Individuals	5596	99%
Organisations	32	1%

Why do we collect demographic information?

It is important that we understand both who we have and have not heard from when we consult on issues that affect everyone in the city. We include a standard set of demographic questions across our consultations that help us better understand this. These questions are optional; submitters do not have to answer them to make a submission.

Where possible, we align the questions we ask with the information that StatsNZ collects via the census. This ensures that we are capturing the information that is consistent with the national approach to reporting on demographics but also enables us to benchmark and understand whether we have heard from a representative group of submitters.

Ranking the organising principles

Respondents were asked to rank three organising principles:

- **How people live, work, & grow:** An option that recognises the distinct needs of urban areas and surrounding provincial communities.
- **How water & rivers flow:** An option shaped by natural features such as rivers, waterways and catchments.
- **Scale, capability, capacity:** An option based on a larger council area, with a focus on affordability, capability, coordination, and decision making.

A total of 5,628 respondents ranked the three organising principles. Almost half (49%) ranked how people live, work, and grow as the most important organising principle, indicating a preference for an approach that supports sustainable long-term growth across both Christchurch and the wider region.

When considered alongside the early engagement findings, where respondents identified improving planning, growth, and infrastructure outcomes as the most important guiding principle, these results point to a strong and consistent community desire for a more effective approach to growth management.

Just under a quarter of respondents (23%) ranked how water and rivers flow as the most important organising principle, while just over a quarter (28%) ranked scale, capability, and capacity as the most important.

Feedback from Christchurch residents was broadly consistent with the overall results, with no material differences in how the organising principles were ranked. However, among respondents who do not live in Christchurch, how people live, work, and grow was even more strongly supported, with 56% ranking it as their most important organising principle.

The differences in feedback across wards was minor. Every ward showed the same overall ranking pattern, with how people live, work, and grow consistently the highest priority, how water and rivers flow second, and scale, capability, and capacity third.

Table 1: Please rank the following organising principles in order of importance, in your view, with 1 being the most important.

Total Respondents: 5,628

Response	Overall Priority	Total Score	1		2		3	
How people live work & grow An option that recognises the distinct needs of urban areas and surrounding provincial communities.	1	12,959	2,769	49%	1,786	32%	1,073	19%
How water & rivers flow An option shaped by natural features such as rivers, waterways and catchments.	2	10,452	1,288	23%	2,242	40%	2,098	37%
Scale, capability, capacity An option based on a larger council area, with a focus on affordability, capability, coordination, and decision making.	3	10,375	1,571	28%	1,600	28%	2,457	44%

Factors Influencing the Ranking of Organising Principles

Respondents were asked to indicate the factors that influenced how they ranked the organising principles.

Overall, half of respondents said their preferred organising principle reflects how people already live, work, and travel. Just under half indicated that their preference was the most practical or workable option (43%), best reflected how growth could be managed and directed to the right places (41%), or balanced local needs with wider regional priorities (41%).

Among respondents who ranked how people live, work, and travel as the most important organising principle, the key factors influencing their choice were that it reflects how people already live, work, and travel (66%), keeps closely connected communities together (51%), feels like the most practical or workable option (46%), and reflects how growth could be managed and directed to the right places (44%).

For respondents who ranked how water and rivers flow as the most important organising principle, the main influences were that it reflects natural system boundaries (71%), supports long-term environmental outcomes (64%), prioritises environmental boundaries (53%), and balances local needs with wider regional priorities (44%).

Among those who ranked scale, capability, and capacity as the most important organising principle, the leading factors were that it supports clearer and more efficient decision-making (47%), feels like the most practical or workable option (45%), prioritises financial sustainability (44%), and helps balance growth aspirations with affordability (44%).

Table 2: Which of the following factors influenced how you ranked the organising principles?		
Total Respondents: 5,628		
Response	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
It reflects how people already live, work, and travel	2,839	50%
It feels like the most practical or workable option	2,422	43%
It reflects how growth could be managed and supports growth in the right places	2,327	41%
It balances local needs with wider regional priorities	2,311	41%
It keeps closely connected communities together	2,158	38%
It supports long term environmental outcomes	2,093	37%

It reflects natural system boundaries (e.g. water, land, catchments)	1,955	35%
It supports clearer and more efficient decision making	1,989	35%
It helps balance growth aspirations with affordability for ratepayers	1,814	32%
It prioritises financial sustainability	1,474	26%
It will strengthen capability and access to expertise	1,463	26%
It prioritises environmental boundaries	1,349	24%
It would create clearer roles and responsibilities	1,348	24%
It reflects a preference for minimising future rates increases	1,334	24%
It provides for stronger coordination with central government	1,158	21%
Other	325	6%
Don't know	108	2%

The factors that influenced how respondents ranked the organising principles differed by ward. Respondents in Banks Peninsula, Cashmere, Central and Linwood were more likely to prioritise environmental considerations, such as natural system boundaries and long-term environmental outcomes, while respondents in Halswell and Innes placed greater emphasis on financial sustainability, affordability and minimising future rates increases.

Harewood, Halswell and Riccarton were more likely to value principles that reflect existing communities and travel patterns, while Fendalton, Papanui and Heathcote placed relatively greater importance on governance, capability and decision making considerations. Overall, environmental priorities tended to be strongest in some wards, while others focused more on financial and practical considerations.

Table 3: Which of the following factors influenced how you ranked the organising principles X Ward

Note: Where no data is reported for a ward, this indicates that respondents in that ward were neither more nor less likely than those in other wards to identify the principles as most important.

Ward	Factors more likely to influence ranking of the organising principles	Factors less likely to influence ranking of the organising principles
Banks Peninsula	• It reflects natural system boundaries • It prioritises environmental boundaries • It keeps closely connected communities together • It supports long term environmental outcomes	• It reflects how people already live, work, and travel
Burwood		• It supports long term environmental outcomes • It balances local needs with wider regional priorities • It prioritises environmental boundaries
Cashmere	• It prioritises environmental boundaries • It supports long term environmental outcomes • It reflects natural system boundaries	• It reflects a preference for minimising future rates increases • It prioritises financial sustainability
Central	• It prioritises environmental boundaries	
Coastal		
Fendalton	• It helps balance growth aspirations with affordability for ratepayers • It provides for stronger coordination with central government • It will strengthen capability and access to expertise	• It prioritises environmental boundaries
Halswell	• It helps balance growth aspirations with affordability for ratepayers • It prioritises financial sustainability • It reflects a preference for minimising future rates increases • It reflects how people already live, work, and travel	

Harewood	• It reflects how people already live, work, and travel	• It prioritises environmental boundaries • It reflects natural system boundaries • It supports long term environmental outcomes
Heathcote	• It supports long term environmental outcomes • It supports clearer and more efficient decision making	• It prioritises financial sustainability
Hornby		• It feels like the most practical or workable option
Innes	• It prioritises financial sustainability • It reflects a preference for minimising future rates increases	• It supports long term environmental outcomes • It reflects natural system boundaries • It prioritises environmental outcomes
Linwood	• It prioritises environmental boundaries	• It prioritises financial sustainability • It reflects natural system boundaries • It will strengthen capability and access to expertise
Papanui	• It will strengthen capability and access to expertise	
Riccarton	• It reflects how people already live, work, & travel	• It reflects a preference for minimising future rates increases
Spreydon		
Waimairi		• It will strengthen capability and access to expertise

Appendix 1: Organising Principles



Organise around

How we work, live & grow

An option that recognises the distinct needs of urban areas and surrounding provincial communities.

What it could deliver

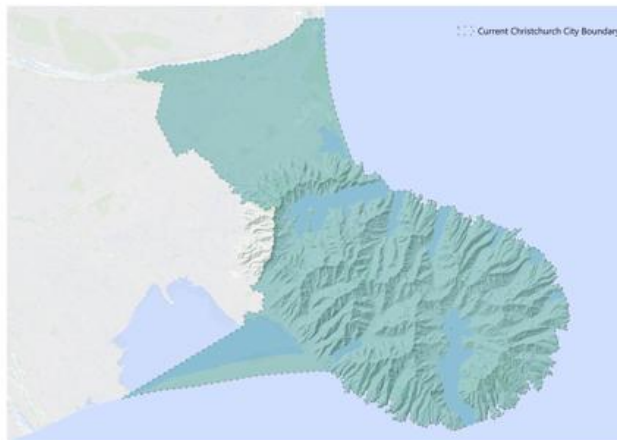
Governance organised around communities with shared interests and needs, bringing together connected urban areas while allowing rural and provincial communities to have arrangements that reflect their own priorities and challenges.

Things to consider

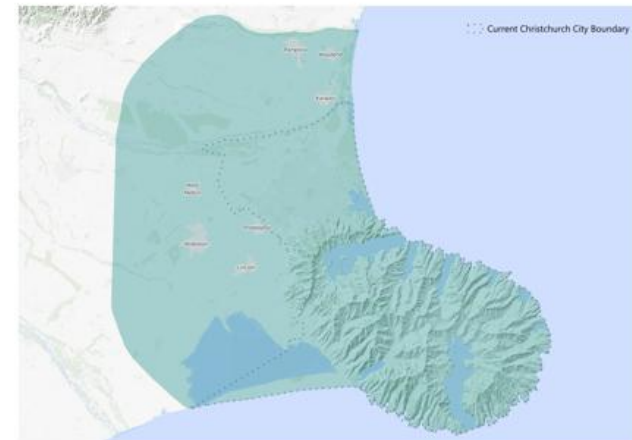
Can services and infrastructure be delivered in a financially sustainable way while responding to different local priorities, needs, and growth patterns across Canterbury?

What this could look for Christchurch

An urban council that could range from Christchurch's current boundaries to a wider urban area reflecting growth and development patterns.



A unitary authority based on the current Christchurch City Council (including Banks Peninsula) boundary.



A unitary council covering Christchurch City (including Banks Peninsula) and the urban parts of Selwyn and Waimakariri.

What this could look for the rest of Canterbury

Provincial councils covering rural areas and their supporting towns and centres, organised around communities with shared geography, local identity, and service needs.



Organise around

How water & rivers flow

An option shaped by natural features such as rivers, waterways and catchments.

What it could deliver

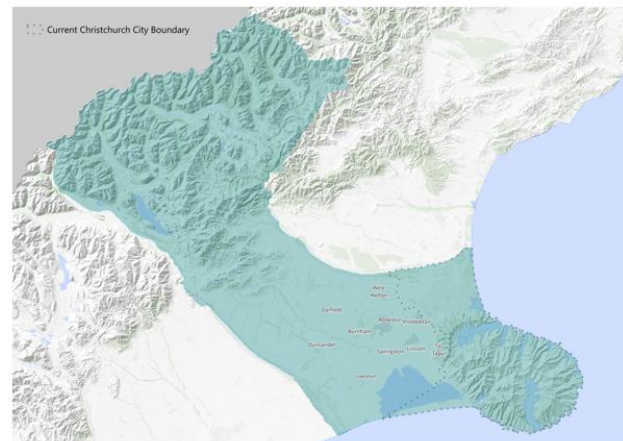
Governance that aligns with the way water, rivers and catchments naturally function, enabling more joined-up management of water quality, flood risk, environmental outcomes and infrastructure across whole systems rather than council boundaries.

Things to consider

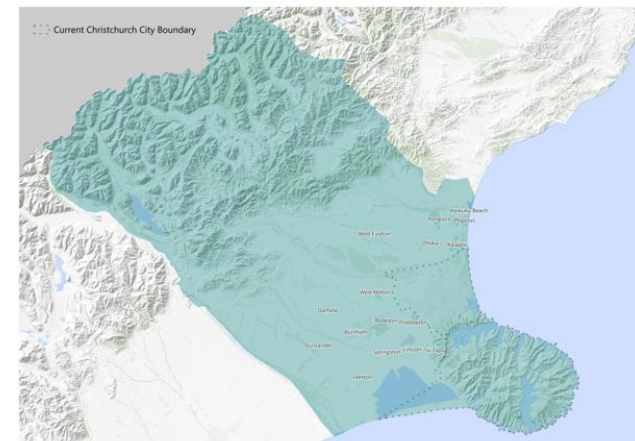
The area covered may extend beyond communities that see themselves as closely connected.

What this could look like for Christchurch

A larger, catchment-shaped council, from source water, to whole freshwater systems, to full river catchments mountains to sea.



A unitary council covering Christchurch City (including Banks Peninsula) and all of the Selwyn district.



A unitary council covering all of Christchurch City (including Banks Peninsula) and the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts.

What this could look like for the rest of Canterbury

One or many council's organised around natural water catchments, enabling water and environmental management to be coordinated beyond current council boundaries.



Organise around

Scale, capability, capacity

An option based on a larger council area, with a focus on affordability, capability, coordination, and decision making.

What it could deliver

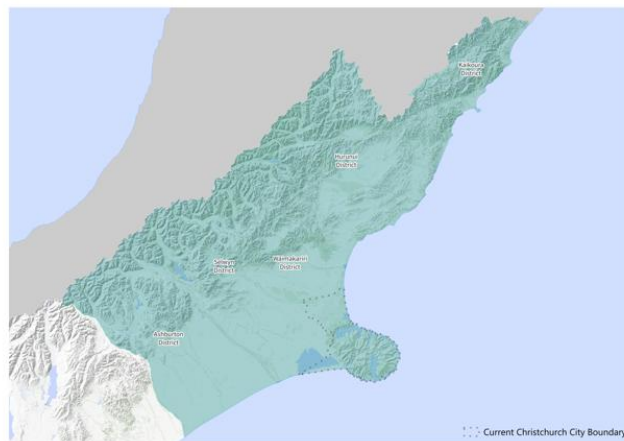
Greater scale to support more consistent services, strong capability and expertise, and more coordinated planning and decision making across a wider area.

Things to consider

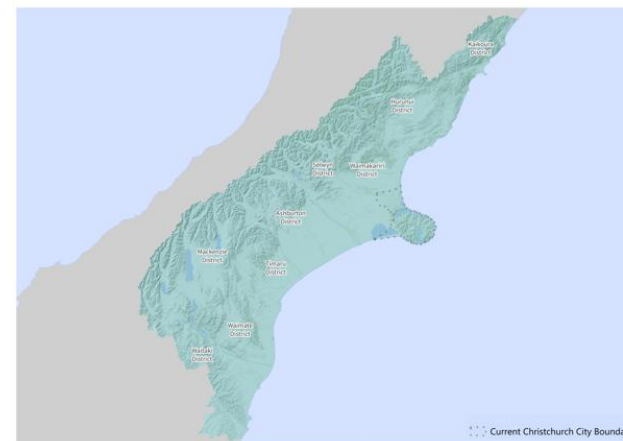
Larger councils may bring greater capability and coordination, but they can be further removed from individual communities. Ensuring local representation, community identity and responsiveness to local needs would be an important consideration.

What this could look like for Christchurch

A larger council area, from Greater Christchurch to a single council covering northern Canterbury, or the whole of Canterbury.



A north canterbury unitary council covering the area from Ashburton in the south to Kaikoura in the north.



A unitary council covering all of Canterbury, from Waitaki in the south to Kaikoura in the north.

What this could look like for the rest of Canterbury

Communities across Canterbury could be brought together into a single council, or into larger councils made up of several neighbouring districts.