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03 941 8999

53 Hereford Street  
Christchurch 8013

PO Box 73013  
Christchurch 8154

[ccc.govt.nz](http://ccc.govt.nz)

Environment Committee Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Taiao  
Environment Committee Staff  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Email: [en@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:en@parliament.govt.nz)

## Christchurch City Council submission on the *Inquiry into climate adaptation*

### Introduction

1. Christchurch City Council (the Council) thanks the Environment Committee for the opportunity to provide comment on the inquiry into climate adaptation.
2. The Council welcomes the detail in these policy documents and the helpful direction provided. National policy on climate adaptation and managed retreat currently represents a large gap. This limits actions we can take through planning and policy at the Council, and across Aotearoa, and we urge the Committee to further this inquiry with urgency and expediency.
3. We note the concurrent release of the draft National Policy Statement for Natural Hazard Decision-making and have sought to align our feedback on the two consultations. However, we also draw attention to the plethora of reform programmes and consultations underway, requiring significant resource for local government to respond. There is also confusion regarding the eventual roles and responsibilities of local government across the various legislative reform programmes. While the *Report of the Expert Working Group on Managed Retreat* goes some way towards addressing these questions around climate adaptation, it nevertheless remains an uncertain environment for local government.
4. The inquiry deals with significant issues for the Council and the communities we serve. It will take a considerable amount of time and collaboration to agree to organisational views on some of the recommendations of the Working Group, particularly where these impact on the wellbeing of our communities and concern community-led retreat. It has therefore not been possible to confirm a position on all of the recommendations contained within the Working Group's report, within the submission timeframe.
5. Christchurch's experience of retreat following the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence, through the Crown's red-zoning process, and the hard lessons learned during this time, cannot fail to inform how we consider these issues. Simple and clear roles and responsibilities are of the utmost importance, as is adequate resourcing, building social cohesion and a wellbeing focus to strengthen community resilience, and building and maintaining trust and confidence in agencies.
6. For avoidance of doubt, in preparation of our submission note that we have drawn on and responded to the proposals set out in the Report of the Expert Working Group on Managed Retreat.

### Key points

7. The key points raised in the submission are:
- Reform must be progressed urgently to provide clarity and avoid unnecessary rework.
  - Urge the need for national direction to help set consistent expectations and enable communities to engage within a generally accepted framework. This is essential to reduce the existing uncertainty that impacts communities and their well-being and provide necessary direction to Councils to support long-term planning and future investment decisions.
  - To enable a balance between the efficiency and certainty of adaptation processes (including managed retreat), and appropriate community involvement in, and ownership of, these processes, the purpose and weighting of community engagement should be well defined and specific to each stage. This is required to set expectations around engagement and ensure authentic engagement.
  - Greater emphasis needs to be placed on creating a framework that is people focused and prioritises community well-being. More involvement from social service and health agencies is required to shift from a strict land-use planning approach to a social policy approach. A greater focus also needs to be placed on how we educate and prepare people for change to ensure community buy-in.
  - Funding and financing must be adequate to enable adaptation, must create incentives that encourage risk reduction by the Crown, local government, private individuals, banks and insurers, and must avoid transfer of risk and cost onto local government. Notably, funding should align with exposure and vulnerability to climate change induced hazards.
  - It is not feasible for rates to fund the scale of investment required. For the district, conservative estimates suggest with sea level rise of only 20cm the replacement value of our three waters network pipes and road networks is \$3.2B. If exposure of all Council infrastructure was quantified, the costs would be far greater than this. Our assessments indicate the approximately \$14B<sup>1</sup> of private properties are exposed within the district, which would be unaffordable for Council to co-fund private property retreat. Our position is that local government remains responsible for public assets only, with central government taking responsibility for compensation for private asset owners.
  - There is need for simple and clear set of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to avoid unnecessary complexity and fragmentation.

### **Submission**

#### *Timing and the need for urgency*

8. The Council considers the policy direction signalled in the Working Group's report to be useful in driving meaningful change in the medium to long-term. However, in the interim, the Council and its many counterparts across the country are already working with communities and mana whenua to undertake adaptation planning, using a variety of different tools and approaches. Investment decisions are being made now that will be in place for decades to come. The Council therefore encourages government to drive reform programmes at a faster pace to reduce the potential for inequities, misalignments, and missed opportunities.
9. The current uncertainty with regard to managed retreat and adaptation funding significantly impacts communities and their wellbeing. At present adaptation planning processes are biased towards protection options, with no or limited pathways to compensate for retreat. This leaves private property owners in at-risk locations. It is also important local authorities are able to undertake long-term planning and infrastructure investment within a framework that provides certainty as to adaptation options, triggers for managed retreat and other adaptation pathways, and guidance for such investment decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on 20cm of sea level rise (estimated 2050), approximately 19,367 residential buildings will be exposed to coastal hazard risk in Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. To determine total replacement costs for private properties, the average value of properties within the district, which is \$727,982, has been applied. This suggests a total replacement cost of \$14 Billion if all these properties were subject to a severe weather event triggering retreat.

10. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that, if adaptation planning is going to continue at pace, decision-makers need to be supported to make decisions in the face of uncertainty. In the past, uncertainty has been used as a reason to slow down adaptation planning. The Council welcomes recommendation 58 in the Working Group's report, which proposes some protection from liability for making decisions and acting in good faith to reduce risk.
11. In principle, the Council supports recommendations for a statutory framework for local adaptation planning, for the sake of clarity and certainty. However, implementing the proposed framework would be extremely slow and expensive. The approach suggested is complex and seeks alignment with resource management reform processes that have lengthy lead-in times (7-10 years). We are concerned that further slowing down the process would undermine current progress and risk maladaptation.

#### *Transitional arrangements*

12. Consideration needs to be given to how adaptation planning is undertaken during the transitional period, acknowledging that it could be years before a new system is in place. Councils, and other decision-makers, need to be supported during the transitional period to avoid locking in inappropriate land use or closing off adaptation pathways before the new system takes full effect.

#### Avoid rework of existing adaptation planning

13. Many Councils across Aotearoa that are facing coastal hazards have established and are currently implementing local adaptation planning processes that conform broadly to the 2017 MfE Coastal Hazards and Climate Change guidance for local government. In addition, large numbers have also completed risk assessments at significant cost. Councils need reassurance that decisions and investments that have already been made or will be made in advance of the new system taking effect, will be absorbed into the new system in order to avoid a significant amount of rework and the associated costs and resources involved.
14. As an example, the Council would like to understand how the following work will be integrated into the new system:
  - Council undertook a comprehensive, district-wide coastal hazards risk assessment in 2020 and has also invested heavily in river flood modelling at a cumulative cost of millions of dollars. Council's commissioning of these models was informed by local knowledge of local environments and hazards, which arguably deliver a more tailored and relevant result than a one-size-fits-all approach guided by national advice. Clarity is needed on whether every Council would have to start their risk assessments again to align with approved methodologies, or whether there is a fast-track/simplified approach for councils with existing risk assessments.
  - In 2024 Council will receive its first adaptation plans for the district, focused on the Lyttelton Harbour – Whakaraupō and Port Levy-Koukourarata area. Council will be required to make decisions on these pathways which have been developed over an 18-month period with significant community and rūnanga engagement, primarily through a Coastal Panel. Clarity is needed to understand how these pathways progress towards holding a statutory weight in order to avoid re-work and loss of community confidence in these processes, as well as funding arrangements to deliver these plans.

#### *Community-led adaptation: bottom up, top down, or a bit of both?*

15. The use of the term 'community-led' retreat implies that communities will be leading and making retreat decisions, yet the Working Group's Report recommends that final decisions are made by adaptation committees comprised of agency representatives at a regional level. The Working Group proposes that national direction identify the circumstances when retreat must be considered, but that the threshold for retreat be set by a community's ability to tolerate risk.

16. These proposals reflect the tensions inherent in taking a purely ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’ approach and the Working Group is to be commended for proposing a nuanced approach to this challenge. The Council considers it critical that this balance is considered, and clarity is provided at each step of the process.
17. To illustrate some of these tensions, we draw on our experience delivering our local adaptation planning programme. In Christchurch, we are working on a co-development process in our local adaptation planning, through a Coastal Panel of community and rūnanga representatives, who are supported by a Specialist and Technical Advisory Group to identify preferred adaptation pathways. The Coastal Panel is involved at every step and the process allows for local input on highly complex aspects of the process, which are much harder to engage wider communities on via intermittent, self-selecting engagement processes.
18. This ‘bottom up’ process has the benefit of tailoring adaptation pathways to best fit with local values thereby increasing community buy-in for the outcome, but it is a complex, resource-intensive and slow process. Even with the Coastal Panel meeting every third week, the full process is likely to take around 18 months. The Council provides an honorarium to Coastal Panel members, as well as funding meals and venues and three check-ins with the wider community throughout the process.
19. Like many other such panels around the country (and despite significant efforts to recruit for diversity within the Coastal Panel), membership tends towards older, middle-class homeowners who have the time and resources to commit to this process. It can therefore be a challenge for community panels to accurately balance their world view and current needs against those of future generations, or preference adaptation options that require significant change to the community's current way of life (for example through a retreat option).
20. To enable a balance between efficiency and certainty, and appropriate community involvement in, and ownership of, these processes, the Council recommends that the purpose and weighting of community engagement should be well defined and specific to each stage of the process. A spectrum of engagement could be tailored as per the following considerations:
  - Does the community’s time and commitment impact the outcome? Time and resource should not be spent on deep community engagement where this will not authentically give communities real influence to determine outcomes (i.e. where decisions are ultimately made by the Adaptation Committee). It is therefore helpful to understand where engagement sits in the IAP2 spectrum; if the decision is to be community-led then engagement should be rich and deep at the ‘empower’ end of the IAP2 spectrum; if the community is ultimately only being informed then engagement should be tailored accordingly at the ‘consult’ end of the IAP2 spectrum.
  - Is community input commensurate to the adaptation decision? Community involvement should be higher where the adaptation pathway is for important community assets or if the community is expected to pay for the outcome. However, local government (representing the interests of the whole community not just directly impacted residents) must also be enabled to make decisions that manage ratepayers' funds wisely, for example by relocating services that are frequently impacted by hazards and have excessive maintenance costs as a result.
  - How proximate is the level of risk? Where a decision is urgently required because a community is already at risk, it may be more efficient and effective for retreat decisions to be driven by a more top-down approach through the proposed nationally-consistent threshold, in recognition of life risk and to also prevent potential delays. Where there is more flexibility in adaptation pathways because the risks are longer-term it may be more feasible to adopt a bottom-up approach.

### Risk assessments

21. The Working Group proposes a top-down approach to risk assessments and the Council supports this where the risk assessment is undertaken at a regional level. However, in line with the points made above, localised risk and vulnerability assessments that will inform local adaptation planning, do require community input. Communities have a significant role to play in detailing local values, and this perspective cannot be captured by experts alone.
22. There is a strong emphasis on the risk assessment stage in the Working Group's report and there are statements that indicate that risk is variably identified across Aotearoa. The Council is not aware of any analysis of the quality of risk assessment work undertaken by local government that supports this view.
23. We also caution against an over-emphasis on front-end processes like risk assessments, while little emphasis has been placed on implementation details such as monitoring and reporting. Monitoring and reporting has a critical role to play in providing communities with certainty as it provides clarity on the pathway and timeline to taking different adaptation options, such as retreat. This certainty also has the benefit of improving the wellbeing of communities and ensuring transparency. However, at present there is no national framework for adaptation monitoring and therefore councils are needing to individually establish these processes to ensure adaptation plans are implemented in a timely way to avoid maladaptation.
24. Furthermore, while it is clearly important to understand risk, as noted, many Councils have already undertaken this step. Most already have a good knowledge of their local risk profile and new risk assessments are costly and time-consuming to undertake. Making these mandatory and providing excessive guidance will require re-work and/or slow down planning processes. The requirements for risk assessments as set out in the Working Group's recommendations (34 in particular) would require local government to spend a lot on consultancy fees. We recommend that thought is given to ways that central government could support these processes so that they are less onerous and expensive for local government, for example through reduced CRI fees or provision of nationally developed risk assessments where local government is unable to develop these itself.

### Community-led retreat

25. The Council strongly supports the establishment of a nationally consistent risk threshold, or criteria to determine a threshold, beyond which communities must consider retreat as an option. A mandate to ensure that these conversations will happen is of paramount importance for local authorities. It will also enable equitable outcomes between communities and early engagement on the issue. There should be very specific and narrow criteria set for any departure from a retreat in locations where this has been identified as the preferred option.
26. However, the Council does not consider that retreat should be determined by community risk tolerance. While the proposal by the Working Group appears to offer a pathway to build community agency into the process, we are unconvinced that it is possible to agree a meaningful community consensus on risk tolerance. There is also the risk that even if community consensus is agreed that the approach agreed is not financially viable. The Council therefore does not consider this as an acceptable basis on which to establish decisions regarding retreat/relocation, noting it could lead to situations where a community is left in a location that has 'intolerable risk' because some people want to stay and/or impose significant costs leading to affordability challenges and inequities.
27. Instead, we propose that significant efforts are made to build a broad consensus nationally, that the risks some communities face are so great that they have no real choice but to leave behind their homes, neighbourhoods and places they care for. To build this consensus, central and local government agencies and

academics need to paint a clear and compelling picture of how climate hazards will impact communities, with emphasis on the compounding and cascading impacts that can often be more significant than extreme weather events themselves.

28. To achieve such transformational change, there needs to be greater emphasis placed on how we educate and prepare people for change by leaning on social science and community-development skillsets. We have seen through campaigns encouraging people to quit smoking or stop drink driving that skilled communications and effective leadership have helped educate and gain social licence for change. In Christchurch the All Right? campaign was critical to providing communities with tips on how to manage their wellbeing as they dealt with uncertainty after the earthquakes. It's important to remember that many adults in Aotearoa have not had the benefit of climate change education and may be less informed than many younger people who have and so we encourage targeting of older audiences. We urge that the importance of this is built into the new system and has adequate resourcing at a national level to deliver.
29. Clarity is also required as to who is proposed to be ultimately responsible for the signals and triggers for planned relocation. Recommendation 11 of the Working Group report states that the Crown would 'set signals and triggers for planned relocation', but Recommendation 6 states that relocation is based on the tolerance of the community. These two directions conflict.

#### Voluntary or mandatory retreat

30. Where a decision has been made to retreat, the Council considers it important to avoid a 'purely voluntary' system of managed retreat, which would see the same challenges that we are facing in the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor/Residential Red Zone around costly service provision, and suboptimal redevelopment; and in some areas where retreat will be required there will be a risk to life for those who might elect to stay.
31. In the case of the red-zoning process following the Canterbury Earthquakes, it was not mandatory to accept the Crown offer, resulting in two percent of residents remaining. The ongoing costs to Council and ratepayers of servicing these residents are disproportionately high and not in the interests of the wider ratepayer base. For example, the ongoing provision of wastewater services alone to some of these properties costs up to \$25,000 annually each (compared with \$220 for a typical urban property).
32. In the context of climate change and in particular flood risk, remaining residents – and any services required to support them – would remain in harm's way, adding life risk to the challenges of a voluntary system. Consideration should also be given to risks to others, not just remaining residents, when determining the risks of a 'purely voluntary' system, for example are emergency services required to risk their lives in responding to people who have chosen to remain if climate related events occur?

#### *Funding and financing*

##### Central government fund

33. The Council supports the establishment of a central government fund for local adaptation. Current local government funding models are widely agreed to be unsustainable. Rates, a key funding mechanism, must be negotiated by elected representatives with their communities and are not an equitable means of addressing risks across the country. Funding gaps have led to a persistent local government infrastructure deficit.
34. The Review into the Future for Local Government recommended significant changes to provide a more sustainable and equitable local government funding and finance system. A key recommendation was that central government establish an intergenerational climate change fund to enable adaptation at a local level. This recommendation is supported by prior calls for a climate fund by the Productivity Commission.



35. Without reform to local government funding and financing there are limited means for local government to meet their own direct costs from adaptation which include costs to:
- Undertake risk assessments and adaptation planning with communities.
  - Implement measures to strengthen infrastructure and community resilience to climate hazards.
  - Following a disaster repair or replace damaged community infrastructure such as roads and bridges, libraries, parks and stormwater systems.
  - Regenerate and maintain areas where retreat has occurred including decontamination of land and removal of roads and services.
  - Provide for intensification and growth in new areas to accommodate displaced populations.
36. To be clear, the costs of adaptation will be over and above existing costs local government currently incurs and will require new funding streams. Simply adding additional requirements to council rates requirements is not sustainable for councils or their communities.

#### Funding roles and responsibilities

37. The Council supports the Crown retaining responsibility for funding any private property buyouts while local government retains current responsibilities for funding community infrastructure.
38. Recent decisions by central government to assign local government joint responsibility for funding forced retreat of private property in Auckland, the Hawkes Bay, Tairāwhiti and Nelson further threatens the financial viability of local government. These negotiations transfer private costs onto local ratepayers with no ability for local government to recover these costs in a targeted or equitable manner. If this approach is continued, the Council request further understanding on the legal basis of this decision.
39. For Council it will not be feasible to support private property buyouts within existing funding sources. Based on 20cm of sea level rise (estimated 2050) 19,367 residential buildings will be exposed to coastal hazard risk in Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. This does not include wider climate risks such as inland flooding or landslides. Applying the average value of properties within the district (\$727,982) suggests a total replacement cost of \$14 Billion if these properties were subject to a severe weather event triggering retreat. This is 10 times Council's expenditure of \$1.54 Billion in the 2023/24 Annual Plan and is comparable to the cost of repair and rebuild of residential property from the Christchurch earthquake sequence.
40. Relying on rates to fund the direct property costs of retreat means that residents who reduce risk by buying in resilient locations will subsidise the decision of others to invest in vulnerable locations. This presents significant equity challenges as:
- Buyouts of high value properties at the coast are subsidised by other residents including those in lower income areas.
  - Compensation payments are funded by council debt (which is capped by various covenants), crowding out investment in community infrastructure for future generations.
41. By contrast, central government can raise revenue in ways that encourage risk reduction by private individuals. For example, through establishing levies on private properties in locations vulnerable to climate impacts to pay for the future costs of adaptation. Alternatively, the Climate Emergency Response Fund can be used, transferring the costs of adaptation onto polluters.
42. More generally it is critical to avoid the Crown transferring the costs and accountability for implementation of unilateral decisions made by them onto local authorities. This transfer of cost and risk is unsustainable. It enables central government to avoid difficult political decisions on adaptation (such as a decision not to fully compensate landowners or to require retreat from an area) by passing these challenges onto local government which has less funding and levers to respond. Where local government is accountable for delivery

it must have proportionate influence at the decision-making table to ensure that implementation is feasible and affordable.

Funding should align with exposure and vulnerability

43. The Council supports allocation of central government funding to communities based on exposure and vulnerability to climate change induced hazards rather than other arbitrary indicators such as population size.
44. While some communities have less capacity to respond to a disaster due to their size, they may also be less exposed to hazards with the scale of response limited to a small and manageable geographic area. By contrast other large communities may face outsized costs of adaptation that if unfunded may have significant national consequences.
45. Christchurch and Banks Peninsula are highly vulnerable to climate impacts, particularly from sea level rise and water table rise, with Christchurch being the economic centre of the South Island. The table below lists a range of assets (public and private) and highlights their potential exposure and vulnerability to coastal hazards based on 20cm and 1m sea level rise (river flooding is not assessed in the table). Adequate central government support for adaptation is critical for Christchurch and for New Zealand.

Asset	20cm of sea level rise		1m of sea level rise		Replacement value of assets affected with 20cm of SLR
	Exposed to hazard risk	Highly vulnerable	Exposed to hazard risk	Highly vulnerable	
Roads	631km (24%)	183km (7%)	772km (29%)	316km (12%)	\$946m
Residential buildings	19,367 buildings (16%)	3,216 (3%)	24,973 (21%)	5,177 (4%)	
Commercial buildings	1,434 buildings (16%)	209 (2%)	1,758 (19%)	298 (3%)	
Water supply network pipes	825km of pipes (29%)	188km (7%)	991km (35%)	192km (7%)	\$833m
Stormwater network pipes	187km of pipes (28%)	19km (3%)	208km (31%)	33km (5%)	\$594m
Wastewater network pipes	449km of pipes (16%)	379km (14%)	TBC	TBC	\$818m

Compensation arrangements should encourage risk reduction by the Crown, local government, insurers, banks and private individuals

46. The Council urges the Crown to establish funding and compensation arrangements that incentivise decision makers at all levels, including local government, central government, insurers, banks and private individuals to act reducing risks now.
47. The expectation of full compensation from government for private property loss in a disaster (with or without insurance) continues to encourage investment into at risk areas. Without new legislation any adaptation plans agreed with communities are currently unlikely to opt for retreat as compensation for private property retreat is not widely available. The compensation arrangements proposed by the Working Group on Managed Retreat should help discourage further development in at risk areas as owners bear a share of the risk and cost associated with retreat.



48. There is urgency to clarify compensation arrangements and help signal the need for change. The Council strongly recommends that the Crown work from the draft proposed by the Working Group to enable timely implementation of the Climate Adaptation Act.
49. Beyond the role of central and local governments there is a strong case for banks and insurers to bear some of the costs associated with climate adaptation, which would likely require regulatory change by central government.
50. Funding arrangements should also incentivise proactive risk reduction. This means central government funding needs to be available for local government to adapt ahead of disaster events. Currently, local government can access central government funding (and often insurance) for rebuilding infrastructure after a disaster but must pay the full cost of preventative measures (for example, wetlands restoration, sea walls or property buyouts). This creates a perverse incentive to defer investment until after a disaster occurs and inhibits action that could be taken now to reduce risk and minimise long term costs at a national level.

#### *Roles and responsibilities / Institutional arrangements*

51. The Council is particularly focused on the criticality of a simple and clear set of roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, given our post-earthquake experiences in which communities and agencies were hindered by an opaque and complex agency ecosystem comprising central and local government, iwi and the private sector. These myriad relationships left communities and agencies unclear on accountabilities, resulting at times in a loss of trust in institutions and conflict between institutions.
52. In commenting on roles and responsibilities we note the confusion regarding the eventual roles and responsibilities of local government, across the various legislative reform programmes. While the Working Group's report goes some way towards addressing these questions around climate adaptation, it nevertheless remains an uncertain environment for local government, in which it remains unclear what the eventual roles and responsibilities of local government will be.
53. The Council recognise the potential fragmentation of adaptation planning under the proposals in the Working Group's report and wider reforms. There is a considerable risk that the creation of new agencies/authorities could lead to slower and more cumbersome adaptation planning processes, rather than creating efficiencies and certainty. We urge that any new structure does not introduce additional complexity and bureaucracy. Moreover, similar to concerns raised regarding the introduction of Regional Planning Committees, we see it as essential that local voice is not lost.
54. When discussing future roles and responsibilities consideration should also be given to if there is adequate skilled resource and expertise to deliver and implement such reform. This was an issue that was similarly raised with regards to the wider RM reforms. The Council encourages the government to consider how they will address any shortage to ensure that there is the appropriate level of skilled expertise across the country.

#### Adaptation Committees

The Working Group's report recommends the establishment of a new, fit-for-purpose decision-making body - an adaptation committee - to undertake local adaptation planning. However, it does not provide detail on the formation and compositional arrangements of these committees. The Council awaits further detail to provide a position on the roles and responsibilities of adaptation committees.

55. Notwithstanding this, the Council considers that the proposed composition of these committees, as detailed in the Working Group report (recommendations 7-9), fails to recognise the wellbeing impacts of the decisions these committees will make. There is a need for more involvement from health and social service agencies to

shift this process from a strict land-use planning approach to a social policy approach that is cognisant of people's wellbeing. Following the Christchurch Earthquakes, agencies worked together to develop a psychosocial strategy 'Community in Mind', which established a system of supports to prevent significant amounts of people having negative social outcomes. Where does responsibility for this important component of managed retreat lie?

#### New Crown entity to oversee implementation of relocation programmes

56. In principle, the Council supports recommendation 32 in the Working Group's report to establish a new Crown entity to oversee implementation of relocation programmes. The Council agrees that implementing any relocation programme will be a significant responsibility that lends itself to a centralised agency that has the appropriate resource and expertise. It also reflects, in part, the approach taken to managing the red zone land following the Canterbury Earthquakes. While there are hard lessons to be learned from the red zone process, the Council notes the benefit of having a separate entity coordinating and overseeing the various activities associated with implementing a large-scale retreat. Again, simplicity and clarity of roles and responsibilities will be crucial to the success of any such organisation.

#### Post-retreat roles and responsibilities

57. Consideration also needs to be given to post-retreat roles and responsibilities. From our experience in managing the red zone land, post-retreat processes such as land amalgamation, land remediation and withdrawal of services can be costly, lengthy and require specialist skillsets. While the Council awaits further detail and clarity on post-retreat roles and responsibilities, we note the following initial comments.
58. Our experience is that the process of reconfiguring and amalgamating individual land titles in a retreat area can be very difficult, costly, and drawn-out. This can significantly delay land remediation and the transition to land uses, particularly if a managed retreat is staged over many years. For example, the Crown offer to red zone residents closed in 2012 and the process of the amalgamation of land titles remains far from conclusion a decade later. Furthermore, local government is not funded, nor does it employ the specialist staff required, to undertake such land reconfiguration and amalgamation work. In the Christchurch red zone example this work is being undertaken by the specialist survey, property and legal staff of Land Information New Zealand at a very significant cost.
59. We must also highlight the financial and carbon costs of remediating land where there are environmental legacy issues, for example at-risk landfills, soil contamination and/or removing infrastructure such as coal tar from roads which need to be disposed of at high cost in the few (often remote) locations that accept this waste. These costs are prohibitive for local government and may not be a priority until they reach a point of failure. The Council would like to see co-funding from Central Government provided to support land remediation, especially where doing so would provide significant environmental benefits. This co-funding should incentivise early actions to avoid environmental damage (for example with landfills) or to incentive early gain of environmental benefits (for example removal of roads to allow unique coastal environments to move landwards). Land remediation should therefore be a part of ongoing discussions around post retreat roles and responsibilities.
60. To support post-retreat procedures stronger powers will be needed across a broad range of processes, including (but not limited to) service withdrawal, road stopping, wildlife concerns, housing, and the management of contaminated land. These will all incur high costs and are likely to slow down the realisation of co-benefits from retreat.

#### Statutory provisions

61. The Council acknowledges the need for greater national direction and appropriate statutory processes to

support climate adaptation and managed retreat, to reduce inefficiencies and provide greater certainty for decision-makers and communities, whilst also recognising that there is a trade-off required between providing national direction and providing flexibility.

62. The Council strongly supports Local Adaptation Plans having statutory weight. This will provide some much-needed certainty to the process and support for the implementation of decisions that are made through the local adaptation planning process.
63. The proposal for an adaptation designation is also supported by the Council. A designation would be significant in achieving the changes required to statutory plans without the need for a formal planning process to be undertaken. However, consideration would need to be given to how the local adaptation planning process is managed to ensure that it does not shift the litigation of a planning process into the adaptation planning process nor reduce the trust of parties in the process.
64. Finally, there is a need to ensure national direction is aligned across the various legislative reform programmes. In the Working Group's report, the connection between adaptation and land-use planning is not always clear and leads to questions as to how the two systems will operate together.

### **Conclusion**

65. The Council thanks the Environment Committee for the opportunity to comment on the inquiry into climate adaptation.
66. The Council also acknowledges the work of the Expert Working Group in delivering such a detailed and comprehensive report.

For any clarification on points within this submission please contact Jane Morgan, Team Leader Coastal Hazards Adaption Planning ([Jane.Morgan@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:Jane.Morgan@ccc.govt.nz)).

Yours faithfully,



Phil Mauger  
**Mayor of Christchurch**