Have your Say!



Draft Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy

Our Place: Our Future

We're developing a strategy to prepare our district and communities for the impacts of a changing climate and to plan for a sustainable and resilient future for everyone in the district.

We want to hear what you think. Find out more and have your say!

We are accepting feedback until Wednesday 18 June

Find out more at
ItsOurPlace.nz

Ashburton DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction

Whether they are local events, like the floods that heavily impacted our district in May 2021, or across New Zealand and the globe, we see many examples of a changing climate. And even though we might not all agree on the cause of climate change, Council has a responsibility to look after our district, prepare our core infrastructure for the future, help our community understand what to expect and show how we can be more sustainable.

One of the goals of this strategy is to improve what we know about climate change, how our essential services will be affected, and how each of us can play a role in reducing negative effects.

In the strategy we describe how our district will be impacted by a changing climate and how we're planning for it. We're focused on strengthening our district's resilience with the strategy's six priority areas, goals and actions. These include nature-based solutions, making sure we use our water in a sustainable way and our shared effort to reduce waste.

Alongside preparing for the future, the strategy intends to reduce our input to the changing climate, including reducing greenhouse gases.

We also aim to celebrate the sustainable efforts our community are committed to and highlight the work Council is currently doing to contribute to a more sustainable future. The document also acknowledges the opportunities that a changing climate might bring to the district.

We believe we are all in this together, and all have a part to play. We have a responsibility to look after our place, to protect the prosperity of our district for future generations, providing the opportunity for them to enjoy living in our place, our district – just as we do now.

It's time for you to have your say. We want to know what is important to you, whether you support the draft strategy and what you think the Council should be doing to plan for the future.

If you'd like to find out more, we encourage you to read the full draft strategy on ItsOurPlace.nz

Why do we need a strategy?

The changes in climate are already impacting our infrastructure, communities and local ecosystems with future projections of worse storms, floods and droughts happening more often, sea levels continuing to rise, and changes in the diversity of plants and animals in our region.

This means that climate change and sustainability are subjects that require a long-term vision and a coherent approach across Council activities. This strategy is an overarching document that integrates existing work, making sure we align our actions across our existing strategies, policies, and plans.

Council also has legal duties to consider climate change impacts in decisions related to natural hazards, emergency management, and community resilience.

Our aim is a strategy that provides guidance for investment, helps to understand a complex issue, that educates and motivates. It explains what Council is doing and why. The community is already doing a lot and also asking for Council to take more action.

And although it requires financial commitments, as a country, we have learnt the hard way that investing in climate resilient infrastructure is cheaper in the long run than having to rebuild entire infrastructure networks following severe climate impacts. Making wise decisions now will reduce further disruption later.

Sustainability and Climate change are interrelated. Sustainable actions and practices help to reduce our impact on a changing climate, enable efficient use of our resources, and help harness the power of a community.

Funding and Costs
Action requires funding and that is why we have indicated **estimated** costs for each of the actions that are not currently included in existing budgets. You will see this in detail in the action plan. Please note that these are estimates and would be confirmed via business case by Council when they make the decisions on annual or long-term plan budgets.

The resilience of infrastructure will require some significant investment in the coming years, but the costs of recovering from unprepared infrastructure will be much higher. These costs are not shown in this strategy, but will be part of our infrastructure budgets.

A bit of background

What is climate change?

Climate change means the long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns which are predominantly caused by human activities that release greenhouse gases - like the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas).

There are two main approaches to addressing or minimising the impacts of climate change. These work hand-in-hand and both will be required in our draft strategy:

Mitigation: Some actions can be taken to reduce the amount of these gases (e.g. we can replace fossil fuels with clean energy sources, carbon dioxide can be absorbed/sequestered by trees).

Adaptation: We can take action to adjust to or minimise the impacts of climate change (e.g. we can manage our stormwater networks to prepare for increased volume and frequency of rainfall, we can build higher stopbanks around rivers to minimise chances of flooding nearby properties).

What is sustainability?

Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (e.g. recycling means we don't need to source more material, and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, using renewable energy rather than fossil fuels). Sustainability is complex and has implications across what we do, how we do it and how it impacts on the natural environment, which underpins everything we do.

How are the two linked?

By taking more sustainable actions, we will also reduce our emissions or better prepare us for the impacts of climate change. For example reducing the amount of food waste that goes to landfill is a sustainable practice, and also means less methane will be released into the atmosphere.

What have we done so far and who else is involved?

In 2019, the Council adopted its first Climate Change Policy. A 2022 review found no framework to meet the goals, leading to the creation of the Climate Resilience Plan, which focused on councils' internal operations. Through this plan we reduced emissions at EA Networks Centre, considered climate impacts on our infrastructure and supported biodiversity.

In 2024, the Council joined the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan and later that year council decided to consolidate its own efforts into a Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy.

Community initiatives, such as planting native plants and reducing litter, demonstrate local commitment to sustainability and climate change mitigation.

There are many local initiatives that show our community cares about sustainability and climate change, and stakeholders in the district are encouraging Council to take action and prepare for impacts. This strategy should help with connecting community activities, being a guideline for people who want to contribute but don't know how to do that.

How has this strategy been prepared?

Following Councils decision to create a Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy in October 2024, early engagement with the community on the content of the strategy took place in January-February 2025. This included a public workshop with community members and a stakeholder workshop, with local businesses and organisations joining the session.

Through this engagement, Councils prior climate change policy and resilience plan and our regional collaboration we identified six priority areas for the strategy. These areas touch on all the services we provide as a council and are the foundation for the goals, objectives and actions of the strategy.

Priority areas

1. Sustainable water management
2. Nature-based solutions
3. A resilient, engaged and informed community
4. Waste reduction and minimisation
5. Resilient infrastructure
6. Transition to a low carbon future

Note: For a good understanding of the goals, please refer to the background information on the six priority areas, referencing the expected impacts and specific challenges for each area, as described in the draft strategy here: itsourplace.nz

Proposed vision and goals

Our vision:

"Working together for a sustainable and resilient future for the Ashburton District: empowering our people, supporting our businesses, fortifying our infrastructure and protecting our environment"

Our goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Attain sustainable and resilient water management, ensuring reliable access, environmental stewardship, and improved water quality.
This means to (objective):

1.1 Ensure a forward-thinking approach to the sustainable management of water resources in the Ashburton District.
1.2 Promote and engage in initiatives to maintain and enhance water quality in district water bodies.
1.3 Foster a culture of water conservation and efficiency within the community.
1.4 Track and communicate water usage and quality data to ensure transparency and informed decision-making.

Goal 2: Encourage nature based solutions and support our communities to help understand how nature-based solutions to climate disruption will work.
This means to (objective)

2.1 Support blue-green networks development for Mid-Canterbury
2.2 Continue biodiversity restoration and ecosystem health enhancement
2.3 Build a climate-resilient environment in the district
2.4 Continue to promote sustainable land use and soil conservation

Goal 3: Build a community that is well-informed about the changing climate and actively engaged in sustainable practices and resilience efforts.

This means to (objective)
3.1 Improving Council understanding of the impacts of a changing climate and sustainable responses, and advocate on behalf of the district in climate change matters.
3.2 Engage with and educate the wider community to improve understanding of climate change and sustainability practices.
3.3 Support the community/ to be prepared/ on resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts.
3.4 Encourage and promote sustainable good practice in Council operations and activities.
3.5 Promote and connect community and stakeholder groups working on sustainable projects and establish partnerships and initiatives to engage the community and promote collective action.

Goal 4: Goal 4: Enable responsible waste management that reduces waste and protects community and environmental wellbeing

This means to (objective)
4.1 Implement methods to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill or other disposal
4.2 Lower waste management costs and increase economic benefits to ensure financial sustainability
4.3 Reduce the risk of environmental damage and protect public health through sustainable waste management
4.4 Engage and involve our community to achieve waste management goals and objectives

Goal 5: Goal 5: Prepare our infrastructure for the long-term impacts of climate change to ensure resilience and safety for our community.

This means to (objective)
5.1 Ensure all critical infrastructure within the district is assessed and upgraded for climate resilience.
5.2 Incorporate climate resilience and sustainability in new infrastructure projects and subdivisions
5.3 Make greater use of durable, low-carbon materials for infrastructure projects

Goal 6: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the impacts of climate change and create a more sustainable future
This means to (objective)

6.1 Set an emissions reduction target for Council activities
6.2 Continue to measure Council's GHG emissions, and adopt and implement emissions reduction Plan
6.3 Promote and encourage sustainable transport in the community
6.4 Increase carbon sinks in the Ashburton District
6.5 Engage with and educate the community on greenhouse gas emissions
6.6 Monitor emissions and report to the public.

Draft strategy

The full draft strategy is available at ItsOurPlace.nz

You can submit on any or all of the questions below. You don't have to complete every question and you can comment on any aspect of the draft strategy. You can provide attachments to support your submission. The full draft strategy is available at itsourplace.nz

Questions:

Our vision for the district in the future is:

"Working together for a sustainable and resilient future for the Ashburton District: empowering our people, supporting our businesses, fortifying our infrastructure and protecting our environment"

1. **Do you support this vision?**

Yes/No

Please explain:

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2. **Do you think the goals and objectives of the strategy capture what you see as the key challenges and opportunities regarding climate change and sustainability in the district?**

Goal1:
Yes/no - Please explain:

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Goal 2:
Yes/no - Please explain:

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Goal 3:
Yes/no - Please explain:

Goal 4:
Yes/no - Please explain:

Goal 5:
Yes/no - Please explain:

Goal 6:
Yes/no - Please explain:

3. What is most important to you?

Rank these areas from most important (1) to least important (6).

Sustainable water management	
Nature-based solutions	
A resilient, engaged and informed community	
Waste reduction and minimisation	
Resilient infrastructure	
Transition to a low carbon future	
Other (please explain):	

Please explain:

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4. Funding allocation

Implementing the strategy will require funding. Share your thoughts on where council should spend funding on the priority areas and indicate your preferred level of support.

	Low level of support	Moderate level of support	Significant level of support
Sustainable water management			
Nature-based solutions			
A resilient, engaged and informed community			
Waste reduction and minimisation			
Resilient infrastructure			
Transition to a low carbon future			

Please explain:

_____
_____
_____
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_____

5. **We have identified 80 actions to reach the goals in the strategy. You can read about them on ItsOurPlace.nz or the action plan on page 23 – 42 in the draft strategy.**

   Is there any specific additional action or anything else Council should be doing with regards to climate change and sustainability for the district?

6. **Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

Review process and timeline

We're accepting feedback from the community until Wednesday 18 June.

On Thursday 26 June, submitters will have the opportunity to present their views to Council in person at the hearing. Councillors will consider and deliberate on all the submissions received on 7 August.

Monday 26 May – Wednesday 18 June
Community Consultation

Thursday 26 June
Submission hearings

Thursday 7 August
Submission deliberations

August
Strategy finalisation

Wednesday 1 September
Final Strategy Adoption

Have your say

Your feedback will help us to know whether we are on the right track.
Please note all submissions are public documents and will be made available on Council's website with the names of submitters included.

Submissions presented in the form of a petition or accompanied by multiple signatures will be processed as a single submission.

The easiest way to provide your feedback is online at Itsourplace.nz

Alternatively, you can provide feedback by filling in the attached submission form and getting it back to us using one of the following methods:

Freepost to	Ashburton District Council Freepost 230444 PO Box 94 Ashburton 7740
Email to	submissions@adc.govt.nz
Hand in to	Ashburton District Council reception, 2 Baring Square East

You have until Wednesday 18 June to get your feedback in.

Your details

Name*.....

Organisation (if appropriate) .....

Address.....

Phone .....

Email*.....

*these fields are required

Do you wish to speak in support of your submission at the hearing?

(if no boxes are ticked, it will be considered that you do not wish to be heard)

☐ **Yes:** *please provide your phone number (see details)*

The hearing will be held in Hine Paaka (Council Chamber) on **Thursday 26 June**

☐ **No:** I do not wish to speak in support of my submission and ask that the following written submission be fully considered.

Please note that by making a submission, your information will be used in the following ways:

- Submission material, including your name and organisation (if applicable) but excluding your contact details, will be included in material available to Council, media and the public at our office and on our website.
- The contact details you provide will be used for administration of the consultation process, including informing you of the outcome of the consultation.
- The information you have provided will be stored and held by Council. If you would like to request access to, or make a correction to your personal information, please contact the Council staff.

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