

Climate Change Response Policy

For Approval by:	Environmental Services Committee
Group:	Council-wide application
Responsibility:	GM Environmental Services. Author: Rhys Taylor, Climate Change Advisor
Date to be adopted:	Environmental Services Committee endorsed in draft November 2023, presented for adoption February 2024, adopted with minor amendments.
Review:	Review to commence May 2026 for completion September 2026 This Policy does not cease to have effect because it is due for review, or being reviewed
Public Consultation:	This Policy builds on previous commitments in LTP 2021-2031 and on 2022-23 public-engagement work aimed towards a Timaru District Climate Change Strategy. External comments received from Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua (as Manawhenua) and Community and Public Health.
Policy Type	Internal focus, Corporate Management

Introduction

Policy Purpose & Context

1. To provide a framework for Timaru District Council to adapt to and help mitigate climate change within its operations, in order to meet community expectations and expected audit obligations.
2. The Policy is consistent with the Council's initial governance statements adopted at the Council meeting in June 2022. This was:
 - i) *to be a climate-friendly council* (adapt to Climate Change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council's operations wherever feasible),
 - ii) *to lead or facilitate mitigation and adaptation projects with others* (We will help enable, empower and inspire substantial climate change actions by many stakeholders in the district, including collaborations with our Tiriti partners) and
 - iii) *to help others to learn and adapt* (We will guide and encourage communities that are most vulnerable to climate change, i.e., those who are: most exposed to climate change; those badly impacted by climate change and, those least resilient).
3. The policy responds to central government direction as set forth in Section 5ZW of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 which outlines requirements for councils when choosing to voluntarily report on climate change

risks and planning. The Office of the Auditor General draws all councils' attention to an urgent need to respond to climate change, referencing two Ministry for the Environment 2022 publications: *First National Adaptation Plan* and *First National Emissions Reduction Plan*. Our work follows up the Canterbury Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment 2021 and also research and community engagement begun locally towards a Timaru District Climate Change Strategy (see Reports on TDCCS presented to Environmental Services Committee in May and November 2023). An internal Risk Assessment for TDC in 2023 identified high risk that "adaptation and mitigation actions may not be adequate to respond, absorb and and reduce impacts of climate change."

4. The Policy aligns with Council's own Community Wellbeings, identified in *Thriving Together – Long Term Plan 2021-3*, being:
environmental e.g. by aiming to reduce TDC carbon emissions to the atmosphere,
economic e.g. by promoting business efficiency and assisting adaptation of homes and businesses,
cultural e.g. by seeking compatibility with runanga and iwi aspirations, and
social e.g. by better protection of critical public assets and community facilities; and by recognising community health impacts of climate change.
5. The Policy leverages:
 - (i) Some community concerns and ideas for resilience raised in initial stages of the Timaru District-wide Climate Change Strategy (TDCCS) facilitated process 2022-2023, especially where these relate to internal operation and powers of the District Council;
 - (ii) Comment from Manawhenua and the already-published concerns on climate change of Ngai Tahu;
 - (iii) Information from the carbon emissions baseline year inventory of Council operations 2022-2023;
 - (iv) Government priorities expressed in both the National Adaptation Plan and National Carbon Emission Reduction Plan, 2022; and
 - (v) Auditor General advice to all Councils following review of previous 2021 Long Term Plans across New Zealand.

Scope

This Policy is limited to all of Council operations, including:

- All employees of the TDC, including short-term employees and independent contractors acting as agents on behalf of the TDC; and
- Governance committees and management of the TDC; and
- Every business, service, or activity of the TDC, except those functions that are purely procedural, constitute emergency works, or provide regulatory functions where this policy is not relevant; and

- It establishes the TDC's position in relation to proposals or activities that are enabled or supported by the TDC (including Council Controlled Organisations), where they may impact carbon emissions and/or climate response adaptations, and where the Council is able to influence activity via statements of intent or similar.

Definitions

Council (TDC)	Timaru District Council, in South Canterbury, NZ
Climate change	"A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods." (from <i>UN Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>). It concerns mostly addition of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, accumulating faster than they can break down (see below)
Greenhouse gas emissions	Conversion of fossilised carbon - from coal, oil and methane gas previously locked in the Earth's crust - burned into carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, where it is a long-lasting 'greenhouse gas' (i.e. is trapping solar-sourced heat). Other greenhouse gases released through human-led activity include some refrigerants, nitrous oxides, and methane from the gut of ruminant animals such as cattle and sheep. The warming effect of varied gases on global atmosphere is expressed in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).
Climate change adaptation	Human response to rapid climate change impacts that seeks to avoid or reduce harm and also take up beneficial opportunities created.
Climate change mitigation	Actions that reduce the human-led emission of carbon dioxide, methane or other greenhouse gases. E.g. Seeking alternatives to fossil fuels such as the use of renewable energy.
Action Plan	Detailed steps, processes or projects consistent with Council Policy and informed by emerging Regional and District Climate Strategy. To include but not limited to actions within the Long Term Plan (2024-).
Resilience	The capacity of systems to cope with external sudden events or more gradual/cumulative changes, in ways that maintain essential functions and allow for manageable and socially just transformations.

Background References

Climate Change and Local Government - what the National Adaptation Plan means for you. Ministry for the Environment. 2022. Publication Info 1080.

Adaptation preparedness: 2020/21 baseline. A summary of local government responses to the first information request under the Climate Change Response Act 2002. Ministry for the Environment. 2021.

Climate Change Response Policy Statement.

(Draft 7, February 14th 2024)

In order to adapt to climate change and reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions, the Timaru District Council will:

Begin resilience action planning at TDC:

1. Develop, adopt and implement a first *Resilience Action Plan* for both mitigation and climate change adaptation within Council operations, to include:
 - (i) actions to reduce direct emissions, starting with fuel use at Council.
 - (ii) incorporate climate change adaptation, resilience and emission mitigation into urban development and land use decisions and future updates of the District Plan (as guided by a Government proposed 2024 *Climate Adaptation Bill*) including identification of opportunities presented by climate change.
 - (iii) develop longer term security of energy and water supplies, lower-emission waste treatments, more-durable roads, and resilient infrastructure asset renewals.
 - (iv) beyond risk area mapping, plan in collaboration with Environment Canterbury for adaptive response to observed accelerating risk of coastal inundation and erosion in higher risk areas, such as on industrial or storage land and TDC wastewater treatment facility near the port, the main trunk rail-line coastal sections, vulnerable landfill sites, coastal natural environment, and residences close to river-mouths (such as Milford, Waipopo and Rangitata Huts).
 - (v) when making investment decisions: improve electrical energy-use efficiency of Council owned housing, of community and sports facilities and Council work premises, water pumping and street lighting.
 - (vi) where appropriate, provide information to help the public and businesses adapt; for example, develop local capacity to advise Timaru District's homeowners, ratepayers and tenants on potential modifications to and uses of buildings that make them less prone to winter under-heating and summer over-heating, generally drier, healthier and also more-efficient use of clean energy.

- (vii) Integrate climate change response objectives into the Council's procurement policy.

Make an emissions inventory for TDC, for a better understanding of the impact of its operations

2. Prepare and publicly-report, at regular intervals (proposed interval two financial years), a carbon emissions inventory or 'footprint' consistent with the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Inventories, completed to a verifiable standard (currently ISO 14064-1). Noting that the baseline inventory for 2022-2023, was published 13th February 2024.
3. Extend carbon inventory processes to operations of Council-Controlled Organisations: Venture Timaru and Timaru District Holdings Ltd.
4. Prioritise gross (absolute) carbon emissions reduction actions over net emissions reduction, such as the purchase of carbon emission units as net offsets.

Use collaborative working within District and Region

5. Collaborate with Manawhenua, through Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua and their agency Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited, noting a strategic commitment to climate response expressed by Ngai Tahu iwi.
6. Collaborate with neighbouring councils in Canterbury to share agreed research effort and results on risk analysis, adaptation, mitigation, and public education, with a view to avoiding duplication of effort and achieving efficiency for investment.
7. Explore how the Council and external partner bodies may contribute to district-wide climate change information gathering, public communication and further district-wide Strategy development, building on the initial community-based 'Climate Action' work initiated by TDC in 2022-2023.
8. Engage with communities most affected by climate change to help ascertain priorities for community-led, Council and/or external, such as central Government, involvement.

Next Review in 2026

9. Review this Policy before mid-2026, to assist the next LTP three-yearly preparation cycle. At that point, have reviewed emission reductions on baseline achieved and set local carbon emission reduction targets for 2050, compatible with New Zealand's national targets made under UN International Agreements.

Monitoring and Reporting

An annual or more frequent monitoring report is requested from Climate Change Advisor(s), to include short case studies of effective behavioural or technical changes made, and summary of staff survey results.

Delegations, References and Revision History

Delegations

Identify here any delegations related to the policy for it to be operative or required as a result of the policy

Delegation	Delegations Register Reference
To 'Climate Change Manager' position (sic)	7.22 (non-statutory) and for carbon unit trading see delegation to Chief Financial Officer 6.4

References

Include here reference to any documents related to the policy (e.g. operating guidelines, procedures)

Title	Relevant Reference within Document
Risk Assessment (at TDC)	Paragraph 3 in introduction above. See R2 in CM document #1615867
<i>Climate Change and Local Government - what the National Adaptation Plan means for you. Ministry for the Environment. 2022.</i>	Background information
<i>Adaptation preparedness: 2020/21 baseline. A summary of local government responses to the first information request under the Climate Change Response Act 2002. Ministry for the Environment. 2021.</i>	Background information

Revision History

Summary of the development and review of the policy

Revision	Owner	Date Approved	Approval By	Next Review	Doc Ref
This is Draft 7.	Climate Change Advisor				