

Notice of Meeting:

I hereby give notice that an ordinary meeting of the Dunedin City Council will be held on:

Date: Thursday 24 September 2026
Time: 9.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, the Octagon, Dunedin

Sandy Graham
Chief Executive Officer

Council
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

MEMBERSHIP**Mayor
Deputy Mayor**

Mayor Sophie Barker
Cr Cherry Lucas

Members

Cr John Chambers	Cr Jo Galer
Cr Christine Garey	Cr Doug Hall
Cr Marie Laufiso	Cr Russell Lund
Cr Mandy Mayhem	Cr Benedict Ong
Cr Andrew Simms	Cr Mickey Treadwell
Cr Lee Vandervis	Cr Steve Walker
Cr Brent Weatherall	

Senior Officer

Sandy Graham, Chief Executive

Governance Support Officer

Lynne Adamson

Lynne Adamson
Governance Support Officer

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Note: Reports and recommendations contained in this agenda are not to be considered as Council policy until adopted.

ITEM TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

REPORTS

15	Representation Review 2028	4
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REPORTS

REPRESENTATION REVIEW 2028

Department: Civic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 Council is required by Part 1A of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (The Act) to review its representation arrangements at least once every six years. DCC is required to undertake that review ahead of the 2028 elections.
- 2 The review involves a substantial programme of work including population analysis, communities-of-interest work, mapping, option development and testing, engagement, statutory resolutions and notices, submissions, hearings, and potentially appeals or objections to the Local Government Commission.
- 3 Council is being asked to consider whether the review should be led by an independent review panel supported by Council staff and external resources or undertaken internally by Council staff. In all cases, Council would retain all statutory decision-making, including adoption of the Initial Proposal and Final Proposal.
- 4 A staged approach is proposed, beginning with Initial scoping, procurement where required and essential preparatory work. Significant public engagement and expenditure would be managed through this staged approach, with work able to stop if legislation associated with Head Start makes a DCC representation review unnecessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- a) **Decides** whether the representation review will be:
 - i. externally led by an independent panel supported by staff and external resources; or
 - ii. undertaken internally by staff.
- b) **Agrees** that if legislation associated with an approved local government reorganisation removes or supersedes DCC's requirement to complete a 2028 representation review, the DCC representation review programme will cease.
- c) **Requests** a further report before significant public engagement or adoption of an Initial Proposal.

BACKGROUND

- 5 The Act requires local authorities to review representation arrangements at least once every six years. DCC is required to complete a representation review for the 2028 elections.
- 6 The review must consider:
- the total number of councillors;
 - whether councillors are elected at large, by wards, or through a combination of both;
 - ward names and boundaries;
 - the number of councillors elected from each ward; and
 - whether community boards should be retained, created, changed or disestablished.
- 7 The statutory process requires Council to develop and adopt an Initial Proposal, publicly notify that proposal, receive and consider submissions, and adopt and notify a Final Proposal. Appeals and objections (if any) are then determined by the Local Government Commission.

Previous Representation Review

- 8 The Council last completed a representation review in 2021, with the resulting representation arrangements applying to the 2022 and 2025 local elections.
- 9 That review was led by a three-person independent panel. Council appointed the panel and its Chair following a public expression-of-interest process and approved the panel's Terms of Reference.
- 10 The panel undertook analysis and community engagement before reporting its findings in August 2021. It recommended retaining the existing arrangements: 14 councillors elected at large and six community boards with their existing boundaries.
- 11 Council adopted an Initial Proposal reflecting those recommendations, completed the required consultation, submissions, and hearings process, and subsequently adopted a Final Proposal retaining the existing arrangements. These arrangements applied to the 2022 and 2025 local elections.

DISCUSSION

What Council is being asked to decide now

- 12 Council is being asked to consider two options:
- whether the review should be led by an independent panel or,
 - whether the review should be undertaken by staff
- 13 If Council approves the independent-panel model, Council is also being asked to agree a process for selecting and appointing the panel.

- 14 Council is not being asked to decide the final representation arrangements at this meeting. Those decisions require further evidence, community input and later Council reports.

Legislative position

- 15 On 26 May 2026 the Local Government Commission advised councils that representation reviews remain a legislative requirement and that the Head Start pathway is not part of the statutory representation review process under the Act.
- 16 Government Head Start guidance similarly states that current statutory representation review obligations continue unless legislation is changed.

Statutory deadlines

- 17 The key Statutory deadlines for the representation review are:

Action or resolution	Current statutory timeframe
Council resolves its Initial Proposal	Between 20 December 2026 and 31 July 2027
Public notice of the Initial Proposal	Within 14 days after Council resolves the proposal
Submissions on the Initial Proposal close	At least one month after the public notice
Council considers submissions, determines its Final Proposal and gives public notice	Within eight weeks after submissions close
Appeals and objections close	At least one month after public notice of the Final Proposal, but no later than 3 December 2027
Council forwards appeals, objections and any required referral to the Local Government Commission	No later than 20 December 2027
Local Government Commission determination	Before 11 April 2028 , meaning by 10 April 2028

- 18 These deadlines leave limited scope to delay the review.

Independent Panel:

- 19 Should a panel be the preferred approach by Council, it would comprise approximately three members, including a Chair. It would review the evidence, identify communities of interest, oversee early engagement, and recommend representation arrangements for Council to consider. Council would retain responsibility for adopting the Initial Proposal and Final Proposal.
- 20 Panel members would be appointed through a public expression-of-interest process. Selection would be based on independence, relevant governance or local government experience, community engagement capability, knowledge of Dunedin, ability to assess evidence objectively, availability and conflicts of interest.
- 21 Staff would administer the process and verify applicants' information but would not shortlist, rank or recommend candidates. Council would assess all eligible applicants, appoint the panel and Chair, and approve the Terms of Reference.
- 22 External specialist technical support required would be procured separately after the panel is appointed.

Budget

- 23 The cost of the representation review will depend on the delivery model selected. An independent panel led review would involve direct external costs. An internally led review may have lower direct costs but would require substantial staff capacity and create opportunity costs across other Council work programmes. Detailed costs will be confirmed once the delivery model and scope have been approved, however budget of up to \$50K will be made available.

OPTIONS

- 24 Two practical delivery models are available:
 - a) an independent review panel supported by Council staff and specialist external resources; or
 - b) an internally led review undertaken principally by Council staff, with specialist external advice commissioned where required.
- 25 Under either option, Council retains responsibility for all statutory decisions and must meet the statutory timetable unless legislation removes or supersedes that obligation.

Option One – Independent review panel supported by staff and external resources.

- 26 Under this option, an independent panel would lead the evidence review, community engagement and assessment of representation options. It would make recommendations to Council
- 27 Council staff would support the panel, administer the statutory process, and prepare Council reports. External specialists could be engaged for technical work such as demographic analysis, mapping, legal advice, or engagement support.

Advantages

- Provides an independent review process.

- Enhances public confidence in the neutrality and objectivity of the review process.
- Separates the development and assessment of options from Council's statutory decisions.
- Provides access to specialist representation-review, engagement, demographic and mapping expertise.
- Reduces the pressure on staff who are already delivering other statutory, reform and corporate work.
- Is consistent with approaches used by DCC in previous representation reviews.

Disadvantages

- Creates panel and administration costs.
- Takes time to appoint and establish the panel.
- Still requires staff support and may require specialist external advice.
- Some expenditure may become unnecessary if legislation removes the requirement for the review.

Option Two – Internally led review by Staff

Under this option, Council staff would lead the analysis, engagement, option development and statutory process. External advice would be obtained where the required expertise or capacity was not available internally.

Advantages

- May have lower direct external costs.
- Uses staff knowledge of Dunedin's communities and existing representation arrangements.
- Avoids the time required to appoint and administer a panel.

Disadvantages

- Requires substantial staff capacity over an extended period.
- Would compete with other statutory, reform and corporate work.
- Provides less independent separation between developing the options and supporting Council's decisions.
- May still require external expenditure for specialist advice.

NEXT STEPS

- 28 If Council approves the independent-panel model, staff will begin the public expression-of-interest process and prepare draft Terms of Reference.

- 29 The eligible applications will then be presented to Council for selection and appointment of the panel and Chair.
- 30 Once appointed, the panel will begin the preliminary review work. A further report will be presented to Council before significant public engagement or adoption of an Initial Proposal.
- 31 If Council decides that staff are to undertake the review, work will begin, and external support procured as required.

Signatories

Author:	Robyn Dillon - Manager Governance
Authoriser:	Nicola Morand - Manahautū (General Manager Community and Strategy) Sandy Graham - Chief Executive

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS

Fit with purpose of Local Government

The recommended decision supports democratic local decision-making and representative and electoral participation. It enables Council to meet its statutory responsibility to review fair and effective representation arrangements.

Fit with strategic framework

	Contributes	Detracts	Not applicable
Social Wellbeing Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Economic Development Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Environment Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Arts and Culture Strategy	✓	☐	☐
3 Waters Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Future Development Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Integrated Transport Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Parks and Recreation Strategy	✓	☐	☐
Other strategic projects/policies/plans	✓	☐	☐

Representation arrangements are a key matter for effective delivery of councils strategic direction.

Māori Impact Statement

The decision to commence and resource the process does not determine representation arrangements. Mana whenua and Māori communities are key participants in the later engagement programme. The review will need to consider relevant statutory representation requirements and the outcome of any separate decisions affecting Māori representation.

Sustainability

No material sustainability implications have been identified. The staged approach limits avoidable work while preserving Council's ability to meet statutory requirements.

LTP/Annual Plan / Financial Strategy /Infrastructure Strategy

The project will require operational funding and staff input. The final external cost is not yet confirmed and will depend on procurement scope and the extent to which the project proceeds before the Head Start position is resolved.

Financial considerations

Budget of up to \$50K is available.

Significance

A representation review is a significant statutory process that ensures the Council's governance arrangements continue to provide fair and effective representation for communities.

Engagement – external

Significant public engagement on representation options will be brought back to Council before it commences.

SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS

Engagement - internal

Delivery will require input from Civic, communications and engagement, legal, finance, procurement and relevant policy staff. The recommended external-led model is intended to reduce, not eliminate, that internal demand.

Risks: Legal / Health and Safety etc.

The principal legal risk is failing to complete the review in accordance with the Local Electoral Act 2001. The principal delivery risk is insufficient time or capacity if work is deferred. These risks are managed by staged commencement, external capacity, legal review and decision milestones. No specific health and safety risks have been identified at this stage.

Conflict of Interest

Elected members have no conflict of interest in participating in this decision, because it is a statutory obligation for them to do so.

Community Boards

Community board arrangements are within the scope of the statutory review. Existing boards will be key participants in later engagement. This report does not propose any change to current community board arrangements.