

27 August 2026

Kia Ora

Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 Request - 1305946

Thank you for your request of 13 July 2026 for information held by the Dunedin City Council (DCC) relating to South Dunedin Future (SDF). Please accept my apologies for the delay in reply, we have received a considerable number of LGOIMA's in regard to South Dunedin Future. Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

Rationale for property acquisition

As DCC and Otago Regional Council (ORC) explore options to reduce flood risk in South Dunedin over the next 50–100 years, including the three proposed futures presented in June 2026, it is likely that achieving meaningful flood risk reduction will require the purchase of private properties in some areas. This may be needed to enable public works such as new or upgraded infrastructure, raising land above anticipated flood levels, and creating green and blue spaces to store and move floodwater. Property acquisition is also being investigated as an option for reducing long-term risk exposure and avoiding long-term lock-in to increasing costs of protecting existing properties.

The three futures identified general areas where interventions such as new pumps and pipes, land raising, and parks, wetlands and waterways could be located. These areas were shown on maps and in visualisations, but were described as indicative, based on analysis to date. The primary purpose of any potential property acquisition identified within the three futures was to support the reduction of flood risk, essentially reducing the modelled impact of flooding in terms of the total number of affected properties and the severity of anticipated impacts on remaining properties.

Reductions in flood risk could be achieved in a number of ways, for example through new or upgraded underground stormwater and groundwater infrastructure, by raising land above anticipated flood levels, by creating new green spaces such as overland flow paths and canals to move flood water, or ponds, wetlands, and storage basins to store excess floodwater. Often these interventions were designed to work in concert as part of a wider network and system.

In some instances, engineering, servicing, or urban design considerations could also influence the extent of any future property acquisition, for example to connect multiple green spaces to make a coherent network, or to avoid isolated pockets of housing and enable a more functional urban form.

Each of the futures sought to apply a different technical design methodology to achieve a similar target level of service, as outlined in the reports presented to Councils in June 2026 ([link](#)). A different mix of flood risk management approaches was used in each future, which resulted in the variation in areas of South Dunedin subject to potential property acquisition. This design work was undertaken at a suburb scale. It did not examine flood risk and mitigation for individual properties, which is a level of detail to be examined in later stages of the SDF programme or in subsequent projects.

Each flood risk management approach and each proposed future has different costs, benefits, and trade-offs. These are described in the reports presented to Councils in June 2026 ([link](#)), and in earlier reports in Councils in March 2025 ([here](#)) and December 2023 ([here](#)). The objective of this phase of the SDF programme was to identify those trade-offs and engage with a range of stakeholders before refining the options and analysing the trade-offs in more detail.

Advice and decision making relating to property acquisition

The SDF programme is a collaboration between DCC and ORC. Technical work has been undertaken by a range of staff across both councils, by external agencies such as Earth Sciences New Zealand (formerly NIWA and GNS), and by consultant teams at environmental services firms WSP, BECA and Tonkin & Taylor. Technical peer review has been undertaken by engineering, planning and environmental services firms Jacobs New Zealand Ltd, Royal HaskoningDHV and Bell Adapt Ltd. Property advisory services relating to potential acquisition and adaptation implications have been provided by PwC.

In 2023, DCC began investigating the potential for proactive property acquisition in South Dunedin to form part of its broader climate adaptation response, including the development of an indicative business case. This business case, together with the related September 2023 media release, is attached. DCC subsequently commissioned two further reports, prepared by PwC in 2025 and 2026 respectively. These reports, also attached, assess the potential property implications of natural hazards and climate change-related risks, and consider possible response options, including potential and proposed adaptation futures for South Dunedin.

Periodic updates on the SDF programme are provided to elected members of both Councils, including in workshops, update reports, and reports seeking decisions at certain points in the process. Councillors received briefings on the three proposed adaptation futures, including information relating to the scope of potential property acquisition, through an update report in September 2025 ([link](#)), and in non-public workshops in March 2026 ([link](#)) and June 2026 ([link](#)), prior to public release. Council decisions on 24 and 25 June 2026 have requested additional technical work, including in relation to potential property acquisition.

Communications and community engagement

Staff considered a range of communication and engagement approaches when determining how best to inform residents and property owners about the potential for future property acquisition. These considerations included extensive previous communications and community engagement on the potential for property acquisition; accounting for the uncertainty associated with potential property acquisition, indicative nature of the locations identified, and long lead in times; maintaining appropriate levels of transparency regarding advice and decision-making; and determining suitable communications, engagement approaches, and potential impacts on affected stakeholders.

After considering these factors, a decision was made by the SDF Programme's joint executive steering group (comprising General Managers and Chief Executives from each council) not to write directly to

individual property owners at that stage. Instead, the potential for property acquisition was to be addressed through specific communications and community engagement activities. Councillors were briefed on this intended approach at the workshop on 10 June 2026 ([link](#)), prior to public release of the SDF reports. However, because of subsequent Council decisions on 24 and 25 June 2026, the planned communications and community engagement on the three proposed futures (including in relation to property acquisition) have now been deferred to allow for the additional technical work requested by Councils to be undertaken.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Kā mihi

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