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WORK PROGRESSES ON JOINT WATER SERVICES ORGANISATION

The Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils expect to have a board in place to oversee the set-up of a new West Coast water organisation by autumn.

The councils are establishing a joint council-controlled water services organisation (WSCCO) to manage water services on behalf of their communities. Councillors from across the West Coast were updated on progress at a meeting on Friday.

The establishment cost is budgeted at \$5 million, as agreed in the Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP), which was approved by the Government in November 2025.

The three councils operate with streamlined staffing levels and no surplus capacity, so consultants are being engaged on a targeted basis to support the significant transition workload.

This work includes programme management, financial support, aligning IT systems, shared services, and the setup activities for the board of directors and the WSCCO management team, all of which are outlined in the Implementation Plan in the Water Services Delivery Plan.

All transition costs will be transferred to the CCO once funding is in place with the Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA).

Considerable work is already under way, with the aim of minimising establishment and ongoing costs. The transition to the Water Services CCO (WSCCO) will occur in stages, from the lead-up to the transfer date, to minimise disruption.

Buller District Council Chief Executive Simon Pickford said: "There are important decisions yet to be made by the three councils. Until the board and Chief Executive are in place, the development and approval of Governance foundational documents sits with each of the councils."

Grey District Council Chief Executive Joanne Soderlund said the councils were focused on setting up a robust organisation that delivers long-term value for communities.

"This is a complex transition, and the staged approach allows us to manage risk, control costs, and ensure continuity of essential water services while the new organisation is established."

Westland District Council Chief Executive Barbara Phillips said: "By working collectively we maintain the oversight of any proposed costs and structures, including implementation, to ensure the best result is in place for the whole region."

The three councils will continue to work closely together over the coming months to progress the establishment of the WSCCO.

A constitution and Shareholders' Agreement will be presented to each council for approval in autumn. Monthly mayoral meetings will begin from this week to support ongoing governance and coordination.

For further information about Local Water Done Well and to read the adopted Water Services Delivery Plan, visit [Local Water Done Well - lets talk buller](#) for Buller, for Grey, [Local Water Done Well – stormwater, wastewater & drinking water - Grey District Council](#), for Westland [Local Water Done Well | Westland District Council](#)

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