

Item 5: Advocacy Priorities: Framework for Implementation

SESSION TYPE: Workshop

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

The purpose of this workshop is to discuss the implementation of Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) advocacy priorities, following from at the 19 March 2026 Council meeting. The workshop will outline an implementation framework for how QLDC will advocate for these priorities, including methods for advocacy, key touchpoints with elected members and other stakeholders. Councillor input is sought on the proposed approach.

DATE/START TIME:

Tuesday, 6 October at 1.00pm

PRESENTERS:

Carrie Williams (Policy Manager)
Caitlin Pemberton (Policy Advisor)

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 10 minutes
Questions or Debate/Discussion: 20 minutes

Prepared by:



Name: Carrie Williams
Title: Policy Manager
4 September 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Pennie Pearce
Title: General Manager, Strategy & Policy
20 April 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Slide Deck: QLDC’s Approach to Advocacy Priorities 2026-2028
B	Draft QLDC Advocacy Framework (page 10)

QLDC's approach to advocacy priorities 2026-2028

6 October 2026 Council workshop

Agenda

- > Objectives of workshop:

- > Report back to Council on implementation of advocacy priorities (action from March Council meeting)
- > Seek feedback on framework
- > Discuss future steps, as part of continuous nature of this work

- > Agenda:

- > Context
- > Recap
- > Explanation of the main elements of the draft framework and discussion
- > Next steps

Recap



Council meeting to agree to its priorities (19 March 2026) and officers to report back on implementation framework

Council 2026. Test framework with councillors, feedback on what good looks like (6 October 2026).

Staff review of the issues and opportunities of the current approach (late-2025)

Two Council workshops to undertake a staged prioritisation exercise (29 January and 10 February 2026)

Implementation

Next steps

Internal guidance to staff on change in approach and process

Drafting of framework and testing internally

In the 6 month period since March to date, 7 staff submissions, and 1 Council submission

Compare this to 35 submissions in 2025

The journey so far:

What is this work about?

Recall that QLDC has historically made more submissions compared to other councils (35 in 2025, compared to DCC 10, Hamilton 16 and ORC 11). Submissions are not always the best form of advocacy

This work is intended to compliment the excellent advocacy work already occurring in many forms across QLDC, and to provide clarity on what the policy team will focus on.

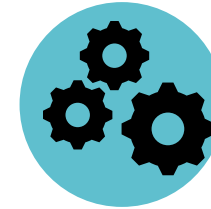
...keeping this in mind, the objectives of this work are to shift from an ad hoc to a more structured approach and includes:



- ✓ Increase transparency with the community about how QLDC is advocating, and how they can assist



- ✓ Shift towards being more proactive on agreed advocacy priorities (and away from a reliance on submissions on a large number of topics as a primary means of advocacy)



- ✓ Applying broader advocacy methods



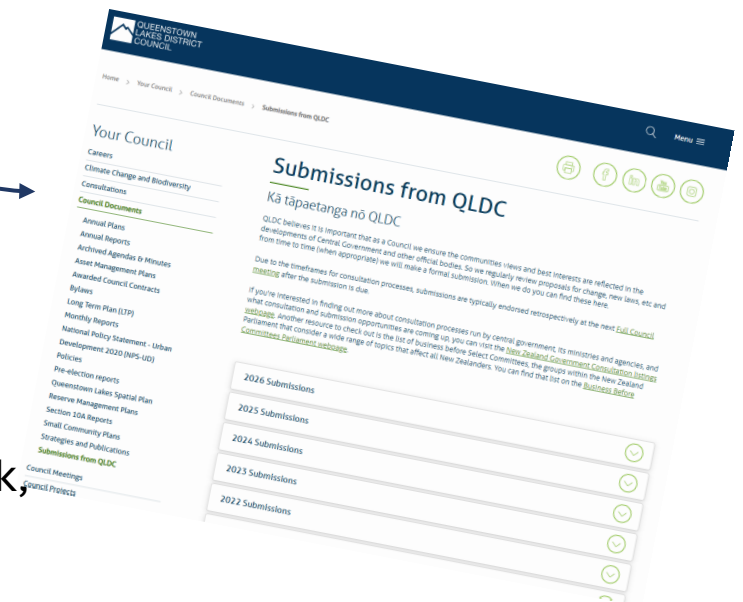
- ✓ Focus energy and resources on agreed priorities through a consistent approach



- ✓ Consider if a staff submission is required on topics outside of priority areas (largely more technical or operational matters)

Advocacy approach

- The draft advocacy framework doc at **Attachment** (to be formatted) is intended as a resource for Councillors, officers, community, and external partners to better understand how we advocate.
- This resource will be added to a re-vamped page on the [QLDC site](#) that discusses submissions within the advocacy context.
- The draft framework document sets out:
 - how we determine advocacy priorities
 - how we will assess and prioritise advocacy – triennial advocacy cycle
 - roles and responsibilities
 - how we develop and implement effective advocacy plans
 - when and how we will work in partnership with stakeholders
 - how we will report and review priorities.
- The following slides cover key aspects of the document for councillor feedback, but input on any part of the document is welcome.



QLDC triennial advocacy cycle

The cycle clearly sets out how priority topics are planned, approved, implemented and then reported on.



Questions for discussion:
This is deliberately externally focused; what additional aspects/areas could be looked into internally? (for example, internal advocacy guidance/training for officers and/or EMs.)

What is the most useful reporting information for EMs and the community?

Priority topics:

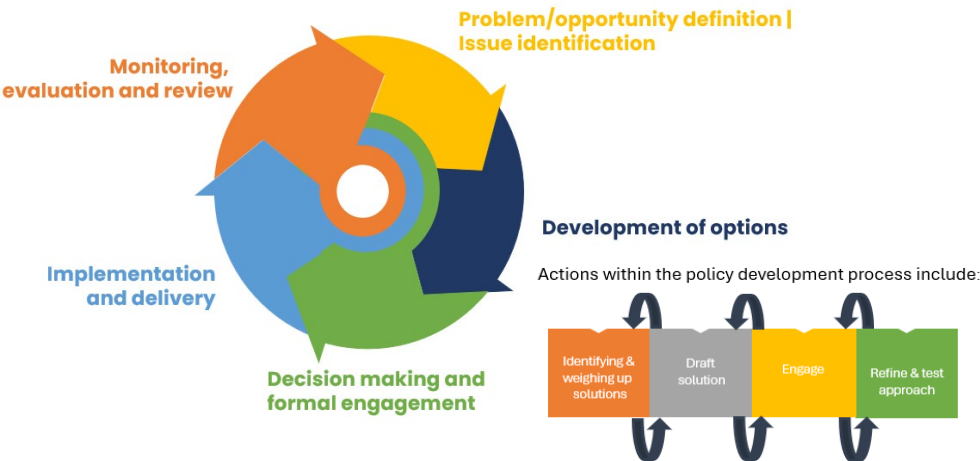
Local Government
system change

Regional and spatial
planning

New funding models
for growth and
infrastructure (and
value capture from
tourism and visitor
economy)

Roles and responsibilities

QLDC Policy cycle ----->



Both the **type** of proposal (i.e. technical/operational vs. strategic) as well as the **stage** in the policy cycle that a proposal is at informs what the best advocacy methods are. Emphasis for advocacy is on the first three stages.

Questions for discussion: Is the division between staff and EM roles clear? Acknowledging that this is a high level document, is there any additional detail required?

Policy cycle stage and advocacy purpose	Primary advocacy methods	Roles
Issue identification: Raise awareness of an issue and establish why Council action is needed	Evidence gathering, research, policy position papers, stakeholder engagement, media and communications, relationship-building with officials and MPs	Officers <u>lead</u> evidence and stakeholder engagement. Elected members champion issues publicly and politically.
Development of options: Identify options and potential proposals to influence outcomes	Early engagement with officials, participation in working groups, technical forums, sector networks (LGNZ, Taituāra), evidence and local case studies	Officers <u>lead</u> technical engagement. Elected members maintain and build strategic relationships and reinforce priorities.
Decision making and formal engagement: Secure support for preferred policy outcomes	Formal submissions, hearings, joint advocacy through advocacy networks Engagement with Ministers, MPs and senior officials, elected member advocacy, targeted communications	Officers provide analysis, briefing material, prepare submissions and technical evidence. Elected members present at hearings and advocate directly to decision-makers.
Implementation and delivery & Monitoring, evaluation and review	Ongoing engagement with agencies, implementation working groups, operational feedback, evidence gathering to monitor implementation, sharing local insights	Officers <u>lead</u> and report to elected members as needed.

Next steps

- Oct 2026 - staff incorporate feedback, circulate org-wide and 'go live' on Council site to promote within our communities.
- As needed - action any additional deliverables agreed to at today's workshop (for example, developing further operational guidance for EMs and/or staff).
- March 2026 - Council workshop for light touch review of priorities and to provide annual report on progress.

DRAFT QLDC's advocacy approach 2026 – 2028 (to be formatted)

Introduction

For QLDC, advocacy means representing the interests of the community and working to influence decisions, funding, policies, or laws to achieve better outcomes for the district.

This framework document sets out how QLDC can work together with key stakeholders to translate effort into outcomes.

QLDC delivers a wide range of services and infrastructure that support our growing communities and high visitor numbers. But to grow well into the future, Council needs additional tools and support. This means working closely with central government and other agencies to secure the support and funding for new infrastructure and services, and to update policies so they are fit for the future.

To do this well, we need a clear and coordinated approach to advocacy. This document shows how we will plan, work together, and focus our efforts so we can achieve the best possible results for our community including:

- how we determine advocacy priorities
- how we will assess and prioritise advocacy that is community-driven, evidence based, and realistic
- the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders advocating
- how we develop and implement effective advocacy plans
- when and how we will work in partnership with stakeholders, including local government associations
- how we will report and review priorities

This document is a resource for our Councillors, officers, community, and external partners to better understand how we advocate.

Our objectives

- To clearly explain how we assess and identify advocacy issues, opportunities, and priorities.
- To increase funding for Council programs, services and projects that benefit our communities
- To influence government decisions so they benefit residents, the environment, and local businesses
- To build trust

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is how Council represents the community and works with decision-makers to secure funding, influence policy, and achieve positive outcomes for the district. It involves raising important issues, promoting solutions, and working with government, agencies, and other organisations on matters that affect Queenstown Lakes. Effective advocacy is informed by a clear understanding of the district's challenges, opportunities, and priorities.

Why do we advocate?

We advocate to ensure the needs and aspirations of the Queenstown Lakes community are reflected in decisions that affect our district. Many decisions about funding, legislation, and policy are made outside Council's control but have a significant impact on our ability to provide infrastructure, services, and support for a growing district. Effective advocacy helps secure better policies, stronger support, and improved long-term outcomes for our communities.

How do we advocate?

Council advocates by seizing opportunities to influence decisions. The best approach depends on the issue, who is involved, and the within the policy development cycle. For example, technical input and officer level engagement may be most effective for shaping operational policy or regulatory settings, while political engagement or collective advocacy may be necessary where decisions that involve system issues or broad legislative change.

Council advocates in a range of ways, including:

- Building strong relationships with Ministers and decision-makers through meetings, letters, and presentations.
- Strategic engagement with Members of Parliament and others across government (i.e. ministers, shadow ministers and other parliamentarians, including crossbenchers and parliamentary committee members).
- Engaging with candidates during election periods.
- Working proactively with central government officers.
- Partnering with other councils, community organisations, and businesses where local expertise and partnerships can strengthen our voice.
- Taking part in regional and sector groups.
- Raising awareness through community campaigns.
- Making and leveraging submissions on proposals and consultations.
- Using media and communications to highlight key issues and priorities.

Strong relationships are key to successful advocacy. When combined with clear reasons for change, they make a compelling case for Council's priorities.

Roles and responsibilities

Good advocacy needs a clear plan and shared understanding of who does what. The policy team leads this work, but Councillors, officers, and the community all play a role in identifying priorities and speaking for what matters most.

Table 1: Advocacy roles and responsibilities

Mayor and elected members	• Agree to advocacy approach and priorities • Spokespeople on advocacy issues (led by the Mayor) • Develop and maintain relationships with stakeholders and the community to support Council's advocacy • Receive updates on planning and evaluation of advocacy initiatives
CE and executive	• Drive advocacy priorities • Accountable and responsible for the implementation of the advocacy priorities and actions of Council • Owners of relationships with key government departments, stakeholders, and community groups • Receive updates on planning and evaluation of advocacy strategies
Policy team	• Support Executive, Mayor and Councillors in the delivery of advocacy actions • Development of advocacy framework and priorities • Coordinate submissions • Organisational capacity building • Provide advice and support on action plans • Reporting and evaluation
Officers	• Owners of relationships with key government departments, stakeholders, and community groups • Provide expert advice to support advocacy priorities • Stakeholder and community management and support • Identification and submission of potential advocacy opportunities • Media relationship management (comms)

How can communities get involved?

Great advocacy involves the whole community – Council, residents, visitors, and businesses.

We encourage people to share their views and help shape our priorities. Community feedback plays an important role in strengthening our advocacy and showing decision-makers what matters.

You can get involved by:

- Taking part in Council consultations and surveys
- Sharing feedback directly with Council
- Joining or working with community groups
- Speaking with your local MP
- Writing to Ministers or signing petitions
- Attending Council Meetings

When we seek support from government, it's important they can see strong community backing. We achieve more when our community is informed, involved, and actively supports the issues that matter.

Council's advocacy networks

Council is committed to building and maintaining strong partnerships to support effective advocacy. Working together allows Council to deliver stronger messages, access more resources, and build stronger connections with key decision-makers.

Council regularly works in partnership to advocate about shared issues, helping to amplify collective voices and ensure it is heard by government.

Advocacy networks

Local:

- Mana whenua
- Organisations, businesses and community groups

Regional/sector:

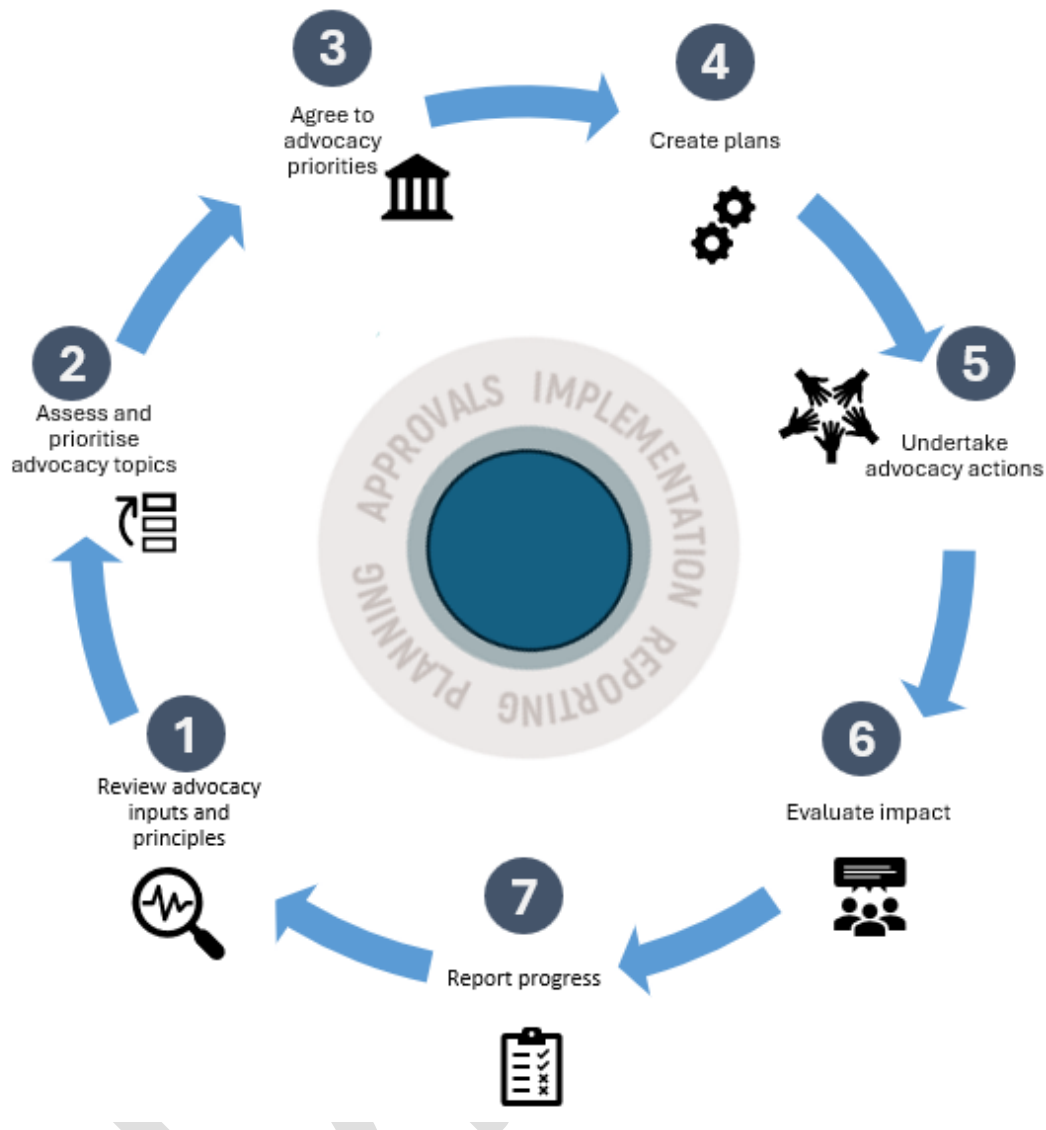
- Taituāra (Local Government Professionals Aotearoa), Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI)
- Subject-matter working groups, forums and networks that elected members participate in include the Mayoral Forum, Regional iwi partnerships, Otago Regional Transport Committee, Otago CDEM Group Joint Committee)
- Cross-council working groups that are officer-led (includes Otago Regional Economic Development Working Group, Otago Waste Network, Otago Biodiversity Forum, Otago Climate Officers' Group, Otago Strategy Managers' Group)

Central government:

- Otago Central Lakes Regional Deal Negotiation Committee
- Grow Well Whaiaora partnership

Working in partnership with these networks helps align policy priorities, strengthen the case for action, and reinforce the importance of these issues at a political level.

QLDC's triennial advocacy cycle



Explanation of stages of the cycle

Stage 1: Review advocacy inputs and principles

Our advocacy priorities are informed by a range of factors, including community feedback, existing Council strategies, and supporting evidence and data. Key inputs that shape these priorities include (infographic):

- Central government priorities and reform programmes
- Timing and emerging opportunities
- Policy changes or identified gaps
- Community sentiment
- Council strategies, frameworks and plans

Stage 2: Assess and prioritise advocacy topics

Council must prioritise its advocacy efforts to ensure resources are used effectively, and deliver the greatest potential impact. This stage involves assessing identified issues and opportunities to determine which advocacy topics should be progressed.

Stage 3: Agree to advocacy priorities

Council officers will develop a set of prioritised advocacy items for consideration and agreement by Councillors. This will be presented to Council between January and March at the start of each triennium, ensuring priorities reflect the outcomes of local government elections.

Officers will also provide an annual workshop (typically in March) to review advocacy priorities, ensure they remain fit for purpose, and report on progress against advocacy actions.

Stage 4: Create plans

Council will develop an advocacy plan for each priority. The level of detail and tactical approach will be aligned with available resourcing and capacity.

Stage 5: Undertake advocacy actions

Council will implement advocacy action plans for each priority, tracking progress and actions as they occur.

Stage 6: Evaluate outcomes and modify action plans as required

Advocacy outcomes will be evaluated on an ongoing basis through the delivery of action plans. This includes assessing what is working well and where adjustments may be needed. Changes to the approach may be influenced by advocacy outcomes, shifts in central government policy, or changes to funding or service models, amongst other factors.

Stage 7: Report progress

Regular reporting on priorities using success measures and indicators is a key component of Council's advocacy approach. Transparent reporting helps build trust and confidence in Council as an effective advocate for the community.

- Executive receives bi-monthly updates
- Councillors will receive annual updates in March alongside a review of advocacy priorities.

The annual report will include:

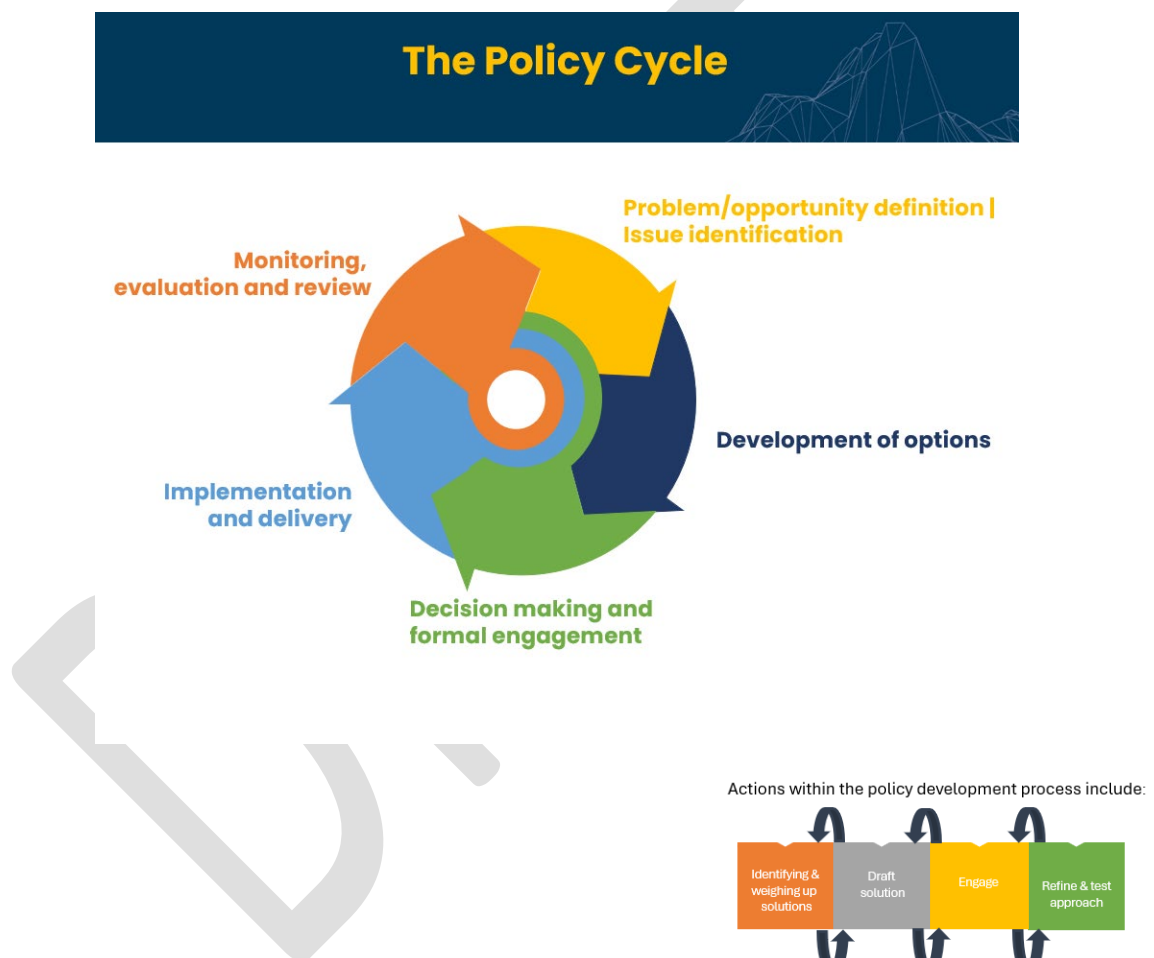
- A summary of the previous year
- An overview of Council's advocacy activities, campaigns and achievements.

- An assessment of key barriers and any opportunities for improvement.
- An overview of new and emerging issues and opportunities
- Any recommendations for advocacy priorities for the following triennium (if applicable).

Council will also communicate advocacy outcomes and achievements through its website, social media, news media, and Annual Reports.

How do we decide what advocacy actions should occur?

New policy and changes to existing policy all follow a similar process, that is often referred to as the policy cycle:



Both the type of proposal (i.e. a technical/operational vs. strategic) as well as the stage in the policy cycle that a proposal is at informs what the best advocacy methods are to influence change. The following table links the stage in the policy cycle with what advocacy methods will generally be used.

Table 2: Policy cycle and primary advocacy methods

Policy cycle stage and advocacy purpose	Primary advocacy methods	Roles
Issue identification: Raise awareness of an issue and establish why Council action is needed	Evidence gathering, research, policy position papers, stakeholder engagement, media and communications, relationship-building with officials and MPs	• Officers lead evidence and stakeholder engagement. • Elected members champion issues publicly and politically.
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ATTACHMENT 1 – QLDC ADVOCACY PRIORITIES FOR THE TRIENNium

QLDC’s advocacy priorities were developed with councillors through two workshops in January and February 2026 and were agreed at a Council meeting on 19 March 2026.

 Local Government system change	 Regional and spatial planning	 New funding models for growth and infrastructure (and value capture from tourism and visitor economy)
Structural, governance, funding, and service-delivery reforms to how local government operates in New Zealand.	Regional spatial planning is key to a shared, long-term direction for growth, land use, natural resources, and infrastructure that is managed effectively across the region.	Securing sustainable, and growth-responsive funding for infrastructure and services is critical to ensuring that development and the visitor economy contribute positively to growth across the district.

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