

Independent Review

Greater Christchurch Partnership

Presentation to Chief Executives 29 July 2025



Key findings

- The GCP has demonstrated **impressive effectiveness during crisis response and strategic planning phases**, particularly earthquake recovery coordination and delivery of the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan.
- **Political confidence in the Partnership has declined**, with decision-making processes becoming slow and consensus-driven rather than strategically focused.
- **Implementation of the spatial plan remains challenging** due to regulatory translation gaps, resource constraints, and limited authority for driving delivery.
- **Multiple stakeholders questioned the Partnership's current purpose**, with changing Government policy environments creating additional uncertainty about collaborative approaches.
- **The Partnership has shifted from strategic leadership to operational coordination, losing the strategic edge that was more characteristic of its most effective periods.**
- **The GCP requires structural and operational changes to maintain relevance and effectiveness in addressing greater Christchurch's evolving strategic challenges.**
- The review provides the analysis and options necessary for informed decision-making. However, **success depends on a collective political leadership commitment to collaborative and partnership models, including with mana whenua and government agencies.**
- **Care needs to be taken on the future of the GCP and its relationship to urban growth partnerships.** Central Government has positioned urban growth partnerships as a key mechanism for achieving coordinated urban development outcomes across New Zealand.
- **These issues and preferred Partnership model are best determined by Partners in the context of the next triennium** of Councils and will require a high degree of buy in as to the strategic (and connected) challenges faced in greater Christchurch, and the purpose of value proposition effective governance of those challenges.



Design principles

- **STRATEGIC FOCUS:** Supports effective governance of the key strategic challenges facing Greater Christchurch – this will shape what is on the agenda
- **STEWARDSHIP:** Ensures the parties work collaboratively to ensure Greater Christchurch interests are effectively managed now and into the future – this will shape the system-based approach that is taken to key challenges facing greater Christchurch including relevance to the provision, funding and regulatory levers that impact the wider community
- **PARTNERSHIP:** Recognises that the value of partnership is tangible, increasing the scale, reach, influence, and political and community engagement for the betterment of the wider Greater Christchurch community – this will determine who is at the table and the principles on which partnership is based including open communication and trust with clear and well understood roles and responsibilities.
- **VALUE FOR MONEY:** Delivers best value for money for ratepayers – this will support confidence that public money is being used appropriately
- **RESPONSIVE:** Ensure that the Partnership has effective mechanisms in place to remain relevant and responsive to changing demands being faced by the Greater Christchurch community.



Options - Partnership model

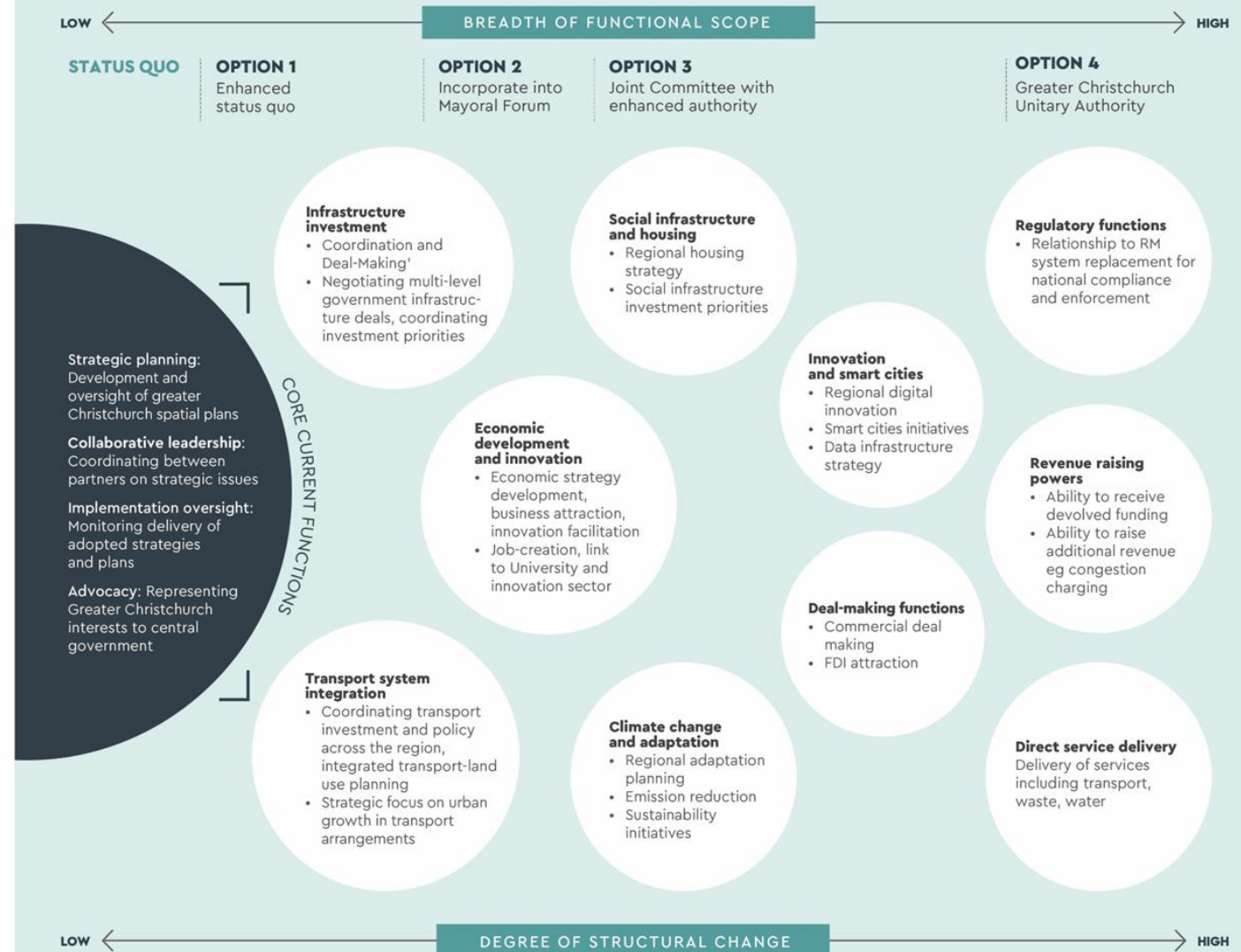
Table 1: Broad functional models

MODEL	FUNCTIONS
Strategic planning coordination	- Spatial plan implementation and monitoring - Strategic planning as key coordination mechanism - Multi-level government alignment - Flexible cooperation in spatial structures
Urban partnership deal-making model	- Infrastructure funding and financing coordination - Economic development interventions - Multi-level government deal negotiation - Governance reform and institutional innovation
Integrated urban model	- All current functions plus climate coordination, social infrastructure - Regional service coordination (not always direct delivery) - Enhanced economic development and innovation functions - Multi-sectoral partnership management

Source: Adapted from OECD Materials

Diagram: Model choices available to GCP members

These strategic choices have been incorporated within our options analysis and are set out in a conceptional diagram below. These options are explored further in the next section and should be examined in more detail at the beginning of the next triennium.



Recommendations and timing



Phases & tasks	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Phase 1: Report receipt and immediate actions							
Immediate steps							
Secretariat: Coordinate distribution of report and advice to GCP							
Council Officers: Brief elected members and prepare council consideration papers							
GCP Members: Receive independent review and endorse interim chair continuation							
Committee formation and confidence building							
Secretariat: Transition from bi-monthly operational meetings to quarterly strategic forums							
Council Officers: Develop clear partnership value proposition addressing member concerns and realign focus from individual council interests to collective accountability							
GCP Members: Establish new GCP following formation processes							
Phases & tasks	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Phase 2: Electoral transition and preparation (November 2025 - February 2026)							
Maintain operational effectiveness							
Secretariat: Enhance capability to maintain operations during electoral transition							
Council Officers: Prepare comprehensive briefing materials on review findings and options							
GCP Members: Ensure continuity of decision-making authority during transition period							
Strengthen mana whenua partnerships							
Secretariat: Provide advisory support and coordinate mana whenua engagement working with Whitiroa							
Council Officers: Meet with mana whenua representatives to discuss review findings and develop enhanced decision-making processes demonstrating genuine partnership commitment							
GCP Members: Approve formal protocols within current structure							
Phase 3: Decision making and implementation (March 2026 - December 2026)							
Decision-making process							
Secretariat: Coordinate structured decision-making processes across partner councils							
Council Officers: Provide comprehensive briefings to elected members and prepare decision papers							
GCP Members: Participate in formal council workshops and make binding decisions on structural options							
Formal option selection							
Secretariat: Coordinate workshops, public consultation processes, and inter-council communications and engagement plan with wider stakeholders							
Council officers: Conduct any Council specific analysis including interactions with other Council functions prepare relevant advice							
GCP Members: Approve options informed by engagement with Government and pass formal council resolutions with binding commitments							



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