

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

An improved and sustainable environment was the big winner in Council's 2018-28 Long Term Plan.

The 10-year vision document has been a hot topic over recent months as we sought public feedback on how to best plan for the future within the resources available.

We consulted with people from throughout the district and took on board the 81 written submissions and 19 people who made verbal submissions.

As your elected representatives we are always mindful it is the

community's assets and money we are responsible for and the decisions we have made take into consideration our future generations.

We are not trying to be something we are not, but we are trying to be the best we can.

I believe the decisions we have made will go towards developing a community and district which is as good as anywhere else.

Our aim is to be world class and to not accept anything below that. We will always cut our cloth to suit our means, but I admire the affordable standard Council has set in its vision for the next decade.

I'm really excited about our district's future. We have tagged some really important issues that will only strengthen our community.

We have also tried our best to minimise rates increases while delivering the best services possible both now and into the future.

One of the most significant changes is around the roading differential to recognise the cost that forestry has on roading.

Historically this has been picked up by the rural ratepayers. To reflect the true cost, we have increased the forestry differential weighting from 1.54 per rating unit to 5.0. This is what we believe is the actual cost of keeping forestry related roads maintained.

With regards to the airport extension this is still on Council's wishlist, but the runway extension will only go ahead if we are able to attract 100 percent external funding.

The draft 2018-28 Long Term Plan included 10 big ticket items that Council identified as needing to be discussed with our community.

We received really good feedback and have made changes to the plan based on listening to what people have told us.

Wastewater consent and pipe network rehabilitation

Council agreed to the preferred option which includes the modification of the existing wastewater facilities such as: significantly increased treatment processes, transitioning to a land-based discharge, a network renewals commitment and an ongoing commitment to a river health partnership strategy. The total cost of \$6.5 million was approved but will only have an effect on rates once the money is being spent. Council will also try to spread the cost to avoid the proposed spike in 2019/20.



Bridge strengthening programme

Council endorsed the bridge strengthening programme which will ensure the district's roading network meets Central Government requirements, including accommodating increased dimension heavy-production motor vehicles on our roads. The bridge strengthening programme will also provide resilience and economic benefits for current and future land use in the district.

The total cost of \$320,000 per annum for four years, in addition to the existing \$120,000 per annum has a minimal impact on rates as work is subsidised by NZTA

Piping open drains and new footpaths

This was identified as a priority based on community feedback. Initially \$300,000 was to be put aside for drains and a further \$300,000 for footpaths. Because footpaths are now attracting a NZTA subsidy the saving will be invested into open drains with a focus on the Kitchener Street drain. The end result will see Council spending \$500,000 on open drains and \$100,000 on footpaths plus the subsidy in the first year.

AFFCO water supply agreement

Council agreed to increase the Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) in relation to this issue. When Council upgraded the Wairoa township water treatment system in the early 1980's they partnered with the predecessors of AFFCO which contributed significantly to the upgrade in return for a reduced cost for the supply of water. This agreement has now been reviewed and a new and increased water rate has been set. However, there still remains a difference between the new rate and the rate charged to other users of the scheme.

Council decided on its preferred option of adding the shortfall to the Uniform Annual General Charge in recognition of AFFCO being the biggest employer in the district and many people across our district receiving direct benefits from the local processing plant. The total cost will see an increase to rates by \$190,000 per annum with a UAGC increase of \$37 per rating unit.

CBD enhancement project

Council opted to not invest \$1.5 million into the CBD enhancement but instead to use the remaining budget set aside in the last Annual Plan (just under \$200,000). This decision was based on community feedback from people asking for the town to be tidied up rather than a total transformation. Council will continue to seek external funding for further enhancements.

Mahia greenwaste and recycling centre

Council agreed to support the establishment of a greenwaste and recycling centre at Mahia to improve facilities and management of waste at Mahia. This is in response to the increased need out at Mahia.



Wairoa landfill and recycling centre

Council opted to implement all proposed changes to this service creating a cost-effective delivery whilst reducing the burden across all ratepayers without a major impact on level of service. Changes will see an increased minimum charge for general waste and greenwaste, increased fee per tonne for general waste and for greenwaste, and landfill and recycling centre closed on one day during the week. This combination of change will see savings of about \$30,000 and an increase of \$70,000 in revenue and is more user pays based.

Disposal of trucked effluent charge

Council agreed to increase the charge for disposal of trucked effluent. This charge adjustment would reflect a fairer user pays system for septic tank waste disposal. It reflects the actual increased costs of processing solids as opposed to fluids. This charge will be levied as a targeted \$30 a year per rural habitable household. Tuai, Opoutama and the Wairoa township are excluded from this charge as they are connected to a full sewage system.

Development of the Wairoa i-SITE & Library enhancement

Council was in favour of developing the i-SITE over three years by investing \$200,000 however have delayed the process pushing it out 4-5 years. Council will continue its efforts to attract external funding. It will be business as usual at the i-SITE.

Extending and making alterations to the library based on a \$300,000 loan and \$600,000 external funding was supported but delayed for 4-5 years so the community can decide what exactly they would like to see as part of the enhancement and we will also continue to try to attract external funding. It will be business as usual at the library.

FOR YOUR DIARY

MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 12 July: 12.30pm

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 24 July: 1.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 31 July: 1.30pm



CONTACT US

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'CAN I CONGRATULATE
COUNCILLORS & STAFF FOR
WORKING THROUGH THIS
PROCESS.'

Mayor Craig Little