

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

Thank you to all those people who came to the 2018-28 Long-Term Plan consultation meetings and those who have made submissions to the plan.

I appreciate the time people have taken to provide constructive feedback.

It is great to see grass roots community involvement and people wanting information about how the future of Wairoa could look.

The closing date for submissions was Tuesday with a total of 77 submissions received. Council has consulted more than ever, and I appreciate the hard work staff have put into this process.

This plan was months in the making and comprises of what we believe needs to be done to grow our community, and what staff/operations have indicated they need.

"THIS PLAN COMPRISES INPUT FROM GENUINE PEOPLE WITH THEIR HEARTS IN THE RIGHT PLACE."

The submissions will be heard on July 2nd and final decisions will be made by Council.

The purpose of the Long-Term Plan is about planning and investing in our future in an affordable way to make our district the best it can be within our financial capabilities.

This document focussed on Hapaitia, which means uplifting our community and is Council's vision based on what we have heard from the community and our pre-engagement Long-Term Plan consultation.

Wairoa has to be sustainable, we don't want booms and busts, because it is the busts that send our people - especially our young ones - out of our community.

All ratepayers should have received a letter with their proposed rates for 2018/19. The average increase across the district is 4.2% per property based on the preferred options within the plan.

However, nothing is set in stone and now that submissions have closed Council will listen to what people have told us before any decisions are made.

As your elected representatives we are ratepayers too, so we understand the impact rates have. Our aim is to try to make rates as fair as possible for everyone, but things also have to be done and we need to leave a worthy legacy for our future generations.

Economic development remains a key priority while ensuring we maintain our levels of services and core business.

It is important Council invests in infrastructure now, and into the future, to provide a foundation for strong and resilient communities.

Wastewater is a big-ticket item, both from a financial and environmental perspective. Consents expire in 2019 and Council has been working with the community to get the process right.

We have been fortunate to have some great community minded people involved with the Council-initiated Wairoa Wastewater Stakeholder Group which has been shortlisted in the Community

Engagement section of the 2018 Local Government New Zealand EXCELLENCE Awards.

We also have to be careful we don't become stagnant, as we need to be progressive for the good of our district.

There will be criticism around using our reserves, ie money in the bank to pay for things, but that is what reserves are for - depreciation set aside for renewals/repairs.

"USING OUR RESERVES IS LIKE FIXING THINGS ON YOUR HOUSE, WHY WOULD YOU BORROW, WHEN YOU HAD MONEY IN THE BANK."

Using our reserves is like fixing things on your house, why would you borrow, when you had money in the bank.

We need to use our reserves to do things now, so we don't find ourselves in a big black hole in the future because we haven't done what we should be doing now.

We are obligated by legislation to forecast our spending, it doesn't mean we will definitely spend the money, but it is prudent to plan for the future.

Unlike a business Council has to physically demonstrate the money is there to be accessed. If it is not used it will be carried over.

Government legislation requires councils to have long-term plans and review them every three years.

I know aspects of the consultation document are complicated and again, Council has requirements under Audit New Zealand that need to be met.

We tried to make it simpler, but Audit NZ recommendations required us to add more information to the document.

A theme of the consultation meetings was the interest in the rating differentials. I am really pleased people are thinking about, and showing an interest, in the current rating system.

Our system does contain a large number of differentials and as we know differentials can fix some problems, but they can also create problems, including wide variations in what people pay in rates.

The system we use now is complicated and that is why earlier this year we looked at different rating options as part of the finance rates and revenue policy review.

Council was trying to get a model without all the complications that we presently have but, in the end, status quo prevailed.

Personally, I still don't think we have it right and I would welcome another rates review.

Councillor Denise Eaglesome-Karekare has suggested a future review could include key stakeholders so the community are involved right from the beginning of the process.

Perhaps with help from the community we can develop a future focused equitable rating system.

I encourage anyone who would like to be involved in this rates stakeholder group to contact myself or Denise, so we can get the ball rolling.

FOR YOUR DIARY

COUNCIL FORUM

Tuesday, 3 July: 1.30pm

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

Wairoa District Council
Queen St, Wairoa
info@wairoadc.govt.nz
(06) 838 7309

GREAT THINGS
GROW HERE™
HAWKE'S BAY NEW ZEALAND



LONG TERM PLAN
2018-2028

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
SUBMISSIONS

Te Wairoa Business Week

July 2nd-6th 2018
Wairoa War Memorial Hal

Five days of all things business & doing business the Wairoa way.

Speakers from Icehouse, Kiwi Tax, IRD, Torere Macadamias, Te Puni Kokiri, Westpac, Creative Marketing, Business HB & more