

### Long Term Plan 2024-2034

On 25 June, Waitomo District Council adopted its Long Term Plan 2024-2034 after many months of planning and consultation.

The plan outlines the direction for the Council for the next 10 years and sets a pathway to achieve its community outcomes through various strategies and actions. Council carefully considered the district's infrastructure challenges alongside matters relating to community aspirations, debt levels, and minimising rate increases.

The total rates requirement is \$25.4 million for the 2024/25 year, an increase of \$2.5 million compared with the 2023/24 year. This equates to an overall rates increase of 11.07%, which is mainly driven by inflation but also the need to mitigate against severe storm events and other core business requirements.

Rates affordability is a serious consideration for Council, and the impact of the rate increase has been discussed thoroughly during the development of the Long Term Plan.

To balance rates affordability alongside the rising costs to deliver services and maintain assets, Council has prioritised needs and re-sequenced works where appropriate.

Individual property rates will vary due to how certain activities are funded and the services received by the property. We urge you to read this newsletter as it will help explain the reasons for your rates increase.

To find your property information you can access the Rating Information Database through our website. ([www.waitomo.govt.nz/council/rating-information/rating-information-database](http://www.waitomo.govt.nz/council/rating-information/rating-information-database))

The overall rates increase includes the additional funding required for roading damage caused by logging of exotic forestry and further road renewals and maintenance which adds \$1.2 million to the costs for 2024/25.

Investment in our 3 waters also accounts for additional costs in the early years on the LTP. Increased operating costs and records management add to the overall costs of delivering the services and infrastructure Council provides.

Water is a precious resource that we should value and use wisely, it is also costly to produce compliant drinking water. One of the most effective ways to do this is by creating a user pays system.

Installing water meters will mean those using large volumes of water will pay more. It will also improve visibility of leaks so less water will be lost.

### Te hanga tahi o tātou Takiwa - Shaping our District together

Council has adopted a new vision statement and updated community outcomes and priorities for the new LTP:



**A district  
for all  
people**



**A district  
that cares  
for its  
environment**



**A district  
that values  
culture**



**A prosperous  
district**

# Rates invoices by email

You now have the option to receive your rates invoice by email.

If you would like this option, please complete the form available on Council's website or email [info@waitomo.govt.nz](mailto:info@waitomo.govt.nz)



# Rates due dates

To assist ratepayers in the payment of their rates, the Council operates a system of payment by quarterly instalments. Rates for the financial year commencing 1 July 2024 are payable in four equal instalments.

<b>Instalment 1</b>	<b>30 August 2024</b>
<b>Instalment 2</b>	<b>29 November 2024</b>
<b>Instalment 3</b>	<b>28 February 2025</b>
<b>Instalment 4</b>	<b>30 May 2025</b>



# Paying your rates

You can pay your rates in the following ways:

- Easy Pay Direct Debit
- On our website using your credit card
- Direct Credit / Automatic Payment
- Cash
- Eftpos or Credit Card

The easiest way to pay your rates is via direct debit. This ensures no penalties will be applied and allows you to spread your payments across the rating year with no due dates.

If you do not already have a direct debit in place, we encourage you to complete a form and return it to us for processing.

If you are having difficulty making payments, please contact our Customer Services team to find out how we can help.

# Rates Remission Policy

Council has a Policy for the Remission of Rates which outlines the circumstances where it may remit rates. The following remission categories are available:

- Properties Used Jointly as a Single Unit
- Community Organisations and Clubs and Societies
- Organisations providing Care for the Elderly.
- Rates on Māori Freehold Land.
- Penalties
- New Residential Subdivisions
- Cases of Financial Hardship
- Cases of Land Affected by Natural Calamity
- New Businesses

Forms are available from our Customer Service Centre or on our website: [www.waitomo.govt.nz](http://www.waitomo.govt.nz)

# Are you eligible for a RATES REBATE?



If you have a low income and pay the rates on your home, you could receive up to **\$790** through Central Government's Rates Rebate Scheme. Applications are now open for rates rebates for the 2024/2025 rating year.

The amount you may receive is based on:

- Your income
- Your annual rates
- Number of dependants you have

You must be living at the property at 1 July and be the legal ratepayer.

Download an application form from our website or contact our Customer Services Team for further assistance.

# Property information online

Did you know your rating and property information is available on Council's website, as well as access to our online GIS mapping system?

Here you will be able to see information such as your annual rates, the property valuation, aerial photography and much more.

Look for the property information link under **Online Services** on our website and search for property information using your valuation number or address location.

# Waitomo District Property Revaluations

The Rating Valuations Act 1998 requires that every property in New Zealand is revalued for rating purposes at least once every three years.

The last revaluation for the Waitomo District occurred in September 2021 and therefore the revaluation is due to be undertaken again in September 2024. The new values will be first used for rating purposes from 1 July 2025.

Rating values are assessed on behalf of Council by Quotable Value using a 'mass-appraisal' process. This method is used all over the world and takes into consideration your property's attributes and the value of local sales.

The Capital Value reflects the probable price that would be paid for the property if it had been for sale at the date of the general revaluation. This valuation does not include chattels, dairy company shares, stock, crops, machinery or trees. The valuation is deemed to include GST (if any) for residential property, and exclude GST for other property types.

## Highest and Best Use

The valuation is made on a "highest and best use" basis, rather than the existing use. For example, a smaller pastoral block may have a higher value as a lifestyle residential property, and a smaller farming property on the outskirts of a larger urban township may have a higher value as a residential subdivision.

## Will the new valuations affect my rates?

All owners and ratepayers will receive notice of their revised values in February 2025. These notices detail

the new Capital Value of your property as at 1 September 2024. Your property's capital value is just one of the components used to calculate your rates. A change in a property's capital value does not automatically mean that your rates will increase or decrease by a similar percentage.

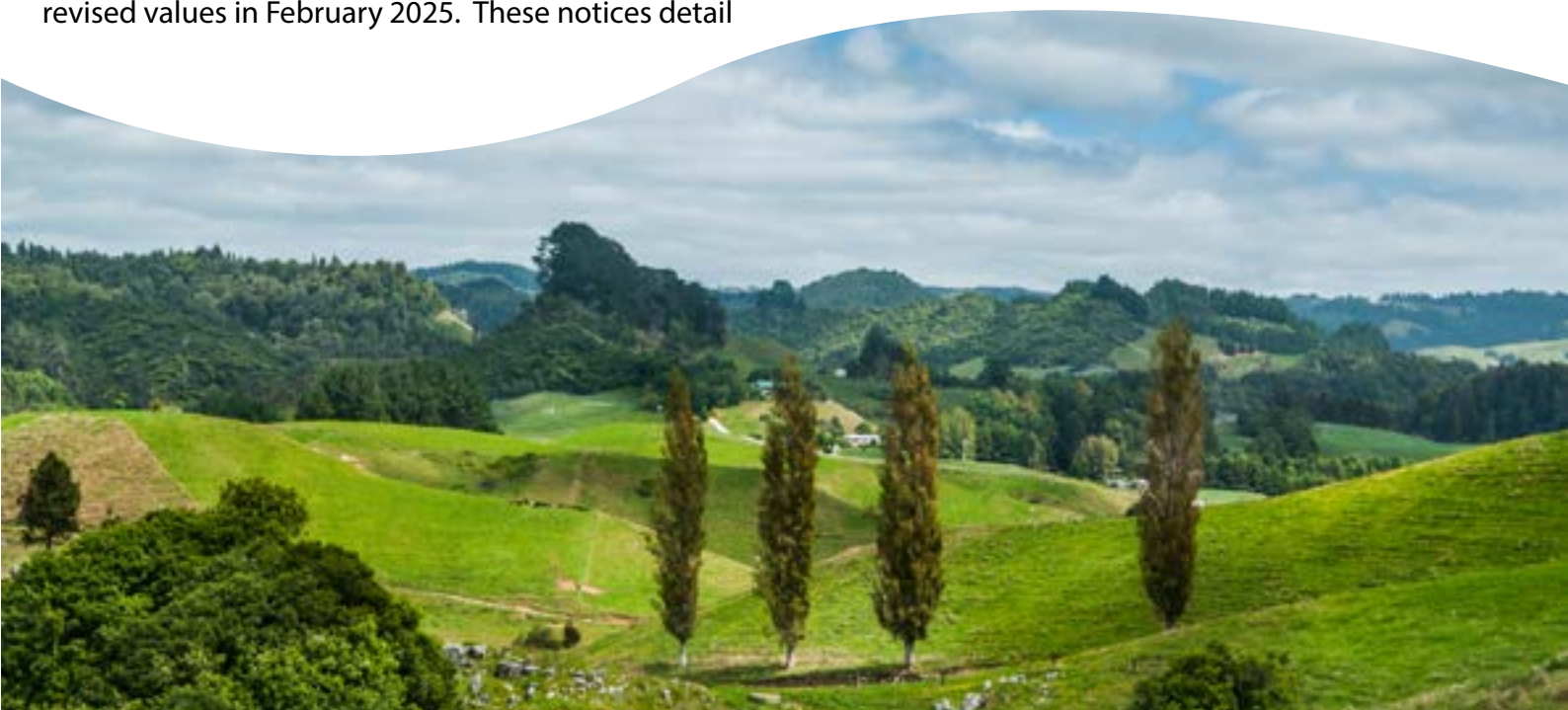
For most urban properties, only a small portion of the annual rates is based on property value. Uniform Annual General Charges (UAGC) and uniform charges for water supply, wastewater, solid waste collection and recycling make up a larger part of the annual rates and these charges are not based on property values.

However, the revaluation can result in a change to the rates charged to individual properties with some increasing and some decreasing because the rates charged on the basis of capital value are split among properties proportionally.

If you think of Council's rate income as a pie, the size of the pie does not increase because of the revaluation. However, an individual ratepayer's slice of the pie might get bigger or smaller depending on how their property value has changed in relation to the average change for the district.

## Objections

Once you receive your valuation notice you will have the opportunity to object if you disagree with your property's new valuation.





# Highlights of the Long Term Plan 2024 -2034

Every three years all councils must provide a detailed plan setting out their direction for the next 10 years.

In April this year we sought feedback from our community on the draft Long Term Plan 2024-2034 with a public consultation process. We presented six proposals to the community asking for feedback on Council's preferred options. We received a total of 132 submissions, that were each considered by Council to help finalise the LTP.

## **Roading differential for exotic forestry properties**

After significant engagement from community submissions and through hearings and other discussions, Council resolved to make a change to the roading rate to enable a new 3 times differential rate for forestry exotic (FE) properties and mixed use properties (pastoral and forestry) where the area of exotic forestry is 20 hectares or more.

Rate impact: FE and mixed use properties will see an increase in rates.

## **Investment in the Te Kūiti stormwater network**

In response to the recent flooding events in Te Kūiti, Council will invest \$6.7 million over the first five years of the LTP in improving the Te Kūiti stormwater network. The investment involves creating retention ponds, specialist modelling and increasing network capacity.

Rate impact: Increase in rates for Te Kūiti urban properties.

## **Change to Te Kūiti Urban Rating Area**

Council reviewed the existing Te Kūiti Urban Rating Area and found that it did not accurately reflect the location of the Te Kūiti stormwater infrastructure and the properties benefitting from the network.

Council has resolved to update the rating area which means for charging stormwater rates, some properties will be reclassified as rural, and some rural properties will become urban.

Rate impact: Increase/decrease. Properties added to the new urban rating area will see an increase in their stormwater rates.

## **Rural Hall ownership**

Council owns eight rural halls which are run and supported by rural hall committees. As a result of community consultation, Council has resolved to work with local rural hall committees to transfer ownership to the committees. This would formalise the arrangements and widen the funding opportunities for the committees.

Rate impact: Nil.

## **Elder Persons Housing – rent levels and considering specialist providers**

Council agreed to increasing the weekly rents more substantially to a level where eligible residents can access Central Government's Accommodation Supplement (AS) to offset this increase. The increased rent would generate more rental income with minimal impact. The increase in rent over two years will reduce the need to have this funded from general rates/ UAGC.

Rate impact: Progress to no rate funding.

## **Simplified Rates Structure**

Some of Council's activities that have districtwide benefit have complex splits on how they are funded through rates. To address this, some Council activities will now be funded by the general rate and UAGC. Council will now add the general rate and UAGC funded activity costs together and then determine the level of the UAGC to achieve the desired mix.

Rate impact: Variable.

