

Councils adopt long term plans

WAITOMO and Otorohanga district councils have both adopted their 2015-2025 Long Term Plans (LTP).

Approved on June 23, the North King Country councils have outlined their plans for the next 10 years, including predicted rates rises, infrastructure upgrades and debt planning.

Following public consultation Waitomo received 33 submissions and Otorohanga 26.

After considering all public input, both councils decided to adopt their preferred options as outlined in the consultation document (CD).

Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna says the LTP signifies the next phase in the council's journey towards "creating a better future with vibrant communities and thriving business".

"We intend to make this possible by placing greater emphasis on community and economic development," he says.

As outlined in the CD, Waitomo District Council (WDC) aims to support the growth of the local economy by promoting the district's many attractions as well as supporting local business initiatives and projects.

This will be delivered in-house rather than establishing a district economic development board as proposed in the 2012-2022 LTP.

RATES & DEBT

Key infrastructure projects for WDC during the next decade include upgrading the Te Kuiti water treatment plant (\$6.2m), general road improvements (\$5.7m), landfill development (\$1.7m), public toilet replacements in Benneydale and Marokopa (\$334k) and installing a new Piopio

water supply pumping line (\$147k).

Mr Hanna says the council has also taken "big strides" in improving its financial sustainability with public debt (\$44.8m as at June 2014) decreasing by 4.5% over the past three years.

"Reducing debt remains a key priority for the council.

"Guided by the debt reduction strategy, we are committed to decreasing public debt by \$18.9 million (37%) over the life of the Long Term Plan.

"We also understand the need for balancing our future plans for development with what is affordable and the rates increases proposed over the next 10 years are between 1.2% and 3.9%."

OTO'S PLAN

Otorohanga mayor Max Baxter says his council's LTP features five key issues – supporting young and old; using resources efficiently; enabling economic growth; retaining the district's identity and planning for the future with the goal of creating a district "where Kiwis can fly".

"Going by the low level of submissions, we'd like to believe that we're satisfying the needs of the general public within the capacity of our debt reduction process and where we are in our 30-year infrastructure plan to deliver the best possible service at the least possible cost."

To increase economic growth, the Otorohanga District Council (ODC) has decided to increase funding for tourism promotion and development, establish a temporary rates remission that can be applied to important new business developments and implement universal metered charging

for water.

Major infrastructure upgrades include constructing a one million litre storage reservoir for the Otorohanga community water supply (\$500k), installing universal water meters in Otorohanga (\$470k), replacing all streetlights with high efficiency LED units (\$300k), upgrading Arohena, Tihiroa and Ranginui rural water supplies (\$292k) and building a foreshore walkway along Pouewe St in Kawhia (100k).

FINANCES

As for the council's finances, Mr Baxter says the public debt is expected to be just more than \$10m at the start of the 2015/16 year and is projected to steadily fall over the next 10 years, reaching a near zero level by 2025.

Rates increases proposed over the next 10 years are between 1.9% and 3.3%.

"We [ODC] believe that Otorohanga is a place where Kiwis can fly and going by the goals set out in this long term plan we certainly have a bright future ahead of us."

In response to a submission from the Otorohanga Zoological Society for the council's backing to help complete an ongoing makeover of the Otorohanga Kiwi House, Mr Baxter says the council will continue supporting the society "in kind".

As for a clubCHAMPS submission asking for alcohol to be banned from all WDC and ODC-owned sports fields, both councils signalled they would consider implementing such a ban at a later date.

For more information about either council's adopted 2015-2025 LTPs visit – waitomo.govt.nz or otodc.govt.nz

Community Update

Monthly news from Waitomo District Council

Holiday Fun at Waitomo District Library

Children aged 5-12 years old are invited to join in our **free Winter Warmers reading programme**. Children visit the library during the school holidays, talk about what they have been reading and earn great rewards. The Library is open Mon-Fri 10am to 5pm and Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm.



Council supports the Starship Mobile Phone Appeal

Now's a great time to find a better use for that old mobile phone – drop it off at Waitomo District Council (during July), raise funds for their National Air Ambulance Service, while helping preserve our environment. Regardless of condition (working or non-working), make or model all mobile phones are accepted by the Starship Mobile Phone Appeal.



Dog Registration Fees are now due

Fees for the 2015/16 dog registration year are now due to be paid at the WDC office, Queen Street Te Kuiti or by posting the registration forms and fees to Waitomo District Council, PO Box 404, Te Kuiti 3941.

A **late registration fee** will be payable in respect of dogs required to be but which remain unregistered on or after the **1 August 2015**.

Dog owners who are new residents of the Waitomo District are required to contact Waitomo District Council on 0800 932 4357.



Follow us on www.facebook.com/WaitomoDistrict.animalcontrol

Have your say about Council services and facilities

Our annual **Resident Satisfaction Survey** closes tomorrow - **Friday 3 July 2015**. You are invited to let us know what you think about the services we provide such as library, refuse, recycling and animal control. Visit our website to complete the survey online.

Return completed paper surveys (including your contact details) to the WDC Office, Waitomo District Library or Te Kuiti Visitor Information Centre i-SITE and go into the draw to **WIN one of five \$200 grocery vouchers**.



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