

It is positive to see a debt reduction over the period to 2025 and to keep debt less than 25% equity.

However, rate payers would hope that fiscal responsibility is kept up over this period whatever changes there are with councillors. Spending needs to be prudent so that debt is kept down and that eventually rates can be reduced so, that they are in line with other councils, that they reflect the ability of ratepayers to pay and that they encourage growth in the district. Ratepayers have had large rate increases over the last three years to get the council debt down. We would hope to get some rate reduction over time to compensate for this.

Currently rates on dairy farms would be more than the net income of many of those properties. Volatility in climate and markets looks to be a long term trend. It is also important for the Council to be in a position to cope with adverse weather events and be aware of the financial constraints of ratepayers. An example of how long term affordability could be managed is Te Kuiti water treatment upgrade. It is a major capital expense and it would be logical to bring in metering to encourage better utilisation and savings. Consents on water takes in the future will be more onerous and it would be hugely expensive if council had to put in water storage to allow constant water takes in the dry years.

I believe the LTP is the minimum of how quickly we should reduce debt and encourage growth with rates affordability.



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Don't wish to present verbally.