

Changes incorporated into the final Long-Term Plan 2021-31

Elderly Persons Housing

We asked our community how they wanted to fund our Elderly Persons Housing portfolio. The three options given were self-sustaining (i.e. rental income covers all associated costs of the portfolio) in two-years, self-sustaining in seven years, or status quo – rent increases consistent with inflation and the general rate used to fund any additional funds that are required. The first two options used rental increases to reach self-sustaining.

Those that indicated their preference for either self-sustaining in seven years, or the status quo of inflationary rental increases, generally had concerns for the affordability of rent increases. However, with a clear majority preferring that self-sustaining is reached within two years, and the feedback we received from the tenants in the houses that the rental increases were acceptable, we chose to continue with our preferred option: 2 years to self-sustaining.

Drinking water meters

We asked our community whether they wanted universal drinking water meters installed across the district over one year, three years, or not at all.

The feedback we received on this topic was mixed. Those that supported the installation of the meters were concerned about the estimated water loss. Those that were against their installation were concerned that Council would begin charging for water use, many did not believe the estimated water loss value, or had alternative suggestions for identifying water losses.

After consideration of the feedback, we decided to take a measured approach to the installation of drinking water meters. Water meters will be installed in Year 1 in the Methven township. Analysis of water loss data will be undertaken in Year 2 to identify whether there is a significant amount of water lost from the system, and what proportion of leaks are on private versus public property.

We will then consult with the community through the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan to install water meters in Ashburton and Rakaia if the Methven trial shows it would be worthwhile.

Methven rates

The consultation document proposed a rate increase in Methven township of 14.86% in Year 1 and 6.80% in Year 2. Following feedback on the unaffordability of this rate increase, the following strategies were used to reduce the rate:

- \$30,000 of funding for the Methven iHub was moved from the Methven targeted rate to the District Promotion activity – which is funded 50% through the general rate and 50% through a targeted rate on commercial properties.
- Methven Community Pool grant of \$15,000 moved to the general rate for Year 1. Year 2 onwards this grant will return to being a targeted rate on the Methven township.
- \$10,000 of additional grant income (from the Provincial Growth Fund) was added into the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall budget, which reduces their need for funding by an equivalent amount.
- \$14,000 of targeted rate was removed from the Mt Hutt Memorial Hall funding, resulting in the hall going into deficit. This deficit will be made up over the following three years.

- \$25,000 of overhead costs on the Methven Community Board have been funded in Year 1 by the general rate rather than the Methven township targeted rate.

These changes resulted in the Methven township rate increase reducing to 10.79% (for a \$350,000 residential property) and the commercial rate to 7.89% in Year 1 of this 10 Year Plan.

Ashburton – Tinwald second urban bridge

A number of submissions were received disagreeing with Chalmers Avenue as the location of the second urban bridge. We have noted these responses, and will take this feedback into consideration when the Detailed Business Case is complete later in 2021.

Other changes

- Research will be undertaken into the development of a strategy or policy on how older people's views can be better incorporated into Council decision-making.
- A ban will be implemented on the use of air brakes in Ashburton township between 10pm and 7am.
- Research will be undertaken into the development of an Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy.
- An investigation will be undertaken into making Mt Somers a Dark Sky township.
- Inclusion of campervan car parks will be considered during the development of the Parking Strategy.
- \$10,000 per year has been included in the budgets - to be used for projects/maintenance on the Ashburton Hakatere River Trail.
- \$20,000 included for a dog park in Rakaia – funded through the Rakaia amenity rate.
- Upgrade of the Balmoral Hall was bought forward to Year 2 (rather than Years 3, 4 and 5).