



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Draft Long-term Plan to be released soon

Council's plan for the next 10 years will soon be released for consultation. The Long-term Plan sets out how Council plans on managing the region's natural resources for the next 10 years, delivering on a range of other legislative responsibilities, and how it will be funded.

West Coast Regional Council Chair, Peter Haddock, said that like everyone, the Council was also grappling with rising costs, higher interest rates and inflationary pressures.

"Just doing the same will cost more. With four new Councilors, and a new Chief Executive, we have been working closely with staff over the past 9 months looking at what work we should, and shouldn't, be delivering on as a Council. This is time for a reset."

As part of the Long-term Plan process, the Groups of Activities have been redesigned to better reflect the work areas of Council. This has included reviewing the various levels of service so that they represent a more modern and contemporary set of measures in the current legislative environment and better assess the Council's service to the community.

"We're not expecting the same increase as the one that occurred in 2021 but there will still be a need to raise the general rate."

In 2021, a 30% general rate increase occurred in response to the requirements of the Government's Fresh Water Reform as well as fast tracking Te Tai o Poutini Plan (the combined District Plan for the West Coast).

"The increase for this Long-term Plan is being driven in part by the need to rebuild the corporate service functions and information technology systems from year 1 to meet the needs of our customers. Rates have been kept artificially low for many years which has meant that our systems and processes are not able to function to today's standards."

Chair Haddock noted the recent rates invoicing issue which has reinforced the need to upgrade Council systems.

"Incidents such as these cost more to resolve in the long run, as well as being extremely annoying and inconvenient to our communities. This is not good enough".

Council is expecting to release the draft Long-term Plan for consultation in April.

"The consultation period will be the time for you to let us know if we have got the plan right," said Chair Haddock. "The submissions we receive from the community help us get a better understanding of your priorities."

ENDS

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