

# Council committed to community conversations on annual plan

The way we engage with you on Council's annual plan has changed. Legislation changes will allow for a more focussed approach to people having a say on what's planned for the 2016/17 year.

An annual plan sets out the work programme, projects, priorities, budgets and rates for the coming year and we need to adopt a 2016/17 plan by June 30 this year.

Local Government Act amendments changed documentation and consultation requirements for annual plans, aimed at councils sticking to the direction set in their long-term plans and avoiding the re-litigation of matters already consulted on and decided. Councils now need only go through a formal submissions and hearings process if their annual plan includes things that are significantly different to what's in their long-term plan. That's assessed against criteria that sets thresholds and triggers for going to the more formal process.

Rotorua Lakes Council's proposed annual plan is essentially year two of the long-term plan. The long-term plan was consulted on last year and adopted eight months ago after formal submissions, hearings and an audit process. No significant changes are being

proposed so there will be no formal submissions and hearings process. However, people will still be able to have their say. We'll be asking for feedback on some key matters that relate to the annual plan – like rates and capital priorities for the year – but we also still want to hear your other ideas.

The new process means we can now be much more focussed in what we talk to our community about in terms of annual plans but as they always are, people will also be welcome to tell us about other matters and share their ideas.

Council plans to talk about the annual plan to groups at meetings and events, with steering groups working in council portfolios and with other stakeholder groups. People will also be able to have a say by phone, email, text, letter or via social media – they can choose which suits them.

Locals are actually having more say than ever, particularly through the



Council plans to deliver on what's in the long-term plan and focus feedback on the annual plan on matters we have to consider annually, like setting the rates and identifying our key projects for any given year.

It's a much more efficient and effective and having a say will actually be easier for people. Not everyone is comfortable making a formal submission but those who still prefer to put things in writing will be able to do so. Others may opt for different ways to give feedback.

We already have a plan and will be sticking to it to continue the momentum Rotorua has gained during the past couple of years.

Rotorua Mayor  
Steve Chadwick

council portfolios which have community representatives on steering groups, leading strategies and impacting on proposals and decision-making. We're also in constant contact with stakeholder groups in the community and this is happening all the time, rather than just at annual or long-term plan time.

## Our key challenges haven't changed from those identified for the Long-term Plan:

- Funding our services – funding our services and building financial sustainability;
- Wastewater – developing effective and environmentally responsible wastewater services;
- Waste strategy – preparation of a comprehensive waste strategy to meet community needs and minimise waste levels;
- Maintaining and future proofing – council and community infrastructure;
- Making progress on priorities – set as part of our shared Rotorua 2030 vision and goals.

The direction we've set in our long-term plan includes managing funding for key projects within a set financial framework, balancing long-term debt levels with services levels and rates increases and taking a steady-as-you-go approach.

That's the track we are staying on and we look forward to engaging with our community about proposed priorities for the coming financial year.

# 2016/2017 Priority Projects



## Community Facilities

Council Activities	\$000
Aquatic Centre building and plant renewals	598
Events and Venues facility and hall renewals	342
Library and Children's Health Hub	3,522
Library renewals	168
Pensioner Housing building renewals	28
Rotorua Museum collection development, renewals and exhibition upgrades	557
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,215</b>



## Governance

Council Activities	\$000
Civic building renewals	1,257
Core software and hardware renewals	524
Information technology system renewals	1,124
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,905</b>



## Roads and Footpaths

Council Activities	\$000
Rural seal extensions	606
Roading renewal programme	5,349
Urban cycleways	433
Urban street upgrades	217
Lighting, safety, other transport network renewals	905
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,510</b>



## Community Safety

Council Activities	\$000
Emergency Management and Regulatory Services equipment renewals	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$39</b>



## Inner City Revitalisation

Council Activities	\$000
City Focus Refresh	1,132
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,132</b>



## Stormwater

Council Activities	\$000
Renewal programme	2,028
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,028</b>



## Sewage Disposal

Council Activities	\$000
Sewage scheme development, treatment and disposal upgrades	2,185
Rotoiti/Rotoma sewage system	866
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,051</b>



## District Development

Council Activities	\$000
EQ strengthening of tourism i-site	1,954
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,954</b>



## Open Spaces and Recreation

Council Activities	\$000
Parks and reserves renewal programme	750
Cemetery development and improvements	563
Eastside youth space development	87
Reserve development	667
Neighbourhood reinvigoration	217
Walkway development	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,304</b>



## Water Supplies

Council Activities	\$000
Pipes replacement, backflow prevention, and pressure management	2,464
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,464</b>

# Grand Total:

# \$28,602m

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Annual Plan

### Q. What is an annual plan?

A. An annual plan is a slice of the Long-term Plan. The latter sets the long-term direction and services council will provide, based on community needs. Council adopted its 2015-2025 Long-term Plan in July 2015.

An annual plan states priorities and budgets for each financial year and is an opportunity to review the building blocks of the long-term plan and make amendments if factors that impact on the direction set have changed.

### Q. Why is this annual plan being prepared differently?

A. Central government says past practice by many councils has seen the foundations of long-term plans being re-litigated and reworked in an annual plan cycle.

Changes to the Local Government Act, which drives how councils do business, put the emphasis on sticking to commitments made in long-term plans and remove the need for the traditional consultation process of calling for submissions, conducting hearings and then deliberating – unless an annual plan includes matters that are significantly different to what's in a long-term plan.

If there are no significant differences councils can discuss relevant topics with their community in ways that best suit them.

There are no significant differences in Council's proposed 2016/17 annual plan so you'll see a much smaller document than in the past, containing only the exceptions identified as they relate to year two of the Long-term Plan and the 2016/17 budget and priorities.

### Q. Can I make a comment or have input into the annual plan like before?

A. You'll have access to information on various topics and will be able to provide feedback but won't need to fill in a submission form.

Feedback will be accepted in person, by letter, email, on council's Facebook and Twitter feeds and by phone (details below). Feedback will be recorded, analysed and shared with councillors for their consideration. Feedback could result in adjustments to the final Annual Plan, referrals to council departments for action within existing budgets or referral to the next Long-term Plan discussions. Topics for discussion will include:

- Rates increases for the 2016/17 year;
- Rates remissions;
- Proposed movements in the rating differentials;
- Capital priorities for 2017.

## Rates and inflation

### Q. What can I expect my rates to increase by this year?

A. Council indicated in its Long-term Plan that for the year 2016/17 rates would increase by the cost of inflation which was like to see a 2.5% average rates increase.

An independent assessment anticipates a 1.9% inflation rate for councils so after adjusting its expenses and revenue assumptions, this council proposes an average rates increase of 1.9%.

General household inflation is lower than that but council costs are dictated by different factors and driven by different supply and demand pressures.

## Paying back debt

### Q. How can I work out what my rates will be, come July when the new financial year starts?

A. For indicative total rates go to [www.rotorualakescouncil.nz](http://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz) and put your details into the rates calculator. Or you can ring the council or call in to the council offices or Rotorua District Library.

### Q. What is council's current debt?

A. \$167.5m

### Q. Is council intending to pay down debt?

A. Yes. During the term of the Long-term Plan the council has budgeted a debt reduction of \$18.5m - \$8.5m for Rotorua Lakes Council and \$10m for Rotorua Airport.

Significant projects in the Long-term Plan will see debt levels spike but reduce over time through council sticking to its debt reduction programme.

## Rates differentials

### Q. What is a rating differential?

A. A rating differential is a factor put onto the general rate in the dollar to reflect either the benefit a certain ratepayer category receives or services/benefits a ratepayer category does not receive.

A commitment was made in the long-term plan to work towards everyone being on the same level for generally rated services.

### Q. What rating groups will be affected by the proposed differentials change?

A. The business community (differential to reduce by 0.1, from 1.8 to 1.7) and the rural residential community (differential to be adjusted from 0.9 to 0.95%).

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for full information about the 2016/17 annual plan or email: [info@rotorualc.nz](mailto:info@rotorualc.nz)