

Notice of Meeting

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Tararua District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, 156 High Street, Dannevirke on **Wednesday 9 April 2025** commencing at **9:30 am**.

Bryan Nicholson Chief Executive

Agenda

- 1. Welcome and Meeting Opening
- 2. Apologies
- 3. Reports
- 3.1 Adoption of Council's Consultation Document and Supporting Information for the Annual Plan 2025/26
- 4. Closure



Report

Date	:	4 April 2025
То	:	Mayor and Councillors Tararua District Council
From	:	Sarah Walshe Finance Manager
Subject	:	Adoption of Council's Consultation Document and Supporting Information for the Annual Plan 2025/26
Item No	:	3.1

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That the report from the Finance Manager dated 25 March 2025 concerning the Adoption of Council's Consultation Document and Supporting Information for the Annual Plan 2025/26 be received.
- 1.2 That the Tararua District Council approves the proposed Pensioner Housing fees and charges for the 2025/2026 financial year being:
 - Dannevirke 1 Bedroom unit- \$XX
 - Dannevirke 2 Bedroom unit \$XX
 - Dannevirke Contribution 2 Bedroom unit \$ XX
 - Woodville, Pahiatua and Eketahuna 1 Bedroom unit \$XX
- 1.3 **That the Tararua District Council approves the proposed amendment to the self***imposed rent cap position to reflect:*
 - Market Rents and / or Rental Appraisals
 - Property Condition
 - Household Income
 - Additional Services Solid Waste & Grounds Maintenance
- 1.4 That the Consultation Document and Supporting Information including the draft Annual Plan 2025-2026 and Fees and Charges Schedule for the 2025-2026 financial year as amended to include the fees set in resolution 1.2 above, be adopted for consultation with the community.
- 1.5 That the Chief Executive be delegated authority to make any required minor amendments and corrections to the draft Consultation document and supporting information prior to finalisation for consultation with the community.

2. Reason for the Report

2.1 To adopt Council's Consultation Document and Supporting Information for the Annual Plan 2025/2026, being year two of the 2024/2034 Long Term Plan, for consultation with the community.

3. Background

- 3.1 Council must prepare an Annual Plan for each financial year as required by Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002.
- 3.2 The Annual Plan is defined by Sections 95(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act and requires that Council present an account of significant changes from the Long Term Plan for the year in which the Annual Plan is being developed and include all

relevant financial and funding impact statements for the year in which the Annual Plan is being prepared.

- 3.3 Council held a series of workshops from December 2024 to March 2025 to discuss the service levels, capital programme, fees and charges, activity expenditure and rates requirement for the Draft Annual Plan 2025/2026.
- 3.4 This report also seeks consideration by Council for amending the self-imposed pensioner housing fee cap of up to 33% gross superannuation to reflect market rents and rent appraisals, and approval of the proposed pensioner housing fees for the 2025-26 financial year for incorporation into the draft Annual Plan and Schedule of Fees and Charges.

4. Consultation with the Community

- 4.1 Council proposes an overall rates increase of 7.71% which is significantly lower than the increase proposed in the Long Term Plan. Of this increase, 3.23% relates to all activities other than water services, and the remaining 4.48% is for water, wastewater, and stormwater activities. Council has gone right back to basics and has reduced costs to include only essential works. To achieve this projects have been reassessed, and reforecast or deferred if appropriate. A deferral of the operational costs for the New Pahiatua Pool from year 2 to year 3, due to with external funding still being sourced. It is not anticipated that the new pool will be operational in the 2025/2026 year.
- 4.2 This year, only partial funding of depreciation is being undertaken, with the remaining portion deferred to future years of the Long-Term Plan. The significant increase in asset prices due to inflation necessitates spreading the cost and its recovery over a longer period.
- 4.3 Additionally, the Government has introduced a new method for funding asset renewals through debt that supports this approach. This is under their framework for the future delivery of water services, called Local Water Done Well. This approach allows for the use of loans to finance all asset purchases (including renewals) without the need to recover depreciation costs through rates. This usually occurs at the same time as funding is also being recovered for debt repayment, a practice considered as "double dipping".
- 4.4 Water service assets, including those for water, wastewater, and stormwater, have very long lifespans. Consequently, if the debt on these assets is repaid over a short period (e.g, ten years), there will be ample time during the remaining useful life (upwards of 100 years) to address future long-term replacement funding requirements after the debt has been repaid.
- 4.5 Council has prepared a Consultation Document and supporting information to consult with the community on whether Council should rate an additional \$150,000 (resulting in an average increase of 0.40%) in rates for our footpaths. After the adoption of the 2024/2034 Long Term Plan Council received notification

from NZTA Waka Kotahi that it had been unsuccessful in its funding request for its footpaths maintenance and renewal programme.

4.6 Council is also seeking feedback from the Community on a proposal Council received from Tararua Aquatic Community Trust to help solve an ongoing issue of carparking.

5. Significance Assessment

- 5.1 The proposed changes recommended triggers the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy under the criteria: "The degree to which the issue / decision has a new financial impact on Council or the rating levels of its communities"
- 5.2 Council is consulting with the community on the proposed rates increase detailing the underlying drivers.

6. Pensioner Housing

6.1 Background

- 6.1.1 Council owns and manages a housing portfolio of 85 pensioner units. With the exception of the six new units built at Aften Court Dannevirke, the portfolio consists of 1 bedroom units that are more than 50 years old and nine 2 bedroom units which are 40 years old.
- 6.1.2 The Pensioner Housing activity has a requirement to be self-funding with the entire activity being 100% privately funded by tenants.
- 6.1.3 Council has a self-imposed rent cap of up to 33% of the Gross Superannuation (Single living alone rate) which does not consider the full household income setting rents well below market rates.
- 6.1.4 Rents are reviewed annually.
- 6.1.5 Significant unplanned renewals have continued to impact the Pensioner Housing Reserves, along with increases in the obligations of landlords and property owners by Government regulation.

6.2 **Proposed Amendment to Self-Imposed Rent Cap Position**

- 6.2.1 It is recommended that the Council remove the self-imposed cap of up to 33% of Gross Superannuation to allow for a sustainable self-funding model that supports the Pensioner Housing activity.
- 6.2.2 The operational and renewal cost of Council's housing portfolio are expected to continue to increase due to inflation, supply and wage pressures and age of assets. Removing the self-imposed rent cap provides Council with the flexibility to assess rents based on market trends, property condition and household income as well as additional services such as solid waste and grounds maintenance. Note that

Councillors will continue to have ultimate approval of future rent adjustments through the annual adoption of Council's Fees and Charges.

6.3 **Proposed Rent Increase**

- 6.3.1 To be self-funding, rental revenue needs to equal or exceed operational and renewal costs of \$793,409 and make provision to repay debt each year.
- 6.3.2 Previously Council had requested that rents be set consistently across all property types (excluding Tenant Contribution Flats). However, rent appraisals carried out in late March suggest Woodville and Pahiatua property conditions are slightly below Dannevirke properties. Eketahuna rent appraisals were not carried out at this time however the 3 units in Eketahuna are similar to those in Woodville.

		Rent Appraisal		
Dannevirke 1 Bedroom	Dannevirke 2 Bedroom	Woodville 1 Bedroom	Pahiatua 1 Bedroom	Eketahuna 1 Bedroom
\$260 - \$275	\$280 -\$310	\$250-\$260	\$240- \$260	N/A

6.3.3 The proposed rent increase provides for a modest operating surplus but exceeds the Council self-imposed cap of 33% of the Gross Superannuation for 1 bedroom units. The proposed rent increase also seeks Council's consideration to set rents for 1 bedroom units in Woodville, Pahiatua and Eketahuna slightly lower than those in Dannevirke.

		Proposed Rent Inc	crease	
Rent Per Week	Existing	Proposed	\$increase	% Gross Super
Dannevirke	1			I
1 Bedroom	\$190	\$265	\$75	42%
2 Bedroom	\$290	\$305	\$15	32%
Contribution Units	\$100	\$155	\$55	25%
Woodville / Pahiat	tua / Eketahuna			
1 Bedroom	\$190	\$250	\$60	40%

6.4 Impact of Rent Increase on Super Annuitants and Accommodation Supplement

- 6.4.1 New Zealand Government Superannuation payments increased on 1 April 2025. These new rates are used in the calculations of the proposed fee. Note that any rent increase would apply from 1 July 2025.
- 6.4.2 A tenant may also be eligible for Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Accommodation Supplement and/or additional benefits over and above the NZ Superannuation payment. The accommodation supplement is tested on income received excluding NZ Superannuation. The maximum rates depend on what area of New Zealand the person lives in. The Tararua District is categorised Area 4. The MSD website provides estimates of the accommodation supplement rate.

Accommodation Supplement	Single pensioner living alone	Couple combined pension
Proposed rent paid per week	\$265	\$305
Accommodation Supplement rent threshold	\$135	\$207
Accommodation Supplement Rent Area 4 maximum payment	\$70	\$80

- 6.4.3 Eligibility for accommodation supplement is income and asset tested. If a tenant has savings over \$8,100.00 (single person) or over \$16,200.00 (couple) they are not eligible. Note that Council eligibility criteria for pensioner housing has savings/asset criteria set at a maximum of \$40,000.00 for single person and \$60,000.00 for couples. This limit excludes the value of cars, household/ personal effects, and prepaid funeral arrangements. It is possible that Council has tenants that are ineligible to access the Accommodation Supplement and Council tenants may be able to receive advice from MSD to assess their eligibility.
- 6.4.4 The following table demonstrates the financial impact for tenants for each proposed rent option. Note, Single living alone NZ Superannuation rate is used to calculate fees for 2 Bedroom Contribution Units due to historic individual agreements.

Proposed Rent Options

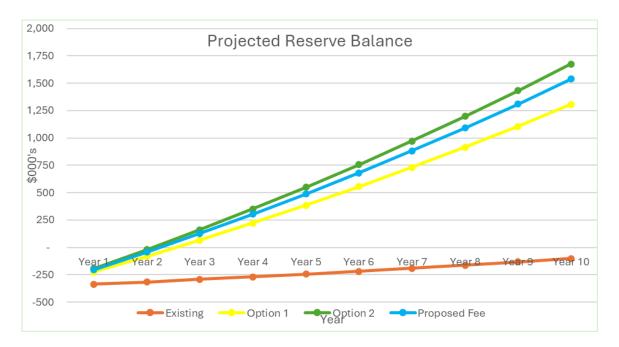
			%Gross			%Gross		%Gross
	Existing		Super	Option 1		Super	Option 2	Super
District Wide 1 Bedroom								
Proposed Rent	\$	190.00	30%	\$	250.00	40%	\$ 265.00	42%
Gov. Subsidy (for eligible applicants)	\$	68.00		\$	70.00		\$ 70.00	
Tenant Pays	\$	122.00	19%	\$	180.00	29%	\$ 195.00	31%
	Existing			Option 1			Option 2	
Dannevirke 2 Bedroom (9 units)								
Proposed Rent	\$	290.00	30%	\$	295.00	31%	\$ 305.00	32%
Gov. Subsidy (for eligible applicants)	\$	68.00		\$	70.00		\$ 80.00	
Tenant Pays	\$	222.00	23%	\$	225.00	24%	\$ 225.00	24%
	Existing			Option 1			Option 2	
Dannevirke 2 Bedroom Contribution Units x 3								
Proposed Rent	\$	100.00	16%	\$	150.00	24%	\$ 155.00	25%
Gov. Subsidy (for eligible applicants)	\$	68.00		\$	70.00		\$ 70.00	
Tenant Pays	\$	32.00	5%	\$	80.00	13%	\$ 85.00	14%
	Existing			Option 1			Option 2	
WDV/PAH/EKE 1 Bedroom (units)								
Proposed Rent	\$	235.00	37%	\$	250.00	40%	\$ 265.00	42%
Gov. Subsidy (for eligible applicants)	\$	68.00		\$	70.00		\$ 70.00	
Tenant Pays	\$	167.00	27%	\$	180.00	29%	\$ 195.00	31%

Assumptions:

- Couples rent a 2-bedroom property, and both are eligible for NZ Superannuation.
- Tenants are not in receipt of any other income or allowance outside of NZ Superannuation.

6.5 Impact of Rent Increase on Pensioner Housing Reserve Balance

6.5.1 The below table offers a projection of the Pensioner Housing Reserve balance over the next five years.

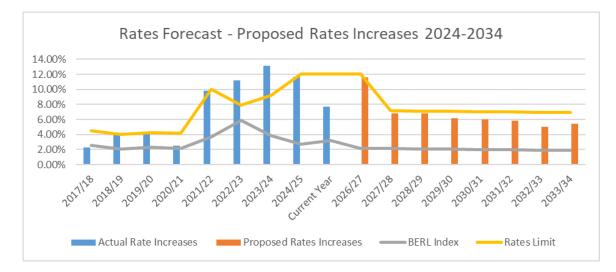


6.6 Summary

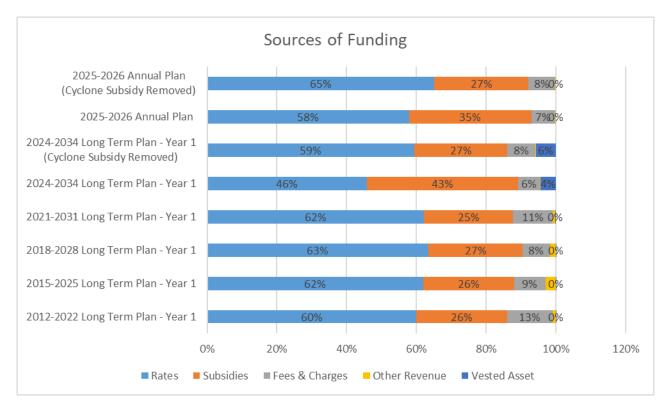
- 6.6.1 Due to the requirement for Pensioner Housing to be a self-funded activity, there are no rates implications for this activity. However, increasing Pensioner Housing fees will have an impact on Pensioner Housing tenants.
- 6.6.2 Council will provide letters to tenants outlining the increase in Pensioner Housing fees as soon as rents are set for the 2025/2026 financial year. This will allow tenants to prepare for the rent increase. Note that increases for most existing tenants will not come into effect until January/February 2026 as all rent increases take effect upon the anniversary of the tenancy commencement.

7. Financial Strategy

- 7.1 The 2024/2034 Financial Strategy set Council's planned approach to financial management over the next 10 years, as part of this strategy Council identified five strategies it would follow to enable to financial management required for the LTP. Response to these how these strategies are being followed in year 2 of the LTP are as follows:
- 7.1.1 **Rates Limit:** Council agreed to increase the rates limits to a level that would all Council to service the increased debt levels, fund the operational cost increase resulting from investment in infrastructure and growth projects and increase cost to meet service levels. Rates limit for year 2 was set at <12%, with a proposed increase of 11.79%, the proposed rates increase for this annual plan is 7.71%.



- 7.1.2 **Dedicated Debt Repayment:** Council agreed to continue with the dedicated debt repayment programme that was implemented in the 2021/2031 LTP, the proposed rates increase includes a 2% of debt repayment.
- 7.1.3 **Borrowing Limits:** Council agreed to increase Council's borrowing limits within the LTP, for the proposed Annual Plan Council is within these limits.
- 7.1.4 **Revenue Sources:** Council agreed to continue its strategy of finding alternative sources of revenue to maximise external funding where possible. The table below shows the mix of Council's funding sources:



7.1.5 **Balanced Budget:** Council agreed that it would meet the s100 Local Government Act (LGA) balanced budget requirement. In this annual plan Council has meet this requirement of being >100% at 112.71%.

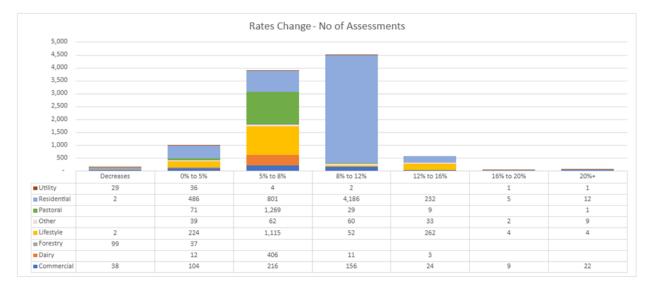
8. Key changes between the Draft Annual Plan and the Long-Term Plan

8.1 **Rates Distribution**

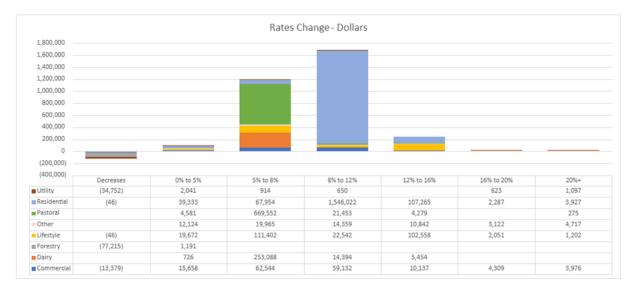
8.1.1 Officers have prepared a rates analysis to show the comparison between the impact of the rates increase on the different sectors between the current year and the proposed annual plan. This shows the impacts of the increases in the activities of Water and Wastewater that primarily effects urban properties.

	2026	2025	Change
Rural	21,453,262	20,124,974	6.60%
Urban	21,354,092	19,501,750	9.50%
Commercial	3,230,179	3,115,449	3.68%
	46,037,533	42,742,173	7.71%

8.2 Rates change distribution in %



8.3 Rates change distribution in dollars



8.4 **Debt Repayment**

8.4.1 As noted in paragraph 7.1.2 above

8.5 Capital Programme

8.5.1 Total capital expenditure is \$46 million compared to \$52 million in Year 2 of the LTP. Below is the summary of the capital projects by Group of Activities.

	Long Term Plan Year 2 2025/2026 \$000's	Annual Plan 2025/2026 \$000's	Variance \$000's
Summary of Capital Projects by Group of	Activities		
Community & Economic Development	58	-	(58)
Community Facilities & Services	3,561	3,299	(262)
District	3,104	2,343	(761)
Environmental Management	390	865	476
Governance & Community Engagement	-	-	-
Regulatory Compliance	-	-	-
Stormwater Drainage	595	595	-
Transportation	25,418	20,914	(4,504)
Wastewater	8,506	8,765	259
Water Supplies	10,749	9,438	(1,311)
TOTAL	52,379	46,219	(6,160)

8.6 Grants and Subsidies

8.6.1 Grants and subsidies revenue has decreased from year 2 of the LTP by \$4.4m in this annual plan. This comprises mainly a reduction in subsidy to be received from Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery project (\$4.1m) in the roading activity as a result in the decrease in this project's requirements after the completion of works scheduled in 2024/2025.

8.7 **Operational Costs**

8.7.1 This has increased by \$212,000 from Year 2 in the LTP and by \$315,000 from the current year (2024/2025). This increase is driven by inflation increase which is pushing up the price of goods and services, disruptions in the supply chain, increases in insurance costs and the ongoing increase in compliance and regulations that Local Government must comply with.

8.8 **Funding of Depreciation Costs**

8.8.1 Depreciation costs have decreased from year 2 budgets by \$855,000, and increased from current year budgets by \$91,000. This decrease is made up of two items, a decrease in depreciation costs – these are calculated as part of annual

revaluations of Council's infrastructure assets, this helps us determine the correct level of depreciation we are required to rate for to ensure reserve balances are maintained at an appropriate level to allow for assets to be renewed when they reach the end of their useful life. The second part of this reduction is that in this Annual Plan Council has deferred the "catch up" of un-funding of depreciation from year 1 of the LTP. Council has deferred this "catch up" for Community Buildings, Stormwater, Wastewater and Water activities. With land rationalisation project underway, Council has elected to fund an appropriate amount of depreciation to allow for the budgeted renewal programme. This is to ensure Council isn't rating to build up a reserve where Council may no longer hold onto all of the currently owned community buildings.

8.8.2 Changes in the funding of depreciation from year 2 of the LTP are as follows:

Activity	\$ Change
Community Buildings	(412,000)
Stormwater	(157,000)
Wastewater	(421,000)
Water	141,000
Total	(849,000)

8.9 **Personnel cost**

8.9.1 Personnel cost has increased by \$165,000 from year 2 budgets and from the previous year \$414,000. The increase is due to anticipated market movements and change in staff resources. There is an increase of \$279,000 or 2.5% on the prior year plus in-housing of waste management services of \$135,000 or 1.2% on the prior year.

8.10 Finance cost

8.10.1 Finance cost has decreased by \$270,000 from year 2 budgets and increased by \$82,000 compared to current year. The decrease is due to change in interest rates from 4.71% to 4.2%. The increase from current year is a result of expected borrowings having increased from the current year.

9. Financial Strategy Limits and Revenue and Financing Compliance

9.1 Financial Prudence Benchmarks

9.1.1 The table below displays Council's planned limit as per the Annual Plan 2024/2025 against its Quantified Maximum limits set in the Financial Strategy.

	Quantified Maximum Limit	Planned Limit	Met
Rates affordability benchmark			
Increases in accordance with financial strategy	12%	9.51%	3
Actual Increases	11.79%	7.71%	3
Debt Affordability			
Net Debt as a percentage of total revenue	175%	139.31%	3
Net interest as a percentage of total revenue	10%	4.83%	3
Net interest as a percentage of annual rates income (debt secured under debenture)	15%	8.33%	3
Liquidity (External term debt + committed loan facilities + available liquid investments to existing external debt)	>110%	111.88%	3
Balanced Budget Benchmark	>100%	112.71%	3
Essential Services Benchmark	>100%	278%	3
Debt Servicing Benchmark	<10%	487%	3

- 9.1.2 Council complies with the rates limits set in the Financial Strategy.
- 9.1.3 Council complies with all of the debt limits set in the Financial Strategy. The debt limit with the least headroom is liquidity. However, this was expected in the Financial Strategy. If an unplanned event occurred (such as a major earthquake) Council has options to increase its liquidity either through a larger standby loan facility, or re-prioritising planned projects if required.
- 9.2 Council has also set lower benchmark limits than LGFA (Local Government Funding Agency) covenants. The LGFA limit for net debt as a percentage of total revenue is <175% compared to Council's limit of <175%. This allows for future headroom and also ensures the cost of debt is maintained at an affordable level to ratepayers.
- 9.3 See the discussion on the Balanced Budget benchmark in section 11.

10. Revenue and Financing Policy

10.1 Council has set funding limits by way of the Revenue and Financing Policy in the 2024/2034 Long Term Plan. Where Council does not comply with these limits, it must formally approve those that fall outside the policy limits. Below is the table of the those that fall outside of the rates policy limits

	ie & Financing Policy	Policy		
		Maximum	Actual	
hrivin	gDistrict			
	ommunity & Economic Development			
	Community Development	100.00%	96.58%	
	Economic Development	100.00%	99.52%	
mprov	ing Our Environment			
-	vironmental Management			
	District Planning	70.00%	60.61%	
	Emergency Management	100.00%	100.00%	
	Waste Management	60.00%	60.00%	
	Recycling	100.00%	100.00%	
	Refuse	0.00%	0.00%	
	Transfer Station	100.00%	40.17%	
Ste	ormwater	100.00%	99.80%	
Wa	astewater	100.00%	91.25%	
Wa	ater Supplies	80.00%	77.72%	
onne	cted Communities			
Co	mmunity Facilities & Services			
	Animal Management	15.00%	19.90%	\otimes
	Cemeteries	70.00%	74.72%	\otimes
	Community Buildings	95.00%	96.06%	
	Libraries	100.00%	99.16%	
	Parks and Reserves	95.00%	91.35%	
	Pensioner Housing	0.00%	0.00%	
	Public Conveniences	100.00%	100.00%	
	Swimming Pools	100.00%	100.00%	
Re	gulatory Compliance			
	Building Compliance	60.00%	58.14%	
	Compliance & Monitoring	90.00%	83.69%	
Tra	ansportation			
	Footpaths	55.00%	79.06%	\otimes
	Footpaths	55.00%	7.04%	
	Town Centre Refurbishments	100.00%	100.00%	
	Roading	40.00%	49.91%	\otimes
nterac	tive Council			
Go	vernance & Community Engagement			
	Communication	100.00%	100.00%	
	Customer Services	100.00%	100.00%	\bigcirc
	Democracy	100.00%	96.19%	\bigcirc
Di	strict & Treasury			
	District & Treasury	100.00%	96.12%	\bigcirc

10.2 Five activities are not currently compliant with the funding splits:

 Roading – Cyclone recovery funding and increasing depreciation funding has meant Council funding splits are non-compliant. Council has increased its depreciation funding in the later years of the LTP to build up its reserves by an additional \$10.5m by year 10 of this LTP. This ensures that Council's depreciation reserves can fund its share of any unbudgeted climate related events that cause significant damage to our roading network.

- Footpaths as signalled in the LTP (as with Roading), in later years of this LTP, depreciation funding is increased in anticipation of growth and cost escalation. The reserves will increase by an additional \$2m by year 10 of this LTP.
- Community Buildings In the LTP we have proposed a funding split range of 85%-95% for rates. This is our desired funding approach. However, as planned we were compliant only in year one. The non-compliance in years 2 onwards is minor. We are doing the rationalisation of our community assets which will help bring us back in line with our desired funding splits for this activity
- Animal Management the team have worked hard to bring this activity to within an 80 / 20 split which is in line with other Councils. To bring this activity into an 85 / 15 split would mean Council would need to increase its fees and charges by \$50,000. We are not recommending any change at this time. We will continue to monitor the activity's performance over the next twelve months.
- Cemeteries An increase in maintenance costs with tree removal work particularly that is required has meant this activity is outside of the funding split. If these costs continue to increase in subsequent years it will mean that either the fees and charges needs to be reassessed in more detail or the policy limits will need to be reassessed in light of the future maintenance requirements for tree removal.

11. Balanced Budget Requirement

- 11.1 Section 100(2) of the LGA allows for Council to set projected operating revenue at a different level from operating expenses if the local authority resolves that it is financially prudent to do so.
- 11.2 Council is required to take into account achieving and maintaining level of service provision, maintenance of assets and facilities and the equitable allocation of funding the provision and maintenance of assets and facilities, when setting an unbalanced budget.
- 11.3 Council has met the balanced budget requirement.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 Consultation opens on 14 April and closes on 15 May 2025.
- 12.2 The engagement channels that Council will be using are:
 - Social Media channels

- Council Website including "Your Say Tararua"
- Bush Telegraph
- Posters and documents at the Service Centres and Libraries
- Radio
- Community Meetings
- Mock Rates Invoice

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 The proposed fees for Pensioner Housing for the 2025/2026 financial year are recommended to Council for approval alongside a recommendation to remove the self-imposed Pensioner Housing fee cap of 33% Gross Superannuation.
- 13.2 Following consideration and approval by Council of the pensioner housing fees, the supporting information for the Consultation Document will be amended accordingly.
- 13.3 Consultation and engagement with the community will take place starting 14 April 2025, with the closing date for feedback from the community being 15 May 2025.

Attachments

Nil.