

Media Release

17 June 2020

Council set to make a decision on Annual Plan for 2020-2021

At the June 24 Council Meeting the Kaipara District Council will make a decision on the Annual Plan for 2020-2021, based on an average rate increase of 3.97%.

Pre-COVID, Council and staff were working towards an average increase of 5.49%. At the May Council meeting Elected Members agreed a reduced increase of 3.97%, deferring non-urgent infrastructure projects while maintaining most current services. Council came to the decision based on information prepared by economists Infometrics, and guidance from staff on the impacts a reduction in rates would have on levels of service.

Mayor Dr Jason Smith says although this may be a greater increase than neighbouring councils, any comparison between councils will always be flawed because the exact situation for each council is unique. Each council makes its decisions for the current and future residents of its own place.

Council staff presented options and models based on a variety of rates increases (0% - 5.49%), at the May Council meeting.

“A zero rates increase would limit our ability to support recovery and would reduce services significantly. Work would be deferred and would delay fundamental projects, such as renewing the District Plan,” says Mayor Smith.

“Roads account for about half of our spending and any cuts to rates would have a significant impact on maintenance and renewal. At a time when so much progress has been made that would set Kaipara back years. This council has painfully learned the lesson of underinvestment in infrastructure, and we don't want to return to those times.”

As one of the largest organisations and employers in the region, the work of the Council helps stimulate the local economy. The Mayor's Taskforce for Economic Support and Recovery is now entering its third month.

During the COVID lockdown and recovery, Kaipara District Council maintained momentum on key plans, including three Spatial Plans for our future Kaipara District, the Kaipara wharf network feasibility study, which includes background for a tourism development strategy, and the Kaipara Kai horticulture industry study. A further topo-climate study for all of Kaipara District is soon to be released.

Mayor Smith says the suite of documents is required reading for anyone with an interest in the future of Kaipara. The documents are all available on www.kaipara.govt.nz website.

The Council has also applied for further funds for “shovel-ready” projects across Kaipara and is expecting to hear soon on the outcomes of those applications.

The official adoption of the Annual Plan, alongside Fees and Charges for 2020-2021 will take place at the Council meeting, Wednesday 24 June 2020, at the Dargaville Town Hall.

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