



ASHBURTON DISTRICT COUNCIL **Long-Term Plan**

2018-28 Volume 1

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Snow at Rakaia Gorge
Kelly Bisset Photography



Part 1

INTRODUCTION

Welcome from the Mayor and Chief Executive

Message from the Mayor

IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO PRESENT OUR LONG-TERM PLAN 2018-28 FOR ASHBURTON DISTRICT.

We are a district of many strengths, with our abundant natural resources, innovative agricultural sector, our creativity, business acumen, and our wonderfully diverse and welcoming community all contributing to make Our Place a great place to live, work, and play.

This plan is the result of a number of conversations with the community through the SOLGM award-winning Our Place campaign. Councillors and I have been out in the community hearing your thoughts and gathering feedback to find out what you consider a priority. I'm very pleased that this plan is a reflection of those priorities, with Council recognising how important issues such as roading and protecting the environment is to the community.

With the changes our district has undergone, our Council has updated our community outcomes to better reflect our current environment. All our activities are aligned to these four key outcomes, which are residents are included and have a voice; a district of great spaces and places; a balanced and sustainable environment; and a prosperous economy based on innovation and opportunity.

In preparation for writing this Long-Term Plan, we asked for your feedback on the financial policies that underpin the plan. The Revenue & Financing Policy, which sets out how we pay for activities and services, attracted a great deal of attention with changes being proposed to the EA Networks Centre fees and changing how Lake Hood properties are rated. This feedback was heard and Council took it into account in the final Revenue & Financing Policy and Long-Term Plan. We want to make sure we make things fair and equitable for our whole community, and thank everyone who put their views forward.

Going forward, we want to continue our conversations with you, the community, and work in partnership with you to design the future of Our Place.

Council's overarching vision is to create a district of choice for lifestyle and opportunity for all our residents now and in the future. We hope this Long-Term Plan 2018-28 will make Ashburton - Our Place that district of choice.

Message from the Chief Executive

Local authorities face significant challenges delivering core infrastructure, regulatory services, and public services in a cost efficient manner in a world that is rapidly changing. Councils have to plan for and adapt to new legislation, new technology that changes the way we do business, environmental concerns, and rising customer expectations whilst keeping rates affordable. This isn't an easy task, and this Long-Term Plan 2018-28 is a culmination of the conversations we have had with the community, feedback our Council has received over recent months and taking account of changes that may arise from the new central government.

This plan has identified our new strategic priorities, which are to plan and provide fit-for-purpose services; work with the community and engage in meaningful conversation; lead the community with clear and rational decision-making; and represent the district on regional/national issues and partner with others when needed. This last priority is critical to us achieving the other three as we have to continue to advocate for the betterment of our district at the national level on important issues such as roading and immigration, and we recognise we cannot work alone in these areas.

Our district has come through a rapid growth period with the changing land use in the agricultural sector. With these changes we have seen many benefits for the district as well as less favourable effects such as the impact of heavy traffic on our roads. This 10-year plan recognises the issues the community has identified through the Our Place campaign we ran in late 2017 and we plan to invest more in our roads and infrastructure to maintain the high levels of service the community expects. With the second stage of the Governments Havelock North Inquiry completed, our Council has prepared a sound drinking water improvement plan in anticipation of the likely changes to drinking water standards and we've funded this from Year One. We know that frequent boil water notices are not acceptable and we have funded for improvements in 2018-19 for the Mt Somers, and Methven water supplies, and looking to upgrade the Ashburton water supply with UV filtering in Year One.

One of the major projects that came through our community conversations was the Second Urban Bridge, more specifically, the timing of it. Our community has told us this is becoming a higher priority therefore we have planned to scope and design the bridge in the Years Four and Five, with building to occur in Years Eight and Nine. We are planning

to fund 20% of the project costs with the intention being that the remaining 80% will be sourced via both the NZTA subsidy and the recently implemented Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) being administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. While there is no certainty with this funding we plan to actively work with both NZTA and MBIE as securing this funding would reduce the cost to our ratepayers and alleviate the pressure on State Highway One. We will keep the community informed of our progress.

The EA Networks Centre has also seen growth and we have included in Years Two-Seven for expanded development (as capital expenditure) in the centre, including a climbing wall, extension of the Learn to Swim pool, enhanced splash deck area, indoor court extension and the sportsfield development for the grounds adjacent to the centre.

Council remains in a strong financial position, with comfortable debt ratio limits. Rating levels in the District remain affordable overall and are still comparatively low when compared to national figures. We have planned for an average of just over a 5% rate increase for the first three years of this plan, dropping to 4% or less from Year Four.



Donna Favel
Mayor



Jane Donaldson
Acting Chief
Executive



Our Roles and Responsibilities

Under the Local Government Act 2002, our purpose is to:

- Enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, Ashburton residents
- Meet the current and future needs of Ashburton residents for good quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in the most cost-effective way for households and businesses.

Council is made up of 13 elected representatives – the Mayor and 12 Councillors.

It's their job to make bylaws, set the district's overall strategic direction, and approve budgets, policies and plans aimed at achieving that direction. Part of their role is to listen and take the pulse of the community before making decisions. The Mayor and Councillors are supported in their role by the Methven Community Board.

The elected representatives are supported by the Council's Chief Executive and officers, who provide advice, implement Council decisions, and look after the district's day-to-day operations.

Our vision, role and activities

Our vision for the district is 'Ashburton District – The district of choice for lifestyle and opportunity'. This sets out our aim to grow and sustain Ashburton as a district that people choose for the high quality lifestyle and opportunities available here. Our vision is supported by the community outcomes that set out our long-term goals and guide our activities (see Part 2 – Community Outcomes).

We provide a range of activities and services for the community. We organise these into seven groups and thirteen activities. Four of these are mandatory under the Local Government Act – Roading and Footpaths, Drinking Water, Stormwater and Wastewater.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTION	LTP GROUP	ACTIVITIES
Local Infrastructure	District Water Management	Drinking Water
		Wastewater
		Stormwater
		Stockwater
Public Services	Transportation	Transportation includes roading and footpaths
	Waste Reduction & Recovery	Waste reduction and recovery includes collection, recycling and disposal
	Community Governance & Decision-Making	Community Grants & Funding Democracy
Regulatory Functions	Regulatory Services	Economic Development includes commercial property, tourism and forestry
		Community Services
		Parks & Open Spaces
		Recreation Facilities
Regulatory Functions	Regulatory Services	Regulatory services includes building regulation, district planning, emergency management, land information + and regulatory compliance

Accountability

Every three years, we publish a Long-Term Plan setting out our intentions for the decade ahead – what we'll do, how we'll do it, how much we'll spend, who will pay, the levels of service we'll provide, and how we'll measure the quality and effectiveness of our work. Our last Long-Term Plan was adopted in June 2015.

In-between these Long-Term Plans, we take a fresh look each year at our work programme, consider whether any changes are needed, and publish an Annual Plan setting out any significant changes to the Long-Term Plan.

Before we adopt Long-Term Plans and any Annual Plans that have significant changes, we seek our residents' views. The consultation process we undertook for this plan and the key changes made as a result are outlined in the following section.

Every year, we publish an Annual Report, which sets out our performance against the Long-Term Plan or Annual Plan for the year. This considers the following:

- Did we do all we said we would do?
- Did we meet our budgets?
- Did we perform as expected?
- Did we contribute to improvements in the overall well-being of Ashburton District and its residents?

We are also required to produce a Pre-Election Report before each local body election. This report summarises major projects planned for the following three years and financial information, including a statement that compares rates, rate increases, and borrowing with the quantified limits specified in our financial strategy.

These reports are made available on our website www.ashburtondc.govt.nz

Engaging with our community

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR COMMUNITY IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR OUR COUNCIL.

We treat engagement as a two-way conversation. We have asked for your views and incorporated your feedback into our decision-making processes. Our Long-Term Plan 2018-28 reflects the needs and wishes of the Ashburton District community.

Developing Māori capacity to contribute to decision-making

Ngai Tahu occupies all but the most northern part of the South Island, which includes the Ashburton District in its entirety.

The Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga of Arowhenua and Ngāi Tūāhuriri share mana whenua (customary authority) status and responsibilities in Ashburton District. Arowhenua is the principal Māori kainga (settlement) of South Canterbury and lies between the junction of the Temuka and Opihi Rivers just south of Temuka. Arowhenua's takiwā (district) covers the area between the Rakaia and Waitaki Rivers and inland to the Main Divide. Ngai Tuahuriri's takiwā of Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga centres on Tuahiwi and extends from the Hurunui to the Hakatere rivers and inland to the Main Divide. As a Council, we recognise the importance and special position of tangata whenua within the region, and the role iwi play within our community engagement processes.

We continue to be committed to building a strong relationship with Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua and working with the rūnanga in good faith. Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua has recently formed and wholly owns Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (AEC); this charitable company aims to “enable meaningful relationships with local and regional councils, local resource users, community interest groups and Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu”. Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Ltd (AEC) has the mandate from Arowhenua to be the primary contact for all environmental and resource consent matters. A Service Level Agreement has been signed between AEC and Ashburton District Council to enable this work to take place. AEC will provide a focal point and interface between our plans and Māori interests.

We will look to contribute where appropriate to the achievement of the rūnanga's strategic goals. Arowhenua's strategic vision is:

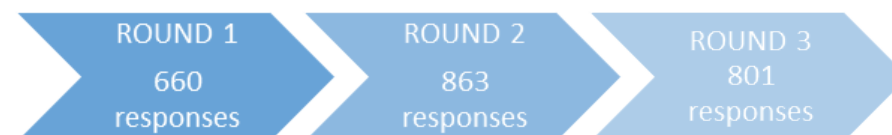
Arowhenua – *Nurturing our people through generations, guardians of the environments we live in, progressing our future locally and globally.*

Our Place Engagement

To help us identify what the community wanted to see in the district over the next ten years, we ran an extensive engagement project called 'Our Place'. This project allowed us to talk to residents and get a sense of what things people valued before we drafted our Long-Term Plan. The project involved three survey rounds over the course of six months. All responses were treated equally and confidentially. In the first round, we asked the open ended question of 'what would you like to see for the future of the district over the next 10 years?'

In the second round, we asked you to further refine the ideas from Round One. In the final round, we asked you to rank those ideas by importance.

We were delighted with the feedback you provided us because the results have helped us prioritise key projects for the future.



What you told us about Our Place

The following eight ideas have been ranked by the community of where they think Council should be prioritising its spending in the future (from highest to lowest importance).

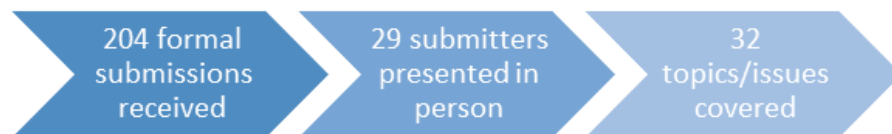
- 1. Roading** (including sealed and unsealed road maintenance)
- 2. Community safety** (including street lighting, road safety, security patrols)
- 3. Environment** (including freshwater management and banning plastic bags)
- 4. Town centre development** (specifically the Ashburton CBD)
- 5. Second bridge development in Ashburton**
- 6. Business development** (including retail shops, restaurants and industry)
- 7. EA Networks Centre development** (including hydrosides, pool/stadium growth, sports fields development)
- 8. New entertainment centres.**

Listening to Our Community

From the 16 April – 14 May we consulted with the community on our draft long-term plan. Every household in the district received a copy of our consultation document in their letterbox and we held seven community meetings throughout the district at the following locations:

- Ashburton
- Mayfield
- Methven
- Hinds
- Hakatere
- Rakaia

What you told us about the Long-Term Plan



The feedback provided by the community on the proposals and related budgets in the Long-Term Plan have led to a number of changes being made to the final document. The decisions made were not easy, and many submitters identified a desire to keep rates at an affordable level. Over 32 different topics were addressed through the submissions. In the Consultation Document, we set out five key issues for the district and options to support how these proposals may be carried out. The community support our preferred options in each of these proposals.

We confirmed the proposals would be maintained as provided for in the Consultation Document for the following key issues:

1. Our Roding Network

We received 129 submissions on this topic regarding the funding we allocate to supplying Our Roding Network in the district. We know Roding is an important issue to you, which is why we have decided to maintain our initial proposal regarding the funding of Our Roding Network. This means we will partially fund our share of the \$3 million required to continue to provide this service. While not finalised, it appears there has been some success in lobbying NZTA for additional

funding for this activity. This means the extra funding from NZTA will assist in maintaining the current levels of service.

2. Our Transportation Upgrades – Second Urban Bridge

We asked for your feedback on how much you are prepared to pay towards funding the Second Urban Bridge. Having already asked for your feedback on whether or not we should build a bridge and where it should be located, we put forward three scenarios to you based on the amount Council would be willing to contribute. These ranged from funding split at 49-51% between Council and NZTA, NZTA covering 80% of the cost, and Council covering 100% of the cost. Our preferred scenario was that NZTA would pick up the majority of the cost (80%) and that ratepayers would pay the remainder. This scenario was by far the most popular with 77% of submitters agreeing with us, therefore we have decided to maintain our preferred approach.

Recent announcements by Central Government have given us reason to believe that the project may be eligible to apply to the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) being administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. We plan to continue to actively work with both NZTA and MBIE, as securing this funding would reduce the cost to our ratepayers and alleviate the pressure on State Highway One. We will keep the community informed of our progress.

3. Our Water – Future Planning

We received 141 responses on the topic of whether we should plan and prepare for changes to national changes to water standards which we see as inevitable. The likely impact on the Drinking Water Standards has been signalled within the Havelock North Inquiry report and its recommendations. It is anticipated that the government response will address the majority if not all of the recommendations made by the enquiry panel. Our preferred option was to plan and prepare for these changes and given 80% of submitters agreed, we decided to maintain this proposal.

4. Our Recreation Upgrades – EA Networks Centre Development

We received over 400 responses to the three proposals included for the future development of the EANC. The proposals were a climbing wall, an extension

to the swim school and splash zone and the sports field development. Our preferred option was to move forward with all three proposals to ensure the facility continues to meet the needs and demands of our residents. The majority of submitters supported our proposals and we have decided to go ahead with all three as follows:

Climbing Wall

We have budgeted \$307,000 in Year Two (2019/20) to install a climbing wall in the stadium to improve the use of the facility. This will be loan-funded, with operational costs split 50/50 between fees and charges and rates.

Swim School Extension and Splash Deck

We have budgeted \$5.2 million in Year Three (2020/21) to extend the current learn-to-swim pool and develop a splash deck to meet demand. This will be loan-funded.

EA Networks Centre Sports Fields

We will proceed with fully scoping this proposal and develop accurate costings in years one and two. We have planned for this project in years four - five (on the proviso that the associated sports and/or sponsors contribute \$2.4 million towards the \$4.8 million development). There will be extensive engagement with the community through the 2021-31 Long Term Plan consultation when clearer details of the project are known, including rating impacts.

Stadium Extension

During the Revenue and Finance Policy consultation undertaken in early 2018, Council received a number of submissions regarding the extension of the stadium from four courts to six. This project was not included in the draft LTP, however further submissions received during the LTP consultation again signaled a need to increase the court space at EANC. As a result of the deliberation process we decided to include \$4.5million of loan funding for the extension of the indoor court area of EANC in Year 7 (2024/25) of the LTP. This will mean there are two further LTP consultation periods to allow opportunity for community feedback on this project.

5. Our Economy – Economic Development Strategy

The proposal regarding our Economy was about whether or not we should proceed with our Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan we developed in 2017. The Plan sets out seven key pillars that we believe will encourage innovation and opportunity in the district, helping our community to prosper. Given the majority of the 134 respondents agreed with our proposal, we decided to maintain what we put forward in the Consultation Document and proceed with the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan implementation.

Submissions from the community

The key decisions made as a result of the feedback received by the community were:

1. Ashburton Art Gallery

We received 11 submissions requesting we increase funding for the Ashburton Art Gallery. This increase would be used to ensure adequate staffing levels are maintained. After deliberations, we decided to approve the request for an additional \$28,000 to fund an additional part-time staff member.

2. District Water Meters

Some submitters raised concerns regarding the installation of water metres in residential areas, with submissions received both in support and opposition. In particular, concerns were raised regarding water meters for properties located in Residential D. The district-wide installation of water meters is not something we were initially proposing to include in our Long-Term Plan. However, as a result of submissions received Council will be investigating the possibility of water metering by reviewing the Water Supply Bylaw through the Bylaw & Policy Subcommittee of Council. If any changes are to be made to the bylaw, we will consult with the community.

3. Lake Clearwater

We received a submission from the Lake Clearwater Hut Holders Association requesting we rescind the decision to sell a number of leases for sections located at Lake Clearwater. We deliberated on this submission and determined a survey



of the area would be carried out by Council to assess property boundaries in the interim. We may also look at investigating a separate rating area for Lake Clearwater when we next review our Revenue & Financing Policy.

4. Lake Hood

We currently provide funding to the Lake Hood Extension Project (LHEP) who manage some of the facilities at Lake Hood. The LHEP is also funded by Lake Hood residents through an annual levy charged to property owners. We consulted with you on our Revenue & Financing Policy earlier in the year which proposed a change to the way Lake Hood properties are rated. It was proposed that Lake Hood be included in the urban amenity rating zone from 1 July 2018 given many of the services experienced by Ashburton urban residents are also provided to Lake Hood residents. Through the Revenue & Financing Policy, we received a number of submissions (both in support and opposition) to this

proposal. When we deliberated on that policy, we decided to maintain our initial proposal but to stage the rating increase over two years.

In our draft LTP, we were proposing to fund the LHEP a total of \$200,000. A number of submitters requested we increase this amount to \$357,000 to ensure Lake Hood residents are not faced with a significant increase in rates coupled with a substantial levy payment. Following deliberations, we decided to increase the amount of funding we provide to the LHEP to \$275,000 throughout the ten years of the LTP.

5. Wheelie Bin Fees

In response to several submissions received, we have developed new charges for the provision of additional wheelie bins when and as requested by users of the kerbside collection service. These are included in the Fees & Charges schedule of the LTP.

Summary of our plan

WE HAVE A STRONG HISTORY OF INVESTING IN THE DISTRICT TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY.

In the past ten years, the Council has invested in major infrastructure and services for the community. While the key spending priority has been on infrastructure, there have been big increases in spending on community sport and recreation facilities in the form of the EA Networks Centre and the Ashburton Art Gallery and Heritage Centre. In the coming years, we are continuing to focus on strong, resilient infrastructure and to ensure these cater for our district's residents now and in the future.

The Long-Term Plan 2018-28 is very much focused on keeping our rates affordable while maintaining our current levels of service for our core activities over the next ten years. Through a combination of the feedback from the Our Place campaign and the changing national government priorities, we have identified the key core issues that are important to our community and help to make Ashburton District the district of choice for lifestyle and opportunity.

We have set out how we intend to maintain essential services for the district such as water supply, waste water services, stormwater and stock water, waste, parks and gardens, libraries, pools, sports fields, recreation centres, streets and Elderly Person's Housing. We have also included our proposed upgrades and renewals to key facilities where there is a need.

This Long-Term Plan has new community outcomes which are the future-focused, aspirational goals we have for Our Place. These are goals that guide our work of providing quality and cost-effective infrastructure, public services and regulatory functions. We have also developed strategic priorities to help us achieve these outcomes.

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

- Residents are included and have a voice
- A district of great spaces and places
- A balanced and sustainable environment
- A prosperous economy based on innovation and opportunity

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Plan and provide fit for purpose services
- Work with the community and engage in meaningful conversations
- Lead the community with clear and rational decision-making
- Represent the district on regional/national issues and partner with others when needed

In our Long-Term Plan, we focused on five major projects for Council investment that align to the priorities from the Our Place campaign feedback, and the anticipated legislative changes we think will happen around drinking water standards. These projects were:

- 1. Our Rooding Network**
- 2. Our Transportation Upgrades** – Second Urban Bridge
- 3. Our Water** – Future Planning
- 4. Our Recreation** – EA Networks Centre Development
- 5. Our Economy** – Economic Development Strategy.

More information on each of these activities can be found in Part 3 - Major Projects 2018-28.

Summary of our financial approach

COUNCIL HAS A VERY STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION WHICH MEANS WE CAN AFFORD TO INVEST IN OUR FUTURE.

The Financial Strategy aims to keep rates affordable while maintaining our levels of service. It also details Council's approach to managing its financial position over the coming ten years, and guides the way we make decisions about income expenditure, borrowing and investments. For this LTP, we are projecting some higher rate increases in the first three years due to the increased expenditure in our infrastructure such as roading, drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and investigating the feasibility of a waste compactor for our waste recovery park. Year Four sees a drop in the rate increases due to the ceasing of our \$900,000 unsubsidised roading rate at the end of Year Three. Year Five sees an increase due to the following:

- Reduced projected revenue from our property sales in the Ashburton Business Estate that would normally offset the rates, as Parts 4 & 5 will be under development and ready for sale after Year Six;
- The expenditure on the Civic Administration and Library Building would reduce the income earned on the property reserves account that is also used to offset rates; and,
- Increased overheads in the election year.

The full Financial Strategy can be found on in Part Ten- Financial Strategy.

Limit on Rates

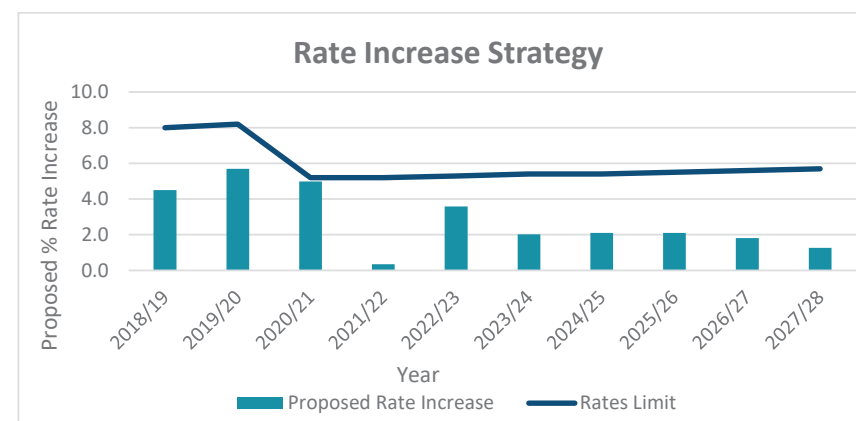
Total rates in any one year are to be no greater than 1% of the total capital value of the district. The table below shows total rates as a percentage of district capital value will remain within the limit set throughout the coming ten years.

LIMIT ON RATES										
Year	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
Rates as a % of district capital value	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17

Limits on Rate Increases

Total rates increase for each year are to be no greater than:

- 2018/19 – 2019/20: 6% + Local Government Price Index
- 2020/21 – 2027/28: 3% + Local Government Price Index



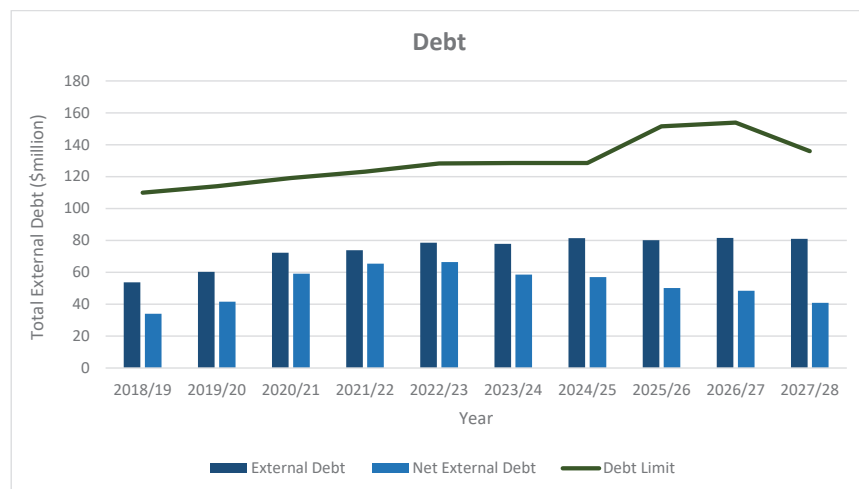
Limits on Borrowing

We fund most new capital expenditure from loan funding. This ensures current ratepayers do not pay all the costs for assets that future generations will also use, also known as inter-generational equity.

In this way, future ratepayers pay their share too. The proposed LTP 2018-28 has been prepared on the basis of the following limits on external debt, which are represented on the graph below:

- Interest to service external debt are to be less than 20% of total revenue
- Interest payments to service external debt are to be less than 25% of total rates for the year
- Net debt shall not exceed 175% of total revenue.

Council also has a policy of a liquidity level of no less than 110%.



LGCI = Local Government Cost Index

Rates increase year by year

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Rates as a % of district capital value	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17
Rates increase (%)	4.5	5.7	5.0	0.4	3.6	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.3
Average LGCI adjustment (%)	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7
Rates increase before LGCI adjustment (%)	2.5	3.5	2.8	-1.8	1.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.7	-1.4

Please note: the table above shows total rates and does not reflect the impact on individual rate payers.

Keeping our rate rises down

Council is proposing some budgeting approaches to keep within the rates limits set in the financial strategy. Specifically, they are:

- Deferring the design of the Ashburton Resource Recovery Park compactor building from 2018/19 to 2020/21 of \$200,000.
- Deferring the construction of the Ashburton Resource Recovery Park compactor building of \$5.4 million from 2019/20 and 2020/21 to 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- Deferring capital works on the Ashburton Resource Recovery Park from Year One to Year Two of \$261,000, the Methven Drop-Off from Year Three to Four of \$128,000, the Rakaia Resource Recovery Park from Year One and 2 to Year Four and Five of \$401,000 and Ashburton Recycling from Years One and Two to Years Three and Four of \$390,000.
- Loan funding in Year One and Two the shortfall on capital works programmes in Rooding rather than rate funding. This amounts to \$850,000 in Year One and \$900,000 in Year Two.
- Removal of discretionary cyclic renewals of \$150,000 in Year One from Ashburton Water Supply.
- Deferring development of new sportsfields surrounding EA Networks Centre from Year Two and Three to Year Four and Five to enable sports groups to fund 50% of the development costs. The total development cost has been budgeted at \$4.8 million.

Strategic use of forestry revenue and reserves – in the past Council has used forestry revenues and reserves to offset rates. Council is proposing to continue to use this approach and sell off forestry land after the harvest of mature trees. It intends to utilise in Year One \$496,560 to offset rates.

