

Key decisions for district's future

Five community meetings, three sausage sizzles and 12 presentations to community groups are included in a wide-ranging public consultation programme to help gather feedback on the draft Long Term Plan 2024-34.

Council was set to adopt the draft plan and budget this week – it details plans to invest \$1.07 billion into running the district over the next 10 years. A 68-page consultation document of highlights and key decisions is planned to go live on 27 March.

Mayor Neil Brown said the draft Long Term Plan for 2024-34 set out what Council planned to deliver and how it would pay for it.

“Rates will vary across the district, depending on where you live, but the average rise in year one is 9.9%. While many other places in the country are a lot higher than this, we know it's still a large increase at a time when many will be feeling the pinch, but it is what is necessary to maintain services and facilities that the community expects.”

The average rate rise for councils across New Zealand for 2024-25 is sitting at 15.3%.

Mayor Brown said one reason for this rise across the country is that the cost of essential infrastructure has skyrocketed over the past three years.

“Civil construction costs have risen 27% over the past three years, so roads and



three waters infrastructure are where we want to focus our investment. We've also planned to lower debt levels.”

The draft Long Term Plan will ask residents for their views on five key decisions, and related policies, although feedback is welcome on any part of the plan. There will be a month for people to make their submissions, with Councillors hosting a wide range of meetings and pop-up events to talk to the community about what is proposed.

Three informal sausage sizzles are part of the engagement schedule, and the first is at the Tinwald Pool on Saturday 6 April, 10am-2pm. Others are planned for Baring Square East on 13 April and the Methven iHub on 20 April.

Community meetings in the evening are

set for Rakaia on 4 April, Mount Somers on 9 April, Hinds on 15 April, Ashburton on 16 April and Methven on 17 April.

Five day-time pop-ups are also planned around the district, and Councillors will also visit 12 community groups at their monthly meetings, including service clubs, secondary schools and GreyPower.

Mayor Brown said there were plenty of events where residents could make their views known, gather information or ask questions.

“I encourage people to do their homework and read the consultation document, which has the right information people need to be informed. The next step is to provide your feedback, which we welcome.”

Visit ItsOurPlace.nz from next week.

CE Hamish Riach Help us balance what's important and affordable



You'll be hearing and seeing a lot about our Long Term Plan over the next six weeks, because it sets the scene for Council services and projects in the next 10 years.

As you would expect, there's a lot of core work, project and financial detail, including budgets for each of the 10 years. There's also some bigger thinking about the future, like what Council should do with Balmoral Hall and the old Polytech, or whether to extend the indoor space at EA Networks Centre.

A Long Term Plan is a big event in the life of Council and happens every three years, the draft set to be adopted this week is the result of work going back at least a year – there's a set process to follow as budgets and business cases are developed and it takes a great deal of work.

It is planned for the draft Long Term Plan to go out for public feedback on 27 March and there will be plenty of opportunities to tell us what you think.

There are a couple of contentious issues expected to generate a lot of feedback and we welcome those opinions, that is what consultation is all about.

The draft LTP proposes an average 9.9 per cent rate increase. We know things are tight but there are also cost pressures on Council through interest rates, insurance and inflation.

A lot more roading work is planned, but costs associated with transportation have skyrocketed 27 per cent in the past three years.

I urge you to read the consultation document – there's a lot in there and it also points to some other policies and planning documents that are out for

consultation at the same time. One of those is a 30-year Masterplan for the EA Networks Centre.

The centre was opened in 2015 and there was always a vision for it to become a larger sporting hub in the future. The draft Masterplan for the centre and surrounding land reflects various conversations we've had with users and stakeholders over the past few years, but we want the wider community's views too.

Overall, there's a lot to consider and it's always a balance between what is important and fair for the community, what ratepayers can afford and preparing for the future.

All the information you need for this important consultation will soon be at ItsOurPlace.nz

SHORT AND SWEET

SPEEDY TRAINS

KiwiRail will soon launch a track safety campaign warning people about trains moving faster through Ashburton. From 8 April, train movements are changing with the opening of the new Fairfield Rail Hub at Fairton and trains will be travelling at usual line speed (up to 80kph) as they pass through Ashburton. Signs at rail crossings will warn pedestrians and drivers to stay alert - people will need to be aware of faster trains and check before crossing.

GRANTS ROUND

Council is currently accepting applications for grants from the Creative Communities Scheme and the Sport New Zealand Rural Travel Fund. Creative Communities helps groups involved in the different forms of the arts, and the Rural Travel Fund helps sporting teams that have to travel long distances to take part in their regular sporting competitions. Applications for both funds close at the end of March.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark King's Birthday weekend in your calendar, as Glow in the Park returns and will this year be at the Ashburton Domain. The light show will run on 31 May, 1 June and 2 June. The event will help the domain celebrate its 160th birthday.

SCOOTER SAFETY

Scotering to the Ashburton Library? You can ask staff to check your scooter at the front desk so it can be stored safely until you leave. Bikes should be parked in the bike rack opposite the main entrance to Te Whare Whakatere.

SH1 EALING

Contractors working for NZ Transport Agency will be undertaking road reconstruction on SH1, near the Rangitata Bridge, until 26 April. There will be Stop/Go traffic management between 6pm and 6am on Sunday-Thursday nights, and a speed restriction of 30kmh, so motorists are advised to allow extra travel time.

Falls expo: Staying on your feet

Come along to the Ashburton Library next month for a free, fun, informative session on preventing falls and the causes of falls as you get older.

The April Falls Expo on Tuesday 9 April is about keeping you on your feet. It will run from 10am to 1pm.

The expo is being organised by Safe Communities with support from 12 other agencies including Sport Canterbury, ACC, the Heart Foundation and Age Concern.

Safe Communities co-ordinator Lesley Symington said the expo was about preventing falls and identifying common causes of falls.

“People will be able to learn about the benefits of strength and balance classes, and where to find those classes in Ashburton, as well as learning about how to improve their strength and balance at home.”

You can also learn more about:

- What the EA Networks Centre offers older adults
- How you can improve your strength and balance with NYMBL, a free app on your smartphone



- How vision and hearing problems, some medications and alcohol can cause falls
- The importance of keeping hydrated
- St John medical alarms
- Getting to a class – Age Concern Ashburton’s Safe Driving courses and the Mid Canterbury Connector community transport service

Mrs Symington said people could also

have a free balance test with Sport Canterbury, and free blood pressure checks and grip strength tests with EA Networks Centre staff.

“They can even join a demo class that is one of Age Concern’s Ashburton Steady as you Go classes. Plus there’ll be giveaways and heaps of information.”

April Falls Expo – Ashburton Library, Te Whare Whakare, on Tuesday 9 April, 10am-1pm.

Lagmhor Road to close temporarily

Lagmhor Road, at the intersection with SH1, will be closed from Friday 22 March, for approximately four days.

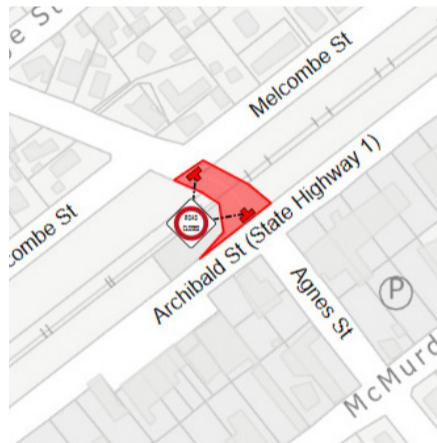
Contractors will be working on Lagmhor Road at the intersection with SH1 and the rail level crossing. This is to undertake the final piece of work to install the LOC box, an essential component that is responsible for coordinating the barrier arms with the pedestrian gates and traffic lights. This work requires the road to be closed during this time.

The road closure will be in place from Friday 22 March for approximately four days. There will be no access in or out during this time so please use the signposted detour routes.

Please look out for work crews and follow their instructions.

Pedestrians are advised to use the signposted detour route via the Melcombe Street rail crossing.

Please look out for changes in traffic management and follow signs on site. A 30kph speed limit will be in place.



RUBBISH & RECYCLING OVER EASTER 2024

Ashburton’s kerbside collection service will not operate on **Good Friday, 29 March**, so people whose bins are normally emptied on a Friday should put them out for collection on Saturday 30 March instead.

Bins will be collected as normal the week beginning Monday 1 April.

The Ashburton Resource Recovery Park will be closed Friday 29 March and Monday 1 April over Easter. The park will be open its usual hours 9am-5pm on Saturday 30 March and Sunday 31 March.

Rakaia Resource Recovery Park will be closed Friday 29 March, Saturday 30 March and Monday 1 April.

The Methven greenwaste facility will be closed Sunday 31 March.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are at Hine Paaka (Council Chambers), 2 Baring Square East, unless specified. Meeting agendas are online at ashburtondc.govt.nz/council/agendas-and-minutes

Community Road Reference Group, Tuesday 26 March, 9am

Ashburton Water Zone Committee, Tuesday 26 March, 1pm (live-streamed)

Council Activity Briefings, Wednesday 27 March, 9.30am

Audit & Risk Committee, Wednesday 27 March, 2pm (live-streamed)

Heritage Mid Canterbury Working Group, Wednesday 27 March, 4pm, Banded Dotterel Room

Council Meeting, Wednesday 3 April, 1pm (live-streamed)

Council Meeting, Wednesday 17 April, 1pm (live-streamed)

Methven Community Board, Monday 22 April, 9am, Mt Hutt Memorial Hall

Ashburton Water Zone Committee, Tuesday 23 April, 1pm (live-streamed)

WORKS NOTICES

Tinwald viaduct/SH1 Tinwald Corridor Improvements - Contractors working on this traffic lights project for NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi have been granted an extension for traffic management on the highway and side roads until 30 April. The viaduct is now open. Lagmhor Road, at the intersection with SH1, will be closed for four days from Friday 22 March.

Seafield Road - Work is planned for Seafield Road, between Christys Road and Stanley Road, from 12 February to 19 May. Traffic management will be in place and will include detours from 4 March.

Thompsons Track - Closed between Braemar and Pole Roads until 26 April for road rehabilitation. Detours in place.

Elizabeth Street - Elizabeth Street outside Ashburton Hospital is one-way (traffic running west to east), while contractors install new water and wastewater pipes. Hospital access remains.

Maronan Road - Traffic management is in place on Maronan Road while contractors rehabilitate a section between the Hinds River and just north of Swamp Road.

For full details of road closures, see our website ashburtondc.govt.nz

RECYCLING CALENDAR

Have trouble remembering your recycling day? Come and grab one of our rubbish and recycling calendars - they are available at the Customer Services desk and online. Check the sticker on the side of your bin to see if you are Week 1 or 2.



TALK IT UP TUESDAYS

Got feedback on local issues? A matter to raise with Council?

Drop by for a biscuit and a chat with a Councillor, and let us know how we can better serve our community.

Every Tuesday: 1pm - 2pm
Ashburton Library
No booking required.

For the latest Council news, visit us at ashburtondc.govt.nz/news

COUNCIL OFFICE

2 Baring Square East
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am-5pm
Thursday 9am-5pm

ASHBURTON LIBRARY

2 Baring Square East, Ashburton 7700
Mon & Fri 8.30am-6pm, Tue-Thu 8.30am-8pm
Sat & Sun 10am-4pm

EA NETWORKS CENTRE

20 River Terrace
Mon - Fri 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm)
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am-4pm daily (late night Wed)