

Time to tell us What Matters, Manawatū!

Our draft Long-term Plan (LTP) sets out what we propose to work on over the next ten years. This LTP is about doing the basics well, sustainably investing in core infrastructure and critical assets while keeping costs down.

While many Councils across the country are proposing double-digit rates increases alongside service cuts, we are in the strong position of proposing our levels of service stay where they are, and a 7.09% increase for existing ratepayers in 2024/25.

Before we finalise our plan, we would like to hear your thoughts about our proposals. You can provide feedback by filling in a submission form, or by visiting: www.mdc.govt.nz/whatmatters

You can also come and speak to our Councillors about the plan in May 2024 if you wish.

The consultation phase runs from **27th March until 27th April 2024**. Our Long-term Plan will be formally adopted by 30th June 2024.



About this summary

This summary takes you through some key elements within our Consultation Document and lets you know where you can find out more information if you'd like to know more before you make a decision.



Where there is additional information in our Consultation Document which you might find useful, we'll indicate it with this symbol.

You can find our full Consultation Document, draft Long-term Plan and supporting documents at www.mdc.govt.nz/whatmatters or at our Council offices on Manchester Street, Feilding.

A few things to keep in mind:

Supporting a district is complicated work and we have kept a number of trends in mind as we put our plan together.



What we'd like your feedback on

When making decisions about services and activities, and how we fund these, Manawātū District Councillors balance each decision's benefits to the community against the costs.

To do this well, councillors listen to the views of people throughout the district as part of the LTP process. The public consultation period runs from 27th March to 27th April 2024.

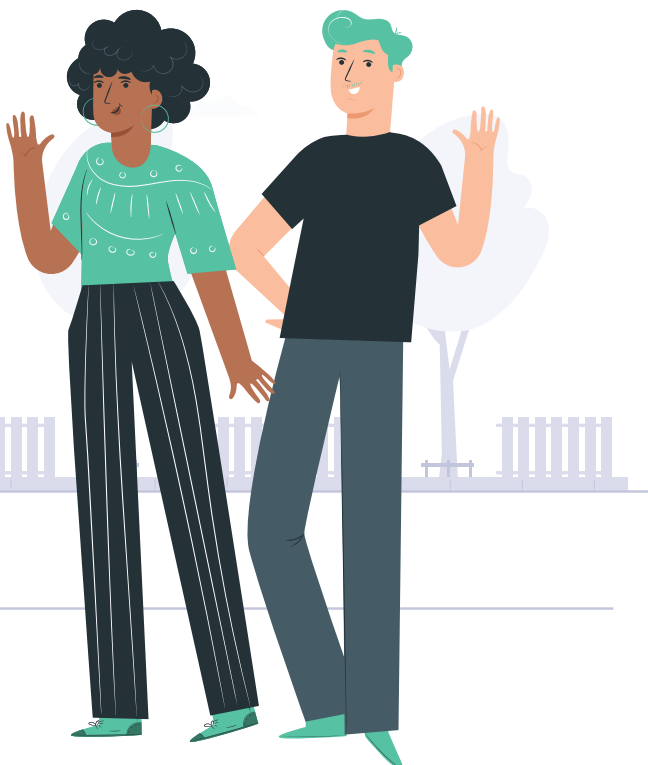
There are four specific issues that we are seeking your feedback on.

What follows is a high level look at each consultation issue. We have outlined the options, along with our preferred option at this stage.



There's lots of supporting information which has gone into developing the proposals we are putting forward. To find out more about each issue please refer to our Consultation Document, or the draft Long-term Plan supporting information on:

www.mdc.govt.nz/whatmatters



Talking money

Our Council is complex and balancing the books is tricky. We need to make lots of decisions such as how we fund things via rates and user fees, how much money to borrow, how to invest prudently and how to allocate rates.



There is a lot more information on how we make financial decisions in our Consultation Document.

To provide an 'apples for apples' comparison, in the options within this section we use the median property Capital Value across all ratepayer categories (excluding Defence properties) - this value is \$660,000.

Please note:

An **(asterisk)* indicates more information.

**Refer to the Consultation Document for a full explanation of how we have worked out these indicative rates based on median capital property value.*

Issue 1

Roading Differentials

It costs a lot of money to maintain our roading network and while we receive some subsidy funding from NZTA, the remainder of the costs are covered by the money we receive from rates.

For roading, we spread the costs across different categories of ratepayers, with some ratepayers paying a greater share than others. Usually rating differentials reflect who benefits from the services (those who benefit more, pay for more). This difference in who pays how much is referred to as a 'differential'.

Feilding residents' rates cover 33% of the council's costs for maintaining roading infrastructure, and rural residents' rates cover 53% (the remainder is covered by other ratepayer categories). However, rural roads account for 89% of our roading infrastructure cost - and this means that Feilding residents are paying to maintain rural roads that they infrequently use.

We think we should change this so that rural residents are paying a more equitable share of the costs.

We have identified 3 options and would like to know what you think.

Option A

Keep things as they are: make no changes to the current differentials, with Feilding residents paying proportionately more than rural ratepayers.

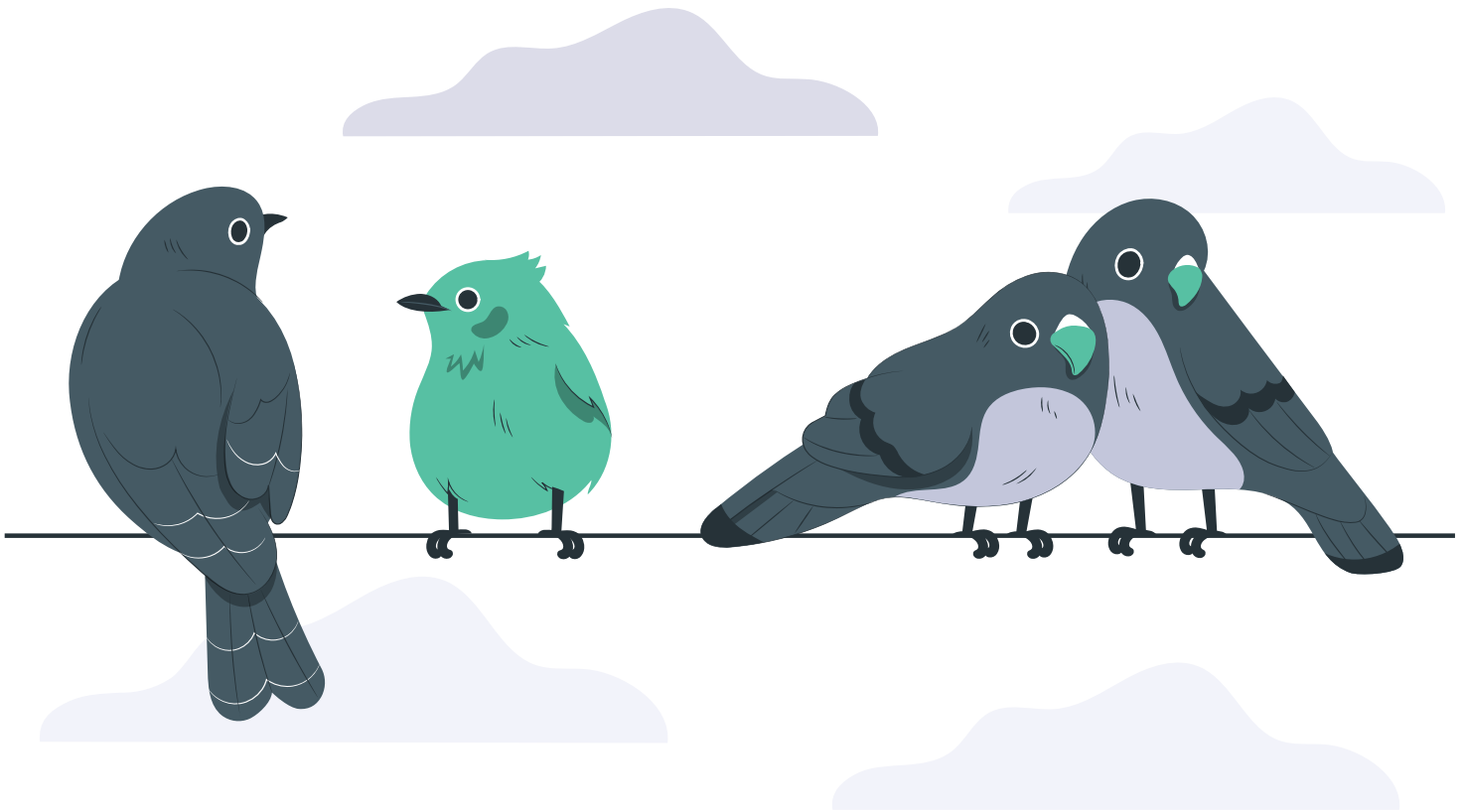
Option B

Remove the current differential completely: this would spread the cost of roading equally across all ratepayers resulting in Feilding ratepayers paying slightly less than they do now (about \$2.50 per week), and rural ratepayers paying slightly more (about \$1.76 per week), for the median capital property value in the district*.

Option C

Council's preferred option

Remove the current differential gradually over 3 years: We like this option because we are working towards moving to a more equitable system for roading costs, but there is no sharp increase to rural ratepayers – the increase would be phased in gradually. However of course, this would also mean that the reduction to Feilding ratepayers would also be slower and more gradual.



Issue 2

Kōwhai Park aviaries

Generations of residents have enjoyed the aviaries at Kōwhai Park since they were gifted to the district in 1964. However, the aviaries now require substantial upgrades and increased levels of service to meet the welfare standards under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

To keep the aviaries up and running would take significant investment. If we decide not to upgrade the aviaries, the current birds that live there will be rehomed. Keeping things as they are now is not an option.

Council's preferred option

Option A

Demolish the aviaries and develop the space on which they sit into display gardens. This would cost approximately \$40,000. It would also result in operational savings of \$10,000 in year 1 and ongoing savings of \$50,000 per annum from year 2 onwards.

Option B

Demolish the aviaries and build new ones that meet the welfare standards. The new build would cost around \$800,000 and we would also have around \$150,000 per year in operating costs, and a further \$132,000 per year in interest and depreciation costs. This option would cost a Feilding ratepayer about \$0.38 per week and town centre businesses an extra \$1.27 per week more than option 1*.

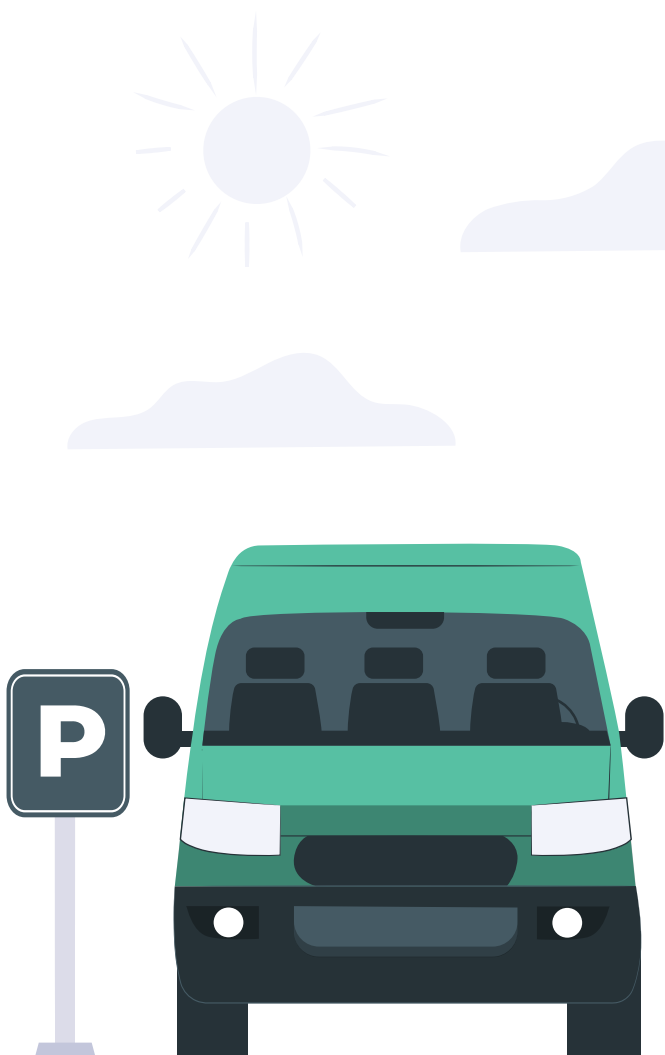
Issue 3

Feilding town centre parking limit enforcement

Last year, Council agreed to introduce time-limited parking in Feilding CBD to encourage a greater turnover of visitors in town. From July 2024 we will actively enforce the time limits. To do this, we will employ a parking warden to monitor the parking time limits and to issue parking fines.

We have budgeted \$125,000 per year to cover the operational cost of enforcement, including parking warden staff costs, uniform and software to issue fines.

We'd like to know your views on how to fairly share that cost across ratepayers.



Council's preferred option

Option A

Fund enforcement with 100% of the cost being met by a general rates charge across the district. This is our preferred option. Everyone pays an equal share, which is based on the assumption that everyone in the district will benefit from a higher turnover of visitors to the CBD in terms of economic growth, town centre vibrancy and more opportunities to park in town. This would cost a Feilding ratepayer about \$0.25 extra per week, and rural ratepayer about \$0.13 extra per week*.

Option B

Fund enforcement by splitting the costs - 25% paid by town centre businesses and the remaining 75% cost spread across all other rate payers. This assumes that CBD businesses will benefit more from the time limited parking as the number of shoppers in town will increase. Here both Feilding and rural ratepayers would pay about \$0.13 less per week and our town centre businesses would pay about an extra \$2.15 per week*.

Option C

100% of the costs are paid by CBD businesses with no burden on other rate payers. This assumes they are receiving all the benefit of a higher number of visitors in town. For this option our town centre businesses would pay about an extra \$8.10 per week, Feilding ratepayers \$0.25 less per week, and rural ratepayers \$0.13 less per week*.

Issue 4

Revenue and financing funding mixes

Generally, if you use a Council service, you pay towards the cost of it. We tend to work on the premise that whoever gets the most benefit out of the service should pay more towards it and we feel that user fees associated with some of our services aren't quite right.

We are proposing making changes to the following services in terms of how much you will pay to use them:

CBD Redevelopment

This activity repays and services the debt required to develop and beautify Feilding's town centre. The total rates required is around \$197,000 per annum. Currently, 85% of this cost is spread over 209 CBD ratepayers, placing a considerable burden on them. As the general community benefits from a vibrant, safe and attractive town centre, we propose changing this to be fully funded (100%) through general rates, spreading the cost across all ratepayers. This would mean about a \$0.26 per week increase in rates for Feilding residents, a \$0.13 increase per week for rural residents, and a decrease of \$10.90 per week for CBD businesses*.

Animal Control

We want to move this from a 40% rates/60% user charge to 20% rates/80% user charge. We feel it's still important for the community to pay some money towards this service, as it helps towards things like keeping dangerous dogs off our streets and clearing wandering stock off our roads. But overall, those who own a dog would pay a larger proportion of the cost. In real terms, this would mean that a dog rego paid in advance of the 1st August would cost \$120 rather than the \$116 current cost, but general ratepayers would pay about \$0.25 per week less in their rates*.

Building Control

We want to move this from 40% rates/60% user charge to 20% rates/ 80% user charge. Again, the community benefits somewhat from this service, as new builds can help increase economic development in the district. However, people who are building properties are going to benefit the most so there is an argument they should pay more. In real terms, they would see an average cost increase of around 20% across our building control services, but Feilding residents would pay about \$0.38 less per week, and rural residents about \$0.13 less per week*.

Consent Planning

We want to move this from 40% rates / 60% user charge to 20% rates / 80% user charge. Consents help us protect our natural and built environment which brings some benefit to our entire community. However we want to even out the charges so that those who are using the consenting service pays more than they currently do. Again, this would see an average cost increase of around 20% across our consents and planning service, but Feilding and rural residents would pay about \$0.13 less per week*.

Solid Waste

This includes the collection and disposal of household rubbish, the sale of blue rubbish bags and the transfer stations. We feel more of the cost of providing this service should be paid for by individuals rather than from rates. We are proposing changing the mix from 35%-45% rates and 55%-65% user charge to 30%-40% rates and 60%-70% user charge. This would save ratepayers about \$0.27 per week*.

Please note: An *(asterisk) indicates more information.

*Refer to the Consultation Document for a full explanation of how we have worked out these indicative rates based on median capital property value.

We're also looking for feedback on the following draft policies:

- Rates Remission and Postponement Policy
- Revenue and Financing Policy



More information on the recommended changes to these policies can be found in our Consultation Document.

So which options do you support?

Let us know what you think

There are a number of ways you can let us know:



Online

Visit www.mdc.govt.nz/whatmatters and complete the online form.



Over the phone

If writing is not your thing, we can help you get your thoughts down. To find out more about this call us on **06 323 0000**.



Email us

Send us an email at submissions@mdc.govt.nz



Feedback form

Fill in the feedback form and send it to:
Council at Private Bag 10 001, Feilding 4743.

Or drop your form into Council reception at:
135 Manchester Street, Feilding.

For more information and to access all the supporting documentation, please visit: www.mdc.govt.nz/whatmatters