

Mayoral Column

Council had our first strategic planning day last week where we discussed our priorities for the next three years.

I'm pleased with how the day went we also talked about coming out to the people through a number of community meetings to hear from you, about what you believe the future of Wairoa looks like and what we will need to prioritise over the next three years.

There are a number of big projects that we have on our work programme and I want to take some time to outline one of them today - The Rating Review.

Rating Review

The last time rates were reviewed in the Wairoa district was in 2011, but we have commenced some preliminary work.

A review of the rating system is well overdue and because it is a very complex issue, I believe it is important that we take the necessary time to work through the review.

Any review will look at simplifying the system, both for the ratepayer and for Council.

Our objective is to put a good system in place that is more equitable.

Rates are calculated using a differential rating system that is based on land use.

Rate differentials apply to the general rate and targeted rate are also set differentially. These are used to change the proportion of rates the council collects from each group of ratepayers. The council may choose to apply a higher rating differential for groups that place greater demands on council services. Conversely, the council may apply a lower rating differential to groups who have less access to council services than other ratepayers.

14
differentials

52
rate types

We have 14 differentials and a total of 52 rate types. What we need to achieve is making our rating system much simpler and at the same time, more equitable.



Mayor - Craig Little

Wairoa has too many differentials (the result of tweaking the differential rather than fixing why it was happening), and that's why I think it's important for us to review our rating system, so that we know that the system we have works for our community.

It's a real challenge to benchmark against other councils, and I see our inclusion in the LGNZ Excellence Programme as a way for us to do this.

We will definitely be consulting the community because this is such an important issue.

We have been doing some preliminary work on the review for about a year, understanding the complexities, looking at options and developing a framework for the review. Because it is so complex, we need to take our time with this review and ensure that we put a process in place that works.

The review will include an overview of the current system including the important relationship between the Financing and Revenue Policy and the rates system.

From there, the review will look at the different types of rates we have.

This will include an examination of which functions are funded by each rate and how the rate is applied. This will lead into a review of the differential categories for each rate and the differential levels that will apply to each category.

It is important to note that the review will not include within its scope the overall level of rates payable. This was decided by full Council as part of the Annual Plan process.

Any proposed changes to the rates system or Financing and Revenue Policy will be widely consulted upon through the special consultative procedure.

Whatever the outcome of the review, the overall total amount the district pays will stay the same. But the way it is distributed may change, so this is where it gets difficult. There will be winners and losers, but the main thing is that we are seriously looking at making the system simpler.

Māori Standing Committee Selection 2016

Hui are happening around the district in the build up to the triennial candidate selection for the Wairoa District Council Māori Standing Committee.

By following the same process laid down in the last selection process three years ago, hui are held amongst marae within eight areas, or takiwā, of the district.

The hui-a-takiwā will result in tangata whenua selecting their own candidate for representation on the Māori Standing Committee, one of the committees of Council.

Māori Relationships Manager, David Tipoki said all 37 known

marae of the district had been informed of the process, and should also have been contacted by their current representative.

"The responsibility of choosing representation lies with each takiwā, as mandated in council's Māori Policy. It is an opportunity to review the current representation and ensure interests and needs are being met," he said.

Each of the eight takiwā candidates will be confirmed at a Hui-a-iwi involving all marae at 10am on Sunday, 27 November at Taihoa Marae. A ninth member from the 'open floor' would be selected at this meeting to complete the committee.

FOR YOUR DIARY

COUNCIL MEETINGS

22 November: 10am

6 December: 10am

MAORI STANDING COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS

HUI-A-IWI

27 November: 10am

Taihoa Marae



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**GREAT THINGS
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HAWKE'S BAY NEW ZEALAND

Wairoa District Audible Sirens



The siren that can often be heard both day and night in Wairoa is the NZ Fire Service Wairoa Volunteer Station siren alerting the volunteer firefighters to a call.

Occasionally the siren will rise and fall several times - this only means "multiple alarms" meaning that further resource is required.

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CIVIL DEFENCE AND/OR A TSUNAMI

The other audible siren heard is the AFFCO evacuation alarm test that typically sounds at 7:45am each Tuesday morning - this alarm could also be activated 24/7 in the event of an evacuation at the plant.

For information on Civil Defence warnings and watches contact tim@wairoadc.govt.nz or visit www.hbemergency.govt.nz

MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS HUI-A-IWI

**Sunday, 27 November, 10.00 am
Taihoa Marae**

This hui is to confirm representatives to the Māori Standing Committee, as well as to select a ninth member.