

**We listened – changes from the
draft to the final plan**

Our Long Term Plan 2024-34 reflects the wishes and needs of the city's residents.

This final version of the Plan, published after many months of preparation and community consultation, sets out a budget for the next 10 years.

We listened

One of the main challenges with every Long Term Plan, (LTP) is making sure our residents and communities have access to, and information about the Draft LTP, its purpose, how they can provide feedback, and the decision-making process.

The Council adopted a draft LTP and Consultation Document on 14 March 2024. The Consultation Document outlined the key issues covered in the LTP, the Council's proposed approach to these matters and preferred options for addressing them.

We used our new online engagement platform to create a more engaging and accessible webpage and submission form. We also increased the functionality of the 'Bubbles Tool' – our online search tool for our capital and operational expenditure. As well as being able to see capital expenditure across the areas of the Council, people could see projects grouped by community board, with operational budgets shown separately.

The full draft LTP and Consultation Document were available for download from the Council website, and in hard copy format from libraries and service centres. Over the consultation period in March/April, we distributed more than 750 consultation documents and 1000 submission forms, and went along to 80 community events – many of them organised by local councillors. The draft LTP and the ways people could have their say were also promoted in print and online.

In total, 7,040 people submitted their views on the Draft LTP over March and April. The feedback we received on the LTP reflects the perspectives and priorities within our community, and the nuanced landscape of values and aspirations. Over recent years we've seen many examples of one person's 'nice-to-have' is another person's 'must-have', and that's held true this year. Submitters commonly told us that we haven't got the balance quite right, but their reasons for this were varied.

For some submitters, there was a real concern about the impact rate rises have on their household budgets. They called for the Council to reduce costs and minimise the rate increases. However, of those submitters who told us we needed more financial restraint hadn't been financially responsible enough, and wanted to reduce services or find efficiencies, many didn't provide any specific examples of spending that they thought was wasteful or areas where we could reduce services or make savings.

On the other hand, there were submitters who voiced their strong desire to see us do more to prioritise the

future of the city. They called for us to accelerate our response to the impacts of climate change, invest more in public and active transport, grow the tree canopy, implement a range of measures to help drive behaviour change (including further increases to car parking charges) and enable intensification across the city.

Many submitters highlighted the importance of the services that we provide, noting that they were pleased to see that we hadn't proposed cuts to services to find savings. They talked about the importance of community facilities, spaces and places.

Submitters were united in their calls for us to focus investment into core infrastructure. However, they were at odds about what constitutes 'core infrastructure'. For some it means investing more into the quality of our roads, footpaths and water supplies, while for others it means accelerating progress on infrastructure that supports active and public transport.

For many the focus was on doing whatever it takes to get the chlorine out of our water, while others wanted us to focus on delivering a stormwater network to

manage increased flooding risk. The importance of our green spaces was recognised by many, with a lot of many submitters calling for us to bring forward planned investment in our sports parks and facilities to allow more people in the city to be more active, more often.

Submissions revealed strong support for community grants and funding, with many submitters reminding us that this funding is crucial to the work that many organisations do for and with our communities. Thousands of submitters wrote in support of the Arts Centre, highlighting the value that the centre brings, citing its cultural significance, heritage value, and community-building role. The public also showed a lot of support for Orana Park, with submitters urging additional funding due to its tourism, conservation, and educational contributions.

Feedback on contestable funds called for maintaining and even increasing support for sustainability, biodiversity, and heritage preservation initiatives. Regarding the Anglican Cathedral, most submitters opposed further Council funding, preferring support for the Arts Centre or expecting the Church to secure additional funds for the restoration project.

Staff reviewed all the submissions, and responded with additional information as appropriate, before they were sent to the Mayor and councillors for consideration. More than 350 people presented their submissions in person across two weeks of hearings.

This was the final, vital step for our elected members as they worked to strike the right balance in the final LTP – one that's affordable, but doesn't overlook the things people really care about.

Changes from the draft to the final plan

Rates

Despite interest rates, inflation and insurance costs, we ultimately arrived at a rates increase lower than we first proposed, and lower than most other metropolitan cities across New Zealand. As well as prudent management of our finances, this result was made possible in large part thanks to dividends from Christchurch City Holdings Limited, with independent professional advice confirming that the increased dividend doesn't represent a risk to CCHL's future operations or viability. We landed with:

- An average residential rates increase for 2024/25 of 9.52%, which equates to an extra \$6.17 a week on average. This is lower than the 12.4% average residential rates increase proposed and consulted on in the Draft LTP.
- An average rates increase for all ratepayers of 9.90% for 2024/25. The average rates increase for all ratepayers proposed in the Draft LTP that went out for public consultation was 13.24%.
- An average business rates increase of 10.90%, which equates to an extra \$1,775 a year, or \$34.14 a week. This is lower than the 14.2% increase proposed in the Draft LTP.
- For an average remote rural property, a rates increase of 10.92% has been approved for 2024/25, which equates to \$309 a year, or \$5.94 a week. This is lower than the 15.4% overall average rates increase for remote rural properties proposed in the Draft LTP.

The Council also decided not to merge the \$20 Active Travel targeted rate into the Uniform Annual General Charge.

Climate change and environmental initiatives

After listening to feedback from submitters, The Council decided to bring forward \$1.8 million in operational funding for climate adaptation work. We'll also establish a Climate Resilience Fund in 2025/26 – this means a 0.25% rates increase that year, increasing by 0.25% thereafter until FY33/34 by which time the accumulated annual rates increase will equal 2.25%. By then the fund could be as high as \$127 million.

We're contributing \$700,000 to the Environmental Partnership Fund in each of the first two years, then \$1m each year thereafter.

We are adding an extra \$100,000 to the next three years of the Biodiversity Fund.

Air Force Museum of New Zealand

During next year's 2025/26 Annual Plan process, we'll consult on an option to fund up to \$5 million in capital spending in 2027/28.

Shirley Community Centre

We'll bring forward funding for the rebuild: \$75,000 in 2024/25, \$800,000 for capital spending in 2025/26, another \$2.83 million for capital spending in 2026/27 as construction gets underway, and \$40,000 in operational spending each year from 2027/28.

Orana Park

For the first three years of the LTP, we'll provide Orana Park with \$240,000 from the Strengthening Communities Fund, plus \$260,000 for maintenance from the Capital Endowment Fund – totalling to a \$500,000 grant each year. The Fendalton-Harewood-Waimairi Community Board has also agreed to spend \$50,000 from their Better Off Funding on a business review.

The Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora

In addition to the \$110,000 Strengthening Communities Funding the Council is already providing to The Arts Centre for the next two years, we'll provide \$500,000 p.a. funding over the 10 years of the LTP, and a further \$250,000 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 from the Capital Endowment Fund. We'll review the arrangements before year three of the Long Term Plan to see if an ongoing grant from the fund is required – subject to the Council accepting an asset management plan from The Arts Centre.

Events funding

Council agreed to provide an earlier increase in grants funding than incorporated in the Draft, being \$1.2 million in 24/25, \$2.1 million in 25/26, \$2.7 million in 26/27 and \$0.4 million in 27/28.

Santa Parade

Council will provide funding of \$125,000 per annum for 3 years (FY24/25, FY25/26 and FY26/27), from the Capital Endowment Fund to the Santa Parade, for organisational expenditure to support the Christmas parade.

Anglican Cathedral

Council staff will engage with Christ Church Cathedral Rebuild Limited, and report back to councillors at regular intervals on the different funding options they're exploring.