

Mayor's Foreword



When I wrote my first introduction to an Annual Plan three years ago, we had only just started ‘opening the books’ so everyone could see the true state of our finances.

We had an unresolved gap in the anticipated spend on horizontal infrastructure (roads and pipes), commitments in terms of the cost-sharing agreement that needed to be funded, and fewer ratepayers. There were enormous unbudgeted costs associated with regaining our accreditation as a Building Consent Authority, and then we had the floods, leading to further unbudgeted spending that needed to be addressed.

This year's Annual Plan enables us to build a platform. I am determined that this term we get ourselves on a stable footing as a Council, so we become financially resilient to unexpected challenges in the future. It is also important we keep the momentum behind the city's regeneration going.

For the first time in recent years, more than half the Council's \$520 million works programme is already committed to major projects, such as the Town Hall, the New Central Library, the Metro Sports Facility and other significant community assets.

In response to public feedback, we have set some new priorities and, in some cases, adjusted when we plan to spend money on projects in our works programme – but we are still aiming to complete essential projects within their scheduled timeframes.

The changes made include additional budgeting for the Port Hills fire recovery, employing extra staff for upkeep of urban parks, establishing a Christchurch Biodiversity Fund, and trialling a free-entry scheme for pre-schoolers visiting Council swimming pools.

To account for these changes and others, the Council has budgeted an additional \$4.4 million in the final 2017–18 Annual Plan. It also includes a slightly lower-than-proposed average rates increase of 5.46 per cent, down from the 5.5 per cent increase put forward for public feedback.

The next step will be the development of the Long Term Plan 2018–28, which will include the 30-year infrastructure strategy. This will enable us to consider the transition from SCIRT and its impact on both asset management and the capital programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Lianne Dalziel'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lianne Dalziel
Mayor of Christchurch