

Frequently Asked Questions for Thames-Coromandel District Council's 2021-31 Long Term Plan consultation

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Introduction to Long Term Plans

What is a long term plan (LTP)?

A LTP is the Council's forward looking "road map", covering a ten year period. It focuses on the 'big picture' describing the services the Council intends providing for its community, capital projects to be undertaken, budgets, how everything is to be funded, and how the Council's performance in delivering its key services will be measured.

What period does the LTP cover?

The LTP is refreshed every three years. An Annual Plan must be adopted in years two and three of an LTP. Our next LTP will cover the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2031.

Does Council consider and plan for issues beyond the 10 year period?

Yes. As part of the LTP we also develop a 30 year Infrastructure Strategy. This allows us to identify significant issues relating to infrastructure and plan for things like the replacement of long life assets that sit outside the 10 year period.

How often do councils prepare a new LTP?

The plan is refreshed every three years and significant changes and new proposals form part of the three yearly public consultation. The last LTP was adopted by Council in June 2018.

Will there be a draft LTP prepared for public consultation?

No. The public consultation is based around the LTP consultation document. The LTP won't be developed until after public consultation has taken place and your views have been considered. Supporting information includes the key financial policies, the draft financial statements, the draft financial and infrastructure strategies and the forecasting assumptions used as a basis for the projections.

These can be found at: www.tcdc.govt.nz/longtermplan2021

What's the timeline for this Long Term Plan process?

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Friday 12 March 2021 | Consultation begins |
| • Tuesday 12 April 2021 | Consultation ends |
| • 5-7 May 2021 | Hearings for submitters (days as required) |
| • 1-2 June 2021 | Council deliberations on draft Long Term Plan, including submissions |
| • 30 June 2021 | Adoption of Long Term Plan and rating resolutions |

How do I give feedback to the Council about its LTP?

Our Consultation Document, which is available at www.tcdc.govt.nz/LongTermPlan2021 outlines our proposals and funding for the 10

years of the LTP. From 12 March - 12 April 2021 we are inviting submissions from anyone interested in having a say on what should be included in our LTP and which option should be chosen for the proposals. Submissions close at 4pm on 12 April 2021. As part of an open and transparent consultation process, submissions are treated as public documents once received. **See page 8 below for more information on the submission process.**

What is the 'Consultation Document'?

The Consultation Document outlines proposals and funding over the 10 year period, and identifies options and costs being considered. It includes an overview of our financial and infrastructure strategies. The Consultation Document focuses feedback to the proposals, however there is an opportunity for residents and ratepayers to put forward any LTP related idea to the Council.

Where can I find out more or get a copy of the Consultation Document?

The LTP Consultation Document is available online from the Council website – www.tcdc.govt.nz/LongTermPlan2021

Hard copies can also be picked up from one of our Council Service Centres at -

- 515 Mackay Street, Thames
- 355 Kapanga Road, Coromandel
- 10 Monk Street, Whitianga
- 620 Port Road, Whangamata.

What are the Supporting Documents?

These are documents which have informed Council's long term planning process and can help our residents and ratepayers to better understand what's in the Consultation Document. Some of these documents are draft/ proposed versions of parts of our 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, for example:

- The Option 1 No frills-Must do capital expenditure projects list
- The Option 2 No frills-Nice to have capital expenditure projects list
- The draft Revenue & Finance Policy
- The draft Infrastructure Strategy
- The draft Financial Strategy
- The schedule of proposed fees and charges for the 2021/22 financial year
- The draft Financial Statements
- The proposed average rates increases by Community Board area and by year
- The draft Significant Forecasting Assumptions; and
- The Draft Activity Descriptions.

We are also seeking feedback on our draft Development Contributions Policy. This Policy won't be in the Long Term Plan, but is important for understanding Council's requirements for contributions of money or land when new development occurs.

You can provide feedback on any of the draft supporting documents in your submission. Your comments will be considered through the process for finalising the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan. The draft supporting documents will be approved when Council adopts the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.

The supporting documents also include documents that have already been approved by Council and therefore cannot be changed through this long term planning process. These include our Water Demand Strategy, Significance and Engagement Policy, Rates Remission and Rates Postponement Policies and Māori Contribution to Council Decision Making Policy.

Go to Council's website – www.tcdc.govt.nz/longtermplan2021 for a full list of the documents supporting the Consultation Document.

What are the key proposals in the Consultation Document?

The Consultation Document contains key proposals relating to major projects and funding changes.

Our proposals included in the Consultation Document are:

- A 'no frills' budget
- Matarangi land purchase (community initiative)
- Whangamatā Community Pool
- Sale of land in Whangamatā
- Changes to rubbish and recycling services
- Fees and charges & getting visitors and users to pay their fair share

More details on these proposals can be found in the Consultation Document.

What is Council focusing on in this LTP?

Council has identified the key challenges are:

- Balancing peak demand and affordability
- The increasing costs of rubbish and recycling
- Keeping communities supplied with potable (drinking) water
- Planning for sustainable growth
- Addressing climate change

Due to our current financial circumstances, we are not able to address all of these challenges right now. In this review, our focus is on getting the basics right. This means ensuring that core and essential projects and services that meet community needs, our asset renewals programme and legislative and compliance requirements are budgeted for and that we maintain our current levels of service.

Other Issues Discussed in the CD

Is Council getting rid of i-SITES?

Council has identified that it can save money by funding Information Centres rather than i-SITES in Thames and Whitianga. It is proposing that needs can be met without meeting the i-SITES industry standards.

Why does the Thames pool need to move off its current site?

Thames Centennial Pool is reaching the end of its usable life and is due for replacement by 2027. This aligns with the long-held desire by Ngati Maru for Council to vacate the existing pool's site given it covers a urupa/burial ground. A new site would mean that more people would be comfortable using the pool given some people prefer not to use the current facility given its location on a urupa/burial ground.

Who currently funds the Thames pool?

This pool facility is currently funded only by Thames ratepayers and users of the facility through admission fees.

The replacement pool costs are proposed to continue to be locally funded. External funding or sponsorship is also being sought.

Who uses the current pool in Thames?

It is used by people throughout the district, from neighbouring districts and further afield. It is the only year round pool in the district and neighbouring district. Its learn to swim and swimming school academy attract many users and provide a high occupancy rate.

What would a pool facility funded only by Thames ratepayers include?

This would be a "like for like" facility to what we have now - a 25m pool within a permanent building rather than an inflatable dome. To help address affordability issues, and/or to build an even better swimming pool facility, we are also working on securing external funding (sponsorships or grants).

Why isn't there enough potable (drinking) water?

Our highest demand for water coincides with the driest months of the year. This puts pressure on the water supply. Additional supplies of water or storage can be expensive. The 2020 Water Demand Strategy is focused on boosting supply of water through less wastage (leaking pipes, education, conservation etc).

What is three waters reform?

The Government is proposing three water services (water supply, wastewater and stormwater) be provided by a separate entity to Council. The planned date for this transfer is likely to occur in the 2023/2024 financial year (within the period of the Long Term Plan). However right now, we're continuing to take a business-as-usual approach to planning for our three waters activities, and this is reflected in our proposed budget, forecasting assumptions and financial and infrastructure strategies.

To stay up to date: www.dia.govt.nz/Three-Waters-Reform-Programme & www.tcdc.govt.nz

What is Council's response to climate change and increases in coastal hazard events?

Our LTP assumptions reflect the most current government advice on how to plan for climate change. All our major new infrastructure and renewals will be tested against a potential sea level rise of 1.4m by 2120 and up to a rise of 1.88m by 2150 in line with this assumption. Council is preparing in consultation with the community on Shoreline Management Plans to inform coastal community development. See tcdc.govt.nz/smp

About rates and our finances

Why are rates going up, and what will mine be?

Rates are going up faster than inflation because the cost for the work that we do is rising. Council is focused on minimising the increases while providing the core

services and levels of service required by the community, and meeting standards set by central government.

What is an 'average' rate increase?

The average increase of 7.1 per cent for 2021/22 has been calculated by dividing the total rates revenue by the number of proposed rating units across the district. The increase for any particular property will vary, depending on the value of the property, where it is located and what services are provided to it.

How do I find out about my proposed rates for 2021/22?

Ratepayers can use the rates calculator on the TCDC website at www.tcdc.govt.nz/rates and click 'online rating information database'. This will calculate the proposed rates for the year of 2021/22 using Option 1 (Council's preferred option) as presented in the Consultation Document. Alternatively, please look up the rating examples provided and use the closest valued property to yours. The rating examples can be found in the Consultation Document here: www.tcdc.govt.nz/longtermplan2021.

Why is there a higher rate increase in 2022/23 and 2023/24?

There are several high expenditures planned for the 2022/23, 2023/24 and also 2025/26 financial years. This includes:

- Paying down of debt
- Three waters compliance regulations
- Increased infrastructure costs

Some of the variation is driven by when capital expenditure projects are planned. The proposed rates increases vary by area and by Community Board Area. See the supporting document *Average rates increase by Community Board area and by year* available here: www.tcdc.govt.nz/LongTermPlan2021

How much will my rates go up?

Rates for individual properties vary depending on where you are in the district, the property value and the services available. As a guide, the rates on an average-priced property are projected to increase by \$214 or 7.1 per cent for the financial year beginning 1 July.

Anticipated average district rates increases across all 10 years of this LTP can be found in the table below. This table is also in our Consultation Document:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
District average rates increase %	7.1%	7.7%	7.7%	4.9%	6.4%	3.0%	2.4%	2.8%	2.9%	2.9%
District average rates \$	3,222	3,471	3,739	3,922	4,172	4,296	4,401	4,524	4,656	4,790

The supporting information with the Consultation Document includes rating examples for different types of properties.

Rate payers can use the rates calculator on the TCDC website at www.tcdc.govt.nz/rates

This will calculate the proposed rates for the year of 2021/22 using Option 1 (Council's preferred option) as presented in the Consultation Document.

What is the difference between local and district funding?

Local funding is predominantly used for the community facilities in each of the five Community Board areas and the grants made by each Community Board. Each Community Board area has a targeted local works and services rate to raise this funding.

District funding is used for services that are available district wide. The general rate, which every ratepayer pays, funds services that all ratepayers can access and can benefit from. The Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) and the land value rate in the dollar are both general rates. There are targeted rates for services offered across the district for those ratepayers connected or within defined areas that are serviced eg water, wastewater, rubbish collection.

Is the increase in value for my property linked to the rates increase?

While the rates that Council collects will go up on average by 7.1 per cent in the 2021/2022 financial year, the effect on individual ratepayers differs based on the value of your property.

If the value of your property increased less than the district average, then your rates increase may be less. This is because rates are not collected just because property valuations have increased, but in order to pay for specific services.

I don't think I can afford this rates increase. Is there any help available?

A rates rebate can be applied for. For the 2020/21 financial year this is up to a maximum of \$655. Rebates are calculated by the Department of Internal Affairs on a sliding scale, dependent on the household income and rates payable for the year. For the 2020/21 financial year, you must apply for a rebate by 30 June 2021. Go to our web page [tcdc.govt.nz/ratesrebate](https://www.tcdc.govt.nz/ratesrebate) for more information.

If you are 65 and over, own and live in your own home, you can apply to postpone payment of your annual rates until you cease to occupy the home. Go to our web page www.tcdc.govt.nz/Our-Services/Rates/Rates-Postponement-Scheme/ for more information.

What savings, project deferrals and efficiencies is the Council proposing to keep rates down?

We will be doing our utmost to find ways to keep the rates down. We are seeking feedback on some options in the Consultation Document. These include:

- Only undertaking projects that are necessary (no frills budget)
- Raising fees and charges for users of Council infrastructure and facilities to reflect the actual costs
- Potentially selling unnecessary land

What is Council's debt?

The Council currently has total debt of \$152 million. Currently \$83 million is external debt. The rest is borrowed from our depreciation and investment reserves (called internal borrowing). This debt has funded a mix of renewals and new assets.

By the end of 2030/31 our total debt will be \$237 million. The extra debt is to loan fund new assets and fund renewals for activities that do not have depreciation reserves large enough. By the end of 2030/31 our external debt is forecast to be \$133 million.

I live rurally – what do I get for my rates?

The Uniform Annual General Charge pays for services that are available to everyone in the district, even if you live further away or do not utilise them often. It includes roads, parks, reserves, libraries and emergency management etc.

How will these proposed changes affect my rates?

To see how the changes for option 1 (Council's preferred option) will affect your rates for 2021/2022 go to www.tcdc.govt.nz/rates.

What fees are proposed to change?

Changes are being made to the following fees:

- Airfields
 - Currently daily fees are the same at our airfields (Pauanui and Thames) but annual fees are different. We are proposing to increase the daily fee from \$11 to \$15 and want to introduce a combined annual fee of \$200 (currently the annual fee for Pauanui is \$110 and for Thames, \$250).
- Harbour Facilities
 - Recreational vessel launching / trailer parking daily and annual permits are increasing to \$20 and \$200 respectively
 - Commercial use of wharves – some fees are increasing including wharfage and casual berthage
- Cemeteries
 - Casket plot purchases are proposed to increase from \$1,300 to \$1,500 and ashes plot purchases from \$300 to \$500
 - Casket interment fees are proposed to increase from \$1,000 to \$1,200 and ashes interment fees from \$190 to \$250.
- Dog registration fees
- Building and resource consent fees
- Development Contributions
- Health licences
- Land Information memoranda (LIMS)
- Alcohol licensing charges (set by central government)

A full list of proposed fees and charges to change can be found at <http://docs.tcdc.govt.nz/store/default/6803924.pdf>

The Public Consultation/Submission Process

How do I make a submission?

We encourage everyone to make their submission online - go to www.tcdc.govt.nz/longtermplan2021. You can read the Consultation Document and answer the questions as you work your way through the document. By registering in our submission software you have the ability to save as you go and pause your submission, finishing it the next day, or the next week. Once you've registered and

used the system you can look back at past submissions and use parts again if they are still applicable. This is our preferred method for receiving submissions. It reduces the risk of human error which may result in transcribing written submissions and saves time processing submissions.

Other ways to make a submission include:

- Sending us an email to consultation@tcdd.govt.nz
- Or, if you require a hardcopy submission form, you can pick one up from any of our service centres in Thames, Coromandel, Whitianga, and Whangamata. Fill it in and return it to us. *Please note that our preference is that submissions are made online. We do however understand that not everyone has access or the affinity to computers that we do!*

As part of ensuring an open and transparent consultation process, submissions are treated as public documents once received. Any personal details provided on the submission form will become public.

When is the consultation period for the Long Term Plan 2021-2031?

9:00am 12 March to 4:00pm 12 April 2021

All submissions must be received by Council by 4.00pm on 12 April at the latest. We can receive enquiries about late submissions, however there is no obligation for the Council to consider late submissions. Council will decide whether it will consider any late submissions when deliberations on submissions take place.

Can I comment via Facebook?

We will be using Facebook to direct people to our online submission portal. Facebook comments are not treated as "formal feedback", however a summary of comments received will be provided to Council to consider.

Are submissions public?

All material relating to public Council meetings, including submissions, must be available to the public. As part of an open and transparent consultation process, submissions are treated as public documents once received.

What if I don't want to register online?

Registering is quick and has benefits for you and the Council. By registering in our online submission software you have the ability to save as you go and pause your submission, finishing it the next day or the next week. Once you've registered and used the system you can look back at past submissions and use parts again if they are still applicable. The online system saves Council administration costs and allows us to publish the submissions faster.

We will only use your personal contact details for contacting you regarding your submission. For example, we will contact you to arrange a hearing if you have requested one. We will also contact you to tell you about the decisions made by our Council in response to the submissions.

If you do not use our online submission software, your other ways to make a submission include:

- Send us an email to consultation@tcdd.govt.nz
- Pick up a hardcopy submission form from any one of our offices in Thames, Coromandel, Whitianga, Tairua and Whangamata. Fill it in and return it to us.

Who do I contact if I have trouble registering?

Phone the Council and a staff member will talk you through the registration process.

What do I put in a submission?

Your submission should tell us what you think about any of the topics covered in the Consultation Document. Whatever topic(s) you submit on, it would be very helpful if you clearly note what you want changed or what you want to stay the same, and why. Also, it would be helpful if you could let us know what decision you would like Council to make as a result of your feedback. Please note that all submissions, in whatever form, must have your name and postal address to be treated and processed as a submission.

In the Consultation Document, our Council is specifically seeking feedback on:

1. A 'no frills' budget
2. Matarangi land purchase (community initiative)
3. Whangamatā Community Pool
4. Sale of land in Whangamatā
5. Changes to rubbish and recycling services
6. Fees and charges & getting visitors and users to pay their fair share.

You can also give us feedback on some of Council's draft strategies, policies and other information which are included as supporting documents to the Consultation Document. These include:

- The Option 1 No frills-Must do capital expenditure projects list
- The Option 2 No frills-Nice to have capital expenditure projects list
- The draft Revenue & Finance Policy
- The draft Infrastructure Strategy
- The draft Financial Strategy
- The schedule of proposed fees and charges for the 2021/22 financial year
- The draft Financial Statements
- The proposed average rates increases by Community Board area and by year
- The draft Significant Forecasting Assumptions; and
- The Draft Activity Descriptions.

The list of supporting documents LTP Consultation Document is available online from the Council website – www.tcdc.govt.nz/LongTermPlan2021

What subjects are not open for submission through this Long Term Plan consultation?

Only the topics covered in the Consultation Document or those that are LTP related will be considered by Council. Topics not covered include:

- Requests for service or maintenance, for example requests for Council to address potholes, uncollected rubbish or graffiti. Please note that if we do get such requests on a submission form, we will lodge them as requests for service. They will not be included as a submission to the Long Term Plan.
- Work managed by other agencies, such as the Waikato Regional Council, Department of Conservation and New Zealand Transport Authority. This includes requests about water quality monitoring and State Highways. Where possible, we will forward such submissions on to these agencies.

- Policies and other documents that have already been adopted by Council, for example, the Water Demand Strategy, Significance and Engagement Policy, Rates Remission and Rates Postponement Policies and Māori Contribution to Council Decision Making Policy.

How will I know what's happened to my submission?

Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged. Once the 2021-31 LTP has been adopted by Council, submitters will be advised by email or letter of the final Council decisions relating to your submission.

What happens after submissions are made?

A copy of each submission in full is made available publicly before Council hearings begin. The hearings will be held in public. All submitters who have indicated they wish to appear to speak about their submission will be contacted to arrange a suitable time for them to present to the Mayor and Councillors.

Following the closing of the public hearings, at a separate meeting, Council will deliberate on all the written and verbal feedback it has received and make decisions about the Long Term Plan's content. Council staff summarise all submissions after they are received. This summary is made available publicly before Council deliberations.

A Long Term Plan for the 2021-2031 financial year will be adopted at a Council meeting on 30 June 2021. All those who made submissions will receive correspondence outlining the decisions Council has made.

Hearings and Decision-making (Deliberations) on the LTP Proposals

How do I present my submission at the public hearings?

Submitters can indicate on their written submission if they would like to make a brief verbal submission or not. Council staff will confirm with the submitter their allocated time at the hearing. At the hearing, you should take your written submission as read, and use your verbal presentation time to highlight your submission points.

Where are the hearings being held?

We'll decide the locations once we know where most people wanting to speak at a hearing are from. There will likely be a hearing held in Thames. Submitters wanting to make a verbal submission will be contacted and informed of the time and venue for the hearing. The hearings will also be advertised on our website and in the public notices of local newspapers.

Hearings are subject to COVID-19 alert levels. They may need to be rescheduled and/or may be held in-person and/or online via Microsoft Teams.

Can I also speak to the Mayor and Councillors about my submission?

Yes. When you send in your submission you can tick the box to request an opportunity to speak briefly at public hearings. These hearings are scheduled for 5, 6 and 7 May, days as needed. We will try to accommodate a time that suits you within the set hearing dates.

Hearings are subject to COVID-19 alert levels. They may need to be rescheduled and/or may be held in-person or online via Microsoft Teams.

The mayor and councillors will also be hosting drop in sessions around the district if that is more convenient for you. See www.tcdc.govt.nz/longtermplan2021 for more details.

When does the Council make final decisions on the LTP?

After the submission period has closed and hearings have concluded, Council will deliberate on all the feedback it has received and make decisions about the Long Term Plan's content. The final 2021-2031 LTP is scheduled for formal adoption on 30 June 2021 and will come into effect on 1 July 2021 - the start of the 2021/22 financial year.

How will we know if the Council has achieved what it set out to do in the LTP?

At the end of each financial year, councils are required to prepare a detailed annual report covering their financial and operational performance for the previous 12 months. The report is subject to independent audit overseen by the Office of the Auditor-General. Annual reports are public documents adopted at open council meetings before 31 October each year and are published on council websites within another month of adoption.

Key contacts

For more information about our public consultation process, please email, or phone to speak with, the following staff.

Leslie Vyfhuis leslie.vyfhuis@tcdc.govt.nz 07 868 0200	Kate Lewis Kate.lewis@tcdc.govt.nz 07 868 0200
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Some helpful Links

News and public notices www.tcdc.govt.nz/Your-Council/News-and-Media/News-and-Public-Notices/

tcdc.govt.nz/Our-Services/Rates/Rates-Frequently-Asked-Questions/

tcdc.govt.nz/Our-Services/Rates/What-do-your-rates-pay-for/

tcdc.govt.nz/ratesrebate

[Thames-Coromandel District Council - Long Term Plans \(tcdc.govt.nz\)](http://Thames-Coromandel District Council - Long Term Plans (tcdc.govt.nz))

Draft financial strategies can be found at www.tcdc.govt.nz/LongTermPlan2021 including our Draft Financial Strategy, Draft Infrastructure Strategy, Draft Revenue and Finance Policy and our Draft Development Contributions Policy.

Current policies can be found below:

- [Development Contributions Policy](#)
- [Treasury Management Policy](#)
- [Rates Remissions and Rates Postponement Policies](#) (note new ones have been adopted, but don't take effect until 1 July 2021)
- [Revenue and Financing Policy](#)