Revenue and Financing Policy

Purpose

Section 102 of the Local Government Act 2002 requires Councils to adopt a Revenue and Financing Policy. The purpose of the Revenue and Financing policy is to provide predictability and certainty about the sources and levels of funding the council proposes to use to meet its funding needs. It explains the rationale for, and the process of selecting appropriate funding mechanisms for operating and capital expenditures. The policy also shows how the Council complied with section 101(3) of the LGA which sets out a number of factors we must consider when making these decisions.[1]

Deciding the best way to fund activities is complex. The Council must exercise its judgment in balancing many factors in complying with legislation, including, but not limited to:

- Accountability
- Affordability
- Benefit
- Competition
- Cost
- Efficiency
- Equity
- Impact of change
- Intergenerational equity
- Legal availability of funding mechanisms
- Social impacts
- Impact on Climate
- Strategic Alignment

[1] Our comprehensive section 101(3) analysis is documented in the funding needs analysis, which should be regarded as part of this Revenue and Financing Policy.

- Transparency

Balancing these sometimes-conflicting principles can be challenging. The council uses its best judgement in the developments of budgets and the choice of funding sources for council activities.

Scope

We have set out our policy under the following headings:

- Funding of operating costs
- Summary of funding of operating costs by activity
- Unfunded operating costs
- Funding of capital costs
- Summary of funding for capital costs by activity
- Overall funding consideration

Funding operating expenditure:

Operating costs arise from the Council's day-to-day operations and services, from collecting rubbish and providing street lighting to maintaining gardens and issuing building consents. The Council will set its projected operating revenue at a level sufficient to meet the current year's projected operating *expenditure*, except where the Council resolves that it is financially prudent not to do so, having regard to

- the estimated expenses of achieving and maintaining the predicted levels of service provision set out in the long-term plan, including the estimated expenses associated with maintaining the service capacity and integrity of assets throughout their useful life; and
- the projected revenue available to fund the estimated expenses associated with maintaining the service capacity and integrity of assets throughout their useful life; and
- the equitable allocation of responsibility for funding the provision and maintenance of assets and facilities throughout their useful life; and

- the funding and financial policies adopted under section 102 of the LGA.

Available funding sources for operating costs are:

Rates

General rates can be used to fund activities where it is not possible and/or practical to clearly identify customers or users. This type of rate is also used where, for reasons of fairness, equity, and consideration of the wider community wellbeing, it is considered that this is the most appropriate way in which to fund an activity.

Targeted rates can be used where an activity benefits an easily identifiable group of ratepayers (such as the commercial or residential sectors) and where it is appropriate that only this group be targeted to pay for some or all of the costs of a particular service. Examples of targeted rates are water targeted rates funding water supply and the Downtown targeted rate funding marketing and events, retail promotion and tourism activities.

User charges

User charges are applied to services where it is identified there is a benefit to an individual or group, or directly attributable cost. User charges encompass a broad group of fees charged directly to an individual or entity including but not limited to:

- Rent payable under leases or licences of land and buildings
- Permits
- Regulatory charges
- Entry fees
- Connection fees
- Disposal fees
- Deposits
- Payments for private works
- Planning and consent fees
- Statutory charges
- Retail sales
- Landing fee

The price of a service is based on a large number of factors including:

- The cost of providing the service
- The estimate of the users' private benefit from using the service
- The impact of cost to potentially encourage/discourage behaviours
- The impact of cost on demand for the service
- Market pricing, including comparability with other councils
- The impact of rates subsidies if competing with local businesses
- Cost and efficiency of collection mechanisms
- Statutory limits
- Other matters as determined by the Council

The ability to charge user charges is limited by various statutes and regulations. As a general rule, fees for statutory functions should be set at no more than the reasonable costs of providing the service. In some cases, legislation sets the fees at a level that is below cost and in other cases, where provided by legislation (such as the Waste Minimisation Act 2008) fees may be set at greater than the cost of providing the service. It is appropriate to incorporate overhead costs when determining the cost of providing a service. Fees and charges may be set at any time and are reviewed annually. A list of current fees and charges is maintained on our website.

Where appropriate and with consideration to 'ability to pay' principals, user charges will be increased annually by the rate of inflation to achieve continued alignment with the proposed funding policy targets. Revenue from user charges is generally allocated to the activity which generates the revenue.

Grants, Subsidies and Other income

Grants, sponsorship, and subsidies are generally used where they are available. Many of these types of income are regular and predictable and can be budgeted for (for example Waka Kotahi NZTA roading subsidy). Some other types are unexpected or unpredictable and may not be able to be prudently budgeted (such as reparation payments, civil defence and other reimbursements, legal settlements, and insurance claims). These are applied where applicable for relevant activities or projects. Other income also includes contractual arrangements.

Borrowing

Council generally plans to fund all cash operating costs from sources other than borrowing. However, in specific circumstances, where Council decides it is prudent to do so, it may fund some operating costs from borrowing.

Investment Income and Proceeds from sale of assets

The Council's approach to investments is documented in the Investment and Liability Management Policies. These investments generate income such as dividends, interest, and rents.

Income from all asset disposals is generally receipted to the activity that used the asset to deliver service. Generally, these proceeds are considered to be capital in nature. However, low value items may be used to fund operating costs. Council may resolve to utilise higher value proceeds for operating purposes if it is satisfied that it is prudent and in the community's interest.

Reserve funds

Reserve funds are used for the purposes that they were created. Reserve funds may be used to meet operating costs if the expenditure is consistent with the purpose of the fund.

Summary of sources of funding for operation costs by activity

The above funding sources (including general rates or targeted rates) were considered when determining the appropriate funding source(s) for each activity in the Funding Needs Analysis, as required by section 101(3)(a). Table 1 shows the degree (expressed as a range) to which each funding source is used to fund operating costs in relation to the relevant activity to be funded, as required by section 101(3)(a) of the LGA.

After the activity-by-activity analysis, the Council has undertaken an analysis of the overall impact of any allocation of liability for revenue needs on the current and future social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the community. This is described in more detail below. The results of this analysis may vary the outcome of the activity-by-activity analysis.

Table 1. Summary of revenue funding sources by activity:

Activity	General rates	Targeted rates	Fees and Charges	Grants, Subsidies, Other Income	Other funding	Borrowing
City governance and engagement	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Civic information	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
City Archives	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Parks and Reserves	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%-10%	0%	0%
Wellington Gardens	80%-90%	0%	10%-20%	0%	0%	0%
Beaches and coast	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Urban Ecology	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Trails	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Waterfront Public Space	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Waste minimisation, disposal and recycling management (Changes in Y4 of the 2024 LTP)*	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Closed Landfills Aftercare	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Organics & Rubbish Collection (starting Y4 of the 2024 LTP) **	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Water network	0%	90% -100%	0%	0% -10%	0%	0%
Water collection and treatment	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sewage collection and disposal	0%	90%-100%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Sewage treatment	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Stormwater management	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Conservation Organisations	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WellingtonNZ and Venues Wellington	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Tākina Wellington Convention & Exhibition Centre	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Activity	General rates	Targeted rates	Fees and Charges	Grants, Subsidies, Other Income	Other funding	Borrowing
City growth fund	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Major Projects	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
International relations	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Improvement Districts	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Galleries and museums (WMT)	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Visitor attractions (Te Papa/Carter Observatory)	30%'	70%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Arts and cultural festivals and events	90%-100%	0%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%
Creative Sector grants	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
City Arts projects and venues access	90%-100%	0%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%
City arts partnerships	80%-90%	0%	0%	10%-20%	0%	0%
Creative sector initiatives	100%		0%	0%	0%	0%
Swimming Pools	70%-80%	0%	20%-30%	0%	0%	0%
Sports fields	80%-90%	0%	10%-20%	0%	0%	0%
Recreation programmes	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Recreation Centres	70%-80%	0%	20%-30%	0%	0%	0%
Recreation partnerships	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Playgrounds	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Marinas	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Golf Course	60%-70%	0%	30%-40%	0%	0%	0%
Leisure card	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Libraries	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Community advocacy	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Activity	General rates	Targeted rates	Fees and Charges	Grants, Subsidies, Other Income	Other funding	Borrowing
Grants (Social and Recreation)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Housing	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Community centres and halls	0%	90%-100%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Cemeteries	50%-60%	0%	40%-50%	0%	0%	0%
Public toilets	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
City safety	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WREMO	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Public health regulations	30%-40%	0%	60%-70%	0%	0%	0%
Urban planning and policy	90%-100%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%	0%
Public spaces and centres development	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Built heritage development	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Housing development	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Building control and facilitation	30%-40%	0%	60%-70%	0%	0%	0%
Development control and facilitation	50%-60%	0%	40%-50%	0%	0%	0%
Earthquake risk mitigation	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Building Control and Facilitation	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Transport planning	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Vehicle network	90%-100%	0%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%
Cycle network	90%-100%	0%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%
Passenger transport network	10%-20%	0%	0%	80%-90%	0%	0%
Pedestrian network	90%-100%	0%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%
Network-wide control and management	60%-70%	0%	10%-20%	10%-20%	0%	0%

Activity	General rates	Targeted rates	Fees and Charges	Grants, Subsidies, Other Income	Other funding	Borrowing
Road safety	70%-80%	0%	0%	20%-30%	0%	0%
Major City Upgrades	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Roads Open Spaces	90%-100%	0%	0%	0%-10%	0%	0%
Charged Up Capital	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Parking	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

* This activity includes Landfill Operations, Rubbish collection, Recycling and Organics Management as well as Waste minimisation activities. Organics & Rubbish collection is proposed to move to a new activity ("Organics & Rubbish Collection") from Y4 of the LTP. This activity will then be funded via a targeted rate.

** This is the new activity that is proposed to cover Organics & Rubbish Collection from Y4 of the LTP onwards. This is proposed to be funded via a targeted rate placed on rating units receiving the service.

Unfunded operating expenditure

The Council has determined that the following items will not be funded:

Accounting for fair value changes: Under Public Benefit Entity International Public Sector Accounting Standard, changes in the fair value of certain assets must be accounted for within the Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense. In accordance with Section 100 of the Local Government Act 2002, the Council does not consider it financially prudent to fund changes in the fair value of assets or liabilities as these are essentially unrealised accounting adjustments.

Non-funding of renewal on Council assets: The Council may elect not to fund all or part of the depreciation expenditure on specific assets in those circumstances where it is not financially prudent to do so. In accordance with Section 100 of the Local Government Act 2002, the Council considers that it is not financially prudent to fund depreciation in the following circumstances:

- Where the original asset purchase was not funded by borrowings, or the original borrowings have been repaid, and
- Where, on an ongoing basis, the replacement of the asset at the end of its useful life will be funded by a third party,
- Where the Council has elected not to replace the asset at the end of its useful life.

- Where a third party has a contractual obligation to either maintain the service potential of the asset throughout all or part of its useful life (or to replace the asset at the end of its useful life) and the Council already effectively funds this through operating grants/tariffs payable to the third party.

Non-funding of depreciation on waterfront assets: The Council transitioned the waterfront project 'in-house' during 2014/2015. This acquisition has necessitated a transition toward fully funding the depreciation of waterfront assets by 2025/26. This transition funding links the cost of funding to the benefits received over time.

Non-funding of depreciation on water assets: On 30 June 2022, the Council revalued its infrastructure assets as part of the regular revaluation of Councils assets. This saw an increase in the value of our three waters assets increase by approximately 88%. Based on this, it was agreed that the three waters depreciation would be rates funded based on the quantum of the waters renewals capital programme for 2022/23 and 2023/24, leaving the balance unfunded. The Council is transitioning back to fully funded the depreciation on water assets by 2028/29.

Funding capital expenditure:

Capital expenditure represents expenditure associated with the purchase and improvement of assets that are held by the Council for use in the provision of its goods and services (for example: bridges, libraries, swimming pools), for rental to others or for administrative purposes, and may include items held for the maintenance or repair of such assets.

Capital expenditure is funded from depreciation, development contributions, capital funding, and restricted funds or through new or extended borrowings as outlined below.

Borrowing

Council must borrow to fund its asset programme. The amount of borrowing available is restricted by the Financial Strategy debt limits. Borrowed funds, both the principal and interest components, are generally repaid by future rates.

Rates

Rates are mostly used to fund depreciation and interest costs related to borrowing. A portion of rates funds the capital (principal) repayments of debt.

Targeted rates are used to fund specific capital projects where there is a benefit of separate funding. Reserve funds for capital expenditure can be sourced from rates.

Grants, Subsidies and Other income

The Council relies on significant subsidies for capital works relating to our transport activities, largely from Waka Kotahi NZTA. Grants and subsidies may be available for other activities from time to time. Other income can be received from many and varied sources and is often not predictable enough to budget for in advance.

Development contributions

Development Contributions are to be used as the primary funding tool for capital expenditure required on water, wastewater, stormwater, roads, and reserves caused by population and employment growth. DCs are applied on an activity and catchment basis, as identified by the DC Policy. Projects funded by DCs identified in the DC Policy may be either completed projects or future projects planned in the period for which DCs may be collected.

It is important to note that, in addition to the requirements of sections 103 and 101(3), the DC Policy describes the rationale for the selection of funding sources in more detail as required by section 106(2)(c)

Proceeds from sale of assets

The Council holds some high value assets for investment purposes which, although not budgeted for, could be sold. Unrestricted proceeds from the sale of these assets could be used to repay debt or supplement the corresponding asset replacement reserves, unless otherwise resolved. The sale of assets could also be used to invest in other assets or to fund a perpetual investment fund.

Other sources of funding

The funding of capital expenditure from restricted or special funds is decided on a case-by-case basis and is subject to the specified purposes and conditions governing the use of those restricted funds.

Financial or environmental contributions

The Council does not require Financial Contributions or Environmental Contributions. If, in the future, the Council decides it wishes to do so, requirements for contributions must be contained in the Council's district plan.

Lump Sum Contributions

Lump sum contributions are provided for in the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 and have restrictions placed on how they are used. Where a lump sum payment option is proposed, ratepayers may choose to pay the lump sum or not. If not, the rating unit will be liable to pay any targeted rate set to recover the loan costs. Generally, Council does not collect revenue from these funding sources to fund operating costs.

Fees and charges

User charges are not often used for capital costs as individual user contributions would generally be too large to be affordable. Borrowing and charging users annually for financing costs (interest and principal) via rates is often a more affordable method of collecting user contributions for capital costs.

The Council may charge for capital works that are for private benefit (such as, a network extension to a single dwelling) or where capital works are undertaken outside of Asset Management Plans at the request of individuals.

Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act 2020 (IFF)

The IFF, which was enacted in August 2020, enables Council to access a new off-balance sheet funding mechanism to support the delivery of infrastructure projects. Council is funding the new Sludge Minimisation Plant via an IFF arrangement.

Summary of sources of funding for capital costs by activity

Funding of Capital costs will be determined via the same principles as the operating costs funding policy unless the Council resolves otherwise. Such a resolution will follow the funding guidelines below and in doing so will be consistent with this policy and not require an amendment to the policy.

Existing projects (projects resolved prior to the adoption of this policy) will be funded according to the Annual Plan, Long-Term Plan or other resolution made at the time the Council approved the project. It is not practicable to determine a funding policy for all unknown future projects. Capital projects are often large in nature and will provide benefits over many years, and the funding approach must reflect this.

The Council uses the following guidelines when considering the funding of capital projects:

- A Funding Needs Analysis will be completed where the project is not included in the Council's capital works programme or is additional to planned services, or where its inclusion impacts on Council's overall funding capacity.
- All projects are to be funded from grants, subsidies, or other external income, where that is available.
- Renewal projects that maintain the same service level are then funded from reserve funds set aside for that purpose.
- General purpose funds or unrestricted reserve funds held for other complementary purposes are considered.
- Lump sum rating options are considered.
- Projects that have exhausted previous funding sources or are for new or increased service levels or for growth in infrastructure are then funded from debt.
- A single project may have a mix of each of these funding options.

It is not practical to create separate funding policies for each and every capital project. The Council will only do this when a project is particularly large, affects a particular group or does not fit with an existing funding policy or activity. Whenever funding a capital project, the Council will consider the available sources of funds, the Revenue and Financing Policy, and section 101(3) in applying the above guidelines to a capital project. Generally, the Council will resolve the funding policy at the time the project is proposed in an Annual or Long-Term Plan.

Overall funding consideration

The Council is required by section 101(3)(b) of the LGA to consider "the overall impact of any allocation of liability for revenue needs on the current and future social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the community". This allows the Council to modify the overall mix of funding that would otherwise apply after the initial s101(3)(a) analysis for each activity to be funded.

Having considered the factors in section 101(3)(b), the following adjustments have been made:

- The allocation of the rates liability between sectors of the rating base is altered by using differentials on the general rate and certain targeted rates. Differential treatment will apply as between commercial and residential properties, and for vacant land/derelict buildings. The Council may modify the differential factors during the term of the Long-Term Plan to reflect a change in allocation of cost, or benefit, or to achieve better community outcomes or wellbeing.
- The rationale for a higher commercial rates differential is three-fold: First, there is a large commuter base that comes into the City for work and uses the infrastructure: We estimate that on average, about 38,000 commuters come to the city every day. It is appropriate that the commercial properties which benefit from this use pay a correspondingly higher rate as compared to residential properties Second, businesses can deduct GST from their rates and deduct rates from their taxable income, which is not available to residential ratepayers. Third, reducing or completely removing this differential would have a substantial impact on residential ratepayers.
- The rationale for a higher vacant land/derelict building differential is two-fold: One community outcome the Council wants to achieve is a vibrant downtown area, and vacant land / derelict buildings can decrease the vibrancy of the downtown area and might have negative effects on retailers. Furthermore, vacant land / derelict buildings have a lower capital value (compared with similar land that is non-derelict or has improvements) and the benefits that owners (whether commercial or residential zone) receive from our general activities are disproportionate to the rates they pay, as compared to land which is fully developed and utilised. Also, the appearance of vacant land / derelict buildings can have a negative impact on the perceptions of the central city.

- The water targeted rate does not apply to ratepayers with whom Council has a separate agreement for a consumption charge.
- Rates affordability (people's ability to pay rates) is an issue in parts of the City. We have considered affordability in our funding needs analysis and in setting differentials.
- Fees and charges may be waived or discounted where it is considered appropriate to do so (e.g., Swimming pools). Some matters we may consider in deciding whether it is appropriate to waive fees are for social reasons (e.g., the promotion of events and facilities) or commercial reasons (e.g., due to poor service or to minimise risk).
- Rates may be remitted where it is considered appropriate to do so, as provided for in the Rates Remissions and Postponements Policies (including Māori Land). These policies address social matters (such as a remission for low-income households) as well as adjusting rates for benefits that differ for some rates assessments (such as additional or no provision of some services).
- The Council may use accounting provisions and reserve funds to spread the costs of activities over multiple years to smooth the cost to users and ratepayers.

Rates

Council's consideration of funding through rates comes:

- After considering how other funding sources will be used to fund operating and capital costs;
- After that has been applied to activities in the Funding Needs Analysis; and/or
- After being adjusted for the overall funding considerations.

The following section outlines the Revenue and Financing Policy requirements that are used to set rates. To have a full understanding of rates they should be read with regards to the analysis above and in conjunction with the Rating Policy, Funding Impact Statement and Rates Resolution.

General rates

The general rate is assessed on all rateable properties (rating units) based on the capital value of the property. The Council has determined in its Funding Needs Analysis which activities should be funded from general rates (see Table 1).

In respect of the general rate, Council observes the provisions of s101(3)(b) of the LGA and the overall impact of the allocation of liability for revenue needs on the community. In doing so, the council has chosen to differentiate the general rate based on four categories:

- A base differential rate, which applies to residential ratepayers, community organisations and rural land.
- A commercial differential rate, which applies to commercial, industrial, and business ratepayers.
- A vacant land / derelict building differential rate, which applies to vacant land and derelict buildings in the downtown area[2].

Targeted rates

Council collects targeted rates to fund activities as identified in the Funding Needs Analysis or as a result of overall funding considerations. Council collects the following targeted rates:

- Water rate
- Sewerage rate
- Waste collection – proposed from Y3 of the LTP onwards
- Stormwater rate
- Residential sector targeted rate
- Commercial sector targeted rate
- Downtown targeted rate
- Business Improvement District (BIDs)

Fee adjustments

The council will amend its regulatory fees and charges annually to (i) reflect increases in costs due to inflation, (ii) to maintain cost recovery levels or (iii) for new services provided / changes to existing services.

REFERENCES

The Funding Needs Analysis, required by section 101(3) of the LGA, provides the background and analysis to explain the funding decisions we have made. It is guided by the funding principles and choices of funding sources documented in the Revenue and Financing Policy.

[2] For further definitions and maps of the rating areas, we refer to our Rating Policy.

The Rating Policy further clarifies funding requirements by documenting matters not included in the Funding Impact Statement, rates resolutions or this Revenue and Financing Policy. It includes definitions and, when applicable, maps for rating areas.

Rates may be remitted where it is considered appropriate to do so and as allowed for in the Rates Remission policies (including Māori Land). These policies address social matters (such as a remission for low-income households) as well as adjusting rates for benefits that differ for some rates assessments (such as additional or no provision of some services).

The Funding Impact Statement is included in each Long-term Plan and Annual Plan as required by clauses 15 and 20 of schedule 10. This statement shows the results of the detailed rates calculation for each year. Together the above documents form the necessary components to lawfully charge under the LGA for our revenue requirements. We must also comply with other legislation regarding the setting of some fees and charges and the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 for the setting of rates.