



FAQs – Annual Plan 2025–2026

General

1. What is the Annual Plan?

The Annual Plan outlines the Council's spending priorities and projects for the year ahead. It updates the 10 Year Plan (Long Term Plan) to reflect current conditions—such as changes in costs, funding, or community needs—and details how Council will fund its activities.

2. How does the Annual Plan differ from the 10 Year Plan?

The 10 Year Plan sets out the longer-term goals and priorities for our city, the Long Term Plan is reviewed every 3 years and the Annual Plan is a one-year update that allows for adjustments in response to current challenges and opportunities.

Engagement

3. How were people able to have their say?

From 27 March to 27 April 2025 Lower Hutt residents were invited to provide feedback on our draft Annual Plan 2025-2026 through an online forum, in our neighborhood hubs, and in person to council.

4. What did we hear from the community?

As expected, we heard that people were concerned about affordability. Many told us that the rates increase was too high, and hourly parking fee increases, particularly in Petone, were unwelcome.

In response, we chose to not increase hourly parking fees across the city. Instead the daily maximum was changed from \$10 to \$12, to balance costs and affordability. We also reduced the rates increase slightly further, bringing it to 12.6% (after growth), compared to the 13.4% set out in the 10 Year Plan 2024-2034.

5. When was the Annual Plan adopted?

Final decisions were made on 4 June 2025 and the plan was adopted by Council on 27 June 2025.

Rates

6. What is the confirmed rates revenue increase?

The total rates revenue will increase by 12.6% (after growth). This is down from the 13.4% projected in the 10 Year Plan.

7. What does this mean for my household?

For an average residential property (\$815,000 capital value), this equates to an increase of \$463 per year—or about \$8.90 per week.

8. What about commercial properties?

Average central commercial properties will pay \$51.04 more per week. For suburban commercial properties, the increase is \$37.87 per week.

9. Why are rates increasing?

The rates increase supports the delivery of essential services and investment in infrastructure that our city depends on. It helps Council:

- Respond to inflation and rising costs of service delivery
- Maintain day-to-day services like rubbish and recycling, parks, roads, and community facilities
- Address a long-standing backlog in water infrastructure
- Manage debt responsibly so we remain financially sustainable in the long term

Over half of the average residential rates increase (\$248 of the \$463) relates to water services, including the higher operational and interest costs needed to support urgent upgrades to drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

Without this funding, we would not be able to continue fixing water leaks, progressing major projects, or providing the services our community relies on.

10. What support is available if I'm struggling to pay my rates?

We offer payment plans and rates postponement options. You may also qualify for a Government rates rebate. Visit huttcity.govt.nz/rates for more information or call us on 04 570 6666.

Fees & charges

11. Are any Council fees or charges changing?

Yes. From July 1 2025, some charges have been increased to better reflect the true cost of delivering services and reduce pressure on rates.

For example, parking daily maximums rose from \$10 to \$12 to help recover costs while

keeping hourly rates unchanged. There are minor changes across pool rates, landfill, community hall hires and more, in line with rising costs of delivery.

12. Where can I see if fees are changing for a service I use?

Under the 'Our Finances' section in the Annual Plan 2025-2026, you can find all changes to *fees and charges* from P.133-164. Specific changes, including to pools, landfill, community hall hires and more can be found on the relevant Council webpage.

Financial management

14. How is Council managing debt?

Council is maintaining its debt at prudent levels, keeping within a net debt to revenue ratio limit of 250%, well below the 280% limit allowed by the Local Government Funding Agency. This ensures we have headroom to respond to emergencies like floods or earthquakes.

15. Is Council still investing in infrastructure?

Yes. Despite cost pressures, investment continues—especially in water, transport and resilience. This includes funding for the Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant and other critical assets.

More information

16. Where can I read the full Annual Plan?

The final Annual Plan 2025-2026, and previous plans, can be found here: hutt.city/annualplan