



28 August 2025

Iotefa Mara

s7(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Iotefa,

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA) 1987

We refer to your official information request dated 31 July 2025, for all information relating to:

- *The analysis and/or calculation and/or consultation documents used to base these rates increases (16 per cent increase between 2023 to 2024; and 11.4 per cent between 2024 to 2025;*
- *The analysis and/or basis and/or consultation documents for switching from bi-monthly payments to quarterly;*
- *The forecast rates increases for this property over the next four years;*
- *The added amenities services being provided by HCC due to these rates increases;*
- *All information provided to HCC rate payers in respect of the recent rates increases and change in payment methodology; and*
- *Hutt City Council's policy on dropping calls to its contact centre when phone lines are busy.*

Answer:

We refer to your official information request dated 31 July 2025, seeking information about the basis for recent rate increases, changes to payment frequency, forecast rates, added services, communications to ratepayers, and contact centre call handling.

Rate increases are set and approved by Council through the Annual Plan (or the Long-Term Plan, adopted every three years). The rate increases of 16.9 per cent (after growth) for the 2024–2025 financial year and 12.6 per cent (after growth) for the 2025–2026 financial year were considered and approved as part of the Long-Term Plan 2024–2034 and the Annual Plan 2025–2026 respectively. These plans are publicly available at: [Annual Plans and Long-Term Plans](#).

The Long-Term Plan 2024–2023 was developed over a series of meetings beginning with the Long-Term Plan/Annual Plan Subcommittee meeting on 30 August 2023. The Annual Plan 2025–2026 was developed from August 2024, with the first relevant meeting held on 26 August 2024. Final adoption of each plan occurred at full Council meetings on 27 June 2024 and 27 June 2025 respectively. Agendas and minutes for these meetings are available on the Council website: [Meeting agendas and minutes](#).

Both plans were subject to public consultation or engagement process. Archived relevant materials are available at: [Draft Annual Plan 2025–26](#), and [10 Year Plan 2024–2034](#).

The option to reduce the number of rates instalments from 1 July 2025 was first proposed to the Long-Term Plan/Annual Plan Subcommittee at its meeting on 16 December 2024. The decision to reduce the instalment number to four was made at the meeting on 24 February 2025. The agendas and minutes for both meetings are available on the Council website at:

- [Agenda of Long Term Plan/Annual Plan Subcommittee – Monday, 16 December 2024](#)
- [Minutes of Long Term Plan/Annual Plan Subcommittee – Monday, 16 December 2024](#)
- [Agenda of Long Term Plan/Annual Plan Subcommittee – 24 February 2025](#)
- [Minutes of Long Term Plan/Annual Plan Subcommittee – 24 February 2025](#)

Council is unable to provide rates forecasts for individual properties. However, the [Annual Plan 2025–2026](#) includes a table outlining projected rates revenue increases for the remaining years of the current Long-Term Plan. This information is located on page 19 of the published plan. Please note this relates to Hutt City Council rates only. We also collect rates on behalf of Greater Wellington Regional Council, which sets its own rates through separate planning processes.

The relevant Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan outline the services and projects funded through rates. These documents detail the Council's priorities, planned infrastructure, community services, and investment areas.

Information provided to ratepayers regarding the recent rates increases and the change in payment methodology was delivered through several channels. A communication flyer explaining the shift from bi-monthly to quarterly invoicing was included with both posted and electronic invoices for the final two instalments of the 2024–25 rating year. In July 2025, an advertorial was published in the Hutt News outlining the rationale for the rates increase and key infrastructure investments. The rates guide and accompanying attachment were then sent with the first instalment of the 2025–26 rating year. Copies of these communications are attached for your reference.

In response to your questions about our contact centre, customers typically wait between 2.5 and 3.5 minutes in the queue before being connected with an agent. The call abandonment rate averages around 12 percent, and overall customer satisfaction with our service is high, averaging around 85 percent.

If a call is disconnected in error, such as due to a technical or network issue, our agents will attempt to return the call wherever possible. Where a direct callback cannot be made, the details are shared with the wider team so that any staff member who subsequently speaks with the customer can continue assisting without the need to restart the process.

In addition to these measures, our system includes a safeguard to ensure customers are not left waiting indefinitely. If a caller remains in the queue for two hours, the system automatically generates a callback request.

At that point, the customer hears a message advising that someone will call them soon, and they are contacted as soon as an agent becomes available. To date, we are not aware of any caller having waited long enough for this safeguard to be triggered.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: [How to make a complaint | Ombudsman New Zealand](#), or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response to your information request may be published on Hutt City Council's website: [Proactive releases | Hutt City Council](#).

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebekah'.

Rebekah van der Splinter

Senior Advisor, Official Information and Privacy

Your first instalment of four is here!

New instalment due dates:



To help save \$50,000 a year, we've moved from six to four rates invoices annually, starting 1 July 2025.

This change only affects how often you receive invoices – not the overall rates you're charged.

You're now receiving your first invoice under this new schedule.

More information

 hutt.city/ratesdates

 rates@huttcity.govt.nz

 04 570 6666



FAQ

? **Has this change increased my rates?**

No, this change only affects how often you receive invoices. The rates shown on your invoice are your new annual rates for the 2025–2026 rating year.

? **Can I still make regular payments?**

Yes. You can continue paying weekly, fortnightly, monthly, or on each due date by Direct Debit. Paying every two months is still available via Direct Debit, just let us know.

? **Worried about larger, less frequent invoices?**

Flexible payment options are still available, like online banking, credit card, or in-person at the Council admin building or NZ Post. Direct Debit is best, enjoy peace of mind as your rates are paid automatically on time with no risk of late penalties.

? **Need to adjust your payment date, skip a cycle, or catch up later?**

Get in touch and we'll work with you! Whether you are tech-savvy or not, we've got support options for you.

? **How do I sign up for direct debit?**

Head to hutt.city/payingyourrates to complete a direct debit form or contact our team for assistance.



Help us further reduce paper waste and postage costs by getting your invoices emailed. Sign up at hutt.city/rates-portal-register

Did you know...

Hutt City Council
sends out
240,000
rates invoices
each year?



We currently send rates invoices six times a year. Most councils have four invoices, and a few send them just twice!

To save ratepayers \$50,000 a year, we'll be dropping down to four invoices, starting from 1 July 2025.

This change only affects how often you receive invoices, not the overall rates you're charged.

New instalment due dates:

- 1** 1 September
- 2** 1 December
- 3** 1 March
- 4** 1 June

FAQ

? Will this change increase my rates?
No, this change only affects how often you receive invoices, not the overall rates charged for the year.

? Can I still make regular payments?
Yes, you can continue paying in a way that works for you – weekly, fortnightly, monthly, or on the new due date. If you would like to keep paying two-monthly after 1 July 2025, just let us know.

? What if I have concerns about less frequent but larger invoices?
Flexible payment options will still be available, including direct debit to spread payments over time. Other payment options are online banking, credit card and in-person payments at the Council admin building or selected NZ Post locations.

? How do I sign up for direct debit?
Head to hutt.city/payingyourrates to complete a direct debit form or contact our team for assistance.



Help us further reduce paper waste and postage costs by getting your invoices emailed. Sign up at hutt.city/rates-portal-register

More information

 hutt.city/ratesdates

 rates@huttcity.govt.nz

 04 570 6666



Helping our communities thrive

Notice



Lower Hutt's Riverbank Market is moving in 2026

One of our city's most iconic weekend events since 2005, the Riverbank Market will be moving just up the road to Dowse Square and the Civic Precinct.

You'll still be able to keep your Saturday routine now with better access to High Street shopping, Riddiford Garden and playground, The Dowse Art Museum, Queensgate Shopping Centre and War Memorial Library.

The market needs to move to make way for improved stopbanks as part of the \$1.5 billion Te Wai Takamori o Te

Awa Kairangi (RiverLink) project which also includes transport improvements and work to reconnect our city to the river.

The new location was selected after detailed planning and engagement. It's close to the current market site, can host existing stallholders, and is well-connected to public transport and parking.

Find out more about the move at hutt.city/market

Local elections

Enrolled to vote?

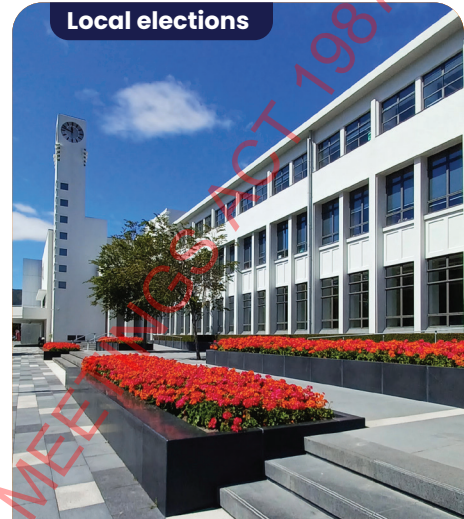
Will you be 18 or older on local government election day, 11 October 2025?

Ensure you're enrolled so you're ready to have your say on who represents you in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt. And if your address has changed since you last voted, you can also check or update your details online.

If you're of Māori descent, now's also the time to move between the General Roll and Māori Roll if you want to vote in the new Mana Kairangi ki Tai Māori Ward instead of voting in a geographic ward.

For more information, go to: vote.nz

Local elections



Making a stand?

Nominations to stand for Mayor, Council and Community boards close at 12 noon on 1 August.

To find out more about standing, head to: hutt.city/elections

Notice

Investing in Lower Hutt:

What's Changing with Rates

Lower Hutt residents will see an average increase of \$8.90 per week in their rates bills following the adoption of the Annual Plan 2025. This equates to a 12.6% increase in rates revenue (after growth), lower than the 13.4% increase forecast in the Long-Term Plan 2024-34.

More than half of this increase is being invested in critical infrastructure. Around \$4.27 per week is going towards upgrading and maintaining our water services—fixing ageing pipes and preparing for future growth remains a top priority. A further \$1.16 will support improvements to the city's transport network.

The plan includes \$256 million in capital investment, with funding for major resilience projects such as RiverLink and the Seaview Wastewater Treatment Plant.

How We're Making It Easier to Pay

To help reduce costs and environmental impact, we're moving from six to four rates invoices a year. This simple change will save around \$50,000 a year in postage, paper and processing. You'll receive your first quarterly invoice in early August, due by 1 September.

The easiest way to manage your rates is by signing up for direct debit. You choose the frequency that works for you, and we'll take care of the rest—making sure payments are on time and accurate. Direct debit also helps avoid overdue penalties, which can apply if full payments aren't made by the due date.

To learn more and set up your direct debit today, visit: hutt.city/ratesdates

Don't forget the new rates instalment dates



The Dowse

Wā & Korero: Shannon Te Ao and Kurt Komene

Saturday 26 July, 10.30am - 12pm
Free | Registrations appreciated

Come along to Ia rā, ia rā at The Dowse for a relaxed session of storytelling, connection and art. Hear directly from the artists about their creative process, collaboration, and what inspired the exhibition.

Photo credit: Shannon Te Ao, Ia rā, ia rā (rere runga, rere raro), 2021, three channel video still. Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs.

The Dowse

Whakataua: An adornment workshop with Neke Moa

Saturday 19 July, 10am - 12pm
\$40 | Bookings essential

Join Pōhātu Roa artist Neke Moa for a hands-on workshop using shells, fibre, and foraged treasures to craft a wearable artwork. Bring your own finds—shells, sticks, stones—or use materials supplied. Spaces are limited, secure your ticket on our website.

dowse.org.nz

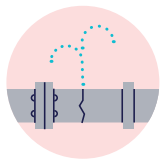
Contact

T: +64 04 570 6666 anytime | 0800 488 824 E: contact@huttcity.govt.nz
A: 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt Write to: Hutt City Council, Private Bag 31912, Lower Hutt 5040

Facebook: fb.com/huttcitycouncil
Website: huttcity.govt.nz

Why have my rates gone up?

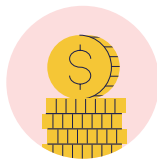
We are focused on making Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt a great place to thrive now and into the future, but our city has a number of challenges including:



Ageing infrastructure



Frequent weather events



Difficult economic environment

To help reduce costs we've delayed some projects, increased our debt, reduced budgets where possible, and have also increased fees and charges to ensure people pay for what they use.

We still need to put our rates up in order to pay for everything we need to do.

In 2025–26 the rates increase will be an average of

\$8.90

per week
per residential household.



How to pay your rates:

- Direct debit or automatic payment
- Phone or internet banking
- Online via credit card
- In person at our Administration Building (30 Laings Road)

Need help paying your rates?

- Payment plans and postponement available
- Rates rebates for those eligible

For more information, visit:
hutt.city/payyourrates

For more information:

 **0800 787 284**
or **+64 04 570 6666**

 More on our Annual Plan:
hutt.city/annualplan



A quick guide to your 2025–26 rates bill



This is how we plan to spend every \$100 of rates, based on the Long Term Plan

Council has agreed on an increase of 12.6% (after growth) in the total amount of rates revenue we collect for 2025-26.

From 1 July 2026, charges for water services will be separate from rates. Find out more at: hutt.city/futurewater

* Sustainability engagement represents spending on community activities, along with facilitation of projects across council activities, including investment in decarbonisation of council facilities, healthy urban waterways, etc.

** Water services is made up of water supply, wastewater, and stormwater investment.

We expect to receive \$5.58 of credit from the landfill. This will help to offset costs and is reflected in the figures for all these other services.

