

CONCERNED RATEPAYERS KAPITI: CANDIDATE QUESTIONEER 2025

Affordability and Financial Management

1 Projected Rates Increases

The Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 outlines average rates increases totalling 115% over 10 years.

If elected would you support these planned increases?

No- I do not support these planned increases.

I, along with 5 other We Love Kāpiti colleagues who are standing in other wards, will if elected, have the numbers at the council table to deliver on our priority to cap KCDC rates increases to no more than 3% p.a., on average.

We have done extensive financial analysis using the data that is publicly available. The 3% p.a. average rates increase is a cap based on what we know now. We may be able to achieve lesser increases once we have access to non-public KCDC information. At this point in time, promises of rates increases even lower than 3% p.a., on average, without the full financial data to back it up, would be an unprofessional guestimate.

2 Council Staffing Costs

Between June 2022 and June 2025, the Kapiti Coast District Council's (KCDC's) total staffing costs are projected to increase by 50%. This includes a 15% increase in staff numbers (FTEs) and at least a 24% rise in average cost per FTE.

Do you consider this level of increase acceptable and if not how would you address it if elected?

No- this level of increase is unacceptable.

We will reduce or cease working in the non-core activities such as:

- intergenerational inequity reporting (a central government responsibility)
- setting and monitoring global warming emissions targets (a central Government responsibility)
- a health strategy (Health NZ and the Ministry of Health's domain)

We also intend a KCDC structural review.

The capped expenditure budgets, will ensure there is no future scope for unwarranted increases in FTE numbers.

3 Economic Development Spending

The LTP plans to spend an average of \$3.1m per year on “economic development” over the next decade, mostly funded by residential rates.

Would you support this level of spending?

We Love Kapiti supports economic growth for the Kapiti District. We want people to come here, to live here, to enjoy the vibe we have to offer and to do that, we need business and economic growth. The role of Council is to make sure that entrepreneurial activities can be supported effectively and efficiently through its regulatory functions.

To get a better functioning economic development strategy we would likely ask all stakeholders to get together to discuss a way forward that is going to have minimum impact on ratepayers, yet create a positive group for progressive, innovative change .

The funding is currently set at \$3.1m a year, most of it funded by residential ratepayers. We will need to look into the allocation of spending in this area and assess what areas are functioning and what areas are not.

We will continue to provide funding for major events in our district currently under the auspices of the Economic Development Strategy. These events are the life-blood of our community- they make us what we are. Examples: Kapiti Food Fair, Māori Land Film Festival.

4 Toi Mahara Gallery Funding

Funding to the Toi Mahara Gallery increased from \$218,600 in 2022/23 to \$671,300 in 2025/26- a 207% rise.

Would you support this level of funding continuing over the next three years?

No We would want to see funding base lined at the actual 2022/23 year level with upward adjustments kept to CPI increases since 2022/23.

5 Debt Reduction and Rates Burden

KCDC plans to reduce its debt from a peak of \$345m in 2030 to \$262m by 2034, largely funded through higher rates.

Do you support this debt reduction Strategy?

No Under We Love Kapiti's 3% p.a. average rates rise cap, debt is predicted to rise to of \$350m in 2034, which is little different to KCDC's peak. This includes debt reduction from the sale of subsidised rental housing. There is no need to force unnecessary debt repayments on ratepayers now, rather than sharing repayments with the future generations, who will benefit over the life of the asset financed. While debt does have to be managed, KCDC does not face a debt crisis,

6 Capital Expenditure Programme

The LTP proposes \$799 million in capital spending over 10 years – about a third of the Council's current fixed asset value – putting considerable upward pressure on rates, especially through increased depreciation costs.

If elected how would you prioritise infrastructure spending to balance affordability and essential services?

We will stop excessive infrastructure spending, like the \$15m Waikanae library and the NZTA/Metlink funded and KCDC supported \$2.2m garden roof bus stop in Paraparaumu. These projects did not need to cost so much.

To deliver 3%pa capped average rates increases, and reduce long term debt, we will need to reduce capital spending by approx. \$50m. Expenditure on critical infrastructure will be given priority. The LTP provides an extensive list of planned expenditure, for example Strategic Land Purchase \$17.3m, and Parks Land Purchase \$37.7m, however it would be unprofessional of us to stipulate where the \$50m reduction will be applied without talking to KCDC staff first. We'll assess what's not critical, not urgent, or excessively priced once we have access to staff advice, and we'll consult the public before making any major changes.

7 Rates Cap proposal

The Government is exploring the possibility of capping local authority rate increases

Do you support the idea of capping rate increases.

Yes It will force Councils to operate with a culture of controlling costs, rather than a culture of cost plus. However a universal uniform cap for all Councils will not work as some Councils will have to spend more on critical infrastructure. Rates caps need to be costed for individual circumstances, which is what We Love Kapiti has done for KCDC

8 Public Engagement

Do you believe that KCDC currently engages well with the community on key plans like the LTP

No KCDC should be running public meetings to consult with residents during the day for those that do not want to come out at night, and in the evenings for those that have daytime commitments. These meetings need to be attended by Councillors, and KCDC staff that have the knowledge to answer technical questions. Opportunities for residents to have online input need to be expanded by inviting residents to subscribe to a mailing list whereby they receive emails inviting their input. KCDC's web site should also allow for feedback

9 **Flood Mapping Consultation**

Are you satisfied with the Council's recent consultation process on the revised flood hazard maps

No The Council has presented a flawed proposal that will result in many Kapiti dwellings being noted as flood prone which will unnecessarily devalue these properties and make obtaining insurance cover difficult and expensive. A residents group has presented credible qualified evidence to Council that the data assumptions and methodology used by Council are extreme and not a realistic prediction of actual risk. Instead of being open minded to consider this evidence Council has stubbornly refused to accept it should change its stance.

10 **Decision Making Behind Closed Doors**

Concerned Ratepayers Kapiti has raised concerns that decisions are effectively made before public consultation and often behind closed doors and, as a result little if anything changes through public consultation process.

What will you do to minimise the use of “public excluded” sessions?

The public should only be excluded when there is a genuine privacy issue or where the information is commercially sensitive. In many cases a matter for consideration will only have some privacy or sensitive components to it, and the matter can be discussed publicly except for these components. This may mean that the Council goes “In Committee” just to consider those components and then comes “Out of “Committee”. This may happen several times in one Council meeting, but in the interests of democracy it is better than a blanket public exclusion.

Will you advocate for prompt public release of decisions made in secret once confidentiality is no longer necessary.

Yes “In Committee” minutes should be posted on the council Website as soon as commercial sensitivity has passed. Privacy issues are likely to need to remain confidential. Each time the Council goes “In Committee” there needs to be a separate minute for this.

11 **Improving Transparency**

If elected would you introduce new measures to increase Council transparency and public participation

Yes My answers to 8 and 10 above apply here.

12 **Voting Rights for Non Elected Members**

Some elected individuals currently have voting rights on KCDC Committees. In other councils non elected individuals attend in an advisory role only

Do you support voting rights for non elected committee members

No The only people that should be making decisions affecting the lives of Kapiti residents are people that have been elected by those residents. I believe in democracy

13 **Maori Ward Referendum**

KCDC established a Maori Ward without a referendum, which was later mandated by central government. The Government has since required Councils to hold a referendum on the establishment of Maori wards.

Do you believe this decision should have been put to a local referendum regardless. Why or Why not.

Yes Establishing a Maori ward was a significant change to the way democracy works in Kapiti and residents should have been given the opportunity to decide this rather than having a decision imposed on them. KCDC did consult with a survey and of those that responded the majority did not support establishment of a Maori ward but the Council went ahead and did this anyway.

14 Top Three Priorities

What are the three most important changes you would want to see from the next Council compared to the current one,

- 1 Cap rates at no more than an average of 3%pa
- 2 Improve transparency and public consultation
- 3 Stop wasteful spending

15 Your Experience

What relevant experience do you bring to help address the financial and affordability challenges facing KCDC over the next three years

I have had a 35 year career in banking including managerial positions involved in financial analysis. I have also had managerial responsibility for developing and managing financial products, for the general market and for specialist customers. This has required legal compliance, innovation, and analysis to identify improvement opportunities.

I have served as Board Chairperson for 5 years for the Newlands College Board of Trustees. I understand the difference between governance and management, and how committees work.

Name **Brent Frogley**

Date 15/08/2023