

CONCERNED RATEPAYERS KAPITI: CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 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 (re)elected, would you support these planned increases?

NO

- If yes: Why do you believe these increases are affordable for ratepayers?
- If not: What level of average annual increases would you consider acceptable instead?

I feel that rates should be capped at no more than CPI. But Rates caps are not the total answer. The current system of Council rates rises across the country is unsustainable. We need to look at Rates Reform!

2. Council Staffing Costs

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

- *If you are a current councillor seeking re-election: Why did you support this level of increase, and what – if anything – would you do differently in the next term to manage costs?*
- *If you are a new candidate: Do you consider this level of increase acceptable? If not, how would you address it if elected?*
- *No, we need to balance the affordability with the work that needs to be done. while keeping staffing levels at sustainable numbers.*

3. Economic Development Spending

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

Would you support continuing this level of spending?

- If yes: Why? Only if we are getting value for money from the money invested to positive return!
- If not: What level of spending would you support instead?

I do not yet know all the details to make an informed comment!

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?

- If yes: Why?
- If not: What level of funding would you support instead?

This level of spending seems very excessive but I need to know details before I can comment.

5. Debt Reduction and Rates Burden

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

Do you support this debt reduction strategy? Why or why not?

I do not support Debt Reduction through higher rates!

We need to look at other ways of reducing debt, like attracting more businesses/employment to the area, increasing council revenue and other revenue streams.

We also need to look at the total system of Council debt. This may need to work with other councils and or central government.

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 (re)elected, how would you prioritise infrastructure spending to balance affordability and essential services?

- Are there specific projects you would delay, reduce, or cancel? Why?

If elected I will take a pragmatic approach to infrastructure projects, prioritising essential council services over Nice to Haves and linked to affordability!

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? Why or why not?

Yes! but rate caps are only part of the solution! We need to look further afield at rates reform.

Transparency

8. Public Engagement

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

- If yes: Please explain.

There seems to be but they could always do better.

- If not: What would you do differently?

9. Flood Mapping Consultation

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

- If yes: Why?

Aspects of it were OK! But...

- If not: What should have been done differently?

I made a submission but didn't get anything in the way of feedback.

Better acknowledgement of people's submissions is needed.

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 processes.

If (re)elected:

a) What will you do to minimise the use of "public excluded" sessions?

I would question why we need to exclude the public? and put pressure on, to make it open if exclusion is not justified!

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

YES

Improving Transparency

If (re)elected, would you introduce new measures to increase Council transparency and public participation?

- If yes: What would these be?

YES. I would question the justification of any lack of transparency or public participation.

- If not: Why not?

Governance and Accountability

12. Voting Rights for Non-Elected Members

Some non-elected individuals currently have voting rights on KCDC committees.

In other councils, non-elected individuals attend in an advisory role only.

Do you support continuing voting rights for non-elected committee members?

- If yes: Why, and would you extend this to other groups?

This would entirely depend on the circumstances of why non-elected committee members would have voting rights But...

- If not: Why not?

...in general I believe in elected democracy!

13. Māori Ward Referendum

KCDC established a Māori 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 Māori wards.

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

14.

NO! As New Zealand's first people, Maori should have a proportional voice in decision making.

15. 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: Rates Reform

2: Grow local Business and employment opportunities

3: affordable housing

16. Your Experience

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

As an executive in the New Zealand Merchant Navy Association and The Wellington branch of the Maritime Union, I have been involved in the financial management of these organisations, including Capital property investment, financial investments, day to day running and expenses and financial scrutiny of the organisation's finances.

I have also been involved with employment contract negotiations for large CEAs. These have to balance the financial situation of the company with those of the employees.

In 2019 I organised a week long Maritime festival and Careers expo in Wellington for the NZMNA which involved fund raising, spending allocation and working with Government departments, local council and businesses in the planning of these events.

NAME: Paul Baggott

DATE: 17/08/2025