

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, I do not support this level of increase. While households across Kapiti are cutting back and making tough choices, KCDC continues to spend like the good times never ended. The disconnect is clear - there continues to be too much spending on things that don't deliver real value.

- 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?

My focus will be on driving efficiencies in KCDC and cutting low quality spending to limit rate increases. Short term goal would be 5%, long term CPI plus 1% max.

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?***

Not acceptable. KCDC needs to move to a more business like footing and improve productivity rather than head count.

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?

- If not: What level of spending would you support instead?

I do not believe economic development is a core Council activity

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?
No.
- If not: What level of funding would you support instead?

Mahara Gallery should be moved into a Trust and should seek funding from private donors and community funding groups.

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?

Infrastructure should be funded by long term borrowing. However, currently KCDC is paying over \$200,000.00 per week in interest payments

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?

Keeping out infrastructure current and maintained is the Council’s prime priority. We are facing pressure from the growth in the area and I believe that developers need to be contributing to the cost of the demands growth will bring.

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

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?

No. Infrastructure costs are rising faster than the CPI increase.

Transparency

8. Public Engagement

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

- If yes: Please explain.
- 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?

No. I live on a section with a 1 in 16 slope yet I'm told I will have a ponding problem. The real problem is that the area highlighted is actually a swimming pool!

- If yes: Why?
- If not: What should have been done differently?

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?

Demand that reasons for public exclusion are rare and valid.

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

Absolutely. This is needed to ensure (regain) public confidence and goodwill are maintained.

11. Improving Transparency

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

- If yes: What would these be?
- 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?

- If not: Why not?

No. Councillors need to be publicly accountable to the ballot box.

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. 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: Drive to contain and reduce expenditure on non-core activities.
- 2: Instruct the CEO to ensure that his staff provide balanced information to Council so that Council make decisions rather than rubber stamping predetermined staff decisions.
- 3: Strive for transparency.

15. Your Experience

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

NAME: Murray Lobb

DATE: 29 September