



A Message from Mayor Kerry Prendergast

Maintaining Wellington's 'edge' in challenging times.

This draft long-term plan has been prepared against a backdrop of challenge. The global economy is slowing, household budgets are tightening, and there is anxiety about jobs.

In such times, what matters is balance.

Residents cannot be asked to fund significant increases in rates, or any other area of household spending.

But, at the same time, it would not be wise to make deep cuts to Council spending. That approach would cost jobs, remove important services, and in the long term make Wellington less vibrant, less competitive, and a less enjoyable place to live.

We face these challenges after a period of very significant investment in Wellington: in infrastructure and key services – transport, water, waste – and in parks, events, festivals, venues, and artistic and creative endeavours that make the city such a great place to live, work and play.

Just as most households continue to pay the mortgage for many years after the house is purchased, we are continuing to pay for many of these past investments. Even without adding anything new to our work programme, we face rising costs.

In this draft long-term plan, we propose to keep providing the key services on which the city depends, and to keep investing in the events and other projects that make Wellington so special. But we will not add to the burden on ratepayers by simply increasing investments. We'll focus our work in areas that we see as vital in the coming period and aim to reduce costs by making modest alterations to services where these don't unduly impact on the high quality of life Wellingtonians experience.

We could, of course, take other approaches. Wellington's rates are not high by national standards; we could continue to invest, and ask ratepayers to foot the bill. Or we could make deeper cuts, to ease the load on ratepayers. But both of these approaches bring costs.

This draft plan has been developed following an extensive review of our work programme and with input from Wellingtonians through an 'early engagement' exercise. I would like to thank all those who have taken part to date and encourage you to continue to have your say on the future of our fantastic city.

This is a draft plan. Your views do influence us. Have we got the balance right?

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "K Prendergast". The signature is fluid and cursive.

KERRY PRENDERGAST
MAYOR