

**Chairperson and Committee Members**

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

26 MAY 2016

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

## **RATES REMISSION FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 This report tables the rates remission applications for Land Protected for Natural or Cultural Conservation Purposes for the 2015/16 year and seeks approval for recommended allocations.

### **DELEGATION**

- 2 The Environment and Community Development Committee has authority to decide this matter under the following section of the Governance Structure and Delegations document approved by Council on 7 November, 2013:

*Section 13.1*

*“7.9 authority to consider and approve applications for Rates Remission for Conservation Purposes.”*

### **BACKGROUND**

- 3 The Long Term Plan 2015-35 references a policy for rates remission for land protected for natural and cultural conservation purposes. The detail of this policy is included in the Long Term Plan as Part 8 of the Rates Remission Policy (Attachment 1).
- 4 This Part 8 of the Rates Remission Policy supports the provisions of the Kāpiti Coast District Plan regarding incentives for heritage feature management and protection. It recognises that most heritage features are already protected by rules in the District Plan and encourages landowners to maintain, enhance and protect heritage features by offering a financial incentive.
- 5 The granting of a rates remission as an incentive for encouraging the protection and management of heritage features is consistent with Council’s responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Historic Places Act 1993.
- 6 Historically the remission fund was consistently oversubscribed, leading to an increase of funding for rates remission for natural or cultural conservation purposes from \$15,000 in 2007/08 to \$28,297 in 2014/15.
- 7 A total of 99 ratepayers benefited from the policy in 2014/15, and the land area to which remission applied totalled 658 hectare (ha). Having applied successfully for rates remission, ratepayers may continue receiving it provided they follow approved management plans designed to protect the natural and cultural values of their sites.

### **ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

## Issues

### 2015-16 Applications

- 8 The Rates Remission for Conservation Purposes programme was advertised in local media in December 2015, and the new owners of two properties whose former owners received remissions were informed of their eligibility by Council staff. Two new applications were received, and are recommended for approval. These are listed (marked with an asterisk) with other recommendations in Attachment 2. A total of 662ha of land on 98 properties are recommended for remission.
- 9 The first application is from the new owners of 234 Te Hapua Road, Te Horo, where there is a wetland identified as ecological site KO55 in the District Plan Heritage Register. The wetland comprises 4.1ha placed under QE II Trust covenant in 2004. The wetland is part of the regionally significant Te Hapua complex, which is highly representative of a formerly extensive swamp and is considered one of the best and largest remaining examples on the Kāpiti Coast. The area provides habitat for endangered species such as spotless crane, *Ranunculus macropus*, *Carex dipsacea*, *Potentilla anserinioides* and other species becoming uncommon in the Wellington Region including *Gratiola sexdentata*, kapungawha and *Baumea articulata*.
- 10 The new owners are committed to continuing protective management of the wetland started more than a decade ago by the previous owners, who followed a plan developed by ecologist John Preece. With advice and support from Kāpiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council, the owners are undertaking extensive pest plant and animal control and will plant eco-sourced native species as part of an on-going programme to protect and enhance the wetland.
- 11 The second application is from the new owners of 66 Smithfield Road, Waikanae, where there is a 4ha remnant of wetland, swamp forest and dune forest of high quality and diverse species representation listed as ecological site K133 in the District Plan Heritage Register. Located within 300m of Nga Manu Nature Reserve, the remnant forms part of an important ecological link between Kāpiti Island, the Hemi Matenga Reserve and the Tararua Ranges. The remnant is protected by a QE II Trust covenant and the landowners are committed to improving its values through good management. They are following advice from Council biodiversity staff on restoring native vegetation to weed infested areas on the bush margins.

## Options

### Principles of Rate Remission for Land Protected for Natural or Cultural Conservation Purposes

- 12 The following sections discuss the principles of rates remission, a range of funding scenarios (presented in a table format), and a recommendation made on the levels of rates remission for 2015-16.
- 13 The main principle behind this particular rates remission programme is to recognise the conservation efforts of ratepayers and the positive contribution their actions make to the district's cultural and biodiversity values.
- 14 The owners of these properties are often motivated solely by the desire to protect and manage their environment, and their actions are voluntary. Many are keen conservationists while others may fence off a bush remnant as the pasture

gain is negligible or to better manage stock movement. Whatever their motivation, addressing significant pressures such as stock grazing or noxious pests has a positive impact on the Kāpiti Coast environment.

- 15 Landowners could use the rates rebate for the upkeep of stock-proof fencing or pest animal and weed control. However in most instances the amount of remission is far less than the true cost of these protective measures.
- 16 Rates remission is an added incentive for landowners to respect the conservation values of parts of their properties that have a legal protection mechanism in place. Further, rates remission is one of the non-regulatory incentives for protecting and maintaining sites of conservation value discussed as part of the Proposed District Plan consultation process. The provision of rates remission also provides a good basis for on-going partnerships between Council and landowners.

### Calculation of Rates Remission

- 17 Rates remission amounts are calculated according to the size of the heritage feature as shown in Table 1. This method is coarsely related to the level of contribution towards the environment as larger areas of forest or wetland are generally more significant. This does not take into account, however, the presence of rare and endangered species or the amount of time and effort put into management.
- 18 This method allows an adjustment to the level of remission using minimum, medium and maximum remission bands as shown in Table 1. In the interests of fairness the selected band applies to all recipients.

<b>Table 1: 2015/16 Level of Remission vs. Feature Size</b>			
<b>Size of total protected area/feature (ha)</b>	<b>Minimum rates remission possible (\$)</b>	<b>Medium rates remission possible (\$)</b>	<b>Maximum rates remission possible (\$)</b>
Up to 1.0 ha	\$65	\$97	\$126
1.001 – 5.0 ha	\$128	\$195	\$253
5.001 – 10.0 ha	\$191	\$292	\$380
10.001 – 20.0 ha	\$256	\$392	\$505
20.001 – 30.0 ha	\$319	\$488	\$631
30.001 – 40.0 ha	\$385	\$587	\$758
40.001 – 50.0 ha	\$447	\$685	\$884
50.001 – 70.0 ha	\$512	\$774	\$1011
70.001 – 100.0 ha	\$575	\$881	\$1094
More than 100 ha	\$640	\$980	\$1263

## CONSIDERATIONS

### Financial considerations

- 19 The amounts in the maximum band of remission in the table above have been reduced by 3.4% from the amounts in that band in 2014/15 so that if the maximum rate were applied in 2015/16 the total amount paid would be within budget.
- 20 Applying the maximum band results in modest levels of remission, e.g. \$253 for areas between 1.001ha and 5ha, and most areas are smaller than 5ha. Council approved the application of the maximum band of rates remission for the 2014/15 year.
- 21 The amount of rates remission allocated in 2015/16 if the maximum band were applied to all applicants would be \$28,261, slightly below this year's budget of \$28,288. Applying the medium band to all applicants would result in remission totalling \$21,746, considerably less than this year's budget. Furthermore the latter option would cut the amounts applicants received by 24% compared to 2014/15, whereas the former would have applicants receiving 3.4% less. Applying the maximum band would achieve a better outcome in line with policy objectives. Therefore it is recommended that the maximum band of remission is applied.

The payments are credited directly to the rates account for each property.

## SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

### Degree of significance

- 22 This matter has a low level of significance under Council policy.

### Engagement

- 23 This matter does not require engagement under Council policy.

### Publicity

- 24 A media release will be prepared to publicise the Committee's decision.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 25 That the Committee approves the maximum band of rates remission to the properties set out in Attachment 2 to report CS-16-1873 in accordance with Council's Policy for Rates Remission for Land Protected for Natural or Cultural Conservation Purposes.

**Report prepared by**      **Approved for submission**      **Approved for submission**

**Rob Cross**

**Crispin Mylne**

**Wayne Maxwell**

**Programme Manager  
Biodiversity**

**Acting Group Manager  
Community Services**

**Group Manager  
Corporate Services**

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Appendix 1 Policy on Rates Remission for Land Protected for Natural or Cultural Conservation Purposes**

**Appendix 2 Properties recommended to receive Rates Remission for Natural or Cultural Conservation Purposes in 2015/2016, and recommended amounts**

## **Appendix 1**

### ***(from the Long Term Plan Rates Remission Policy)***

#### **PART 8**

### **RATES REMISSIONS FOR LAND PROTECTED FOR NATURAL OR CULTURAL CONSERVATION PURPOSES**

#### **Policy Objective**

The objective of this Policy is to:

- preserve and promote natural resources and heritage land to encourage the maintenance, enhancement and protection of land for natural or cultural purposes.

#### **Community Outcomes**

The Community Outcomes that this Policy relates to are:

- Outcome 1: there are healthy natural systems which people can enjoy; and
- Outcome 2: local character is retained within a cohesive District.

#### **Policy Conditions and Criteria**

This Policy supports the provisions of the Kāpiti Coast District Plan and the Heritage Strategy. It recognises that most heritage features are already protected by rules in the District Plan and encourages landowners to maintain, enhance and protect heritage features by offering a financial incentive.

Ratepayers who own rating units which have some feature of cultural or natural heritage which is voluntarily protected may qualify for remission of rates under this Policy, for example:

- properties that have a QEII Covenant under section 22 of the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977 registered on their Certificate(s) of Title;
- properties that have a Conservation Covenant with the Department of Conservation registered on their Certificate(s) of Title;
- properties that have a site listed in the District Plan Heritage Register (excluding any buildings);
- appropriately protected riparian strips; and
- heritage features that are protected by a Section 221 consent notice (Resource Management Act 1991) registered on the Certificate of Title (excluding buildings).

This Policy does not apply to land that is non-rateable under section 8 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 and is liable only for rates for water supply, wastewater disposal, waste collection or recycling.

Applications for rates remission in accordance with this Policy must be in writing and supported by documentary evidence of the protected status of the rating unit, for example, a copy of the covenant agreement or other legal mechanism.

In considering any application for remission of rates under this Policy, the Council Committee responsible for the Council's environmental and natural heritage portfolio (at the time of adopting this Policy this is the Environment and Community Development Committee) will consider the following criteria:

- the extent to which the preservation of natural or cultural heritage will be promoted by granting remission on rates on the rating unit;

- the degree to which features of natural or cultural heritage are present on the land;
- the degree to which features of natural or cultural heritage inhibit the economic utilisation of the land;
- whether, and to what extent, public access to/over the heritage feature is provided for;
- the extent to which the heritage feature is legally (e.g. covenanted) and physically (e.g. fenced) protected;
- in respect of Geological Sites and Wāhi Tapu:
  - the importance of the place to the tāngata whenua;
  - the community association with, or public esteem for, the place;
  - the potential of the place for public education;
  - the representative quality and/or a quality or type or rarity that is important to the District;
  - the potential of the place as a wildlife refuge or feeding area;
  - the potential of the place for its diversity in flora and fauna.
- in respect of Ecological Sites (Areas of Significant Indigenous Vegetation and Significant Habitats of Indigenous Flora) whether the site has:

Representativeness - The site contains an ecosystem that is under-represented or unique in the ecological district;

Rarity - The site contains threatened ecosystems; threatened species; and species that are endemic to the ecological district;

Diversity – The site has a diversity of ecosystems species and vegetation;

Distinctiveness – The site contains large / dense population of viable species; is largely in its natural state or restorable; has an uninterrupted ecological sequence; and contains significant land forms;

Continuity and Linkage within Landscape: – The site provides, or has potential to provide, corridor/buffer zone to an existing area;

Cultural Values – The site has: traditional importance for Māori; recreational values; significant landscape value; protection of soil values; water catchment protection; recreation or tourism importance; and aesthetic coherence;

Ecological Restoration - an ability to be restored; difficulty of restoration; and cost / time;

Landscape Integrity - significance to the original character of the landscape; isolated feature (for example, does it stand out or blend in?); and whether it has a role in landscape protection; and

Sustainability - size and shape of area; activities occurring on the boundaries which may affect its sustainability; adjoins another protected area; links; and easily managed.

Where remission of rates is granted under this Policy the landowner, in conjunction with the Council, will be required to develop a Heritage Management Plan.

The purpose of a Heritage Management Plan is to set out a plan of action for managing a heritage feature within the Kāpiti Coast District that is subject to rates remission.

The Heritage Management Plan will:

- be reviewed on an annual basis by the Council in conjunction with the landowner;
- may contain conditions which shall be complied with on an on-going basis, including requirements to fence off the area, undertake weed control and restoration, undertake pest control and keep stock out of the area; and
- will ensure that the site will be managed in a manner that protects and enhances the heritage feature.

Any decision on whether to grant remission on rates will be at the discretion of the Council Committee responsible for the Council's environmental and natural heritage portfolio (at the time of adopting this Policy this is the Environment and Community Development Committee). The amount of remission will be determined on a case-by-case basis by that same Committee, taking into account the merits of the protected feature and the extent to which it meets the criteria specified in this Policy. The amount of rates remission will be reviewed by that same Committee as appropriate.

In granting rates remission under this Policy, the Council Committee responsible for the Council's environmental and natural heritage portfolio (at the time of adopting this Policy this is the Environment and Community Development Committee) may specify certain conditions before remission will be granted. Applicants will be required to agree in writing to these conditions and to pay any remitted rates if the conditions are violated.

## Appendix 2

**Properties recommended to receive Rates Remission for  
Land Protected for Natural or Cultural Conservation Purposes in  
2015/2016, and recommended amounts**

<b>Property Location</b>	<b>Valuation</b>	<b>Amount</b>
331 Valley Road	1540004300	\$380
222 Valley Road	1530006403	\$253
62 Hadfield Road	1490005300	\$253
234 Te Hapua Road	1489001104	\$253
140 Taylors Road	1486120207	\$126
150 Taylors Road	1486120208	\$126
96 Otaki Gorge Road	1488109601	\$126
243 North Highway 1, Otaki	1486124200	\$380
432 Mangaone South Rd	1490023400	\$758
518 Mangaone South Rd	1490023401	\$126
115 Arcus Rd, Te Horo	1488127403	\$126
566 Rahui Rd, Ōtaki	1488151200	\$631
0 Akatarawa Road, Waikanae	1488516803	\$505
117 Ruapehu Street	1525164400	\$126
197 State Highway 1	1526204900	\$126
310-312 Te Hapua Road	1489001116	\$380
67 Waihoanga Road	1488158704	\$253
331 Otaki Gorge Rd	1488106600	\$253
176 Te Hapua Rd,	1489000800	\$253
69 Mickell Road, Te Horo	1488166504	\$380
52 Ruahine Street	1525131600	\$126
168 Taylors Rd	1486120212	\$253
200 Reikorangi Road	1488516102	\$126
54 Kohekohe Road	1494149000	\$126
30-34 Greendale Drive, Paraparaumu	1526035024	\$253
71 Aston Road, Paraparaumu	1515012400	\$505
366 State Highway 1, Paekakariki	1540002404	\$253
207 Te Hapua Road	1489001114	\$126
98 Old Coach Road North	1486103300	\$380
5 Matata Place	1496055362	\$126
227 Te Hapua Rd	1489001113	\$253
90a Winara Ave	1488159001	\$631
54 Makora Rd	1526004900	\$126
48 Ruahine St	1525131500	\$126
91A Ringawhati Road	1486154000	\$253
0 State Highway 1, Paraparaumu	1515011900	\$505
16 Aston Road, Paraparaumu	1515012422	\$380
15 Catley Road, Te Horo	1488124001	\$126
14 Riwai Street	1525142300	\$126
158 Taylors Road, Otaki	1486120209	\$253
15 Manu Grove	1495107600	\$126
87 Belvedere Avenue	1495129300	\$126
126 Te Hapua Rd	1489000702	\$253
184 State Highway 1, Paraparaumu	1526227100	\$253
70 Otaki Gorge Road	1488108900	\$126
0 State Highway 1 South, Otaki	1486117000	\$253
<b>Property Location</b>	<b>Valuation</b>	<b>Amount</b>

75 Forest Lakes Road, Otaki	1486119900	\$253
204 Te Hapua Road, Waikanae	1489001100	\$505
108 Huia Street, Waikanae	1496035150	\$253
152 Te Hapua Road,	1489000700	\$505
298 Mangaone Road, Waikanae	1490024900	\$380
20-24 Reikorangi Road, Waikanae	1488515600	\$126
80 Waterfall Rd	1540004100	\$380
99 State Highway 1, Waikanae	1489019600	\$380
387, 405 Otaki Gorge Road	1488107600	\$253
0 Otaki Gorge Road, Otaki	1488107000	\$253
362-368 Otaki Gorge Road,	1488120000	\$380
514 State Highway 1,	1515013800	\$505
60 Octavius Road, Waikanae	1490005605	\$253
424 Te Moana Road	1494115500	\$126
Otaki Gorge Road, Otaki	1488164700	\$1,094
217 State Highway 1	1526205500	\$126
528-530 State Highway 1, Paekakariki	1540002500	\$631
190 Te Hapua Road, Waikanae	1489001101	\$126
3 Hadfield Road, Te Horo	1490003207	\$253
92 Old Hautere Road, Te Horo	1488118100	\$253
111 Ngatiawa Rd	1490018701	\$126
156 Maungakotukutuku Rd	1540004400	\$253
16 Tongariro St, Paraparaumu	1525120400	\$126
2 Kereru St	1496065000	\$126
248 Ngarara Road,	1489015200	\$884
66 Smithfield Road	1489017300	\$253
Park Avenue	1493175200	\$631
53 Mangaone Road	1490018900	\$126
121 Otaihanga Rd	1526032800	\$253
2 Jacks Bush Road,	1489016200	\$126
8 Jacks Bush Road	1489016201	\$253
16 Jacks Bush Road,	1489016203	\$253
31 Jacks Bush Road,	1489016204	\$126
27 Jacks Bush Road,	1489016205	\$126
19 Jacks Bush Road,	1489016206	\$126
17 Jacks Bush Road,	1489016207	\$126
Hadfield Road	1490003212	\$253
19 Kakariki Grove, Waikanae	1496067101	\$126
568 Otaki Gorge Road, Otaki	1488157510	\$253
231 Te Hapua Road, Ōtaki*	1489001115	\$253
233 Te Hapua Road, Ōtaki*	1489001111	\$253
182 Te Hapua Road, Ōtaki	1489000900	\$505
1400 Ōtaki Gorge Rd, Ōtaki	1488165809	\$1,263
319 Mangaone Nth Rd, Hautere	1488167200	\$631
79 Belvedere Avenue, Waikanae	1495128900	\$126
95 Panorama Drive, Paraparaumu	1530150001	\$380
146 Rahui Road, Ōtaki	1486155800	\$126
153 Main Road North, Paraparaumu	1526203500	\$253
218 Pukenamu Road, Ōtaki	1489000213	\$253
11 Kakariki Grove, Waikanae	1496066800	\$253
0 State Highway 1, Ōtaki	1486122400	\$380
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28,261</b>