



5 September 2025

The Hon Wayne Brown

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Dear Hon Wayne Brown and Auckland Council

RE: 2025/2026 RATES LEVY

1. This letter is sent on behalf of the Omaha Beach Community Inc. (OBC) which represents most of the property owners in Omaha.
2. You will be aware that there is a significant degree of discontent regarding the recent rates process. In particular, many owners have been taken by surprise by the level of increases, not attributable just to any increase in the tri-annual revaluation of their properties, but in the way that the Council has calculated the increase.
3. The outcome is that instead of the forecast 5.8% increase for average value residential properties or 6.8% following the revaluation process, the true rate of increase for the owners we represent is ~25%.
4. The purpose of this letter is to try and gain a better understanding of exactly what has occurred and why.
5. You will of course be aware of the Council's obligations pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002.
6. In particular s.95 requires a local authority to prepare and adopt an annual plan for each year and consistent with the provisions with that section to adopt a consultation process following the principles set out in s.82 of that Act.

7. In general terms the consultation process is to ensure that owners and ratepayers are provided with reasonable access to relevant information so that the public are fully informed and encouraged to present their views on any issues of importance.
8. S.93(c)(2)(g) of the Act provides that the long-term plan must include the impact of proposals on the rates assessed in different categories of rateable land with a range of property values, by the provision of examples as provided for in s.15(5) of Schedule 10 of the Act.
9. The Council's long-term plan was released in February 2025. The information on rates was dealt with in Part 3 and after discussing the revaluation process generally stated that the proposed overall rate increase would be 5.8% of the average value of a residential property, which in general terms would be 6.8% for the 2025/2026 year but subject to the revaluation process.
10. Pages 30 – 32 of the consultation document are **attached** for your convenience.
11. A reader of the long-term plan / consultation document could take comfort therefore from the annual consultation document that the rates would not materially differ from those forecast in the passage cited above.
12. In fact, that information appears to be quite misleading. The rate increases are not 5.8% or 6.8% of the average value, not just because there was an increase in value (and which is always open to challenge), but because the multiplier used by the Council in assessing rates was 0.00162380 for the 2023/2024 year and now 0.00202701, and which converts to an average percentage increase of 24.83%.
13. Omaha is treated for rating purposes as rural / residential. At some point it appears to us the Council made a decision to utilise a two-part mechanism to impose disproportionate and severe rate increases on owners of properties such as those in Omaha.
14. The first is that the Council was in possession of revaluation data showing a material divergence in property values, with rural / lifestyle properties increasing in value relative to urban residential properties. Examples can be provided if required. That is a breach of s.93(c)(2)(g).
15. Secondly it appears to have made a contemporaneous and active policy decision to significantly increase the general rates multiplier applied to those properties.
16. The Council's own internal analysis contained in its adopted annual plan for 2025/2026 (Volume 1, pages 79 – 80) show that it had actual knowledge that the compounding effect of the new and higher multiplier to the new valuations would be severe and disproportionate.
17. The Committee believes that in spite of possessing this direct knowledge of both the mechanism and its inevitable outcome the Council deliberately withheld all of this material information from the public in the consultation process.

18. We understand the Council's position on the question of rural / residential rates is that the current budget was not a "major change" in the Council's overall ten-year plan. However, in the final budget 2025/2026 Volume 1 on pages 79 – 80 the Council discussed the significant and unfair rates impact the new property values would have on rural properties. The Council chose not to mention that fact when it asked for public feedback.
19. As we expect you will understand our members and ratepayers have been taken by surprise by the significant increase in the assessment of rates and have asked us to investigate this matter further.
20. A number of homeowners have advised us that they exercised the invitation contained in the consultation document to have their say but were still not alerted to the change in the rating multiplier. It is quite likely that most ratepayers would be content with that assessment and not therefore exercise the other rights available to them.
21. Those rights included not just having a say, but a possible challenge to the rating value, the time for which has now expired, or raising the issue with the Local Board, Council members, and through the press. All of those opportunities have been lost.
22. For these reasons we would be grateful if you could let us have answers to the following questions:
 - (i) Do you agree that the Council made the decision to increase the multiplier for rural / residential properties such as those at Omaha?
 - (ii) Do you agree that the average percentage increase in rates was not 5.8%, or 6.8% after the revaluation, but in fact almost 25%?
 - (iii) If the answer to the preceding question is yes, when was the decision made to increase the multiplier and by whom?
 - (iv) Why was the public not notified that the Council's annual planned consultation document was in error and for the reasons discussed above?
23. In view of the public interest in this matter a copy of this letter will be posted on the OBC website and will no doubt attract a good deal of comment.
24. It is therefore in the public interest for you and the Council to let us have your earliest response with as much detail as possible.
25. In the meantime, the OBC expressly reserves all the rights and remedies available to it.

Yours faithfully



Paul Head (President)
OMAHA BEACH COMMUNITY INC.