

## **2019-2020 Budget (extract)**

### **Part 14 – REVENUE POLICY**

#### **1. Revenue Policy**

In accordance with section 104(5)(c)(iii) of the *Local Government Act 2009* and section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the Council has prepared and adopted this revenue policy as a financial policy of the local government.

#### **2. Objective**

The objective of this revenue policy is to help ensure consistency between the Council's longer term objectives, as set out in the Financial Plan, and the revenue decisions made in the 2019-2020 budget process.

#### **3. Policy Statement**

##### **3.1 General policy statement**

It is an intended outcome of the Financial Plan that Council remains in a sound financial position at all times whilst delivering on the objectives contained within the Financial Plan. It is envisaged that overall net wealth of the community (total equity) will continue to be enhanced throughout the planning period.

To achieve this outcome the Council will seek to ensure that its revenues (after concessions on rates and charges) are sufficient to cover its costs having regard to year-to-year variations in revenues.

The Council has adopted a set of principles relating to the levying of rates and charges, granting concessions for rates and charges, recovering overdue rates and charges and cost-recovery methods.

The Council will take account of the principles of equity, economic efficiency and simplicity in levying rates and charges and granting concessions for rates and charges.

##### **3.2 Levying rates and charges**

###### **3.2.1 Principles**

In accordance with section 193(1)(a)(i) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the Council intends to apply the principles as set out below for levying rates and charges.

In general terms, to ensure that Ipswich continues to be a great place to live and to attract business investment and employment, the Council intends to fund the cost of providing services from user charges, except where:

- (a) the benefits of a service or facility are available to all residents;
- (b) concessions for rates and charges are applicable to groups or individuals based on their lower capacity to pay and exceptional circumstances of groups or individuals who meet eligibility criteria;

- (c) it is not cost-effective to levy user charges;
- (d) not doing so provides net economic benefits in attracting and retaining businesses; and
- (e) in the opinion of the Council, such charges do not meet the objectives of the Financial Plan.

Further, from a practical perspective, in levying rates and charges, the Council intends to:

- (a) make the system for paying rates and charges simple and inexpensive to administer;
- (b) manage its cashflows from rates and charges by providing for quarterly payments, discounts for payment by the due date and interest on overdue amounts; and
- (c) provide an equitable payment system that provides a range of payment options for ratepayers to pay the rates and charges and arrears of any rates or charges.

### **3.2.2 Differential general rates**

The Council intends to levy differential general rates on all rateable land in the local government area. This recognises the inequity which would result if a single general rate were applied to all rateable land in the local government area by reference to the rateable value of the land alone.

For rateable land that is used for residential purposes or is used for commercial activities a higher rate may be applied than that applied to rateable land that has no capacity to produce revenue such as rateable land used for a residential purpose which is occupied by the land owner. This reflects the revenue-producing capacity of rateable land that may be rented or is used for commercial activities.

Differential general rating categories, described in the Revenue Statement, are reviewed each financial year in order to maintain a rating structure that is clear, cost effective and simple to administer.

Differential general rates will be set at levels:

- (a) to generate revenue sufficient to meet the difference between the outlays of the Council's business activities less any ordinary business or trading income, grants, subsidies or contributions received in respect of those programs and any internal financial accommodation arranged;
- (b) that recognise the different revenue-producing capacity of rateable land within the local government area; and
- (c) that recognise the differing level of benefits that rateable land in different rating categories receive from the Council's services and facilities.

### **3.2.3 Rateable value of land**

The Council has determined that the rateable value of land shall be the 3-year averaged value of land and that the 3-year averaged value of land will be used as the basis for calculating the differential general rates. The value of the land as determined by the Valuer-General in accordance with the *Land Valuation Act 2010*, will be used by the Council for calculating the 3-year averaged value of the land, and the 3-year averaged value will be worked out in accordance with section 76 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

### **3.2.4 Minimum amount of general rates and special rates and charges**

The Council has determined that due to the cost of providing a minimum service to rateable land, an equitable contribution per rateable land is to apply in relation to the funding of the Council's services and facilities and that this contribution is to be made irrespective of where the rateable land is located or its valuation.

The Council has also determined that rateable land in certain rating categories may have a different minimum amount of general rates to that applying to other rating categories.

The Council may also elect to fix a minimum amount of special rates and charges.

### **3.2.5 Limitation of increase in rates or charges levied**

The Council intends to limit the increase in the differential general rates for certain rating categories of rateable land in the local government area to moderate the impact of rapid, uneven and significant changes in land values across the local government area.

### **3.2.6 Special rates and charges**

The Council may elect to levy special rates and charges, on a year by year basis, for rural fire brigades and other facilities or services which it considers have a special association with particular land in the local government area. The proceeds of the particular special rate and charge are directed towards the costs of the relevant initiative or facility.

### **3.2.7 Separate rates and charges**

A separate charge for the Enviroplan will be levied equally on all rateable land within the local government area, to provide for the acquisition and protection of bushland areas and for the provision of facilities for public access to those areas, on the basis that the benefit is shared equally by all parcels of rateable land, regardless of their value. The revenue raised is used to contribute to the costs of acquiring bushland and for providing and managing public access.

### **3.2.8 Utility charges**

Utility charges for waste management services are determined having regard to the following:

- (a) performance targets in the Ipswich Waste Services Annual Performance Plans;
- (b) the cost of provision of the services and infrastructure and an appropriate return on assets;
- (c) pricing oversight requirements of the Queensland Competition Authority;
- (d) operating and capital grants, subsidies or contributions received from others.

Some waste management utility charges are supplied by special agreement. The charges which have been negotiated under those agreements still have regard to the above principles.

The Council's waste management utility charges are applied on a per waste management service basis. All costs associated with providing the waste management service are recovered by levying the waste management utility charges.

### **3.2.9 Discount**

It is the Council's policy to encourage the prompt payment of rates and charges by allowing a discount for the payment of certain rates or charges where payment is made in full on or before the end of the discount period stated in the rate notice being 30 days from the issue of the rate notice. The discount is only to apply to the differential general rate (excluding utility charges, separate charges, Emergency Management Levy and arrears of any rate or charge).

The Council also encourages prompt payment of selected fees such as annual dog registrations by offering a discount for the full payment by the due date.

## **3.3 Granting concessions for rates and charges**

### **3.3.1 Principles**

In accordance with section 193(1)(a)(ii) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the Council intends to apply the following principles for granting concessions for rates and charges:

- (a) where an applicable Council policy in relation to the granting of the concession is in place, the Council will grant concessions where there is a need to resolve anomalies in order to ensure equitable treatment for groups and individuals in similar circumstances;
- (b) regard is to be had to the limited financial capacity to pay and exceptional circumstances of groups or individuals who meet eligibility criteria in any applicable Council policy;
- (c) that the requirements for granting concessions be clear and transparent in order to ensure the equitable treatment of all beneficiaries.

### **3.3.2 Purpose for the concessions**

The purpose for the concession for rates and charges to be granted by the Council are stated in the following table.

<b>Column 1 Concession for rates and charges</b>	<b>Column 2 Purpose for the concession</b>
Concession to an eligible pensioner who owns and occupies rateable land.	Acknowledge that pensioners have limited financial capacity.
Concession to an eligible entity whose objects do not include making a profit which owns rateable land.	Support activities that do not make a profit.

<b>Column 1</b> <b>Concession for rates and charges</b>	<b>Column 2</b> <b>Purpose for the concession</b>
Concession to an eligible entity that provides assistance or encouragement for arts or cultural development which owns rateable land.	Support activities that assist and encourage arts and cultural development.
Concession to an eligible landowner who is an individual and who is subject to financial hardship from the payment of rates and charges.	Support individuals where the payment of rates and charges will or has affected the wellbeing of the individuals in such a way as to constitute an unreasonable outcome based on present community standards.
Concession to an eligible landowner whose land is subject to a mining lease requiring the carrying out of improvement restoration for the mining lease.	Support the carrying out of improvement restoration for the mining lease which is exceptional and necessitated by the characteristics of the land.

### **3.4 Recovering overdue rates and charges**

#### **3.4.1 Principles**

In accordance with section 193(1)(a)(iii) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the Council intends to apply these principles set out below for recovering overdue rates and charges.

In general terms the Council exercises its rate recovery powers in order to reduce the overall rate burden on ratepayers.

The Council specifically intends to apply the following principles for recovering overdue rates and charges:

- (a) transparency by making clear the obligations of ratepayers and the processes used by the Council in assisting them to meet their financial obligations;
- (b) making the processes used to recover outstanding rates and charges clear, simple to administer and cost effective;
- (c) equity by having regard to capacity to pay in determining appropriate arrangements for different sectors of the community and providing the same treatment for ratepayers with similar circumstances;
- (d) flexibility to respond to community expectations by providing assistance to encourage or discourage certain behaviours.

#### **3.4.2 Interest**

The Council also intends to charge interest on overdue rates and charges from the day on which they become overdue and at the rate as may be determined under section 133 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* compounded on daily rests. However, if the overdue rates and charges are paid within 21 days from their due date, no interest shall be charged.

### **3.5 Cost-recovery methods**

#### **3.5.1 Principles**

In accordance with section 193(1)(a)(iv) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the Council intends to apply the following principles for cost-recovery methods:

- (a) fees and charges are set to recover the costs of the Council in providing services and taking actions associated with regulatory compliance;
- (b) the process for recovering the Council's costs is to be clear, simple to administer and cost effective.

#### **3.5.2 Cost-recovery fees**

The Council has fixed cost-recovery fees under section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. All cost-recovery fees set by the Council are included in the Register of Cost Recovery Fees which is open for inspection at the Council's public office.

### **3.6 Funding of physical and social infrastructure costs for new development**

In accordance with section 193(1)(c) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, the Council intends to fund the provision of local government trunk infrastructure networks for new development by the adoption and levying of infrastructure charges on new development in accordance with the *Planning Act 2016*.

The infrastructure charges for providing local government trunk infrastructure networks are detailed in resolutions made by the Council under the *Planning Act 2016* having regard to the Council's planning scheme including its priority infrastructure plan.

The Council also intends for new development to meet the Council's additional costs of bringing forward development infrastructure and other physical and social infrastructure costs for a new development which is of sufficient magnitude to accelerate the growth rate of a specific area so that the availability of facilities is not adversely affected and existing ratepayers are not burdened with the cost of providing the additional infrastructure.

### **3.7 Other revenue**

#### **3.7.1 Commercial fees**

The Council charges commercial fees for other services provided by the Council.

The Council intends to set the commercial fees having regard to the following:

- (a) the user pays principle;
- (b) the estimated cost of provision of services or access to the Council's facilities;
- (c) a fair return for the use of the Council's infrastructure;
- (d) the fees charged by any alternative providers;
- (e) the performance targets set for the Council's business activities;
- (f) the need to encourage or discourage particular behaviours.

### **3.7.2 Other revenue**

The Council intends to pursue and collect other revenue, such as investment interest income, sale or disposal of assets, grants and subsidies, sale of Council's provision of goods or services and dividends from investments on the basis of the Council taking advantage of opportunities to maximise the efficient use of resources and activities under its control.

## **4 Roles and responsibilities**

The General Managers in each department, together with the Finance Branch of the Corporate Services Department, are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.