This plan outlines a programme of work that continues with the broad range of high-quality services that make Wellington such a great place to live and do business.

This plan responds to the economic climate by delivering an average rates increase of 3.74 percent. This is a notable achievement considering we face significant costs pressures – from insurance, interest and depreciation costs, from increases in petroleum based products such as bitumen that is used for maintaining our roads, to our leaky buildings liability – all of which are unavoidable costs that have to be met.

We achieved this result through prudent financial management - by focusing on internal efficiencies, austerity measures and process improvements to deliver over $7 million in savings, as well as making modest reductions to some services where tolerance is greatest and where they will not adversely impact on the overall outcomes sought for the city.

Without the austerity and efficiency initiatives undertaken this year, the rates increase would be much higher.

We have a busy programme of work ahead of us in 2011/12. The 2011 Rugby World Cup will bring thousands of visitors to the city, the new indoor community sports centre will open, and we will continue to look after the city’s $6 billion of assets to ensure they meet the needs of the community now, and into the future.

In the coming year we will earthquake strengthen core infrastructure – particularly our water network, make improvements to our recreation facilities, look after our parks, beaches and gardens, develop plans for the future of the city, regulate building work, make transport improvements, and continue to deliver the hundreds of vital services on which the city and its residents rely on for their quality of life.

GARRY POOLE