

Sent: Saturday, 28 March 2015 12:35 PM

Subject: Newcastle City Council - David Walker - objection submission

Attn : Local Government Team

Please accept this as my submission as an individual ratepayer, regarding the recent application by Newcastle Council to increase rates by 8% annually compounded over 5 years.

I submit that :

- Newcastle Council have not consulted adequately with ratepayers
- Newcastle Council have mis-represented ratepayers when reporting the results of surveys (although I am aware of one survey only). I personally have contributed to one survey conducted by the Council “Voice” web survey portal, in which rate increase options were canvassed. There were three options given, of which one was to be selected. The rate increase sought by Council was not one of these options. The increase sought is considerably more than those canvassed.
- the rate increase sought is an “ambit claim” and that Council are setting an unrealistic and unjustified goal for funding in the knowledge that iPart will agree to a lesser amount, albeit that amount will be higher than if originally requested.
- ratepayers are not satisfied with the efficiency of Council and manner in which the current rates are spent. There has been insufficient communication of other options including cost reductions such as contracting out of some services, and user pay options for some services.
- many ratepayers cannot afford rate increase of this magnitude. That is not to say a small increase is not warranted, perhaps up to the statutory maximum rate increase (ie with no variation). In this economic climate any increase in rates will make home budgeting for many a burden that is not sustainable.
- Any rate increase will be passed on from landlords to tenants, which may put further economic pressure on the less advantaged residents of Newcastle
- The rate increase is politically motivated and is designed to be used as a means to build infrastructure much of which will be difficult to justify, simply as a means to promote the political profile of some Councillors.

Regards,

David Walker