

Do you wish to speak in support of your submission at the hearing?:

Yes

I am able to attend: Afternoon, Evening

I intend to attend: In-person

Would you like to be added to our database to be notified of future consultations?:

Yes

### **Your Details**

Full Name: Selwyn Price

### **Do you agree with our preferred option or do you support another option?**

Drinking water meters: Don't install meters

Let us know why: Up until now I have supported the use of water meters, and the charging of water beyond a basic daily limit (one cumec per day per household). However, the wording in this LTP consultation document makes me deeply suspicious – “We do not plan to charge for water in this draft ten year plan, but the future funding of water will be reviewed in three years’ time”. In other words, once we have installed water meters, at your expense, we will be able to charge you for water reticulation. What evidence has ADC provided that “we could be losing up to 50% of our water from the system”? (where is the citation for the specific study of this issue?). How much of that water loss would be detected if water meters were placed on the public parts of the system only (trunk and reticulation mains), and not on service connections? Surely a renewal programme of all mains will alleviate the worst of water leaks, and alleviate the need or cost of water meters?

Elderly Persons Housing: Self sustaining in 7 years

Let us know why: Back in July 2020 this question went out for public consultation and a subsequent decision was made. Why is council now backtracking on that decision? The public housing price comparisons provided on page 21 are meaningless – they are incredibly selective, and no source is given for the information. We deserve better than this in a public consultation document. We have only got into this position because of a previous systemic lack of maintenance (and I'm afraid that ADC is notorious for this with all of its buildings), so it begs the question as to what systems will be put in place to avoid this being a recurring event. I see this as rectifying a historic flaw, and don't see why some of the most vulnerable of our residents should shoulder this burden alone. We should continue to subsidise rents for the longer of the two options, which is surely the humanitarian thing to do, and then ensure that elderly persons housing is self-sustaining.

What do you think about our plans for our other projects and activities?: Specific responses to the LTP Consultation Document Our Strategic Direction 1/ p. 9 Success measure: “Residents believe they can influence council decision-making” – in my opinion public consultation needs to be more than mere occasional lip-service. It is incumbent on

all councilors to show they have read all the submissions and have considered the content by asking specific questions of submitters. 2/ p.9 Success measure: “Resident satisfaction with the state of the district’s environment and biodiversity” – nobody should be satisfied with the state of the district’s environment and biodiversity. In recent years declining water quality (eg, Ashburton Lakes, Hakatere/Ashburton River), lack of wetlands, and meagre remnants of native flora and fauna have meant that the Ashburton District has one of the worst records in the country when it comes to biodiversity. With native vegetation covering considerably less than 0.01% of land area on the plains (compared to the Canterbury-wide average of 1%), combined with an increased interest in native planting for carbon sequestration from agricultural interests in particular, and the restoration of indigenous habitat from a range of community groups in general, the time is right for the appointment of a fulltime biodiversity officer to coordinate activities and develop council policies. Beyond biodiversity, council have a responsibility to role-model good environmental practice, and much more needs to be done on a daily basis to reduce council’s energy usage and carbon emissions. A LTP is an opportunity to look ahead to what can be achieved in all areas, but continuing with a high spend on roads, and little to no mention of alternative transportation networks, this appears to be a ‘status quo’ approach to planning in general, and to identified challenges in particular, in the environmental sphere. 3/ p.9 Success measure: “Resident satisfaction with Council’s activity to care for the districts environment and biodiversity” – this should not be construed to mean maintaining the status quo: currently we have river catchments being over-allocated; a band aid approach (ie. too little mitigation) to effectively improving water quality, reducing leaching or actively role-modelling reducing carbon emissions; and a desire to dig more bores instead of reducing consumption of groundwater. I was disappointed to see that council’s response to the NPS for freshwater management didn’t embrace looking at how they could work towards achieving the statement’s aims and objectives, but instead commissioning not one but two reports opposing the statement. This is not only counterproductive, but is backward-looking, drawing attention to this council’s obsession with the economic development of the agriculture sector above all other considerations, and continues their reputation for denying the challenges that climate change will inevitably bring. A proactive approach might include such things as how the agriculture sector can be assisted/advised to decrease the clear degradation of our environment, how planting on public and private land can be managed to increase carbon sequestration, and how council can reduce their own carbon footprint, eg. what is the percentage of EVs in the council’s fleet? 4/ p.9 Success measure: “Tourism spend trends” – the trend of ADC investment in attracting tourists to the district has been consistently downward for many years, and none more so than in 2020. When the tourism sector most needed support, council cut it loose. On a recent road trip south, I was struck by how communities smaller than Ashburton (eg. Oamaru and Gore) have understood and embraced the

benefits of attracting visitors to their districts, and the economic development benefits brought by identifying a point of difference and enhancing it. It is beyond time for Ashburton to stop behaving as if we are an island, and open up to the benefits (social, cultural and economic) of attracting visitors from across the rivers. Our Challenges 5/ p.14 Climate change – it strikes me that here the challenges are understated and the opportunities are overstated. Climate change challenges confront more than just the minority of residents in Ashburton District who work in the agricultural sector, and the challenges affect all of us as a community more than just economically. It continues to be an embarrassment to have council state such an anti-scientific approach (especially from a council dominated by agriculturally-linked councilors and with a newly created Agricultural Portfolio Advisor position) as that there is an opportunity to grow new crops without considering the downside to this. Consider, for example: warmer, wetter and more humid conditions equal increased fungal activity, which requires more management with even more fungicides; vector-borne diseases will affect both human and animal health; agronomists/hydrologists would be able to advise on the effect of the water cycle, which may need a complete rethink of all human activity, especially in the instance of desertification along the East Coast. 6/ p.14 I totally agree that “Conserving and enhancing intact ecosystems, such as wetlands, could help lessen the impact of extreme weather events as well as providing ecological value”, but have seen scant evidence of this in the LTP consultation document – where is the budget (previously in the LTP) for this, and will wetlands be created, for example, to help filter stormwater before it is discharged into our rivers? 7/ p.14 Covid-19 - A whole section on Covid-19 and not a single mention of health or health outcomes for our community! This, of course, gives the lie to the assertion (p.8) that “Kā hua ki te hāpori, our community outcomes, also look to the future and take a ‘whole-of-community’ view. They integrate social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. We aim to contribute to these outcomes in every activity that we deliver...” 8/ p.14 “With a rurally dominated community it is expected that our agriculture sector will be a source of strength for our local economy” – while the District’s economy may be ‘rurally dominated’ the community is not – around 60% of the people in the district live in urban areas. Climate change will impact, of course, all aspects of our lives, not just economic. 9/ p.14 “the increasing difficulty to import goods and skilled labourers into New Zealand may impact the delivery of services and therefore our economy.” – aside from the term ‘skilled labourers’ being an oxymoron, any industry relying on migrant workers (skilled or otherwise) long term needs to take a good, analytical look at their sector model. What else are we planning in the next ten years? 10/ pp.26/30 “Ashburton CBD car park \$1.5 million” “Develop a Parking Strategy and Ashburton CBD Parking Plan – and we’ve budgeted \$1.5m in 2021/22 to implement this plan” - was this not considered when the CBD revitalization plan was made and implemented? If not, this seems like an admission of an embarrassing oversight. We might also like to consider transport trends over the next ten years, and consider whether

a community better informed around carbon emissions and other effects of climate change might make the provision of so many parking spaces obsolete. 11/ p.27 Stormwater capital upgrades (from Year 8) \$17 million? Does this include consideration of filtration of stormwater before it is discharged into our rivers? (see also point 6/, above, and point 15/, below). Farmers have rightly made the comparison of rural degradation of freshwater to that of urban areas, and in my view we need to clean up both – council has a responsibility in the stormwater area, and needs to provide more detail about how this budget will be spent. 12/ pp.27/29 Ashburton Urban Second Bridge \$7.5 million? Waka Kotahi will not fund the rest of this if it is on an urban road rather than a State Highway. What fund will the remaining \$10.7 million/21% come from? Is this nothing more than wishful thinking? I would like to add my voice to those who oppose the current preferred option of a bridge off the end of Chalmers Avenue. My opposition encompasses just about everything about it, from public consultation, through the decision-making process, to road safety (in particular for the hundreds of school-age children who cross Bridge Street and Chalmers Avenue twice daily), to environmental and economic factors (eg. haulage companies will always take the shortest route, which for those passing through will always mean SH1/West Street). My preference would be for a bridge going directly off the end of West Street, and linking with Melcombe Street, before having priority to rejoin SH1 south of Tinwald. 13/ p.27 “Festive lighting \$417k” – less than five years ago we were told that the festive lighting proposed to be purchased then would last 25 – 30 years. Should we expect better accountability from our council than this? 14/ p.27 Library books – modern libraries need resources that include, but are not restricted to, books. A review of how books are de-accessioned, and where they go when they are, might also be timely. In my view, our rural libraries get a miserly part of the budget, and rural people deserve a better slice of the pie in this area. 15/ p.28 “Continue with our stormwater network upgrade programme - to increase our resilience against flooding and to improve the quality of the water before it enters the environment” – how and at what estimated cost? (see also points 6/ and 11/, above). 16/ p.29 “Continue our stockwater closure programme” – at a saving of \$50k per annum, but at what cost to the environment, including to the aquifers? 17/ p.29 “Methven does not have enough water storage” – for what purpose, by what study, and at what cost environmentally? 18/ p.31 “Additional resources have been included to increase our capability in biodiversity” – what does this mean, and how much is allocated, bearing in mind that the current level is a very low bar (see also points 2/ and 3/, above).