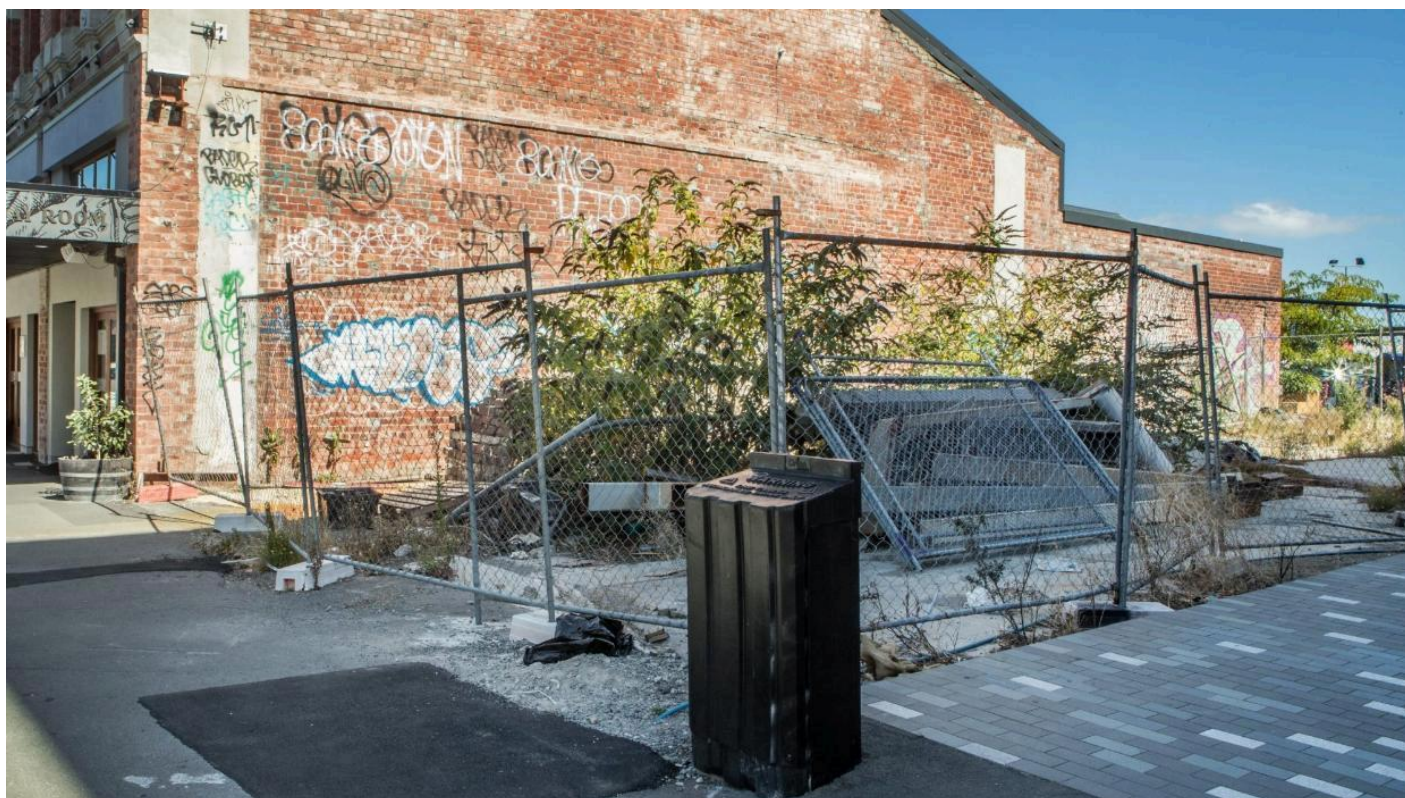


June 21, 2022, • 07:34pm

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Untidy and vacant sites in central Christchurch, such as this one on High St pictured earlier this year, could attract a rates hike for the owners.

JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON / STUFF

Owners of shoddy empty central city blocks are on notice – lift your game, or you will have to pay.

Christchurch City Council decided on Tuesday to go ahead with a [controversial new rating scheme that will significantly hike the rates of vacant central city land](#).

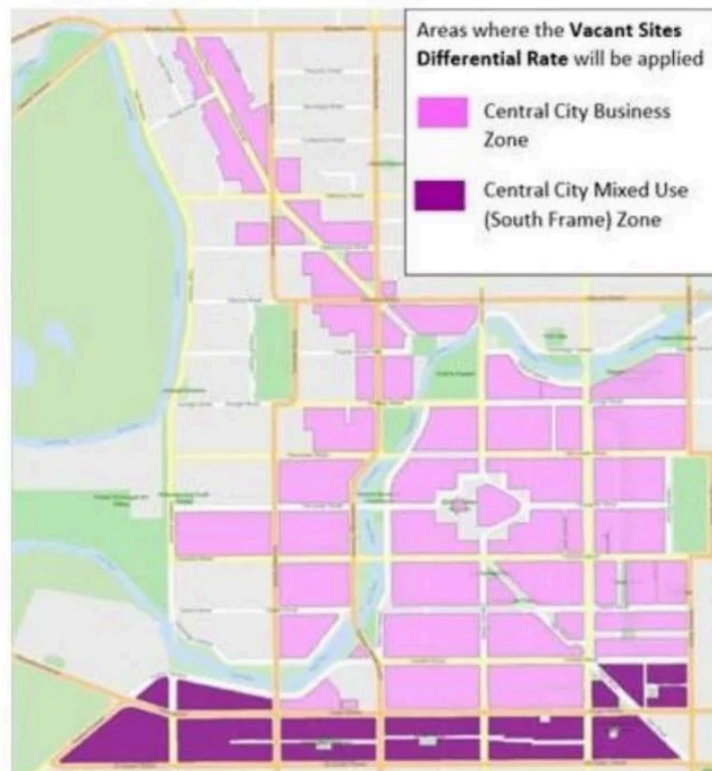
The decision was made as the council adopted its 2022/23 annual budget, confirming a 4.65% rates rise or \$2.66 per week (\$138.27 per annum) for the average residential property worth \$508,608.

The rise is [below the 4.96% that was signalled earlier this year](#).

**READ MORE:**

\* [Plan to tidy up vacant Christchurch land 'will only encourage bad development', opponents say](#)

\* [New budget sets out rates hike for vacant land in central Christchurch](#)



This map shows the areas (in pink and purple) that will be affected by the council's proposal to charge extra rates on vacant land.  
CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL / SUPPLIED

The new scheme will affect owners of vacant properties in much of the central city, including the South Frame and around Victoria St.

Property owners will be charged four times the standard general rate, but only if there is no active or consented use being made of the land.

Most [temporary car parks in the central city](#) will not be affected, as most have a resource consent.

Land worth \$2.15 million would normally pay about \$11,796 towards the general rate. Under the new scheme, it would jump to about \$27,803.

Owners will be able to apply for a rates remission if they keep sites tidy and well maintained and if development has been held up because of council delays in processing consents.

The council has also directed staff to investigate extending the policy throughout the city and to cover derelict buildings. These will be consulted on next year as part of the 2023/24 annual plan.



Councillors approved a \$1.27 billion budget on Tuesday. (File photo)  
ALDEN WILLIAMS / STUFF

Mayor Lianne Dalziel said people had overwhelmingly asked the council to do something about vacant sites.

She said the new policy was about fairness and providing property owners with a financial incentive to do something positive with their land.

Gough said the council's approach was misguided and there were too many questions over what qualified for a remission and Owners of vacant land paid relatively low rates because rates were based on capital value, but they benefited from council's what did not, while MacDonald said landowners had been through difficult times and the council needed to be careful about a infrastructure, Dalziel said. policy that penalised them.

"It's only right they should pay a fair share of the costs, if they won't lift their game as many have."

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Sara Templeton said the council had provided substantial "carrots" for people to develop in the central city, but now it needed to use a "stick" as well.

"We've had people come to us asking us to make our city look better."

Councillors also decided to delay bringing in the excess water charge from July to October.

Some [wanted it deferred for 12 months](#), but it did not pass after the vote was split when Dalziel abstained. The deferral passed 10 votes to seven.



## Locals are buying the Governors Bay jetty to restore it

Locals are buying pieces of the Governors Bay jetty to help restore it after it was wrecked in the quakes and the council deemed it too expensive to repair. *(Video first published November 2013)*

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Other notable decisions under the annual plan include a \$3m grant to Edgeware Pool and \$815,000 given for the Governors Bay jetty, which [is in addition to a \\$1.5m loan](#) approved in March.

Another \$537.5m will be spent on the daily costs of running the city, and \$126.5m on debt.

Six councillors voted against the annual plan adoption – Chu, Keown, Gough, Johanson, MacDonald and Mauger, Gough saying the council needed to be far smarter with how it spent its money.

## No news is not good news, Canterbury

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