

POSITION DESCRIPTION

1 Position

POSITION: Rates Officer

APPOINTEE:

REPORTS TO: Manager Finance & Information Technology *and*
Senior Finance Officer

LOCATION: Greymouth

2 Nature and Scope

2.1 Geographic

Within Grey District boundaries but regular contact and visits throughout New Zealand if required.

2.2 Responsibilities and Objective

The Rates Officer is responsible to the Manager Finance & Information Technology to assist with the efficient charging, collection, and accounting for all rates levied by the Grey District Council in accordance with the relevant legislation and Council policy.

2.3 Functional Relationships

Required to establish strong links with the following:

Within Organisation:

- Work colleagues
- Planning and Regulatory Section Staff - Inspectors, Planning Officers etc
- Administration Staff - who handle Council's land transactions (leases, sales etc)
- Members of Council's Management Team

Outside Organisation:

- Ratepayers and other customers
- Real Estate Offices
- Solicitors Firms
- Valuation Service Provider (VSP)
- Office of the Valuer General
- Land Information New Zealand
- Work and Income New Zealand
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Surveyors
- West Coast Regional Council
- Council's Auditor
- Council's Corporate Financial System Provider
- Council's Debt Collection Agency
- Other Council's Rating Departments

2.4 Influence/Impact of Position on Organisation's End Results

- Rates in the Grey District are recognised to be high and therefore, not popular. They currently account for approximately 50% of Council's operating revenue. The Rates Officer therefore plays a key role in the revenue collection processes of Council. The position calls for a high level of inter-personal skills and the ability to provide explanations which are easily understood by others is essential.
- Actions of this position holder impacts greatly on other position holders who have a greater control over the organisation's results.

2.5 Problem Complexity and Scope for Problem Solving

- Problems of a complex nature may be encountered from time to time and are expected to be able to be solved by the position holder.
- Problems of a highly complex nature should be discussed with the Manager Finance & Information Technology.

3 Key Tasks and Expected Outcomes

3.1 Strategic

- Advise the Manager Finance & Information Technology on the adequacy of Council's current rating policies, taking note of new and/or amended legislative requirements.
- Ensure the integrity of Council's District Valuation Roll (DVR) is maintained to a sufficient quality to meet the standards required by the Valuer General.
- Advise the Manager Finance & Information Technology on recommended enhancements to Council's Rating software solution. Identify any new requirements to the software as a result of a change in legislation and/or Council policy.

3.2 Operational

- Process all maintenance required to keep computer rating records updated. This includes:
 - General rates maintenance (change of address, ownership, changes to improvements, changes to capital/land value, correction of data etc).
 - Adjustments to rates levied (remission of rates allowed by Council policy or delegation, corrections, alterations, including addition of fees where applicable etc).
- Process all updates made by Council's Valuation Service Provider, which may involve manual and/or electronic updating of information.
- Reconciling Council's database to that of the Valuation Service Provider and taking the appropriate action to correct where necessary.
- Reply to rating correspondence received within 7 days of receipt of correspondence. Due to the number of rateable properties in the district, it is expected that the level of correspondence regarding rating matters will be high.
- Filing of all rating correspondence, valuation references, maintenance input forms and output from computer in a manner in which it can be easily traced and retrieved.
- Preparation and mailing of rates invoices/assessments each billing period. Rates invoices and assessments are prepared on electronic media which is processed by a Print/Mail-House who print and post the rates invoices and assessments direct. The Rates Officer must liaise with the Print/Mail House and also Council's software house to ensure that the file sent for printing is error free and in the correct format. Electronic copies of all documents must be returned for electronic archival. Liaise with the Print/Mail House to ensure there is sufficient paper stock for printing.
- After the last day for payment of each rates instalment and at the end of the financial year, the Rates Officer shall levy a penalty at the rate set by Council resolution. Council policy must be followed in relation to those ratepayers who qualify for exemptions and remissions in terms of the imposition of such penalties. Penalty notices shall be processed in-house and issued after each penalty levy.
- Review the level of payments being received by Council from ratepayers paying by 'Direct Debit' to ensure that payments are sufficient. Review outstanding rate amounts owed to Council and initiate follow up action to recover such amounts (eg sending a reminder notice).
- Advise Manager Finance & Information Technology on appropriate action for outstanding debts.
- Place outstanding rate debts as directed in the hand of a debt collection agency and monitor the recovery of such debt.
- The valuation roll held on Council's database must be balanced to that held by Council's Valuation Service Provider on a monthly basis. After the triennial revaluation of properties in the

Grey District the Rates Officer must update Council's database and ensure that the rolls are kept in balance.

- Identification of land which may be abandoned, and then carrying out the necessary action to have the Courts declare the land to be abandoned and allow Council to advertise it for sale.
- Deal with all day to day counter and telephone enquiries in a polite and courteous manner. The number of queries received, especially regarding valuations, can be very high.
- Be a first point of contact for ratepayers requiring an explanation of the rating process and its specific implementation in the Grey District. Resolve any conflicts where possible where ratepayers have a genuine issue.
- Provide assistance to the cashier during peak times to ensure cash receipting is carried out efficiently and effectively. (The requirements as set out in the Cashier's job description apply here)
- Supervise the Rates Rebate scheme; including processing rebates, answering queries from ratepayers, assisting staff with correct rebate procedures, liaising with the Department of Internal Affairs as required and keeping up to date with rebate legislation and requirements.
- Update the Rating section of Council's website and intranet.
- Expected to carry out the duties allocated under the civil defence plan.

3.3 Personal Development

- To attend relevant and value-adding professional courses and programmes in consultation with the Manager Finance & Information Technology.

3.4 Other

- Any other duties which the Manager Finance & Information may, from time to time, allocate.

4 Limitations on Authority

4.1 Legal Status

The incumbent will, apart from the responsibilities set out herein, have all the powers/responsibilities delegated to them by the Chief Executive Officer, or Council through the Chief Executive Officer.

5 Person Specifications

5.1 Personal Attributes

- The position holder will deal mainly with individuals and organisations outside of the Council. It is required that the position holder will at all times display excellent public contact skills while discharging his/her duties in this respect.
- Effective communication skills are also required to enable the day to day work routines to be completed effectively and efficiently.

The Rates Officer will:

- have strong and astute inter-personal skills relevant to both internal and external association
- be a proficient communicator, act responsibly, and be able to project a credible and dependable image, maintaining and promoting appropriate standards of integrity
- demonstrate an ability to balance innovative and creative thinking with critical and objective analysis
- have a good understanding of the operational and statutory constraints applicable to the local government and rating function
- be positively competitive, performance-driven and accept responsibility and accountability for attainment of quality of performance and departmental goals
- be committed to excellence in service delivery and promote departmental efficiency setting a personal example of honesty, integrity and ethics
- work towards high performance, achievement departmental and inter-departmental teams through a positive, collaborative approach

5.2 Qualifications and Experience

- No formal tertiary qualification is required.

- Secondary education to a high standard is required.
- A high standard of written and oral English skills are required for this position.
- An understanding of database manipulation is required for this position.
- Computer literacy is required for this position.
- The Rates Officer is expected to have a thorough knowledge of rating under the applicable legislation.
- A good understanding of the requirements of Council and Management is also required to ensure that the position holder can react to different situations in a manner which will ensure that the wider goals of Council are being met.

Rates Officer

Date

Manager Finance & Information Technology

Date