

## 9. QUALIFICATION FOR EARTHQUAKE RELATED RATES RELIEF

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	Paul Anderson, General Manager Corporate Services, DDI 941-8540
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Diane Brandish, Corporate Finance Manager
<b>Author:</b>	Steve Kelsen, Funds and Financial Policies Manager

1. On 19 August 2011 the Board requested staff advice regarding “the requirement for residents to provide engineering reports or other evidence to support their application for rates rebate, when the Council would already hold the information.” The purpose of this report is to provide the information requested.
2. At its meeting on 10 June 2011 the Council resolved to continue to provide earthquake related rates remissions for residential properties that are unable to be occupied.
3. When applying the earthquake related rates remission policy Council staff follow the following process:
  - (a) Where Council holds information which shows that a property cannot be occupied and the date on which it qualified a rates remission for that property is granted without the need for application by the owner (for example, all residential properties located inside the central business district cordon were identified using Council’s geographic information system and a remission was applied to their rates account).
  - (b) Where Council does not hold sufficient information on a property to automatically grant a remission and the ratepayer applies for a remission:
    - (i) where Council can confirm the application qualifies for remission with Council or Civil Defence information the application is granted, and
    - (ii) where Council does not hold sufficient information to confirm that the application qualifies for remission the applicant is asked to provide supporting information.

The Council has deliberately not set specific criteria for determining if a property is unable to be occupied because it is considered important that staff are not constrained when asked to respond to any unexpected situations. The rule of thumb used by staff is to accept any form of independent evidence that a property cannot be occupied because it is unsafe or unsanitary. The forms of evidence normally provided are letters from insurers or EQC, or reports from structural engineers. Staff have also carried out some property inspections themselves and granted remissions based on what they have seen.
4. Although over 60,000 residential properties were inspected by Civil Defence following the February earthquake, this is less than half of the residences in Christchurch. Also: (1) in some cases information recorded about a property has become outdated as owners, insurers or EQC commission their own inspections; and (2) in many cases information held by the Council does not indicate the date on which a property qualified for remission (for example a property may have become unsafe following the Boxing Day earthquake but not been inspected by Civil Defence until after the February earthquake).
5. Because of this the Council does not have sufficient information in all cases to automatically grant remissions either on its own initiative or on receipt of an application. However, the Council does not require applicants for earthquake related rates remissions to provide engineering reports or other evidence if it holds sufficient information to grant the remission.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. Nil

### Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

12. Not applicable.

### LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

13. Nil.

**ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS**

19. Not applicable.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES**

20. Not applicable.

**CONSULTATION FULFILMENT**

21. Not applicable.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board note the contents of this report.

**CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION**

To be discussed.

