

10th August 2020

Mr John Hayes
Kāpiti Communities Affordable Housing Taskforce

Email: jandlhayes@gmail.com

Dear John

Formal response to recommendations by the Kāpiti Coast Communities Housing Taskforce

You will be aware that several months ago, during the COVID-19 lockdown, our Council endorsed the Housing Programme Assessment Report and agreed to establish a housing programme based on the steps it identifies. This was an important milestone for our Council and gives staff a clear mandate to identify ways the Council can play a role in responding to the significant challenges around the affordability and availability of housing in our district.

I write to acknowledge the role the Kāpiti Communities Affordable Housing Taskforce played in ensuring the Council made housing a priority, through both its own exploration of the housing issues faced within our district and its ongoing advocacy.

I know the taskforce's view is that the Council didn't act quickly or strongly enough following the receipt of your report, nor did it do enough to formally recognise the taskforce's contribution. I know from my discussions with staff that this has been acknowledged, but I'd like to once again offer my own personal thanks to you and the others involved in the taskforce, particularly previous chair Paul Hughes.

In regards to a formal response to the taskforce's submissions, dated August 2017 and updated for in April 2018, please accept the comments that follow in this letter as our formal response to your recommendations, as resolved by the Council.

Kāpiti Coast Communities Housing Taskforce

We note the efforts of the Taskforce to comprehensively consult with housing providers, developers and others involved in the sector on the Kāpiti Coast as part of the development of the report. Of the 18 total recommendations, the Taskforce identified four as key, with a focus on increasing supply:

- Recommendation 3A - That Council lease its social housing stock and land to the local Registered Community Housing Providers - Dwell Housing Trust or Link People or Paekakariki Housing Trust, and iwi if they wish, by December 2018.
- Recommendation 3B - That Council immediately investigate why landowners do not want to rent unused habitable units that they own and use the results to free up these potential homes.
- Recommendation 3F – That Council waive or reduce its fees and levies as appropriate when a residential development includes provision for affordable or social or papakainga housing, particularly where it is to be purchased by a recognised or run by a recognised Community Housing provider. That Council use discretion and scaling in the application of its rules, Development Contributions and required items, particularly where the homes being developed are smaller or are socially clustered.
- Recommendation 3G - That Council immediately request Government to urgently fund and develop affordable and social housing on suitable NZTA owned Residential zoned land surplus from the construction of the Kāpiti Expressway, to remedy the earlier loss of housing.

Through the consultation for the 2018-38 long term plan, Council discussed the Taskforce's report and identified that Council would "do more work to investigate the options the Council has to influence housing issues". Following supportive feedback from the consultation, the 2018-38 Long Term Plan (LTP) provided mandate and direction for the Council to consider our future role in housing including:

- housing - In 2018/19 we will investigate options for the Council's role (page 22, LTP)
- Council has a role in social housing as it provides affordable housing for older people, and over the next three years we will consider our wider role in social housing.

Housing programme establishment

To define Council's role in the housing sector, in early 2019, the organisation engaged The Property Group Limited (TPG) to prepare specialist and targeted advice on the future of housing in the Kāpiti Coast district. The purpose of the assessment was to identify the key issues to be addressed and the tasks required to establish a housing programme.

A final draft Housing Programme Assessment report was completed in October 2019 following consultation with over 80 stakeholders including Council staff, housing providers, Māori landowners and Central Government. Following internal review, the Housing Programme Assessment report was approved by Council in April 2020. For details please refer to Appendix One.

Analysis

Council Officers have reviewed both the Taskforce Report and TPG's Assessment. The Taskforce Report and the TPG Assessment have identified similar key issues to be addressed with regards to housing in the Kāpiti Coast, including the supply and quality of housing.

In many cases the TPG Assessment has developed actions which will respond to the recommendations made in the Taskforce Report. A full comparison of the recommendations and actions from the two reports is attached as Appendix Two, which includes the Council officer response to the recommendations made through the Taskforce Report.

Recommendations

Council has approved recommendations that until a detailed work programme is developed, the following actions from the TPG Assessment are prioritised as time and resource allow:

- Action 1: Undertake an audit of Council's existing residential land holdings to determine redevelopment potential and improvements needed
- Action 2: Investigate the suitability of other Council owned land to support housing developments, giving greater weight to the use of Council land for housing
- Action 3: Engage with local iwi to determine how Council can support and enhance the capacity of Maori housing providers through opportunities for development partnerships on Maori-owned and other land
- Action 4: Identify partnership opportunities with the public housing sector
- Action 7: Establish a working group with the local housing sector, including CHPs to support this industry to provide quality housing
- Action 14: Identify suitable Council or other land through Council or its partnerships that maybe available for temporary relocatable housing.

Work to develop a detailed Housing work programme will begin early in the 2020/21 financial year. In the meantime, housing will remain an important consideration as the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 become apparent.

Conclusion and next steps

For Council to progress these actions and stand up the housing programme in partnership with the housing sector in a timely fashion, it is my view that the Taskforce's independent advisory role to the Mayor has now been fulfilled.

A role of Housing Portfolio has been created with Councillor McCann working with staff and Councillors to help drive a Council response from a governance perspective. The Mayor's Office will continue to have an oversight on this important activity.

Council staff are engaging widely with stakeholders within the housing sector to form the relationships needed to support sharing of information and provide guidance to aspects of the housing programme. It is likely that Council staff will establish some sort of working party to work at a more operational level as work progresses. I know Council staff will be in contact with you to seek your thoughts as they work on the scope for such a group.

In closing, and on behalf of the Council and the wider Kāpiti community, I thank you and the members of the Taskforce for their patience and efforts to identify and present options for progressing a more equitable housing sector on the Kāpiti Coast.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Gurunathan JP, MA', written over a horizontal line.

K. Gurunathan JP, MA
MAYOR, KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT