

## **1 Upper Hutt Affordable Housing Strategy**

### **1.1 Vision, outcomes and principles**

#### **1.1.1 Affordable housing vision**

All people living in Upper Hutt are well housed and have access to adequate, affordable housing that meets their needs.

#### **1.1.2 Strategy Outcomes**

- Upper Hutt has a well-functioning housing system that supports sustainable, resilient and connected communities
- An increase in the supply and retention of adequate, affordable, quality housing for rent and to buy
- Upper Hutt has an adequate supply of Public and Community housing and housing support to meet the needs of those requiring housing assistance in the city.

#### **1.1.3 Guiding Principles**

- Adequate housing is key to supporting wellbeing – social, environmental, economic and cultural;
- Affordable housing supports a resilient and sustainable city and underpins our strategic priorities of community and economy;
- We will play an active leadership role to enable housing solutions;
- Collaborative action – we will work together and in partnership with central government and communities;
- Housing in Upper Hutt is part of a regional and national housing market and solutions need to address this;
- We recognise that the housing market operates across the housing continuum and we will focus our efforts on the parts of the continuum that have the greatest impact on achieving our vision of all people living in Upper Hutt are well housed and have access to adequate, affordable housing that meets their needs;
- Housing is a human right and we will support good housing for everyone.

#### **1.1.3a**

We will not as a Council own Social housing

### **1.2 Issues Identified**

Based on the analysis of housing demand identified in the Stakeholder Engagement and in Section 6 (below) we have identified the following issues that this strategy needs to address:

- a. Lack of affordable housing of the right size for the changing demographic (1 and 2 bedrooms) There is also a need for suitable larger housing, 5-plus bedrooms, for larger families and intergenerational family living;
- b. Lack of affordable rental housing accessible to people on a low income;
- c. Lack of affordable homes to purchase for people on low/median incomes and ability of people to afford the required deposits and a lack of programmes such as shared ownership to address these gaps;
- d. Upper Hutt is a low priority for Government resulting in lack of investment in Public Housing in the City. There is a shortfall of Public housing with 160 on the Public Housing Register for Upper Hutt as of March 2020;

- e. Lack of coordination between housing providers and services to provide a joined-up approach;
- f. Lack of an active Registered Community Housing Provider in Upper Hutt able to provide additional affordable rental homes;
- g. Lack of support for a local community housing provider to become established to address need; and
- h. Lack of sufficient suitable accommodation for Emergency/Transitional Housing in Upper Hutt.

### **1.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

The Council will have a critical role in setting land-use policy, undertaking further research, advocacy and monitoring. There is an opportunity through Plan Change 50 to change the District Plan to incentivise the market to deliver more affordable housing units. The Council can also potentially provide land for pilot projects.

Central Government is an important partner in terms of policy development, funding assistance for low income households, the delivery of further rental units through Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and potentially by support for locally-initiated Community Housing Providers through its Public Housing investment programme.

There is also an important role for the Community, Church, Māori and business sectors in Upper Hutt in delivering homes and services.

### **1.4 The Council's Role**

It is recognised that dealing with homelessness and housing need is not the primary responsibility of local government, and that central government through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Crown Entity Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities (formerly HNZO) are the primary agencies with responsibility for public housing and homelessness. It is recognised however that Central Government's current efforts are primarily directed at areas with the most acute needs such as Auckland or Christchurch and that smaller Districts such as Upper Hutt can miss out on the level of resources needed to address its own local issues

Under the newly amended Local Government Act Councils have a role to promote the wellbeing of their communities and promote social wellbeing. Addressing housing and homelessness contributes towards increasing wellbeing, and as noted above, in some cases Central Government does not prioritise some local authorities. In these cases Councils can act proactively to coordinate efforts to address issues locally providing facilitation, and enabling partnerships and collaboration to benefit residents of Upper Hutt.

There are a number of ways that Councils can help to address housing needs in their area. These include:

- The direct provision of housing (often targeted at Pensioners);
- Enabling the provision of affordable housing by third parties including through:
  - The provision of free/subsidised land;
  - Playing a leadership role in brokering partnerships with housing providers, developers, service providers etc.;
  - Targeted use of the RMA process through the District Plan to require or incentivise the development of affordable housing;
  - General use of the RMA process through the District Plan to enable development of new housing supply to address wider demand and supply issues;
- The Council can partner with one or more Registered Community Housing Providers in the Wellington Region or could support a local organisation to become a Registered Community Housing Provider by providing support to build capacity to enable that provider to address some of the unmet demand for Public and/or affordable housing.

### **1.5 Practices**

There are a number of things the Council can do to assist addressing housing affordability, the supply of affordable homes and homelessness.

### **1.5.1 Council as Local Leader and Convenor**

The Council has already demonstrated local leadership by carrying out stakeholder consultation with local agencies and community groups. The Council will continue to demonstrate leadership by continuing to support the Upper Hutt Housing Network by providing meeting space and staff input to coordinate meetings. The Upper Hutt Housing Network exists to provide an opportunity for those working in the housing and homelessness space in Upper Hutt (which will include organisations based elsewhere) to meet. The purpose of the Network is to provide an opportunity to engage, connect, share information and look at collaborative opportunities. It also provides a platform to engage with and hear from Government Agencies such as the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities etc. around the latest programmes, innovations and what is happening elsewhere and opportunities this may provide locally.

The Council could also provide leadership by completing a more detailed Housing Needs Assessment to help us better understand the nature and scale of the need for affordable housing. This would define the extent of the issue and would better inform the Council about the issues and its role.

### **1.5.2 Council as Advocate**

The Council will act as an advocate at a regional and national level working with other councils and with LGNZ to lobby for additional resources to be directed at addressing homelessness and housing need and strengthening the role of councils in doing this. Councils, working through LGNZ, may consider starting a ‘Mayors Task Force on Housing’ similar to the Mayors Task Force on Jobs. LGNZ is taking an increasingly proactive role in housing as it has been identified as a priority issue by most of its members and it recently launched the [Housing 2030](#) website. LGNZ is focusing its efforts in three general areas; supply, social and community housing, and healthy homes.

### **1.5.3 Partnerships**

The Council will work with the other Wellington Territorial Authorities to address issues across the region, given the regional nature of the housing problem for example by conducting a regional housing needs assessment. The Council can also play an important role in partnering with HUD, Kāinga Ora, local housing groups and registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs).

## **1.6 Policies**

### **1.6.1 Develop a Council Affordable Housing Strategy**

The Council has agreed to develop this Affordable Housing Strategy to guide its response to providing affordable housing in Upper Hutt and address homelessness. This Strategy will be aligned with a number of other relevant Council Strategies and documents.

### **1.6.2 The RMA and District Plan**

The principle way that the Council can address long-term housing affordability is by enabling the increased supply of social and affordable housing through its planning role under the Resource Management Act (1991). It can do this in a number of ways, for example:

- Using the District plan to promote intensification through zoning;
- Provide free pre-application advice to community housing providers;
- Change development controls to permit Secondary Dwellings on existing sections;
- Administrative measures such as Development Contribution discounts/waivers; and
- Prioritise resource and building consents relating to Community Housing.

Through Plan Change 50 the Council is already undertaking work to ensure the District Plan enables the provision of adequate housing to meet the future needs of Upper Hutt. Plan Change 50 is the review of the residential and rural chapters of the District Plan. The plan change will review the policies and rules about how land within these zones can be used and developed in the future. A key driver of the plan change will be to enable growth to meet long-term housing demand.

Proposed changes through the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (NPC-UDC) will influence Council's role to deliver housing, accelerating Councils obligation to deliver housing at increased density.

## **1.7 Resources**

Council can direct resources in a number of ways to help address homelessness and housing need in Upper Hutt.

### **1.7.1 Understanding Future Trends**

Carry out a detailed housing needs assessment to better understand housing demand based on household type, size and income. This can help plan for growth based on the types, prices and tenures of homes needed for Upper Hutt residents. (The Council is already undertaking work to plan for future growth).

### **1.7.2 Council Funding**

Council could prioritise funding to either commission additional research or data (such as a Housing Needs Assessment) through the Annual Plan process or out of baseline funding. In addition Council could directly fund (or co-fund) projects that contributed to increased community wellbeing with regard to housing, such as partnerships with local Community Housing Providers with some Council funding for buildings and programmes to complement any government funding.

### **1.7.3 Community Grants**

Council currently makes Community Grants available to community groups working in Upper Hutt including those providing support to homeless whānau and people in housing need. This support includes housing advocacy services or services providing support and/or accommodation.

### **1.7.4 Use of Council Owned Buildings**

The Council could lease (at market or below market rents) to community groups working with homeless whānau either as office space or potentially as accommodation.

### **1.7.5 Council Staff Input**

Council staff can support groups working to address housing affordability and homelessness through ongoing support and input such as providing support to the ongoing housing network, facilitating meetings between local housing groups, developers, businesses, church groups and government agencies etc.

### **1.7.6 Sale/Disposal/Lease of Council Land to Housing Providers**

Council could sell Council owned land that is surplus to requirements to a community housing provider either at or below market valuation. Council could also enter into long term lease arrangements for Council owned land with a community housing provider.

## **1.8 Delivering the Outcomes: Housing Action Plan**

### **1.8.1 Upper Hutt has a well-functioning housing system that supports sustainable, resilient and connected communities**

- The Council will investigate the commissioning and co-funding of a more detailed housing needs assessment to better understanding the nature and scale of the need for affordable housing;
- The Council will ensure Plan Change 50 assists in delivering affordable housing outcomes, in addition to net increase in supply of new housing;
- The Council will ensure alignment between all Strategies and Plans that impact on Affordable Housing addressing all parts of the housing continuum;
- The Council will provide leadership and promote collaboration between all those with an interest in delivering affordable housing including by facilitating and supporting Upper Hutt Housing Network amongst other initiatives.

### **1.8.2 An increase in the supply and retention of adequate, affordable, quality housing for rent and to buy**

- The Council will explore regulatory and non-regulatory measures to increase the supply of affordable housing e.g. through Inclusionary zoning, fast-track consenting etc.;
- The Council will work with developers to understand incentives and barriers to supply of affordable housing;
- Where appropriate the Council will make Council owned land available for affordable housing;
- The Council will explore alternative solutions including facilitation of the provision of relocatable prefabricated homes on available council land to increase the supply of affordable housing.

### **1.8.3 Upper Hutt has an adequate supply of Public and Community housing, and housing support to meet the needs of those requiring housing assistance**

- The Council will work with one or more existing Registered Community Housing Providers to explore options to provide housing, and/or
- Providing capacity building support to local group(s) to become registered as a local CHP;
- The Council will work with support providers to ensure wrap-around support is available to vulnerable tenants/owners;
- The Council will explore opportunities with Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and HUD to intensify existing State Housing to increase Public Housing supply.

## **2 Strategy Summary**

### **2.1 Vision**

All people living in Upper Hutt are well housed and have access to adequate, affordable housing that meets their needs.

### **2.2 Outcomes**

- Upper Hutt has a well-functioning housing system that supports sustainable, resilient and connected communities;
- An increase in the supply and retention of adequate, affordable, quality housing for rent and to buy;
- Upper Hutt has an adequate supply of Public and Community housing, and housing support to meet the needs of those requiring housing assistance.

### **2.3 Guiding principles**

- Housing is key to supporting a resilient and sustainable city and underpins our strategic priorities of community and economy;
- We will play an active leadership role to enable housing solutions;
- Collaborative action – we will work together and in partnership with central government and communities;
- Housing in Upper Hutt is part of a regional and national housing market and solutions need to address this;
- We recognise that the housing market operates across the housing continuum and we will focus our efforts on the parts of the continuum that have the greatest impact on achieving our vision of all people living in Upper Hutt are well housed and have access to adequate, affordable housing that meets their needs;
- Housing is a human right and we will support good housing for everyone.

### **2.4 Actions**

#### **2.4.1 Upper Hutt has a well-functioning housing system that supports sustainable, resilient and connected communities**

- Investigate the commissioning and co-funding of a more detailed housing needs assessment to better understanding the nature and scale of the need for affordable housing;
- Ensure Plan Change 50 assists in delivering affordable housing outcomes, in addition to a net increase in supply of new housing;
- Ensure alignment between all Strategies and Plans that impact on Affordable Housing addressing all parts of the housing continuum; and
- Provide leadership and promote collaboration between all those with an interest in delivering affordable housing including by facilitating and supporting Upper Hutt Housing Network amongst other initiatives.

#### **2.4.2 An increase in the supply and retention of adequate, affordable, quality housing for rent and to buy**

- Explore regulatory and non-regulatory measures to increase the supply of affordable housing e.g. through Inclusionary zoning, fast-track consenting etc.;
- Work with developers to understand incentives and barriers to supply of affordable housing;
- Where appropriate make Council owned land available for affordable housing;
- Explore alternative solutions including facilitation of the provision of relocatable prefabricated homes on available council land to increase the supply of affordable housing.

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- Providing capacity building support to local group(s) to become registered as a local CHP;
- Work with support providers to ensure wrap-around support is available to vulnerable tenants/owners;
- Explore opportunities with Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and HUD to intensify existing State Housing to increase Public Housing supply.

### 3 Appendix 1 – Glossary

Term	Definition
Emergency Housing	Emergency housing is short-term housing provided or funded by MSD to those families in immediate housing need. It is usually provided by private sector providers such as in motels.
Homelessness	Homelessness is defined as a living situation where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are: without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household, or living in uninhabitable housing.
Housing Affordability	The internationally adopted standard for defining housing affordability is that residents should spend no more than 30% of their gross household income (GHI) on housing costs – either rent or mortgage payments.
Housing Continuum	The housing continuum model is used by central and local government to demonstrate the differing needs of housing across a broad scale. The housing continuum illustrates the pathway from homelessness and emergency accommodation on the far left through assisted/affordable rental or assisted/affordable ownership, to private renting and ownership options in the market.
Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities	<p>Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities (Kāinga Ora) was established on 1 October 2019 as a new Crown agency to transform housing and urban development throughout New Zealand.</p> <p>Kāinga Ora has two key roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being a public housing landlord</li> <li>• partnering with the development community, Māori, local and central government and others on urban development projects of all sizes.</li> </ul>
Public Housing	Public housing is provided for people most in need of housing for as long as they need it. Public Housing is provided by Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and by Registered Community Housing Providers.
Public Housing Register	The Public Housing Register is administered by the Ministry of Social Development. The Housing Register represents applicants not currently in public housing who have been assessed as eligible, and who are ready to be matched to a suitable Public Housing place.
Transitional Housing	Transitional housing helps people in urgent need of a place to stay so they don't become homeless. It includes support services to help people secure a longer-term home and get back on their feet so that they're in a stronger position to stay housed.