

## National Policy Statement on Urban Development – Waiheke Local Board Feedback to City Development Committee

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the National Policy Statement (NPS) on Urban Development is to:

- provide sufficient residential and business development capacity to meet demand
- ensure plans are based on robust and accurate evidence
- promote coordination between councils and infrastructure providers on integrated land use and infrastructure planning
- ensure that land use planning adapts to market activity i.e. anticipates demand.

Land supply targets are required for the short, medium and long term, and must be reviewed triennially. To allow for development capacity not being taken up by the market, targets must build in, at least 20% extra capacity in the short and medium term and 15% in the long term. High growth urban areas also have to provide a future land release and intensification strategy.

### **Consultation Issues**

What do you think of the proposal to target policies to different areas?

Whilst it makes sense to have more directed targeting to the highest growth areas, it is critical that development capacity is aligned with environmental objectives. Island locations must be protected from the effects of overdevelopment, and due to the physical separation from the main urban areas and being situated in sensitive marine environments, are not ideal for intensive housing or business growth initiatives.

Enabling Growth and Development While Managing the Effects

The PA3 objective of the NPS states that decision-makers must:

recognise and provide for the contribution development will make in enabling people, communities and future generations to provide for their social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being.

The Board believes that there needs to be more consistent referencing to managing the environmental effects of development throughout the document to reinforce the need for environmental protection mechanisms.

What impact would the policy to recognise the positive impacts of development at district, regional and national scale, as well as local effects have?

This could result in a more integrated long term approach to planning for development, as positive impacts can only accrue if infrastructure and social infrastructure components are planned and established concurrently. A focus on the

positive effects of urban development must in no way be allowed to overshadow the potentially damaging effects on rural landscapes, waterways and coastal areas.

At a national level, the government should consider, as part of the raft of strategies aimed at addressing urban development in NZ, encouraging and incentivising development growth in areas outside of Auckland, where it is most desired and where there is the greatest capacity for expansion without negative environmental impacts. Other strategies which deal with demand, and not just land supply, must also be developed.

Would the proposed policies contribute to better co-ordination between land-use planning and infrastructure provision?

The NPS may go some way to addressing better alignment between councils, CCO's and infrastructure providers but this co-ordination has not been managed effectively to date. If the NPS does not have the authority to direct infrastructure providers, then the Board recommends that legislative changes should be considered to direct infrastructure providers to develop long term plans which predict and support development capacity which are aligned with the new TLA plans. The NPS does not specifically include key infrastructure such as power, telephone and internet, and the Board recommends that these be included for the sake of completeness.

### **Waiheke Local Board View**

In the National Policy Statement, Auckland is divided into four high growth zones (from Appendix A1 of the consultation document). Waiheke Island however, does not meet this definition. In the consultation document a high growth area is defined as:

“Any secondary urban area that has a combined resident and visitor population greater than 30,000 at any time of the year with a growth of greater than 10% over 10 years”.

Waiheke does not have a population of greater than 30,000 at any time of the year. The Board asserts that Waiheke should not be considered part of the Auckland Central Zone.

### **Population Projections**

Waiheke's total population is projected to grow only 1% per annum to 2046. If these projections are correct (and the current population is already behind projection) there does not appear to be high demand for more residential or commercial land on the island. Based on growth modelling undertaken by council in 2012, it was estimated there was a total capacity of approximately 1122 new dwellings through the development of existing vacant sites and a total capacity of approximately 949 new dwellings available through infill development.

This does not include re-development of existing bach sites. This is sufficient for future growth to 2040.

The most significant trend on the island has been in the growth of the over 65 age group. Between the 2006 and 2013 censuses, this group grew by greater than 50%. The over 65s are not generally associated with house-buying or new business activity.

Waiheke Local Board is committed to the outcomes in the 30-year Auckland Long Term Plan, and in particular the outcome which also forms part of the Local Board Plan:

**Treasured islands, coastlines, wetlands and marine areas.** We will work to protect, maintain and enhance our magical island, land, coastline, wetland and marine environments for Auckland's future generations.

The Board supports the need for a more co-ordinated approach to growth for the Auckland region, to ensure there are affordable options for home-owners and businesses going forward. However the Board believes that residential and business growth pressure needs to be addressed in the isthmus, where environment impacts can be better managed, rather than in the Gulf Islands..

Whilst the western semi-rural villages of Waiheke are within the Auckland Metropolitan Urban Limit (Baseline 2010), in reality the pattern of development on Waiheke is that of a series of rural villages, such as those found in Franklin and Rodney. The Gulf islands also share Heritage Values with the Waitakere Ranges where no growth is planned due to environment protection constraints. As such the Board asserts that Waiheke and the Gulf Islands should remain no growth zones. It is imperative that the NPS is responsive to island communities where residential and business intensification could have irreversible effects on fragile ecosystems and environments. The adverse effects of development are already a reality for Waiheke. Ecoli counts at Little Oneroa Lagoon are ten times the safe limit and stormwater discharges at Anzac Bay compromises a harbour of high biogenic value.

It must be acknowledged that the island is not an urban location but semi-rural and rural in character. The operative district plan recognises this and is designed to preserve this as an essential feature of the island.

### **Auckland Council District Plan – Waiheke Strategic Management Area 2013**

Strategic Management Areas (SMAs) are a framework in the District Plan (Gulf Islands Section) to provide strategic direction for resource management in the Gulf Islands.

The objective for Waiheke is:

To provide for the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the Waiheke community while ensuring the protection of the historic heritage, landscape character, the natural features, ecosystems and visual amenity of the island.

Limiting village style activities to the western side of the island, separated by greenbelts and keeping larger scale activities to the eastern end under the Rural Urban Boundary, confines urban activity to areas where transport infrastructure exists to support the development.

The SMA makes provision for protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing natural features and associated processes, such as wetland systems, indigenous vegetation, wildlife habitats, coastal and other ecosystems.

Making new land available for residential and business growth on Waiheke could compromise the environmental objectives of SMA and be of such small scale as to be immaterial in comparison to the 400,000 sections required for the growth of Auckland over the next 30 years.

### **Intensification and Reticulation**

The Waiheke Local Board represents a community that does not support the extension of the existing reticulated sewerage system at Owhanake or the installation of new public reticulation systems.

One of the development strategies considered is “up-zoning” to enable greater intensification, which would allow an increase in the development capacity of land. On Waiheke this would be entirely dependent on the development of reticulated sewerage systems. Not only are such systems highly cost prohibitive; the move would be at odds with the provisions of the HGI Section of the District Plan. It would change the island character that the plan was produced to protect.

### **Affordable Housing**

The small number of lots that could be created through various land use strategies on the island would make little material impact to the supply of land and therefore would have no impact on price. The island has become a sought after location for permanent and holiday homes, so new lots will command a premium. Given the small scale of developments on the island, if developers were forced to pay for infrastructure such as storm-water and roading, the additional costs would simply be added to the purchase price of the sections. This would further contribute to the lack of affordability of island housing.

