

22 JAN 2020

Transitional housing at Wood Street, Wainuiomata

Thank you for your request for information about Transitional Housing at Wood Street, Wainuiomata. As Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities has received a large number of requests for information about this project, we have prepared the following response in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) providing the relevant information that we currently hold that can be made available at this time.

Information not provided will be presented at a public meeting to be held in Wainuiomata on Wednesday, 22 January 2020 at 6.30pm, at the Wainuiomata Primary School hall. There will also be representatives from Kāinga Ora, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Social Development who will be able to take further questions. However, some of the requested information is not able to be provided, for reasons that are set out below.

Transitional housing provides people in urgent need of housing with a warm, dry and safe place to live for three months or more while they are helped to find more permanent accommodation. More information can be found on Transitional Housing in the Housing Quarterly Reports and the Public Housing Plan available on the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's website. The Ministry of Social Development also provides information about Transitional Housing on its website at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/social-housing/transitional-housing-fact-sheet.pdf>

Transitional housing is managed by contracted providers who are responsible for making sure the families living there are supported and helped to find permanent housing. This can include budgeting advice, health services or engagement with social services. They will also be responsible for ensuring the properties are well maintained and managed.

We are unable to advise which contracted provider will be used in the Wood Street, Wainuiomata site as that has yet to be determined by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

In response to questions about the rationale for using the Wood Street site, I can advise that Kāinga Ora assessed numerous state and council owned sites across areas of designated housing need. Wood Street is one of the very few sites that met all of our key criteria including that it was vacant, crown or council owned land, of a suitable gradient, with suitable services and roading to the site and suitable zoning. Development risks with regard to flooding and traffic were also considered. Early discussions about the possible use of this site commenced in mid-October 2019.

Permanent housing was deemed unsuitable on this site due to the site being leased. However, the development at Wood Street will be built with a quality and layout that can be converted to permanent housing in the future if the land was to be acquired by Kāinga Ora or a third party. The homes will be of a high quality, designed to fit in with the neighbourhood and landscaped with plenty of parking. They will be positioned for maximum sun and privacy

and there will be open spaces and quality on-site amenities for residents. Kāinga Ora will build and own these properties and ensure the construction process is carefully managed to minimise noise and disruption to neighbours.

Wood Street transitional housing was initially planned to be made up of 34 two-bedroom homes, and 10 three-bedroom homes, plus a community building and an office. However, following public consultation this has been amended. New plans will be presented at the public meeting in Wainuiomata on 22 January 2020. As this information will soon be made publicly available, we decline to provide the draft plans under section 18(d) of the OIA.

The expected date the application for resource consent will be submitted has been extended due to consultation with the community, as we have also agreed to amend the draft consent plans. However, Kāinga Ora is still aiming to lodge the plans in the first quarter of this calendar year. While the plans are still being amended we are unable to provide final estimations of the cost of the project.

As previously advised, this project has been developed rapidly, in response to the growing need for housing as part of ongoing government initiatives to meet housing need. Information has already been provided to the community covering many of the questions asked in the current OIA requests. We have therefore attached the previously provided 'Q and A' factsheet dated 5 December 2019 entitled '*More information on plans for transitional housing at Wood Street, Wainuiomata*'. We also attach a further factsheet dated January 2020 which contains important updates about the project.

The people living in these homes will be people and whānau who need somewhere warm, dry and safe to live while they look for a longer-term home. Before they're placed into transitional housing, the Ministry of Social Development will talk with each family or individual to understand their situation and make sure a transitional home is the right option for them. A social services provider will work closely with them while they're in these homes, supporting them to find longer-term housing and access the services they need. Information about eligibility for emergency housing is available at:

www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/eligibility-criteria-for-emergency-housing.html.

Requests for *all correspondence related to Transitional Housing at Wood Street, Wainuiomata* are not able to be met due to the volume of emails that would need to be collated. We are therefore declining these requests under section 18(f) of the OIA.

With regard to requests for Briefings to Ministers, Cabinet Minutes and Aides Memoirs, we have been advised that this information will be proactively released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. As this information will soon be publicly available, we are declining to provide it here under section 18(d) of the OIA.

Questions related to the possible effect this development could have on local property values are unable to be answered as this information is not held by Kāinga Ora, or by any other agency that we are aware of. We therefore decline to provide this information under section 18(g) of the OIA as we do not hold it.

With regard to questions about the consultation process, Kāinga Ora has engaged with the community, sought feedback and modified its plans in response to the concerns raised. Further consultation is planned and we will endeavour to keep the community informed as things progress. We also invite the community to contact our dedicated Senior Stakeholder Manager, Renee Regal with any further concerns or for further information.

A copy of the project brief is attached. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by officials, as it is still under active consideration. The location of our homes in Wainuiomata has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect the privacy of our tenants. Information has also been withheld under section 9(2)(j) of the OIA to enable Kāinga Ora to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage. With regard to the public interest in this information, we consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold it.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alex Travis".

Alex Travis
Acting Manager Government Relations

