

1 May 2024

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Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2024 to Jeff Murray, Regional Director Northland, regarding Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities proposed redevelopment in Ruakākā. You asked several questions relating to the development, and as such we have interpreted these as an Official Information Act 1982 request.

Please find the following context to support the responses to the specific questions you provided:

The Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities Act 2019 instructs Kāinga Ora to contribute to thriving communities, and support good access to jobs, amenities, and services. Kāinga Ora does this by identifying areas which have a high demand for housing, as well as having access to these amenities. In this context, the majority of our new investments are in urban Whangarei with other areas of focusing being Ruakākā, Kaitaia, Kerikeri / Waipapa, Kaikohe, Kawakawa and Dargaville.

Northland's population continues to grow, and the demand for public housing in the area is evident with over 1,100 individuals and whānau on the Ministry of Social Developments (MSD) Housing Register across the Northland region. Of these individuals and whānau, 633 are based in the Whangārei District. More information on the Housing Register is available at the following link: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/housing-register.html>

Where redevelopment is proposed, Kāinga Ora seeks to align our plans with the relevant Council's District Plan. We understand the extensive consultation process a District Plan undergoes and work hard to align with these rules that have been agreed upon with the community, hapū, and stakeholders.

Please find the following responses to your specific questions:

1. What evidence, if any, was used to identify the homeless rate in Ruakākā?

Kāinga Ora has not identified a specific homeless rate for Ruakākā.

Kāinga Ora delivers housing according to the Public Housing Plan, with location-based demand evident via the MSD Housing Register and the household structures of our customers.

2. Will this development, which was proposed under the previous government legislation need reviewing to comply under the current government, if so, when will this be completed?

This housing proposal is subject to the statutory requirements and processes set out under the Resource Management Act.

3. What evidence, if any, is there to support Ruakākā needing high-density housing?

High-density housing is not proposed for the Ruakākā redevelopment. Kāinga Ora is proposing two-level townhouses, which are classed as being the lower end of medium density, which aligns to the District Plan zone for the site: "Medium Density Residential".

4. Is there sufficient infrastructure to handle the capacity of this growth, including but not limited to schooling, medical needs, water, waste, public transport, and traffic?

Kāinga Ora housing does not create population growth, or demand for services in the places we develop. Rather, Kāinga Ora ensures there is adequate housing in the places people are already choosing to live. It is councils, through the resource consent process, that look at whether there is enough infrastructure and services to support a new housing proposal.

5. Has an environmental impact review been undertaken and by whom?

Yes, an 'Assessment of Environmental Effects' is included as part of our resource consent application.

6. Is the cost-of-living crisis a factor when considering a development of this scale being built outside a main centre without the same opportunity to source food and goods from a variety of stores?

With a population of over 2,000, Ruakākā is an existing and established town just 30 minutes from the region's main city, Whangarei. The demand for goods and services across Northland are managed by the respective organisations and agencies who deliver them.

7. Are the existing water systems sufficient to manage this kind of high-density development?

The proposed redevelopment is not high-density, rather it is classed as lower-end medium density.

A capacity assessment of the reticulated networks is included as part of our resource consent application, and provided the recommendations of the report are adhered to, there will be no capacity constraints on the reticulated networks as a result of the proposed development.

8. Will these buildings have fire escapes?

Fire escapes are not a requirement for two-level homes under the NZ Building Code.

9. Are job opportunities within the community a consideration when assigning homes to clients, if so, how?

Kāinga Ora considers both current place of work, and future job opportunities when matching people to homes. Other criteria include local ties and connections to an area, whānau support, schooling and need for specific health services etc.

10. How, if at all, does Kainga Ora plan to address any antisocial and or illegal behaviour within this development?

Kāinga Ora homes have been part of the Ruakākā community for decades, and almost all of our customers here live well in their homes, are good neighbours, and contribute positively to the community. Where instances of anti-social behaviour do arise, we take them seriously and take action as necessary, including relocations. Illegal behaviour and crime are matters for the Police. Kāinga Ora

has also been given direction to make changes to how we approach and address tenants displaying disruptive and anti-social behaviour, which includes removing the Sustaining Tenancies Framework.

11. Will there be a point of contact for Ruakākā residents to alert Kainga Ora to concerns, and if so, will that contact be local and be able to address any issues with relative urgency?

The quickest and most efficient way to report concerns, is to call our customer service centre on freephone 0800 801 601. Staff at the centre have access to information and systems that allow them to efficiently provide advice, escalate urgent matters, log jobs with contractors and contact other agencies and organisations as required - including councils, health services and the police.

The call centre can be reached 24/7 in the case of urgent matters.

12. How many carparks will be available to Kainga Ora clients, and will there be provision for visitor parking?

The District Plan no longer includes minimum car parking requirements; however, this proposal does include off-street parking for residents. Kāinga Ora is not responsible for the policing of vehicles, either belonging to our tenants or their guests. If issues with parking occur, Kāinga Ora will work with tenants to rectify this.

13. Does Kainga Ora plan to house non Ruakākā families in the proposed Ruakākā development?

Kāinga Ora has a dedicated placements team, that assess properties as they become available and make suitable matches from those most in need and eligible from the public housing register.

Location preference is a key consideration of the placement process. Kāinga Ora considers tenants local ties and existing connections to an area such as whanau support, current schools, workplace, health needs and travel considerations when assessing and making placement decisions for tenants.

14. How many existing homes currently up to the healthy homes standard are to be demolished to make way for this development?

Over the past four to five years Kainga Ora has successfully brought nearly all eligible homes up to Healthy Homes standards. Given their age and condition, upgrades for our Ruakākā homes on Tiki Place and Tamingi Street were completed early in the work programme, prior to the proposed redevelopment.

The homes currently onsite are planned for relocation within Northland, so the Healthy Home interventions will be utilised by future owners.

15. What effect, if any will there be on traffic, and, what, if any, consideration has been given to tsunami evacuations for this area?

Kāinga Ora housing does not create additional population growth, and no additional strain on traffic arises in areas where there are developments. Parking has been addressed as a part of the consent process.

Homes built by and for Kāinga Ora developments must meet our design and building requirements. However, we cannot predict extreme weather events. In the occurrence of a natural disaster or extreme weather event our place-based teams support tenants where possible, including rehousing and disposal of damaged goods.

16. What if any consideration has been given to the neighbouring properties which will now lose their privacy, and has this been communicated to them, if so how, and when?

Neighbouring properties are always considered when a planning a redevelopment, namely through district planning rules related to privacy, sunlight, height, bulk, and shading.

17. Why is this development not in keeping with the rest of the homes in the village, where 90 to 95% of the homes are single level?

The proposal includes two-storey homes only, which are already present in the neighbourhood. The proposal aims to be in keeping with the existing neighbourhood, while also delivering more new homes for this high-growth part of the Whangarei District.

18. What, if any, community safety measures have been considered with this project?

Best practice design has informed this proposal, including specific safety measures from the 'Crime Prevention Through Environment Design' (CPTED). CPTED measures include site layout, lighting, non-climbable fences, privacy, passive surveillance of common outdoor areas – all of which contribute to safe homes and neighbourhoods. Pedestrian and driveway safety measures are also key considerations for our redevelopment proposals.

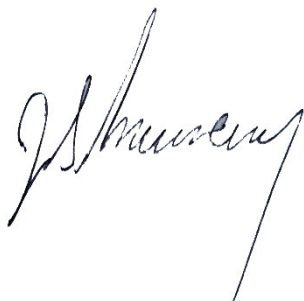
19. Where and how does this development allow for keeping with customary traditions, particularly in the event of Tangi?

Māori cultural practices are facilitated and maintained through the organisation of internal spaces, such as the visual and physical separation of certain household functions (such as bathrooms and dining/kitchen facilities) in order to protect their tapu or noa nature. This is outlined in our Design Requirements.

Kāinga Ora does not have a formal policy for holding Tangi in our homes.

I trust this information is helpful.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Murray', written in a cursive style.

Jeff Murray
Regional Director Te Tai Tokerau/Northland

