

Council front the Community

About 100 attended the Kumeu-Huapai Ratepayers meeting at Soljans Winery Restaurant on the 9th September, to hear from the four Council Representatives. Councillors Penny Hulse, & Penny Webster with senior planners Roger Blakely & Penny Pirrit presented the growth strategies and the Unitary Plan issues to the group.

What was important was, that they confirmed to all that the expected population growth in the area as a result of the Future Urban Boundary and potential that it created, will give us a population of 20,000-30,000 residents. That is larger growth than first thought and it naturally triggers the urgent need for infrastructure planning.

Penny Webster promised a meeting with the Auckland Transport & New Zealand Transport Association NZTA before the end of the year. Penny will be held to that!

What was clear to all, was that the 'elephant wasn't in the room' namely NZTA & Auckland Transport. They have yet to surface with how and when the infrastructure will occur and where.

We will need to ensure the transport group are here after the election so we can make progress. With the population numbers confirmed, the changes needed for roading, schools and reserves have to be identified early so that long term solution are transparent to the Community. Structure planning has been confirmed as about 3 years away, and will only be started after the Unitary Plan is substantially completed, Council Staff indicated. Lack of staff to complete the task is the reason for the delays. With 500 Planners employed it does raise some serious questions on Council's performance and priorities.

Penny Hulse, Deputy Mayor, confirmed that the four SHA's applied for by landowners in the District, have been declined by the Auckland Council. The progression of these will be as part of the Unitary Plan submissions and decisions. That means the consideration of those areas, which haven't been made public will come through in the same process as other individual submissions. That is how it should be!

On the 16th September I received information about the concept of the 'NorthWest Busway Project' being presented to Auckland Development Committee.

The proposal links Auckland City to Westgate and the North Shore. The proposal doesn't provide for any consideration of linkages by buses to Kumeu. The three local Boards at Henderson, Whau (New Lynn) & Waitakere Ranges made comments on the proposal but nothing from our Rodney Board. It appears that Rodney has been left out of being consulted. Given that the growth is project to 30,000 people in the next 30 years, it makes sense to have Kumeu-Huapai factored into early planning.

Finally I have to say something about the Auckland Council wage costs. Having 1780 staff on over \$100,000 each means we will never have sufficient funds allocated to our Local Board for community projects. Council Staff are increasing and so is the overall costs of wages, so the greater the cost of staff overheads the less there is to spend on capital works or infrastructure. No one seems willing to grasp the nettle of having to reduce staff and therefore costs, so the Council can provide value for money.

It may be wishful thinking but the Council needs to be run as a business not a bureaucracy.

Pete Sinton
Chairman
Kumeu-Huapai Residents & Ratepayers Association