

UNITARY PLAN PROGRESS?

At the time of writing this (April 2015), the Association is in the middle of a 3 day mediation over land use categories and use component for the Rural Zoning including 'Countryside Living'. The Council's lawyers and planners attending are still sticking to unreasonable minimum standards in the Rural Zone of 80 ha min & 40 ha in 'Mixed Rural' and in Kumeu 2.0 ha for 'Countryside Living'. They cite the fact that they are just bringing forward the rules in the old District Plan, but it has been pointed out by numerous submitters those rules are out of date. They acknowledge that in Kumeu practically all subdivided blocks are at 1 ha minimum now.

Many landowners have suggested that the unused rule of 'Large Lot' 4000 m² be applied to help increase the number of sites around Kumeu without losing the character of the district. The zoning areas and issues will be resolved at the end of 2015. Final release of the Unitary Plan decisions will be in June 2016, just prior to local body elections in October 2016.

The transport issues are still unresolved for the district in that no studies have been started by NZTA or Auckland Transport. Both groups at the Mayor's meeting on Saturday 14th March acknowledged that there was urgency needed to proceed with the study. The Mayor's response also acknowledged this, but the Auckland Council Planners are saying that they haven't the staff to start work until after the Unitary Plan hearings are over. Given that the Special Housing Area has been advertised and submissions closed, it seems that application will be considered in isolation. It is a case definitely the 'cart before the horse' situation.

It is looking more likely that the Association will have to give evidence to the Commissioners over the zonings with or without the local Board involvement. That would be a pity, but as I have been saying for the last 2 years, the structure plan for the district needs to be available for the Unitary Plan Commissioners to consider at their hearing, not be left to the staff to do afterwards. There appears to be a reluctance by Council staff to deal with the worsening situation that is transport and the growth of Kumeu-Huapai.

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