

24 August 2021

To the landowners in Hukutaia

As part of its long-term strategy for the future of our town, the Ōpōtiki District Council is considering the options for enabling more residential development in Hukutaia in the coming years. This strategy forms part of Council's Long Term Plan 2021-2031, which we consulted on recently and was adopted by Council last month.

Since then, the Government has announced the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund via Kainga Ora. This fund is part of the Government's response to the housing crisis and provides \$1 billion in nationwide assistance to help communities upgrade the infrastructure that is needed to increase housing supply.

Ōpōtiki has prepared an application to the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund for some essential upgrades in Hukutaia, including water, wastewater and stormwater reticulation and roading upgrades. We have also applied for funding to assist with property connection costs for any properties in the Stage 1 areas.

If our application is successful, it means a significant proportion of these essential but expensive services will be funded by central government, rather than by local ratepayers. This would mean more housing (including affordable housing) available in Ōpōtiki, without the burden falling to local rates.

To be successful in our application for Government funding, we need to show that upgrading the infrastructure in Hukutaia will enable more landowners to make sections and houses available to the market, resulting in better housing supply in Ōpōtiki.

To provide a roadmap of possible development approaches for Hukutaia as a whole, Council has begun developing a draft structure plan for the area. This identifies the current and future infrastructure requirements, as well as setting out the possibilities for how and when landowners might proceed with development.

Having an inter-generational plan for Hukutaia allows Council to stage infrastructure investment efficiently and effectively. It also provides certainty for landowners and developers regarding where Council would like to see growth occur. This enables the market to respond to growth over the short, medium and long term. It doesn't mean that growth will happen all at once.

The structure plan is a discussion document only, aimed at starting a conversation with landowners and the community about what might be possible – it is not a change to the current District Plan, and it is not prescriptive in any way. Every landowner can still decide for themselves what – if anything – they would like to do with their land.

Attached is a one-page summary of the proposed structure plan showing the possibilities for how Hukutaia might be developed in the decades ahead, and showing the timeline for when development might occur.

As many people will have questions about what the structure plan might mean for the community as a whole and them personally, we're planning to hold an open day in the coming weeks at the Ōpōtiki Golf Club. This will be an opportunity to come along and talk to Council staff, to find out about the structure plan and how the neighbourhood could develop in the next 50 years, and to contribute your thoughts and ideas. When we have some clarity about Covid alert levels, we will finalise details on the time and location and let you know.

We still have more information to compile for the Government and to discuss with the community. This includes things like financial support for residents to connect to the new wastewater systems, the possibilities for existing sections to be subdivided, how roading and transport could work, where we can enable local shops in Hukutaia, and much more. As this is developed, we will share it openly and widely, via the Hukutaia open day and social media. So we encourage you to come along, have a look at what might be possible and contribute your great ideas to make Hukutaia and Ōpōtiki a better place to live.

Yours sincerely

Lyn Riesterer

Ōpōtiki Mayor