

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE 10 July 2018

Thank you, Madam Chair, Mr. Mayor and Councillors for agreeing to hear us today. You already know that we felt betrayed almost two years ago. You have the history to date and so we hope you will actually make history today.

We appreciate the difficulties you and your staff work under, the need to be risk averse and to keep a close eye on the cost implications of everything you do. We would expect nothing less. But caution must not be allowed to stifle progress.

In the grand scheme of things, no one is asking for anything more than Aucklanders should expect to have and be able to afford over time. "Age-Friendly" means investing **for** people at every stage of their lives. It is not just about us. It's really about planning good infrastructure and good programmes for the whole of life.

It is an on-going incremental process of improvement, which you will always be able to control through the Long Term Plan and Annual Budgets.

Yes, perhaps it is aspirational, just as the Auckland plan is. But it is also highly practical. Who knows? Overtime, we might even recognise it as being inspirational.

Much work is underway but it now needs to be driven and consistent. It needs to be recognised as necessary, and embedded across the whole Council family, including Local Boards and CCOs. And yes, it needs to be monitored as everything does. But let's not just monitor the status quo!

Why are we afraid of moving forward in a more defined direction I wonder?

Central Government is encouraging this move because there is strength in cooperation and sharing of information as well as experiences. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. And if the Office for Seniors' application for New Zealand to join the Age Friendly network is agreed to, then it will be a simpler path to follow. Ireland, a country with a similar population, has already taken this step.

Attachment C, lists the requirements for joining the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and I quote:

The Age Friendly **journey** requires a continuous process of improvement.
(Isn't that what we all want?)

Members can join at any step.

The different steps taken together take an average 5 years to execute.

No execution should be necessary and I believe Auckland is above average.

We would not begin on the bottom rung because the baseline report is already done. It is not too difficult to comply.

So, when you step on the ladder, Auckland, the largest and most complex Local Authority in the country, will be setting an example for others to follow by demonstrating once again, its commitment to its diverse population, especially the burgeoning senior component which is about to hit. Surely this is a really positive move for society in general.

Every one of you at this table and every one to whom you are responsible, will benefit or suffer from the decision you make today.

Our hope is that you will be seen as progressive by preparing for the future in a cooperative and collegial way.

You need to have understanding, commitment and faith in that future. We have it, even if our future may be briefer than yours.

We will be analysing the report in more detail and challenging it where appropriate, so that if a new governance structure is decided upon, it can be well informed. But that is for another day.

Suffice it to say, if we are looking at containing costs, why don't we tap into the wisdom and generosity of what is an expanding pool of potential volunteers within our demographic who have professional, practical and life skills in abundance. It would need to be done carefully to show their contribution is valued. Then you might be surprised how many Aucklanders would give their time for the greater good.

I come from a background in the west, where it was estimated that every \$1 invested in specific volunteer projects returned up to some \$7 to ratepayers. The "Waitakere Way" was necessary because resources were always stretched, the city was growing fast and ratepayers were pressured. That sounds like Auckland doesn't it? Together, we can find a way.

While we are disappointed in the recommendation in the report, which focuses more on cost than value-and there is a distinction- nothing we have said should be seen as criticism of the Governing Body or staff. It should be taken as an affirmation of the work done to date.

We would like to see an acceptance of what is best practice, embedded in everything Council does. It is just a commonsense way of making our city **fit for purpose**.

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The Seniors Advisory Panel's role is to provide advice through the lenses of older people.

I can tell you Madam Chair, the cataracts have gone. All we need is the new prescription to give 20:20 vision into the future.

It is no secret that we commend Option 2 to you today.

Let Auckland flourish! We're here to help you do it.