

Memo

3 Jan 2020

To: Anna Jennings, Principal Advisor, Urban Growth and Housing
cc: Victoria Villaraza, Relationship Manager, Local Board Services
From: Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board

Subject: Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board's feedback on the Urban Development Bill

Context/Background

The Urban Development Bill was introduced in Parliament on 5 December 2019. It follows on from the Kāinga Ora–Homes and Communities bill, which disestablished Housing New Zealand and set up a Crown entity in the same name. The purpose is to provide specific powers to enable Kāinga Ora–Homes and Communities (Kāinga Ora) to undertake urban development within a defined specified development project area (SDPA) as well as providing the ability to use powers of acquisition for all Kāinga Ora's development activities. This piece of legislation impacts on urban growth and housing.

Local boards received a memo with details on 16 January 2020 and were invited to attend a workshop on the Bill on 31 January 2020. Local boards have the opportunity to give feedback, by 7 February 2020 which will be appended to the council submission.

Feedback:

The Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board notes the following points as feedback:

- a. **Affordable housing:** The board is in principle supportive of government's intent of the Bill, that is, to improve the social and economic performance of New Zealand's urban areas. The board recognises that local communities are in need of affordable homes.
- b. The board acknowledges that giving Kāinga Ora more powers and establishing specified development project areas (SPDA) will speed-up the building process and allow more houses to be built, many of these will benefit families in our local board area. However as highlighted in Auckland Council submission to an earlier Bill, the Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities Bill, the need to see the detail of how the new urban development entity, Kāinga Ora, would operate and what powers would be afforded to it is pertinent to implications on the ground.
- c. **Scope of Kāinga Ora's powers and Auckland's governance model, role of local boards:** The board has a serious concern about the scope of some of those powers, including and specifically Kāinga Ora's powers regarding:
 - the resource consenting process and
 - powers of acquisition of reserves that may include the acquisition of local reserves, parks and playgrounds without consultation with our local boards.
- d. **Place-making and local plans:** The Bill should recognise the governance role of Territorial Authorities, including that of Local Boards. Given the place-making role of local boards and the increased rhetoric about 'localism' and 'subsidiarity' regarding local government, it would be appropriate for the Bill to recognise Councils and Local Boards as more than merely 'stakeholders'. Kāinga Ora should be required to work in partnership with Councils and Local Boards to build better 'communities' – this aligns well with the overarching objective of the Bill.
- e. Auckland has a unique governance model and local boards have a responsibility in place-shaping, are responsible for decision-making on local issues, activities and services. These activities include maintaining and upgrading town centres, facilities including local parks and caring for the local environment, preserving heritage.

- f. **Gap in strategic alignment:** The provisions in the Bill and operational requirements from Kāinga Ora must include reference to local context of plans and strategies. Currently there is a gap in strategic alignment as the community effort that shaped the making of plans and strategies, including those at a local board level, are not considered – e.g. Auckland Plan 2050, Local Board Plans, Open space network plans, community facilities network plan..
- g. **Acquisition of reserves:** The board has serious concerns on giving power to Kāinga Ora to acquire reserves. This proposal implies loss of limited green open spaces due to urban intensification and growth. Further, the Bill does not place a requirement on Kāinga Ora to replace green space if reserves are acquired. This is at a time when local communities are demanding open spaces and it is important for them to protect and preserve green space or the limited reserve areas we have. There is huge risk of loss of oversight from a local governance perspective.
- h. **Communication, consultation with local population:** There is a high risk of confusion, communication gaps and even duplication for local communities, applicants and developers if Kāinga Ora was automatically the resource consent authority. The unintended complications can arise as many urban developments require both district and regional consents. Local boards are the first point of contact for communities and it is important for the Bill and Kāinga Ora to recognise local governance roles and responsibilities and engage as partners.
- i. **Development powers outside of SPDA:** The board is concerned about the extensive powers with Kāinga Ora for developments that are not a SDPA may result in situations where small developments, in smaller parcels of land such as that around Papatoetoe, will go ahead without consulting with neighbours or local residents.
- j. **Reduce upheaval and negative impact on vulnerable communities:** The Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board is of the view that a greater emphasis on community involvement and participation is warranted. As noted earlier, many important plans and strategies have been prepared by council based on significant involvement by the community. The Bill in its current form does not require these to be taken into account and there is huge risk that local communities will be left out of this major change process. A large part of the planned developments are in southern local board areas of Auckland, it is in our areas that SDPA will be implemented, where large parts of our communities are vulnerable and at risk and will have to experience major upheavals.
- k. **Shared prosperity:** A challenge for Auckland and Ōtara-Papatoetoe local area is taking actions to share prosperity and opportunities with those more vulnerable. The development projects which Kāinga Ora will lead are expected to improve employment and business opportunities. The Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board would like to see the inclusion of ‘**social procurement**’ that result in creating jobs for local people and opportunities for local business in these development projects. These opportunities must be proactively offered to locals in the first instance. These are significant urban developments in the local areas and meaningful pathways need to be designed to empower locals for employment and to enable them to make the most of the business opportunities.
- l. **Policy instruments for pathways to home ownership:** The board recognises the need in our communities for affordable housing and advocates for putting into place policy instruments and measures to assist locals get into home ownership through the SDPA. Maori and Pacific homeownership rates have plummeted and owning real estate has been shown to be one of the biggest factors in wealth growth amongst New Zealanders, even more significant a factor than education. This is an opportune time to take steps that can make a tangible difference or else the big changes will have a reverse effect on our communities if our families are priced out of local areas, instead of providing affordable homes for all.

The Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board appreciates the opportunity to give feedback and is interested to be informed of the next steps and progress on the Bill.

Lotu Fuli

Chair, Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board