

Memorandum

21 November 2018

To: Environment and Community Committee

Subject: Statistics New Zealand submission on a definition for housing quality

From: Sophie Heighway, Sustainability Initiatives Group Manager, Environmental Services

Purpose

1. To note that a submission was provided by Auckland Council staff to Statistics New Zealand on 14 November 2018 regarding a definition and conceptual framework for housing quality.

Summary

- Statistics New Zealand is leading the development of a definition and conceptual framework for housing quality in partnership with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and BRANZ (a consultancy with expertise in building and construction).
- Currently there is no single agreed definition of housing quality nationally or internationally.
- Statistics New Zealand developed a proposed definition that includes a framework to help collate, describe and define all the different aspects of housing quality. They then requested feedback from potential stakeholders and the wider public.
- A submission was provided by staff on behalf of Auckland Council and is shown in Attachment A for the Environment and Community Committee's information.
- The submission supports the development of a definition and framework for housing quality. It also makes several additional comments about how the framework could be widened to include consideration of the natural environment, sustainability and housing affordability.
- No further action is required by councillors.

Context/Background

2. Housing quality is important for all New Zealanders. Everyone should have access to healthy, safe and secure housing and basic services. Poor housing quality has been linked with poor physical and mental health.
3. Housing should also support cultural and spiritual needs, reduce the limitations of disabilities, enable access to social support networks, and adapt to changing living needs.
4. Currently there is no single agreed definition of housing quality nationally or internationally.
5. Statistics New Zealand is leading the development of a definition and conceptual framework for housing quality in partnership with the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment and BRANZ (an independent organisation which provides research, testing and consultancy services for the building and construction industry).
6. They developed a proposed definition of housing quality for use in New Zealand's data system. The proposed definition includes a framework to help collate, describe, and define all the different aspects of housing quality.
7. The framework brings together and defines four interrelated elements of housing quality:
 - housing habitability
 - housing functionality
 - environmental sustainability
 - social and cultural sustainability.

8. Statistics New Zealand sought feedback from potential stakeholders and the wider public so the definition could be refined and developed.
9. Public submissions on the topic were open from 17 October 2018 to 19 November 2018, during which period council staff lodged a submission (see Attachment A).

Discussion

10. Staff considered that the submission did not need to be approved by Environment and Community Committee before it was provided to Statistics New Zealand given its low risk.
11. In general, the submission supported the development of a definition for housing quality. However, the submission did not fully support the proposed definition and suggested some minor changes. These were:
 - The consultation document proposes the following definition of housing quality: “Housing quality refers to the degree that housing provides a healthy, safe, secure, and resilient environment for individuals, families, and whānau to live in and to participate within their kāinga and communities.” The council submitted that this definition be extended to include sustainability and mention the natural environment.
 - The consultation document asks if the four elements in the proposal (as mentioned above) are the right ones. The submission suggested that housing quality should be a pre-requisite to quality, as it includes materials, location and design.
 - The submission suggested that indoor air quality, carbon emissions and housing functionality should be added to the definition and discussed how housing will need have a greater restorative impact on people and the environment.
12. Council welcomes this proposal to set a definition of housing quality and recognises that this will support previous submissions made regarding housing affordability and quality.

Māori Impact Statement

13. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development consultation document on healthy homes states that Māori are more likely to ‘live in, or feel the effects of, cold and damp rental homes’.
14. As such, the development of a definition and conceptual framework for housing quality is likely to have more positive impacts for Māori than other Aucklanders.
15. The framework is also aligned with the Auckland Plan’s direction to advance ‘Māori wellbeing through improving the specific needs of vulnerable tamariki and whānau, particularly whānau who are experiencing substandard housing...’

Next steps/implementation

16. The submission was submitted via an online submission form to Statistics New Zealand on 14 November 2018, as per Attachment A to this memo.
17. No further steps are required by council. If you have any questions about this memo or the accompanying submission please contact Sophie Heighway on Sophie.heighway@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Attachments

- a) Submission by Auckland Council to Statistics New Zealand on “Developing a definition for housing quality: Consultation”

Developing a definition and conceptual
framework for housing quality:
Submission form

Please return your completed submission form by 9am Wednesday 14 November 2018
to: housingqualityframework@stats.govt.nz

Section 1: Your details

Name of person making this submission:

This submission is made:

by an individual

on behalf of an iwi or Māori authority or group

on behalf of a business or organisation

on behalf of a government agency

other



Please specify:

Your contact details:

Email:

Daytime phone number:

Are you happy for us to contact you?

Yes

No

Section 2: Completing the form

We are consulting on a proposed definition and conceptual framework for housing quality.

Please answer the following questions. Question 1 asks for feedback on the proposed definition of housing quality and our proposed framework. Questions 2–5 ask for feedback on the proposed definitions of each of the four framework elements.

The final question is for additional comments or thoughts on this topic.

Question 1: Proposed definition and framework for housing quality

The proposed framework below brings together the elements and definitions identified that relate to housing quality.

Housing quality definition

Housing quality refers to the degree that housing provides a healthy, safe, secure, and resilient environment for individuals, families, and whānau to live in and to participate within their kāinga and communities.

Conceptual framework elements and their definitions



1.1 Do you agree with the proposed definition for housing quality outlined above?

Yes

No

If 'no' please explain. _____

1.2 Do you agree with the four elements in the housing quality framework – housing habitability, housing functionality, environmental sustainability, and social and cultural sustainability?

Yes

No

If 'no' please explain. _____

Question 2: Framework element – housing habitability

- 2.1 Looking at the proposed definition of housing habitability and its subcomponents in the consultation document, do they adequately cover the meaning of each term?

Housing habitability: The degree to which housing and its location provide a physically safe, physically secure, and physically healthy environment. It relates to the design, construction, materials, and service provision of a house and to how well it has been built and maintained. Habitability covers the primary function of housing as providing shelter, focusing on the condition of the house's physical structure and the facilities within it.

Housing provides a *physically safe* environment when it has a sound structure reasonably resilient to natural hazards (such as extreme weather), is free from material hazards or hazards that may cause accidents. This includes adequate smoke alarms and escape routes. The location of the house should be free from avoidable hazards such as frequent flooding.

Housing provides a *physically secure* environment if it offers reasonable protection from intruders.

Housing provides a *physically healthy* environment if it has drinkable water, including hot and cold water supplies; facilities for personal hygiene and laundering, food preparation and prevention of contamination, and waste water treatment; a safe source of energy; access to natural and artificial light; protection from noise transmission; protection from cold, dampness and mould, and excess heat (including the provision of weathertight structures, insulation, ventilation, a safe heat source, and drainage).

Yes

No

If 'no' please explain. _____

- 2.2 Are there any other aspects of housing habitability you would include in the definition?

Yes

No

If 'yes' please explain. _____

Question 3: Framework element – housing functionality

3.1 Looking at the proposed definitions of housing functionality and its subcomponents, do they adequately cover the meaning of each term?

Housing functionality: The degree to which the design, construction, and location of housing support the specific physical, cultural, and social needs of individuals, families, and whānau in their kāinga and communities.

Specific cultural and spiritual participation refers to the extent to which housing supports cultural and spiritual needs. This can include the design of the house, such as the ability to have flexible spaces to accommodate visitors. It can also include the extent to which the location allows for cultural connection.

Social participation refers to the extent to which housing and its location enable access to social support networks.

Economic participation is about how the location allows for access to employment.

Connectivity is about access to transport, services, and the environment, including green spaces, parks, and beaches. Connection with the environment is important for mental and physical wellbeing. For Māori this can also refer to access to traditional food sources and other aspects of culture that relate to the physical environment.

Specific physical, sensory, and cognitive needs concern the extent to which housing design supports individual physical needs.

Specific emotional and mental health needs concern the extent to which housing supports and provides for emotional and physical wellbeing. This is closely tied to housing habitability and social and cultural participation, and connectivity.

Yes

No

If 'no' please explain. _____

3.2 Are there any other aspects of housing functionality you would include in the definition?

Yes

No

If 'yes' please explain. _____

Question 4: Framework element – environmental sustainability

4.1 Looking at the proposed definition of environmental sustainability, does it adequately cover the meaning of the term?

Environmental sustainability: The degree to which housing design, construction, and materials interact with and impact on the natural environment to support habitability now and in the future. Environmental sustainability focuses on the resource efficiency, durability, and resilience of housing.

Yes

No

If 'no' please explain. _____

4.2 Are there any other aspects of environmental sustainability you would include in the definition?

Yes

No

If 'yes' please explain. _____

Question 5: Framework element – social and cultural sustainability

5.1 Looking at the proposed definition of social and cultural sustainability, does it adequately cover the meaning of the term?

Social and cultural sustainability: The degree to which housing design is flexible enough to respond to changes in the specific physical, cultural, and social needs of individuals, families, and whānau, thereby supporting functionality across time.

Yes

No

If 'no' please explain. _____

5.2 Are there any other aspects of social and cultural sustainability you would include in the definition?

Yes

No

If 'yes' please explain. _____
