

ITEM **OLDER PERSONS HOUSING POLICY**

TO: **HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS**
OTOROHANGA DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

DATE: **16 FEBRUARY 2021**

Relevant Community Outcomes

- Ensure services and facilities meet the needs of the community
 - Otorohanga is a safe place to live
 - Foster an involved and engaged community
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Executive Summary

Attached is the draft Older Persons Housing Policy (see Attachment 1) for Council's consideration and discussion. The Policy has been developed to set out the Council's practice in regard to the provision, management and tenancy of Council's Older Persons Housing portfolio within Ōtorohanga District.

Recommendation

It is recommended that;

1. The draft Older Persons Housing Policy as attached in this report is adopted by Council as a draft, and that on adoption of the draft Policy a public notification period is given of one month to allow members of the public, iwi and stakeholders the opportunity to submit in respect of the draft Older Persons Housing Policy to assist Council in their policy setting and decision making process as per the Local Government Act 2002.
2. At the completion of the submission period, staff report back to Council for consideration a summary of the submissions and how any concerns raised through the submission process have been addressed within the policy development before Council adopts the final Older Persons Housing Policy.

Background

Council owns 28 housing units, located in 3 complexes within the urban centres of Ōtorohanga and Kawhia. The units were mainly constructed at a time when Central Government provided loans to Local Authorities at low concessionary interest rates to encourage Council involvement in pensioner housing.

Council recognises there is a genuine and growing need for long-term accommodation for older persons in the Ōtorohanga District. With the demand for housing increasing, the need for clear guidance in regard to the provision, management and tenancy of Council's Older Persons Housing portfolio within Ōtorohanga District has become essential for the efficient, fair and transparent management of Council's Older Persons Housing Portfolio.

A draft Housing Policy was presented for discussion and input at a combined workshop in October 2020 with Council and Community Board members. The input of Elected Members from the workshop provided direction and assistance to staff working on the development of the attached draft Older Persons Housing Policy.

The Older Persons Housing Policy;

- a. provides clear guidelines on tenant eligibility for persons wanting to live in Council-owned houses.

- b. provides guidelines for the level of rental, with the intention of the facilities being self-funding.
- c. ensures Council meets its statutory obligations with respect to tenancies.
- d. confirms Councils commitment to the provision of housing.

Options

Option 1 - That Council approves the draft Older Persons Housing Policy

The advantages of this option are;

- Council provides clear guidance in regard to the provision, management and tenancy of Council's Older Persons Housing portfolio within Ōtorohanga District.
- Council staff are able to manage the Older Persons Housing Portfolio in an efficient, fair and transparent way.
- Council brings the management of the Older Persons Housing Portfolio into line with industry and local government best practice.

The disadvantages of this option are;

- Some community members may feel that by providing a clear policy with a set criterion that other persons looking for housing may be excluded from Council's housing provision if they do not qualify under the proposed Policy.

Option 2 - That Council does not approve the draft Older Persons Housing Policy

The advantages of this option are;

- This avoids a set criteria and clear guidance, allowing for more flexibility to manage each case 'on its own merits'.

The disadvantages of this option are;

- This options exposes Council to unnecessary risk with an inconsistent, ad-hoc approach being applied to the management of the portfolio.
- Council staff will labour over operational decision making without any clear direction from Council.

Considerations

1. Significance and Engagement

Although Older Persons Housing is listed as a strategic asset in Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, developing a Policy to guide the management of the Older Persons Housing Portfolio does not trigger any specific consultative requirements.

2. Policy and Plans

Other than the Significance and Engagement Policy there are no other Policies or Plans that need to be considered in the development of the Older Persons Housing Policy.

3. Legal

The Local Government Act 2002 applies to the development of Council policies and the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 sets out the legalities of the management of residential tenancies.

4. Financial

There are no specific financial implications relating to the development of this Policy as it has been covered through existing resources.

5. Iwi

Iwi have not been involved to date in the development of the Older Persons Housing Policy however they will be invited to provide us with submissions should they wish to. Housing availability and affordability, including rental stock, is a matter of high interest across the whole of the New Zealand community, including and not limited to iwi.

Preferred Option and Reasons

It is the staff recommendation that Council supports option 1 to approve the draft Older Persons Housing Policy so we can progress with a public notification period inviting feedback from interested parties before finalising the Policy.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Draft Older Persons Housing Policy

Patricia Ambury

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER