

Oral submission to Parliamentary Select Committee into community-led climate change adaptation

16 July 2024

Presented by Conor Twyform (Pukerua Bay Climate Action Group) and Iain MacLean (Deputy chair Pukerua Bay Residents Association)

Conor Twyford's introduction and summary of our written submission

- Tēna koutou katoa — thanks for the introduction and thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. I'm going to hand over shortly to my friend, neighbour and colleague, Iain MacLean, to talk about a specific innovation we think is of value to this inquiry.
- But first: Pukerua Bay and climate change (photo). When 5 of us got organised in 2022 and held our first meeting in the school hall on a beautiful spring day in October, we were stunned by the extent of community interest in the issue.
- As a small coastal community we are well placed to be part of the adaptation conversation, given our positioning on the part of the SH59 that is prone to closure due to flooding, the number of slips we experience and housing along the waterfront that is prone to sea level rise.
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- Our community is small and deeply connected which means we are in a strong position to respond to disasters and emergencies. (photo of first meeting or one of the workshops).
- As a small coastal community we are well placed to be part of the adaptation conversation, given our positioning on the part of the SH59 that is prone to closure due to flooding, the number of slips we experience and housing along the waterfront that is prone to sea level rise.
- Before handing over to Iain and in the interests of time my main messages to the committee would be that:
- Ground up community-driven leadership involving mana whenua is essential
- Decision making units should be kept at a fairly low level

- Our Village Plan has been a bridge between local people and council and has set the stage for our climate planning. It has surfaced key values around kaitiakitanga and sustainability, and showed that people are not against more housing per se but rather they recognise the need for housing that is sensitive to the terrain
- Yet communities may lack capacity and capability; hence it's absolutely essential that we also have a national overview and strategy
- Adaptation planning should be a conversation between local communities and local and central government
- We need to get in front of issues before they become a problem, and we are forced into a recovery response we are in a strong position to respond to disasters and emergencies. (photo of first meeting or one of the workshops).

Iain MacLean's recommendation on revised district plans

- Tēnā koutou katoa — Pukerua Bay Residents Association strongly supports the work of the Climate Change Action Group.
- We also engage with Porirua City Council on things like urban planning in the city. We have a suggestion about district plans that we think will be very useful around the whole of the country as a result of the government's policies on housing growth.
- The whole area of farmland between Pukerua Bay and Plimmerton is earmarked for development as the 'Northern Growth Area'. Will result in 5,000 – 6,000 new houses across potentially seven separate properties.
- To the immediate south east of Pukerua Bay, two developers are planning to build hundreds of medium density houses on two former farms.
- This area next to Pukerua Bay has its own structure plan as part of a District Plan variation to rezone the land to residential.
- We were very surprised to see the original proposed district plan variation didn't mention anything about the impacts of climate change, given that PCC has a climate change strategy.
- We told PCC they needed to be explicit about how things like landform, infrastructure, urban design, water run-off, and placement of structures should anticipate and minimise the impacts of extreme weather events, and increase community resilience.
- We told them transport design and connectivity should minimise the reliance on private motor vehicles for personal transport and maximise use of public transport and carbon-neutral, active transport modes, such as cycling. We also said the interpretation of rules around development should be in line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

- Very pleased the hearing panel recommended, and council accepted, that climate change and resilience needed to be included in the DP.
- We didn't get included a detailed list of factors to consider, but the plan does say,
 - > "The development will incorporate design principles that anticipate the effects of climate change, to mitigate its impacts, to avoid contributing to it and to increase community resilience."
- There are two beneficial consequences of this:
 1. Even though people will argue about what the simple statement means, they won't be able to avoid having the discussion and will have to come to some agreement at the consenting stage.
 2. Secondly, council has created a precedent by declaring that considering climate change at this level of planning is essential.
- This leads us onto the rest of the Northern Growth Area, which will also require DP variations as council rezones the land to residential. Going through this variation process provides an opportunity for this climate change requirement to be included in any new plan.
- While this Select Committee's inquiry is largely looking at existing communities and how they will adapt to climate change, we need to ensure that new communities incorporate suitable approaches to avoid future problems, so they aren't in the position many of our existing communities are in, having to bolt it on years after they have been built.
- We think this approach of including a requirement like this is a good balance between telling developers and councils **what** they have to do — i.e. consider the impacts of climate change — without being prescriptive about **how** they should do it.
- That leaves it open for solutions that can be tailored to specific situations to get the most appropriate and effective approaches.
- Getting this right is important to our communities. The combination of new developments and climate change will have an impact on existing communities. But we also want to make sure our new neighbours aren't exposed to the negative impacts because no one took the opportunity to prevent it.
- Select Committees have influence, and this is an opportunity for you to include a significant recommendation in your report that will help guide future development in a way that incorporates climate change mitigation right from the beginning.
- Given their legal status and their place in the hierarchy of plans, strategies and policies, keeping it as local as possible by making climate change mitigation explicit in District Plans is an ideal way of ensuring this happens.

- This is quite timely, as the government's policy on housing development means many councils will review their DPs soon to enable this, and we recommend councils take this approach when they do so.
- Government should also support and encourage this approach.
- Given the interest there will be in the outcomes of this inquiry, we would strongly urge that the committee's report recommends that future DP reviews include a requirement to take account of climate change.

There wasn't enough time for the committee members to ask any questions as we had used our entire 10 minutes allocated to presenters.