



ST HELIERS & GLENDOWIE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Intensification meeting notes from meeting 10 September 2025

Venue: St Heliers Community Centre, 100 St Heliers bay Road, St Heliers

Time: 7.30 – 8.30pm

Lauren Hawken, St Heliers and Glendowie Residents Association Committee member, and currently standing as an Independent Candidate for the OLB, organised and hosted meeting.

Meeting organised to inform local residents from an independent perspective of the proposed upzoning plan changes announced by Auckland Council.

This is not about stopping growth, the current Unitary Plan already enables a significant amount of housing capacity, this is about planning for growth in a sustainable way, to protect the amenity of our neighbourhood.

Guest Speaker: Hamish Firth – Director/Planner – Mt Hobson Group

Over 30 years experience, in the planning profession, well respected Planner.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/hamish-firth-5461503a/?originalSubdomain=nz>

Hamish will be covering:

- What the Government's directives mean in practice,
- How Council has responded,
- The impacts of blanket upzoning and walkable catchments, and
- What residents can do to have a say.

Government mandates (directed by Housing Minister Chris Bishop), has led to the Planning Changes now proposed with the blanket up zoning of our suburbs.

Hamish to speak for about 40 minutes. Thank you to Desley Simpson for attending.

Status quo disrupted; two ways

- Amendment ACT Medium Density Residential Standards MDRS – Plan change 78 – blanket upzoning, which Auckland Council has pushed back on.
- Central Govt. (Chris Bishop), providing an alternative, to drop the MDRS provisions, but Council must still enable the same if not more housing capacity as Plan change 78. Therefore still creating the same blanket upzoning approach, just with more intensification close to rapid transport stations, and down zoning in coastal areas. All other areas are to be up zoned from Mixed housing suburban to Mixed housing urban – Terraced and apartment zone.
- Increasing intensification and heights with walkable catchments closed to our rapid transport hubs - 2025 amendment from current govt. equivalent zoning capacity and around Mt Eden, Kingland, Morningside, Baldwin Avenue. Go to 50 metres high.

- Reshaping of areas large flat areas near our coast are being down zoned to single house. They are being down zoned, for insurance reasons with flooding and inundation & sea ingress. Insurance problems resulting if these steps not taken.

If you don't support the upzoning, recommend that residents speaking to someone at Central Govt, level i.e Goldsmith, Seymour, and Van Veldon. Chris Bishop in charge. Auckland Council has been mandated this, so no point contacting Council.

Auckland Unitary Plan is working well now – since 2016 has given a variety of housing typologies for residents to live in. More options are still available. Current 2016 Plan has enabling capacity for 900,000 houses. We are building approx. 14,000, houses a year, and have built approx. 140000 since 2016, so we are well beneath the enabling capacity mark of 900000. Still have room for 760000 more houses... which at the project building rate will take 54 years....

Key takeaway

- Raw calculation: 54 years at 14,000 houses/year
- Adjusted for **population growth**: closer to **125–130 years** to fully use capacity
- Shows that **current build rate is only partially “eating into” the total capacity** because most of it is needed just to keep up with population growth.

Single bedroom in blocks high demand, where developers are putting their efforts.

Auckland Unitary Plan is required to be reviewed every 10 years (legislative requirement). Or plan for 2Mil more houses with no infrastructure in place.

Designation. When these don't get put in place you get 'blight'. Example, Parnell for 40 years going to put in motorway, wider road. 2016 kept. Now lapsed. Road should be widened, not done, now no money.

What is 'Blight' in planning terms in NZ.

In planning terms, **blight** refers to areas or properties that are physically deteriorated, underused, or unsafe, often leading to economic decline, reduced property values, and negative social impacts on the surrounding community. Identifying blight is important for urban planning as it can justify redevelopment, revitalization, or renewal initiatives to improve safety, usability, and overall community wellbeing.

Need to change legislation, to halt the proposed upzoning that has occurred. Our current planning document is working well.

Examples of what work, what doesn't. Height in St Georges Bay Road, Parnell. However same suburb small quiet cul-de-sac zoned for 50 metres, street too narrow doesn't work. Scope too board.

We don't need to plan for this. We need to review the Auckland Unitary Plan. Another 100,000 homes needed, need to accommodate that. CRL changes need to be made. Planning for infrastructure.

Hobson Bay, 34 x per year raw sewage flows in the waterway. St Heliers Beach also has raw sewage spill.

We are never going to have enough money for the infrastructure, there is always a lag.

Questions/answers time:

Q. When does quality of these builds come into the equation. We need to build better. Example Long drive across from diary.

A. The average New Zealander just wants a warm dry house. Needs to come under a building ACT review for better builds/standards.

Q. As a professional planner, have you made a stand directly.

Seeing someone in his professional capacity in 2 weeks' time. Practical language to get some changes, pull-back. We need to take a breath, plan change 78 to go, need infrastructure alongside.

S. Desley, next week we have to put a first stake in the ground. We do have to enter something. Get rid of plan change 78. Do something about the 2 Mil. Then we need to do something. **24th**

September Council has to ratify proposal.

Chris Bishop has to make a legislative change, should be something else.

Q. Been down this path before. Went to court, won. Then overturned by legislation.

S. Desley, the message is. Work within our rules or we will do it for you.

Q. Talk us through the stage growth that we might see.

A. Random level of houses driven by a developer.

Unitary plan working well. Perhaps some further development around commuter corridors.

S. Desley has said if they vote against it the government will do it for Council. Council wants more green fields. Drury a Hobsonville on steroids. Food bowl issue out south as well.

OLB have put something together. Remuera ridge and other options as an alternative.

S. Desley. Watercare has maps of where we can develop and where we can't based on existing infrastructure. More definition around infrastructure required. Stormwater and wastewater need to be in place, overflows, failings no longer acceptable to society.

Need to get rid of the 2Mil, made up number.

Q. Infrastructure lagging, why. Why can't the Local Boards manage that.

A. Greenfields easier and cheaper to put in infrastructure there. Existing suburbs significant problems due to existing land, houses, infrastructure. Very difficult retrofitting to older areas. When you build new houses in green fields new income to do work.

Q. What is proposed. 500, 600, 700 – 3 dwelling. Current permitted. (explain ...)

Q. Watercare do they every stop development? Do they stop developments, yes.

Q. Why in terms of this discussion, local St Heliers beach one of 10 dirtiest beaches in Auckland. Sewage going into stormwater. Current system overflowing into beach. Why don't we stop connections into this area? No answer provided.

Q. Desley, what hurts politicians is loss of votes. Why aren't they getting a vote from residents, organised.

S. Desley, Watercare already have on their website details of where problems and limitations are. Watercare has 3.8 mil per day to spend. Interceptor. We need to be much more tough when consents are requested.

Q. Glen Innes 2500 just about to be finished. This has been planned in Tamaki. Authority and autonomy.

Q. Rob Meredith, to do a GST rebate for developers? Millwater, \$1k extra per year to pay for infrastructure for 30 years.

Q. Is height 11 Metres – properties to be up zoned to Mixed Housing Urban - yes. In St Heliers/Glendowie every site has 3 houses potential. Will be as of right.

Q. 2-3 years at the moment. MDRS disappears in November 2025. We return to unitary plan at this point. Eg. Atkin Avenue going back to single house.

S. Desley. 3 storey 3 height. Bring in this new one for debate, which means we revert back to Unitary Plan. Then we can debate.

Q. Any consideration for commercial building.

A. The city centre plan change has gone through.

Q. Underground water care. All single zoned areas are very low lying. What does this mean.

A. One house per site. No development potential. Floor level is likely to be increased. Escape paths required.

Q. Underground infrastructure very expensive. Are development contributions enough.

A. Blunt tool up front. Need to spread that. Redhill first \$100k to council per house. Milldale, Fulton Hogan where additional rate for a period of time.

Q. What are they doing overseas?

A. Sydney complaints same as Auckland.

Q. Development contributions are they varied by area.

A. Yes. Different areas, different demand. Matrix of command.

Lauren: Thanked Hamish Firth for attending, thanked Desley for answering questions and for the residents coming. Was an informative evening.

Meeting closed: 8.30pm

Well attended: approx. 80 people in attendance?

Minutes taken: Claire Bickerdike, *Secretary, St Heliers and Glendowie Residents Association.*