



## **Regional Council urged to unlock valuable land for development**

**TAURANGA, 11 July 2023:** Tauranga’s Urban Task Force (UTF) are urging the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) to act on the city’s desperate housing shortage by unlocking any type of land that has the potential to deliver much-needed building capacity.

In a submission delivered to the Council’s hearing commissioners for Plan Change 6, UTF Chairman, Scott Adams, highlighted the poor performance of the region against the rest of the country.

“We have a severe shortage of zoned and serviced land for both residential and commercial use. Tauranga has been non-compliant with government capacity requirements under the National Policy Statement for Urban Development,” says Adams.

“We’re the poorest performing region in terms of both housing supply and affordability.”

Adams noted that the BOPRC has the resources available to urgently free up land for development.

“Our three Councils have had a formal process underway for some time that has identified new urban growth areas, but this is a time-consuming project and both the rezoning of land and the provision of services to the new areas will take years,” he says.

“In the meantime, smaller areas of land that’s already zoned and serviced is sitting empty. The Council needs to consider any smaller greenfield land parcel opportunities, acting urgently to allow these smaller developments which will provide a stop-gap while they work on readying larger urban growth projects such as Te Tumu, Tauriko West & Omokoroa.

“At present, the way Plan Change 6 is written, it could prevent all unanticipated development on some of these smaller areas from occurring.”

UTF’s Town Planning Policy Advisor, Aaron Collier suggests the Council reconsider the set of restrictions currently in place for developments.

“We want to see a more enabling approach to new development in response to the supply crisis. The Regional Council’s suggestion that there be an arbitrary 5ha limit on smaller development sites is only going to worsen the existing housing supply crisis,” he says.

“Some of the smaller sites on the urban fringe can easily accommodate up to 100 homes, they’re already connected and ready for service, but they fall under the 5ha limit,” says Collier.

Adding to frustration with the development limits, Regional Council staff have been unable to clarify where the 5ha limit originated from.

“We’re looking for sensible decision-making here from the region’s leadership. We support the long-term foundations for town-planning outlined in Plan Change 6, and we support the joint Future Development Strategy which will create a blueprint for regional development in years to come,” says Collier.

“However, right now, we need some lateral thinking and urgent action to get residents into homes and keep companies in business. The economy of the region depends upon it.

“Flexible policy is the key to building a better city. If development and infrastructure opportunities come along which benefit the region but sit outside current restrictions, we need to be able to at least have the policy basis to consider them,” says Adams.

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For more information about the Urban Task Force including copies of submissions referred to in this release see: <https://urbantaskforce.co.nz/>