

Kaupapa Here – Whare mō ngā Pāhake

Housing for the Elderly Policy

Person Responsible: Group Manager Community and Infrastructure Services

Date Adopted: 28 June 2022

Status: Current

Status:

Date Last Reviewed: NA

Next Review Date: June 2027

Review Period: 5 years

Revision Number: 1

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to confirm that the Council will continue to provide housing for the elderly and set out how it will manage the activity, including funding, accommodation standards and tenancy management.

Objective

To provide principles and guidelines for the Council's role in meeting the current and future housing needs of older people in the South Taranaki District.

Community Outcomes

The Housing for the Elderly Policy contributes to the following community outcomes and priority:

Together South Taranaki (social well-being) – a District with healthy, safe, resilient, informed and connected people.

Vibrant Taranaki (cultural well-being) – a vibrant and creative District that celebrates diversity and has strong relations with Iwi/Hapū.

Community Priority – innovative and updated community facilities and services across the District.

Scope

This Policy applies to all of the Council's rental housing that is identified as housing for the elderly.

Principles

1. Purpose

The Council's Housing for the Elderly activity provides an affordable housing option for residents of the South Taranaki District who have a higher level of need.

2. Accommodation Standards

The Council is committed to providing safe comfortable and affordable accommodation that complies with the Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019 for current and future tenants of its Housing for the Elderly units.

3. Tenant Support Service

The Council is committed to the provision of an effective tenancy management and support service that supports tenants to age in place.

4. Asset Management

Protection of the Council's assets through well planned maintenance and capital works programmes is essential. However, the cost to ratepayers will be considered in all aspects of the Housing for the Elderly service delivery.

5. Meeting Long Term Needs

The Council will support the development of additional housing units in areas of demand provided this can be achieved with minimal impact on ratepayers or through partnerships with other stakeholders.

The Council will consider the sale of units that cannot be cost-effectively modified to meet the minimum standards defined in this Policy or cannot achieve a reasonable rental return.

As much as possible, the provision of the Council's Housing for the Elderly service will contribute to climate change mitigation and incorporate environmentally sustainable practices.

Requirements of the Legislation

The Council is not required by legislation to provide housing for the elderly but, having decided to do so, it must comply with:

- [The Local Government Act 2002](#).
- [The Residential Tenancies Act 1986](#).
- [Residential Tenancies \(Healthy Homes Standards\) Regulations 2019](#).

Definition

Council means the South Taranaki District Council.

Policy

1.0 Eligibility Criteria

- 1.1 To be eligible for the Council's Housing for the Elderly, applicants must:
- i. Be in receipt of New Zealand Superannuation, a war pension or age-related benefit.
 - ii. Have total assets, including cash, investments, house and other property not exceeding \$40,000 for a single person and \$50,000 for couples (excluding car, furniture and personal effects); and
 - iii. Have additional income below the current gross income limit for the Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) Accommodation Supplement.
 - iv. Be able to live independently (including with assistance from external support).
 - v. Be able to demonstrate they are a good tenant with no history of excessive drinking of alcohol, use of recreational drugs or domestic or other violence.

Exceptions

- 1.2 Units that have been vacant for more than 12 weeks may be rented to tenants over 55 years of age and in receipt of a Supported Living Payment or Widows benefit from WINZ, provided they meet the above income and asset criteria.

Conditions

- 1.3 The Council provides Housing for the Elderly as a social service. However, this is not an obligation to accommodate any applicant who meets the eligibility criteria. For example, if an applicant has a previous record of causing loss or damage to their accommodation or disruption to neighbours, their application may not be accepted.
- 1.4 Likewise, if a tenant causes damage to Council property or behaves in a way that affects the well-being of other tenants and neighbours, the Council may apply to the Tenancy Tribunal for termination of the tenancy.

2.0 Accommodation Standards

- 2.1 The Council is committed to providing safe comfortable and affordable housing that meets the required standards under current legislation.

3.0 Tenant Support Service

- 3.1 In addition to supporting the tenants, the tenancy management and support service is intended to protect the Council asset and minimise maintenance costs through the early identification of issues that may result in loss of income or damage to Council property.
- 3.2 Staff will refer a tenant to appropriate social or health services if they become aware that the tenant requires additional assistance, such as with financial, health, social or disability issues.

4.0 Rentals and Funding

Funding Objectives

- 4.1 The operational costs of the Housing for the Elderly activity will be funded as per the Council's [Revenue and Financing Policy](#).
- 4.2 This is an overall target and individual blocks of units may achieve higher or lower returns.

Rental Objectives

- 4.3 To achieve the funding objectives, rentals for Housing for the Elderly will be set at 80% of market rates, with consideration given to the condition of each unit.
- 4.4 Rentals for existing tenants will be increased by a maximum of 10% per year until 80% of market rate is reached.
- 4.5 Units that cannot be expected to achieve a reasonable rental return will be considered for sale. Details of the decision-making process relating to the disposal of Housing for the Elderly units are in Section 5 of this Policy. Any proposed acquisition or disposal of Housing for the Elderly units will follow the Council's Property Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

5.0 Meeting Long Term Needs

- 5.1 The Council recognises that, as the population ages, the demand for its Housing for the Elderly activity will increase progressively over the next 20 years and it supports investigation into options for meeting that need.
- 5.2 The needs of older people will be taken into account when considering the provision of new housing, such as access, social interaction, proximity to retail and medical services, safety and mobility (including pathways and public transport).

5.3 The Council also acknowledges the variation in demand for housing throughout the District, reflecting the preference of older people to live closer to health and social services and public transport. As a first step in meeting long term housing needs the Council will consider the disposal of units that:

- Cannot be cost effectively upgraded to meet the minimum standards as defined in the Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019;
- Are not expected to achieve a reasonable rental return; or
- For a period of two years have had an occupancy rate of under 50% by tenants aged over 65 years of age.

5.4 The above measures provide a trigger/guide for staff to inform the Council when any units have reached a point where they are either:

- a. At the end of their useful life; or
- b. Not meeting the funding policy.

5.5 Any funds resulting from the sale or disposal of existing units will be reinvested in the development of Housing for the Elderly units in areas of highest need.

6.0 Related Council Policies, Plans and Strategies

Housing for the Elderly Asset Management Plan

6.1 The Housing for the Elderly Policy will support the development and implementation of the Asset Management Plan by providing guidance on the levels of service expected by the Council and a clear indication of the Council's level of commitment to the funding of capital works and maintenance.

Long Term Plan

6.2 The Housing for the Elderly Policy will provide guidance for the development of appropriate service levels, performance measures and budgets for the Housing for the Elderly activity. The Council's Significance and Engagement Policy states that Housing for the Elderly assets are strategic assets.

7.0 More Information

Consult the Properties and Facilities Operations Manager, Properties and Facilities Team Leader or the Group Manager Community and Infrastructure Services if you have questions about this Policy.