

Released Thursday 3 February 2022

Mayoral Taskforce for Social Housing Update for Meeting, Tuesday 1 February 2022

The Mayoral Taskforce for Social Housing has held its first meeting for 2022, discussing the need for social housing and council's role as a public housing provider.

Established by Wellington's Mayor Andy Foster, the Taskforce first met in December to help the council address the affordability, financial sustainability and quality of its public housing portfolio.

The Taskforce comprises independent subject matter experts, housing advocates, council tenants, Mayor Foster, Deputy Mayor Sarah Free and Wellington city councillors Tamatha Paul and Diane Calvert.

On Tuesday night (Feb 1, 2022) the Taskforce met virtually and heard from author and lawyer Max Harris and researcher Jacqueline Paul – both have extensive backgrounds in housing research.

The meeting took a high-level look at the history of public housing in Wellington and New Zealand, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its role in the provision of public housing, the importance of security of tenure for tenants and the distinct role that councils play in providing public housing, historically and in the present.

As the third largest provider and the largest council provider of public housing, the Taskforce also discussed the unique characteristics of Wellington City Council including its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi in relation to public housing.

Aside from ensuring the future sustainability of the council's housing portfolio, the Taskforce is also looking at a series of future options to increase the supply of public housing in Wellington.

These include extending the current Income Related Rents Subsidy (IRRS) to council tenants. Another option is establishing a Community Housing Provider (CHP) on behalf of the council to enable eligible tenants to access IRRS. A third option is for the council to fund the current shortfall in its housing portfolio through borrowing.

The Taskforce plans to hold more hearings this month and release its final report in April.