

Submission PR250/18

Beacon Pathway Submission to the Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022 for Auckland Council

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What is Beacon?

Beacon Pathway Incorporated aims to transform New Zealand's homes and neighbourhoods to be high performing, adaptable, resilient and affordable. To achieve this, Beacon's work uses demonstrations and monitoring to provide proof of the benefits of improving New Zealand's housing stock.

Beacon Pathway Inc. builds on the successful research programme completed by Beacon's original consortium which developed a whole-of-house approach to improving the performance of both new and existing homes, using demonstrations and monitoring to provide proof of the benefits of improving New Zealand's housing stock. Much of this work was developed with Waitakere City Council and is available free of charge on the Beacon website www.beaconpathway.co.nz. Tools developed by Beacon include:

- Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework – a framework and tools to measure the sustainability of neighbourhoods
- HSS High Standard of Sustainability–performance benchmarks for a sustainable home which take a whole of house approach to improving the performance of both new and existing homes. This encompasses energy, water, indoor environment, waste, and material/product selection.
- A HomeSmart approach to assessing existing homes and developing a renovation plan – this underpins the Retrofit Your Home initiative.
- *Policy Options for Sustainable Homes: A Resource Manual for Local Government*- this provides an overview of the range of tools available to councils to encourage people to make more sustainable choices in their homes and neighbourhoods

Beacon believes that these tools and approaches can contribute to achieving the vision set by the draft Auckland Plan and extends an offer of support to Council to work collaboratively in exploring some of these tools and approaches in the Auckland region.

Beacon's Members include: Christchurch City Council, EECA, New Zealand Steel, Fletcher Aluminium, Certified Builders, Resene and Insulpro Manufacturing.

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- Beacon wishes to speak in support of its LTP submission to the Auckland Council hearing panel.
- The most important topics from our submission that we wish to speak about are transforming homes and neighbourhoods to be high performing, adaptable, resilient and affordable.
- These relate most to the following groups of activities from Volume 2 of the draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022:
 - Planning
 - Economic development
 - Built and natural environment
 - Solid waste
 - Stormwater and flood protection
 - Water supply and sewerage
 - Transport
 - Community

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1 Summary- Beacon's Perspective on the Draft Long Term Plan

Beacon congratulates the Auckland Council on developing its first draft Long Term Plan (LTP) detailing the work programme over the next 10 years to achieve the vision – *the world's most liveable city*. Beacon believes that to achieve this vision will require a step change in the types of activities provided by the Council and how these activities are delivered. It cannot be achieved by delivering business as usual.

A core theme of the draft Auckland Plan is growth and opportunity that builds and sustains the quality of life available to Aucklanders. In order to deliver on the Mayoral vision, climate change strategies, addressing housing needs, a move to a low carbon future, improved community resilience and other aspects of 21st century sustainability must also be drawn through to the draft LTP. Strong leadership, innovation and a focus on working collaboratively across communities, industry and central government, as well as across the various aspects of Council (including Local Boards and Council Controlled Organisations) will be needed to deliver many aspects in the Auckland Plan.

Beacon has expertise, networks and a range of tools which may be of assistance in achieving the transition to the world's most liveable city. Much of this work was developed with Waitakere City Council and is available free of charge on the Beacon website.

1.1 Key points from Beacon Pathway's submission

1.1.1 *Quality homes and neighbourhoods underpin Auckland Council's vision*

In Beacon's view, quality, sustainable and affordable housing and neighbourhoods can underpin much of the progress required to achieve the vision and direction as outlined in the draft Auckland Plan. Oncoming climate change, peak oil and economic tightening reinforce the need for development that is well-connected and serviced by public transport, and housing/commercial building stock which is energy, water and waste efficient. The quality of the vision of any place-based development needs to include not only a demand management approach to the management of natural resources but also opportunities for diversity of supply - water, energy and localised waste management.

1.1.2 *Step change needed to achieve vision*

Achieving Auckland's vision will require a range of innovative strategic and policy approaches – backed up by methods, actions and delivery the like of which has not been seen in Auckland before. A key component of achieving this vision is improving Auckland's housing stock.

Beacon supports the vision and direction set by the draft Auckland Plan; however, does not see the step change required by the Plan being delivered through the 2012-2022 LTP.

Beacon submits that becoming a sustainable, low carbon and resilient city should be included more explicitly as a transformational shift.

Beacon supports the sixth transformation shift *significantly enhance Maori social and economic wellbeing* and requests that this shift be woven through the remainder of final LTP. For example, there is no discussion of this in section 2.2.3.

The vision and statements in the Auckland Plan, particularly around climate change need to feature strongly in all sections of the LTP and in particular the transport sections and the Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP). To achieve the vision will require a fundamental shift in the transport projects delivered, not business as usual.

1.1.3 Well-designed neighbourhoods are a pathway to a liveable city

Beacon supports the realisation of a quality compact city with intensification around transport hubs. This will require an urban design framework with a strong emphasis on resilience, low impact design, demand management and diversity of infrastructure supply.

Beacon's research has identified that medium density mixed-use is a sustainable neighbourhood form which brings benefits to a city. Unfortunately, to date, New Zealand has not specifically designed dwellings and neighbourhoods to achieve these benefits: so our experience of higher density mixed use has been poor. The opportunity is to plan, design and retrofit Auckland neighbourhoods to realise the liveable city vision. Beacon proposes its Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit as a robust evidence-based tool for Auckland Council to use. See Appendix One: Beacon Resources.

Beacon supports the focus on the spatial initiatives (section 2.2.4). Housing and neighbourhoods should be a key part of each of these initiatives. There are opportunities for sustainable housing (new and retrofit) and neighbourhood pilot examples within these projects.

1.1.4 A liveable city demands that Auckland offers quality housing stock

Beacon supports the development of the Housing Strategy for Auckland. Beacon research indicates that the highest costs to the economy, environment and to homeowners occurs during the operation of a home (see Appendix One: Beacon Resources). Therefore, strong emphasis should be given to quality design and retrofit to optimise operational performance. The Strategy must focus on improving the existing housing stock, high quality future housing, sustainability and affordability. Beacon would welcome the opportunity to input to the development of the Strategy.

Beacon fully supports the Retrofit Your Home programme whole of house approach and funding be continued and expanded. This is the council's main programme by which Auckland can transform existing housing stock to deliver:

- Improved health outcomes - cold damp homes pose serious health risks
- Improved productivity outcomes – for individuals, communities and business
- Economic benefit–Beacon's research indicates 392 full-time equivalent jobs are generated for every 1000 homes renovated (see Appendix One: Beacon Resources)
- Reduced load on water infrastructure - household level efficiencies have direct benefits at the community scale, particularly where there is growing demand within catchments – as per water in the Auckland area. (see Appendix One: Beacon Resources)
- More efficient resource use, resilience and reduced operational costs – insulating the community from inevitable price increases and providing a more resilient infrastructure and carbon savings.

Beacon submits that Auckland Council explore ways to reduce the amount of construction waste being developed and going to landfill, including the use of construction waste bylaws as used in Christchurch.

Beacon supports the important roles that local boards can play in improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of their local communities with improved housing and neighbourhood quality and affordability. Beacon requests that all Local Boards include in their current and future Local Board Plans and Agreements:

- a) a strategic priority Our people have good quality and affordable housing and neighbourhoods
- b) an initiative to support participation of their residents in the Auckland Retrofit Your Home Initiative and other sustainability initiatives and programmes

Beacon supports the housing focus by Maungakiekie-Tamaki, Rodney and Waitemata Local Boards.

1.1.5 Council is a key player determining Auckland's housing outcomes

Beacon's research shows that councils that want to successfully promote more sustainable homes can make it easier for homeowners to build and retrofit more sustainable homes. In partnership with councils, Beacon has developed a Resource Manual to support improved housing outcomes (see Appendix One: Beacon Resources) and has expertise in this area.

Beacon supports rationalising the regulatory and policy framework including development of the Unitary Plan. These must assist in delivering the step changes required to achieve the vision for Auckland including focusing on resilience, sustainability, a low carbon future and providing an enabling environment for innovative solutions.

Infrastructure is a major cost to Council. Council must focus on demand management, resilience, creating an enabling environment for innovative solutions including localised and diverse networks and being design led-rather than engineering-led in all approaches for all infrastructure – roading, waters, energy.

Beacon supports user charges to signal the cost of services and as a demand management tool. However, an analysis of the positive externalities from a good or service must be undertaken as in some cases the benefits arising may be such that the service or good should be rates funded. Beacon supports fixed and volumetric charging for water and wastewater service as a demand management tool and to identify the cost associated with its use (see Appendix One: Beacon Resources).

Strategies, policies and plans being developed by the Auckland Council need to take full account of climate change, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and other aspects of resilience and sustainability such as demand management, local sourcing and local initiatives

Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs), for example Auckland Transport, need to be clearly delivering on the intent of the Auckland Plan.

Council must foster a holistic economic development approach, focusing on delivering a more resilient and self-reliant economy, not one highly reliant on exports and high energy use. This includes:

- Working with businesses to deliver environmentally responsible business operations
- Facilitating local economic development – to create a more fair and equitable society and one where people do not need to travel long distances to work and play
- Facilitating iwi/Maori economic development and social economic development

Beacon supports the development of an Innovation Centre with a key focus on sustainable and renewable technologies and energy.

1.1.6 Liveable neighbourhoods need sustainable transport provision

Beacon's research positions transport infrastructure as a key element of a neighbourhood's built environment: poor decisions can undermine outcomes (see Appendix One: Beacon Resources).

Public transport provides transport choices and a more sustainable and resilient mode of transport. Therefore it is disappointing to see the RLTP(pp3, 22) state *sustained growth in the use of public transport over the next 30 years is necessary to free up our motorways and arterials for freight, commercial and other trips vital to the economy that cannot use public transport*. This sentence must be amended to reflect the true benefits of public transport in order for the intent of the Auckland Plan to be realised through this section.

Public transport, walking and cycling must receive a larger proportion of the transport spend to redress the poor (but improving) state of infrastructure and services from a historical underspend and to contribute to a higher quality of life in Auckland.

Public transport infrastructure and services must be provided alongside new development, not following the development.

1.1.7 Beacon resources

A summary of the key programmes of work undertaken by Beacon which could assist Auckland Council is provided as Appendix 1. Further details are available free of charge on the Beacon website www.beaconpathway.co.nz or through contacting Beacon directly.

2 Beacon Pathway's Comments on Submission Questions

This section addresses the questions raised in the draft Long Term Plan submission form (Volume 1, pp79-81).

2.1 Transport

Beacon strongly supports development of an integrated transport network, with the prioritisation of cycling, walking, slow streets, public transport and connectivity. This is a transport network which supports land use, provides for all people, but most importantly addresses issues of sustainability and resilience – climate change, the adverse health impacts from transport, peak oil and resource availability.

The vision and statements in the Auckland Plan, particularly around Auckland's response to climate change do not appear to follow through to the LTP and RLTP. Targets in the Auckland Plan to reduce carbon emissions at the same time as the city is currently on a path towards increasing emissions, highlights the fundamental shift required by Auckland. The reality is that, to reduce carbon emissions, we need to shift our society and communities, our urban fabric and transport systems, our means of production and consumption away from business as usual – in short, a fundamental shift of every aspect of Auckland's future. In terms of transport, such shifts must include a greater utilisation of water transport, alternative fuelled public transport (bio fuels and electric vehicles), teleworking and support for shared workspaces (for example, the Kitchen in Grey Lynn, Parnell Trust and Community Waitakere) as well as an effective transit system. These shifts will enable Auckland to prepare for peak oil and the transition to different energy futures, greater self reliance in energy supplies and a move away from the dependence on the private car.

The Draft Auckland Plan took a deliberate step to move away from an “engineer-led” approach in transportation planning and city building to a design-led one where the function (or movement) must be balanced against the need to create places that people want to live and work in. This reinforces the importance of land use planning, where land use activities lead the way for transport solutions and also indicates the importance of communities having active roles in making these plans and decisions. This approach must follow through to the design and implementation of projects.

Beacon also notes the subtle changes in wording between the transport sections in the LTP and the RLTP and submits that, in particular sections, these alter the emphasis and intent of the documents, which will impact on the actions that follow. Examples include the changed wording between the section *How do we decide our transport priorities* (LTP vol. 1, p48) and *How projects are prioritised* (RLTP p4). Beacon submits that Auckland Transport (and other CCOs) needs to be clearly delivering on the objectives and intent of the Auckland Plan.

As well, Beacon notes the statement (RLTP, p3, para 4) “*sustained growth in the use of public transport over the next 30 years is necessary to free up our motorways and arterials for freight, commercial and other trips vital to the economy that cannot use public transport.*” The purpose of public transport is far greater than this – benefits include providing affordable, efficient and effective transport choices for a wide range of people and purposes, more sustainable and efficient options for travel than the private motor vehicle and reducing emissions. It is disappointing to note such a narrow focus.

Question 1.2 Do you agree with the proposed balance of dollars being spent between road/footpaths and public transport?

4– Disagree

Comment - Beacon submits that the proposed allocation of resources between road/footpaths and public transport, particularly with regard to capital expenditure, does not redress the years of underspend on public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure. Projects that support increased sustainability and resilience must be prioritised in order to deliver on the vision and direction of the Auckland Plan and for Auckland to become more resilient and ultimately more sustainable. Such projects generally focus on a local or sub-regional scale rather than a regional scale and include walking and cycling and public transport. Further, such projects complement each other – effective local walking and cycling networks and infrastructure enable public transport users to combine different modes of transport efficiently and easily, which in turn increases uptake of each of these modes.

Question 1.3 Are there specific projects you agree or disagree with?

Comment - Beacon supports the development of a transport network which serves the people of Auckland and beyond, allows for the movement of freight, but most importantly addresses issues of moving towards a low carbon future, resilience and providing affordable and regular access around the city for all. Therefore, Beacon recommends an emphasis on the further development of the public transport network, walking and cycling, including:

- The City Rail Link planning
- Electrification of rail network
- Walking and cycling projects, especially around town centres and schools
- Increased operating subsidies for public transport – allowing for the expansion of the network including ensuring that services to new areas of development such as in Hobsonville and Flatbush are implemented as the first people move in to the new subdivisions.

2.2 Economic Development

Beacon supports a holistic economic development approach focussing on delivering a more resilient and self-reliant economy. The next 30 years will provide significant challenges to the economy of Auckland from the perspective of energy price increases, resource availability and energy security as well as vulnerability to global economic events. Beacon recommends that Council should be setting the stage for supporting an economy that is not primarily dependent on export products which in turn are dependent on imports of energy (in particular oil and gas).

The development of a sustainable eco-economy means going beyond simply developing green products and services. An eco-economy supports the resilience of the environment and people. Such an economy provides local jobs in enterprises that contribute to wellbeing and quality of life across the city for Aucklanders. At the same time, it also minimises negative impacts on environment at any stage of the production and consumption cycle. Unless Council works closely with businesses to deliver environmentally and socially responsible business operations, the development and manufacture of eco-technologies and approaches in Auckland could result in negative local environmental and societal effects. Ultimately this will compromise the viability of the local economy as well.

Economic development activity needs to provide opportunities for all Aucklanders, creating a more fair and equitable society by supporting and developing local opportunities for people to live, work and play close to home, thus reducing the need to travel and enabling a broader participation in and development of local areas. For example, working closer to home enables parents to participate in their children's daily lives more easily. It also contributes to the viability and vibrancy of local commercial centres, potentially providing jobs and services for those with limited access to transportation.

Beacon is strongly supportive of focussing on facilitating an iwi/Maori economic powerhouse and the support of a diverse ethnic economy; however it is difficult to see how this is to be achieved given the level of detail provided in the LTP.

It is noted that the economic development activity is recorded as having no contribution to the Community Outcome – A Green Auckland. By developing a sustainable eco-economy with more local jobs and less requirement to travel (for both workers and service users), this activity will be contributing to the greening of Auckland.

Question 2.2 Do you agree with the proposed projects that are included in this budget?

Comment - Beacon supports the establishment of an Innovation Centre. This needs to have sustainable and renewable technologies and energy as a key focus. Beacon draws Auckland Council's attention to the New Zealand Clean Energy Centre in Taupo as an effective example of such a centre.(refer www.nzcleanenergy.co.nz).

Question 2.3 Are there other projects you would like to see included in this area?

Comment- Beacon supports activities which create local jobs, develop local areas to live work and play and are well linked by public transport. Therefore Beacon supports an emphasis on local economic development as well as economic development that has a social component.

Beacon suggests the opportunity to develop a housing showcase, demonstrating best practice for housing and neighbourhoods. This could be developed as a collaborative partnership between the Council, private industry and central government agencies, as is currently being done in Christchurch.

2.3 Urban Development and Natural Environment

Beacon strongly supports activities to realise a quality compact city, with enduring town centres and neighbourhoods, and good design in all development. Beacon supports the intensification to medium density development around transport hubs (below five storeys), with a resulting reduction in suburban sprawl. Housing and neighbourhood sustainability, both in terms of new build and retrofit, are key aspects to developing a resilient city.

To achieve this, clear design guidelines or policy methods, which set out sustainability principles as the underlying framework for urban design and development, are needed. These should include an emphasis on resilience (responding to climate change and peak oil), low impact design, demand management and diversity of supply and be both for new development or redevelopment of existing sites.

Other comments

- Beacon supports the aim to protect and enhance harbours, coasts, beaches and islands by applying a sustainable approach to planning and delivering what we do. However this aim should also include protecting and enhancing land and biodiversity (vol2, p46, para 2).
- The Local Built and Natural Environment section (vol 2, 6.4, pp 53-55) should also focus on the built environment and the connections between the built and natural environment.

Question 3.1 Do you agree with the proposed projects that are included in this budget?

Comment - Beacon supports projects and activities to progress the targets in the Auckland Plan including:

- Development of the Unitary Plan – this should focus on moving the city to a more sustainable, resilient and low carbon future with quality housing and neighbourhoods. Work undertaken by Beacon on local government barriers to building more sustainable homes and the range of policy options available to councils to support sustainable building is available at www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/a_resource_manual_for_local_government.
- Stormwater, water supply and sewerage – Beacon supports projects to manage demand for services, create a more resilient, localised and diverse network, and where appropriate, maintain the network. An enabling environment allowing people to have a supplementary water supply with rainwater tanks and the aggressive promotion of demand management and good neighbourhood design is required. Beacon has done extensive work on the benefits to local government of demand management – including cost benefits and value analysis. Beacon draws Auckland Council's attention to the report *Slowing The Flow – A Comprehensive Demand Management Framework for Reticulated Water Supply* (www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/a_framework_for_councils) And *Water Demand Management: An Economic Framework to Value* (www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/reports_and_presentations_water) as sources of information around best practice demand management approaches.
- Rationalising the regulatory and policy framework for Auckland. This work must create a framework with a focus on resilience, sustainability and opportunities for innovative solutions.

Question 3.2 Are there other projects you would like to see included in this area?

Comment - Beacon supports projects which demonstrate good quality urban design and sustainability, increased resilience, and demand management.

Beacon seeks that the water, wastewater and stormwater components of the Retrofit Your Home project be incorporated. The Retrofit Your Home assessment already looks at these components within a home, and gives recommendations on how to improve sustainability in these areas. Supply of water efficient devices (e.g. low flow shower head, dual flush toilets), stormwater

management and supplementary water supply systems should be included within the ambit of the programme. Inclusion of these aspects in the Retrofit Your Home programme is consistent with the whole of house approach endorsed by the Strategy and Finance Committee (resolution SF/2010/30).

2.4 Local Communities

Beacon supports Council taking key roles in the building of strong communities so that Aucklanders feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods and take pride in their region. For communities to become stronger, more resilient, and better able to meet their needs, so that Auckland becomes a better place to live, Beacon believes Council must work closely with communities to ensure the design and function of local places (dwellings, neighbourhoods and connecting infrastructure such as roads and parks) meets the needs of local communities. While endorsing Council's provision of high-quality facilities and services such as libraries, community services, cemeteries and emergency management services, Beacon recommends that Council extend the focus of the communities theme to recognise that communities (residents, business owners, workers, iwi) have an important role to play in other themes as well. For example, as identified earlier in this submission, Beacon raises the importance of access to quality and affordable housing and neighbourhoods in terms of fostering individual and community wellbeing. Further, communities play a significant role in the success of how places and the services, such as public transport, that are provided within these places function and adapt.

It is therefore critical that Local Boards are able to support the creation and maintenance of a strong sense of community identity and fostering wellbeing across their diverse communities. Beacon encourages Local Boards to support local efforts towards improved resilience and sustainability and to foster collaborative ways of working across the themes in the LTP, across Council and with various specialist partners (such as housing providers) as well as with their local communities.

Beacon would also like to see Directive 1.7 in the Auckland Plan directly actioned as part of the LTP. This Directive recognises that *programmes and actions to address economic, environmental and social challenges at the local level will ultimately only succeed if owned by communities* (Draft Auckland Plan, p48). It aims to strengthen communities by working with them to develop leadership, skills and capacity to contribute to decision making so community expertise can contribute to that of relevant professionals and local development can be community-led as well as design-led. Enabling Auckland's diverse and dynamic population to contribute to decision making will assist the relevance of those decisions and garner understanding and support for changes and innovations towards improving the resilience and sustainability of the city.

Question 4.1 Do you agree with the proposed extra funding allocated to local boards for local projects?

1- Strongly agree

Comment - Beacon supports the important roles undertaken by Local Boards, and the importance of Local Boards in the delivery of *both* local and regional projects. It is critical that Local Boards do not simply become a vehicle for regional policy, yet important that regional strategies, such as the proposed Housing Strategy, are consistently applied while still responding to local needs, concerns and suggestions. It is equally critical that local solutions and priorities are shared with other areas, particularly within sub-regions. This may be most critical where there is shared responsibility for assets such as the Tamaki Estuary. Working collaboratively and sharing solutions and ideas is also important to ensure adaptation to the dynamics of the city and to avoid fragmentation and growing disparities.

Beacon strongly supports the role of Local Boards in promoting resilience and localised solutions and infrastructure. Local Boards are designed to be the major interface between Council and local communities. They are, therefore, ideally, situated to promote and support local activities that can improve the quality of life in Auckland while also improving sustainability and resilience. Informing Local Boards about emerging innovations, opportunities and evidence needs to be a key aspect of the support mechanisms for Local Boards.

Question 4.3 Are there other projects you would like to see included in this area?

Comment - Beacon supports the important roles that local boards can play in improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of their local communities with improved housing and neighbourhood quality and affordability. Several local boards have identified the importance of this role in their draft Local Board Agreements. In line with the Draft Auckland Plan, Beacon submits that all Local Boards include in their current and future Local Board Plans and Agreement:

- a strategic priority -*our people have good quality and affordable housing and neighbourhoods*
- an initiative -*support participation of their residents in the Auckland Retrofit Your Home Initiative and other sustainability initiatives and programmes*

Beacon also supports delivery of demonstration projects at the localised level. There are particular opportunities, such as the Southern Initiative, areas of growth priority and intensive corridors, already identified in the Draft Auckland plan and these must include significant input from local communities which may best be developed through demonstration projects that include housing and neighbourhood development. Further, the definition of appropriateness in Strategic Direction 9 *Appropriately house all Aucklanders* also suggests a strong localised decision making component and which may, again be most usefully demonstrated locally. Beacon has significant expertise and tools to assist with such projects in relation to local communities and the build environment.

2.6 Managing our finances

Question 6.2 Do you agree on the proposal to collect some or all council costs for services through user fees and charges?

2- Agree, however this needs to be considered on a case by case basis and with the analysis including positive externalities arising from the project.

Comment - Beacon supports user charges where the beneficiary can be readily identified and where no wider social benefits would support funding the service/good from rates.

In many cases there are benefits to the community from the use of a service or good, even when the user can be directly identified. For example, the benefits of using a library fall beyond the user, by ensuring a more educated population. Another example is the use of the Retrofit Your Home programme. Beacon supports rates funding of free home assessments. These provide home owners with expert guidance on the most appropriate retrofit actions for their property. It is likely that charging for the assessment will result in reduced uptake of the programme. Beacon supports the use of a targeted rate for the installation of items arising from this assessment.

Question 6.5 Which transition options do you support?

Support a combination of phasing and capping

Comment - Beacon supports the use of a three year transition to the new rating system for those with large rate increases or decreases and notes that only the remission scheme is available to Council at this time. Beacon would support an option which balances the increases/decreases within each property type.

2.7 Wastewater

Question 7.1 Do you agree with the proposed wastewater tariff structure?

Comment - Beacon supports the use of a fixed and volumetric charging structure for both domestic and non-domestic users. Beacon supports initiatives to reduce demand for wastewater services and identify to users that there is a cost associated with their use. Beacon submits that Auckland Council investigate local servicing options and distributed systems, particularly for areas not currently served by centralised infrastructure. In rural and peri-urban areas, greywater systems should also be supported more strongly as a method to sit alongside more conventional on-site wastewater disposal systems.

3 Other comments

Beacon supports the development of the Auckland Plan as the guiding document for the development and management of Auckland for the next 30 years and beyond. In its submission to the draft Auckland Plan in October 2011, Beacon noted that the achievement of the Plan will be in the development and application of its detail. The draft Long Term Plan is the tool designed to provide the work programme that details how the Auckland Plan will be achieved. It is, therefore, critical that the LTP focuses on the step changes required to move Auckland in the direction of achieving the Auckland Plan vision, rather than focussing on business as usual. Unfortunately, overall, these step changes are not readily identifiable in the LTP.

3.1 Volume One– An Overview of the Next 10 Years

Section 2.2 Community Outcomes

Beacon supports the community outcomes flowing from the outcomes identified in the Auckland Plan. Access to quality and affordable housing is a key theme across most of the outcomes and is critical in significantly reducing social and economic disadvantage. The criticality of this issue needs to be followed through by the Council in terms of its planning and activities.

Section 2.2.3 Transformational Shifts

In its submission on the draft Auckland Plan, Beacon identified further transformations that are needed in order to become the world's most liveable city. In an era of peak resources and the increasing effects of climate change, Auckland needs to focus on becoming a sustainable, low carbon and resilient city. This should encompass society, the built form, our communities, the economy and the wider environment.

Beacon Pathway supports the sixth transformational shift “significantly enhance Maori social and economic wellbeing” but notes that there is no discussion of this in section 2.2.3

Section 2.2.4 Spatial Initiatives

Beacon supports the spatial initiatives outlined in section 2.2.4 but draws the attention of Council to the underlying theme of housing within each. For example, within the city, there is a need for better examples of mixed-use urban residential development of a high standard. In addition, there is a wealth of opportunities for such developments to provide for their own energy, heat, cooling and water needs. Council could explore policy mechanisms to ensure that a greater level of sustainability is integrated within all new and existing developments, for example through a renewable energy policy requiring a certain percentage of any new

developments to offset their carbon footprint through renewable energy provision on site (following the Merton Rule example from the UK¹).

More specifically, existing housing in South Auckland, like much of New Zealand housing, is cold, damp and unhealthy which leads to poor social and health outcomes. Beacon submits that there is an opportunity to improve wellbeing by retrofitting the poorly performing housing stock as part of the Southern Initiative.

Beacon also recommends that Council develop a pilot example of affordable, sustainable urban living in partnership with key stakeholders such as NZIA, DBH, NZPI, social housing providers and developers. Such an exemplar best-practice housing precinct has the potential to deliver a new inner-city neighbourhood of medium density and mixed-use homes, based on affordable design principles, to inspire and shape modern urban living in Auckland. Beacon strongly supports the development of at least one unique ‘eco-precinct’ which will meet current and future residents’ needs through creating homes and neighbourhoods which are great places to live, work and play. Such a precinct has the potential to become a model for Auckland whereby the city could potentially generate more energy than it consumes, conserving / recycling water and delivering living / working environments which are carbon zero and incorporate restorative sustainable design. Beacon recommends the involvement of industry early on to promote industry innovation and learning by providing a living laboratory of sustainable building design incorporating prefabrication, modular designs and green technologies.

Beacon also recommends that the exemplar ‘best-practice neighbourhood’ be established as quickly as possible and become part of Auckland Council’s vision of an exemplar sustainable eco-city, as it will contribute to the tools, incentives and education needed to shift approaches from what is currently accepted as business as usual to a more sustainable way of doing things. Such a neighbourhood will also encourage homeowners to seriously consider new forms of central city living, for example, and this will provide an ongoing resource for developers in the area. It may also be useful to inform developments in other areas, such as suburban and peri-urban areas and offers the opportunity for Auckland to be recognised as a leader in eco-city dwellings and lifestyles internationally.

3.2 Volume Two – Our Services and Activities

In general Beacon found it difficult to see the alignment of the 11 strategic directions, targets and priorities. It is recommended that this be developed diagrammatically so clear linkages are easily evident and proposed priorities can be firmly connected to overarching directions and targets.

1 For more information please see ‘The Merton Rule, A review of the practical, environmental and economic effects’ available from www.nhbcfoundation.org

Section 4 - Planning Theme

Beacon strongly supports the development of the Auckland Plan as the overarching direction for Auckland. Underlying this is a myriad of strategies, policies and plans, many of which are yet to be developed. Each of these will need to take full account of climate change, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, building for a more resilient future and other 21st Century sustainability aspects, some of which are not yet known. Key components of many of these policies must be demand management, low impact urban design approaches, favouring design-led rather than engineering-led approaches and the importance of local sources and initiatives.

Development of a Housing Strategy for Auckland

Beacon supports the development of an overall housing strategy for Auckland. This must be concerned with improving existing stock as well as providing high quality future housing to meet Auckland's needs and affordability. It must also recognise the importance of neighbourhoods to the function of individual and groups of dwellings, and to the function of the wider settlement. As a key stakeholder in research and methodologies to improve housing, Beacon would welcome the opportunity to input to the development of such a strategy.

We strongly recommend that the definition of affordability also takes into account ongoing running costs (e.g. energy, water, maintenance, and transport costs). Beacon also draws the Council's attention to the potential of reduced initial capital costs in relation to innovative shared equity schemes such as those pursued by organisations such as the New Zealand Housing Foundation. In the face of reducing home ownership, these 'third sector' partnerships show great promise in delivering new models of ownership and Beacon would be happy to assist Council in developing relationships with potential delivery partners.

Section 7 Solid Waste Theme

Construction waste is a major contributor to landfill. The building of an average three bedroom house sends five tonnes of new material waste to landfill. Good construction management can cut this to two tonnes without significant cost to the builder/developer. Christchurch City Council has developed a strong approach to the management of construction waste through use of bylaws and this could be emulated in Auckland. Beacon submits that Auckland Council explore ways to reduce the amount of construction waste being developed and going to landfill, and take the opportunity to learn from the best practice developed in other local authorities.

Infrastructure Development

Beacon is strongly supportive of deliberate steps away from engineer-led approaches to design-led approaches for energy and water supply as well as for the transportation network. As well, there is considerable scope to utilise energy and water demand strategies at the household and neighbourhood level to reduce the requirement to provide large engineering projects (such as the Waikato to Auckland water pipeline). Involving communities in such design and decision making can also help to change behaviour.

Retrofit Your Home Programme

Beacon acknowledges the importance of this programme and its inclusion in Volume 1 as a way of achieving Community Outcomes (it is included in the *A Green Auckland* community outcome, but also is a pathway towards other community outcomes). It is also recognised as a way of achieving Transformational Shift *ii. Strongly commit to environmental action and green growth*. Retrofit Your Home also contributes significantly to other Transformational Shifts such as *v. Substantially raise the living standards for all Aucklanders and focus on those most in need*. It is, therefore, disappointing that the programme is not mentioned in any of the activities in Volume 2. Beacon recommends including Retrofit Your Home as a key delivery mechanism for several themes, including those concerned with the stormwater and flood protection and water supply and sewerage. There is also room for inclusion in the community theme, built and natural environment theme, and the economic development theme. It is critical to ensure that the many and varied implications of such projects are recognised across a breadth of themes.

Beacon supports the continuation of the Retrofit Your Home programme including development of a targeted rate and in 2012/2013, financial assistance of \$6m to be provided through a targeted rate and the rates funding of free home assessments (\$398,050). Beacon supports ongoing funding and expansion of this important programme in subsequent years of the LTP.

Beacon notes that the targeted rate is worded to cover only heating and insulation. This must be changed to also include other installations arising from the home assessment e.g. rainwater tanks and other water efficiency devices. In its current format the programme is inconsistent with the whole of house approach endorsed by the Strategy and Finance Committee (resolution SF/2010/30) and offers a limited and partial pathway to improving home performance and quality of life. Further comment on the targeted rate is provided in comments on volume 3.

3.3 Volume Three – Financial Information Policies and Fees

Retrofit your House Targeted Rate (vol3, p163)

Beacon submits that the targeted rate be renamed “Retrofit Your Home Targeted Rate” for consistency with the name of the programme (p163).

Beacon submits that all other references to the Retrofit Your Home programme use the correct name. For example p163 bullet point 2 refers to the programme as the *Retro-fit your house insulation scheme* and p171 7f as *Retro-fit your house*.

Beacon submits that the sentence 1 of the targeted rate be changed to reflect that the targeted rate allows for activities beyond heating and insulation.....

The retrofit targeted rate is set on a property that has received financial assistance from Auckland Council for the installation of items to make that home more sustainable and healthier including clean heat, insulation and water efficient fittings such as rainwater tanks.

In its current format the programme is inconsistent with the whole of house approach endorsed by the Strategy and Finance Committee (resolution SF/2010/30).

3.4 Volume Four – Local Board Information and Agreements

Beacon Pathway supports the important role of Local Boards to enable democratic decision-making by, and on behalf of their communities and to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities within their local board area.

Beacon raises the importance of quality and affordable housing in promoting the wellbeing of communities. There are many long-term benefits to be gained from making more sustainable building choices. Improving the performance of buildings can benefit the health, productivity and resource efficiency of building occupants, as well as generating community-wide benefits such as savings in infrastructure investment and improvements to air and water quality and the natural environment. Despite the importance of housing to community wellbeing, Beacon is surprised that only four of the local boards made any reference to housing in their draft Local Board Agreements and only two Boards allocated budget for the support of housing initiatives. Beacon submits that all Local Boards include in their current and future Local Board Plans and Agreements:

- a strategic priority - *Our people have good quality and affordable housing and neighbourhoods*
- an initiative - *support participation of their residents in the Auckland Retrofit Your Home Initiative and other sustainability initiatives and programmes.*

Beacon Pathway Incorporated supports

- the focus that the Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board has placed on housing including:
 - having a strategic priority *our people have good quality and affordable housing* (vol 4, p192)
 - Advocating to Auckland Council Property that they act as a catalyst developer (vol4, p191);
 - a proposed budget of \$50,000 in 2012/2013 (vol4, p195) for *improving housing quality in rental properties by working with stakeholders to explore options to achieve positive housing outcomes for tenants, particularly those in areas of higher deprivation.*
- The initiative/project included by the Rodney Local Board that encourages Rodney residents to participate in community led environmental programmes and the Retrofit your Home initiative, including a proposed budget of \$103,300 in 2012/2013 (vol4 pp 283, 289). Beacon submits that the Board include budget for this work in future years
- The initiative/project included by the Waitemata Local Board to *develop a localised plan to cut carbon emissions (and to respond to the effects of climate change)* (vol3, p364). Beacon would support the inclusion of funding in later years to support initiatives stemming from this plan.

4 Appendix One: Beacon Resources

4.1 Neighbourhoods

4.1.1 *Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit*

Neighbourhoods are important because the way they are laid out and organised has significant impacts on how a home performs and on the direct, as well as indirect, costs to households.

Beacon's Neighbourhood research team has developed a framework and tools to measure the sustainability of New Zealand neighbourhoods - *The Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit*.

This research indicates that the neighbourhood scale presents opportunities for:

- House retrofit
- New design and construction awareness/desirability
- Distributed reticulation systems – electricity and water
- Improved stormwater management
- Improved connectivity and mixed use
- Reduced transport costs

The Kit is available free to help planners, designers, neighbourhood managers and developers identify, discuss and prioritise changes to improve the sustainability of both new and existing neighbourhoods.

Download from

www.beaconpathway.co.nz/neighbourhoods/article/the_neighbourhood_sustainability_framework

4.1.2 *The value of neighbourhoods*

Beacon's research has identified that low density non-mixed use (e.g. neighbourhood that are almost entirely residential) generate net costs rather than net benefits for a city. As a corollary, mixed use, medium density neighbourhoods are of value to cities. Research which awarded monetary values to different neighbourhoods showed that a sustainable neighbourhood is worth \$1,362 per household compared to a negative value of \$595 per household for NZ's least sustainable neighbourhoods.

Find out more at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

4.2 Homes

4.2.1 *HSS High Standard of Sustainability®*

New Zealand homes can and should perform better. Homes that perform well have benefits that go beyond direct financial savings; they benefit the whole economy, local council budgets, and, most importantly, families.

A sustainable home is the sum of its parts. Beacon's focus is on whole-of-house sustainability - encompassing energy, water, indoor environment, waste and material/product selection. This focus is reflected in our work on a set of performance benchmarks to achieve a sustainable home - the HSS High Standard of Sustainability®.

See **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

4.2.2 Policy Options for Sustainable Homes – A resource manual for local government

Beacon Pathway has conducted research into the council-induced barriers to building and renovating homes to a high standard of sustainability. The research found that policy and regulatory barriers to sustainable building choices exist in:

- administering the Building Act and Building Code;
- inflexible conventional infrastructure standards (particularly for water); and
- District Plan provisions that provide no allowance for sustainable designs such as passive solar orientation or features such as rainwater tanks (e.g. traditional development controls for height, yards, and height-in-relation-to-boundary).

Beacon research has shown that councils throughout New Zealand have developed a range of initiatives to encourage people to make more sustainable choices in their homes and neighbourhoods, and are seeing some good results. The resource manual of policy options for councils provides an overview of the range of tools available to councils, and gives detailed examples of policies and practices already in place in New Zealand. Beacon recommends that Auckland City Council explore a number of the options outlined in the Resource Manual to assist in realising the visions outlined in the Auckland Plan.

Download the Manual from

www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/a_resource_manual_for_local_government

4.2.3 National Value Case

Beacon's National Value Case for Sustainable Housing Innovations showed that there were clear national benefits to encouraging housing improvements on a wider scale. In particular, it showed the economic value to New Zealand of:

- A direct private economic gain to households of 1% GDP (\$2 billion in 2007 \$ terms).
- Savings in household energy consumption of 22PJ/year with reduction of CO2 emissions of 3600kt/year.
- Direct water savings of 130 million m³/year.

4.2.4 Renovation and job creation

Beacon research, supplied to the Job Summit, established the value to the nation of large-scale home renovation by illustrating that housing is a critical part of urban infrastructure and that renovation is a viable source of job creation. Large scale renovation is BIG on job creation showed that for every 1,000 houses retrofitted to perform to Beacon's HSS®, a total of 392 full time equivalent jobs are required.

See www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/large_scale_renovation_creates_jobs

4.2.5 Water demand management

Beacon's water research has demonstrated the value of a demand management approach and provided a framework for councils considering instituting it. *Slowing the Flow: A Demand Management Framework* is a guide to the development of water demand management strategies and policies for all those working in reticulated water supply.

Beacon's research has also developed a comprehensive approach to valuing council implementation of water demand management. A case study of Tauranga City Council's demand management measures showed that the Council delayed the implementation of the next major water supply infrastructure by approximately 10 years with a net benefit to the community of \$53.3 million in 2009 terms.

See www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/reports_and_presentations_water

4.3 Expertise

Beacon Pathway has considerable expertise in the sustainability of New Zealand homes and neighbourhoods and has worked extensively with local councils. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss how we can help with Auckland Council and local boards.