

Submission to Marlborough District Council District Plan 2021
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From: Grey Power Marlborough

The Marlborough District Council (MDC) has a vital role in providing quality affordable housing to the senior members of it's community. This will compliment the work of other housing providers such as Kaianga Ora, other community based organisations with an interest in housing like Abbeyfield, Sustainable Housing Trust and Iwi organisations.

The MDC will provide leadership in coordinating senior housing from within it structure using the Senior Housing Subcommittee to lead discussions on current and innovative housing options in a way that encourages community participation in planning and supply.

The MDC needs to regularly review it's current stock of housing and how it best meets the needs of it's senior citizens with the overall aim of maintaining a stock of healthy, warm and economical accommodation. Intensification of housing on current sites needs to be carried out in a way that retains the affordability while promoting a community ambiance, which is most important for the tenant.

The retention of affordable rental rates in a diverse and at times volatile marketplace is vital to the tenant population of Marlborough. The MDC current rental of 80% of market rate, as the private sector rental rate increases not only puts financial pressure on the council tenants but also the MDC to be able to maintain housing stock of the highest standard possible. The MDC must continually look at all financial streams both local and nationally that will assist them in retaining this economic and affordable rental rates for both parties.

As the population of Marlborough ages many people will be looking to downsize from their current rental properties, perhaps in the private and or government sector, to smaller 1 or 2 bedroom units. The private rental sector tends not to provide this sector of the market to any great degree and the MDC is a current major stakeholder in this segment. Ways must be explored to maintain this lead position in Senior housing and working collaboratively with NGOs and other parties to be seen as innovative that leads to, maintains, and promotes quality and economy.

The MDC should enter dialogue with the private development sector with some form of incentive that promotes the building of smaller houses that the Council could then be in a position to purchase/lease and manage within its current housing portfolio. The current private development sector appears to focus on family housing not suitable for seniors in both configuration and cost.

The Retirement Village market has developed in Blenheim over the last decade with a future development about to start. Although this market focusses on the senior members of our community it does rely upon those entering this market generally be 'of means' and who have sold their current housing in a strong market to move into the village setting. This tends to exclude the long-term renters who do not have the equity of a house to convert into cash and remain reliant on the affordable supply of rental accommodation for housing.

The private sector rental providers generally have 3-4 bedroom housing stock and at times can be reluctant to carryout alterations to a house to meet the disability needs of a potential tenant that may only be of a short term or indeterminate lease.

The MDC also has a role in promoting and providing accessible housing and also being a leader and perhaps via regulation, ensuring the wider housing market comply to standards that do not act as barriers to senior renters as their needs change. Due to our aging population this access to suitable housing will become a pressure point and all sectors of the housing market must be seen to be reacting in an appropriate way.

In summary, the MDC must maintain and promote it's role as a vital provider of senior housing and be seen as one that embraces quality and innovation as a rule of thumb. It needs to build strong effective networks with all allied providers of housing in Marlborough from suitable infrastructure though to affordable development fees to ensure housing development continues to respond in a way that meets Marlborough's older residents needs.

Brian Ross
Grey Power
MDC Senior Housing Subcommittee representative