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1st August 2024

Kia ora,

RE: Proposed Ward Changes to Rodney District

On behalf of the Omaha Beach Community Inc (OBC) we are responding to your request for input into the proposed change of wards in the "Rodney district".

OBC is the Incorporated Society that represents the 1200+ residents and ratepayers of Omaha Beach. OBC is the largest residents society in New Zealand in terms of financial membership.

After careful consideration, we do not support the changes that Council is proposing.

The introduction to this matter in the consultative online document states;

"The current structure has been around for almost 15 years, and now you should give your views on how you think it can be improved".

"The review aims to better reflect the shared interests of rural communities who live in the local board area and ensure everyone is fairly represented."

"Residents are being asked how they want to be represented in the future. The council must ensure the structure is fair, effective and keeps pace with region's growth".

In Warkworth the proposal is that the number of representatives will be reduced from 3 to 2. It is the opinion of OBC and our membership that the proposed change is entirely inconsistent with Council's stated objectives.

The Warkworth area is one that has been selected by the Council for high growth. It is eventually projected to grow from its current population of around 4,000 to 25,000 people. The area is a true mix of urban and rural properties and the current members of the Local Board do an excellent job of travelling around a huge area representing the various views of both the rural and the urban population, including Omaha.

To reduce the number of RLB representatives for this area to 2 seems contrary to all 3 of your statements above. 15 years ago we were not part of the Auckland Council at all. Many of us feel that we are far removed from the Council and that there is a lack of adequate representation (we have only 1 Counsellor) and a lack of appropriate resource allocation.

As already stated, we are a fast-growing population and a mix of urban and rural. Subdivisions continue to develop in both rural and urban areas of the ward. Council's own plans call for this growth to increase in the coming years.

Therefore, if anything we feel that the number of representatives for the Warkworth Ward should be increased to reflect your desire to "keep pace with the region's growth". To reduce the number instead appears counterintuitive and contravenes everything that you are apparently trying to achieve in your review.

Finally, the proposed community consultation at the farmers market at the weekend is fundamentally flawed. It will no doubt produce a range of opinions from many people, **most of whom do not live in this Ward nor even in Rodney**. For this reason, any findings could not be considered meaningful and will be open to challenge.

If you are genuinely seeking local opinion it would be much more appropriate and meaningful to work with the local community groups and we would be happy to discuss this with you and facilitate greater community input in any way we can.

In summary, the Omaha Beach Community does not support the proposed changes and we strongly request that the status quo remains unchanged for the Warkworth Ward.

Yours faithfully, on behalf of OBC.



Rohan Meuli
Treasurer
OMAHA BEACH COMMUNITY, INC.