

Draft summary of feedback to 31 May 2024

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Introduction

In 2019, Selwyn District Council made the decision that the leases for the Upper Selwyn Huts would be for a finite term and are now in the process of gathering feedback to help inform the decision-making process for method of retreat moving forward.

Jacobs were provided a copy of all of the feedback received from hut owners. Feedback is being provided through multiple sources at present, including from the Long-Term Plan submissions, public meeting feedback and emails to the huts@selwyn.govt.nz inbox. The feedback included responses from 65 individual hut owners or occupiers. We do not have addresses for all respondents so cannot confirm how many individual huts this represents. The feedback period is due to close in August 2024.

The responses were broken down into the individual feedback points raised. Each individual feedback point is counted separately. There are 351 feedback points forming part of this summary, which considers all feedback received by the Council to 31 May 2024. This memo will be updated with all feedback received for completeness at the close of the feedback period in August 2024.

Feedback is broken down into the following common themes:

- Process;
- Wastewater pipe;
- Lease length;
- Relationship with Council;
- Need for retreat; and
- Financial pressure.

Each of the themes is briefly discussed below.

Process

110 comments on the process were received. A significant portion of these were requesting information from Council and have not been discussed further but Council has separately responded to these requests. 42 individuals raised concerns over the process so far and three acknowledged the work Council was doing to support the community.

Ten individuals did not think the huts should be made to retreat without compensation in some form. The remainder criticised various aspects of the process to date. This included that buyers were not aware that the

leases were finite, the lack of transparency, the tight timeframes to respond, and the need for better engagement with the community.

Other individuals touched on the desire to understand more about the settlement's impact on mahinga kai and the proposed inspection programme.

Wastewater pipe

74 pieces of feedback received from 59 individuals were made on the theme of the wastewater pipe upgrade.

The key theme in this feedback questions why the hut owners should pay 30% of the upgrades if they will only get to utilise the pipe for a finite period of time. It is suggested in the feedback that if the hut owners have to pay for a percentage of the upgrade that they should be able to stay for longer than the 15 years proposed to see a return on their investment.

Almost everyone who commented on the wastewater pipe upgrade, which serves the Upper Selwyn Huts exclusively, thought the pipe should be paid for via the district wide rates.

Lease length

Some of the feedback commented on the lease length. 56 individuals commented on the issue.

Almost all of these sought an extension to the deed of licence or requested further clarity as to why 15 years was appropriate. In particular, 35 individuals wanted the settlement to be listed as an historic site. They believe this would in turn prevent the removal of the huts.

Other suggestions included stopping people from holding more than one licence, introducing trigger points instead of a fixed date for retreat, the need for certainty around licence length, and that licensees should have the ability to break the lease at any time.

Relationship with Council

40 pieces of feedback were received from 25 different people commenting on the poor relationship between the Council and community.

Most felt as though they had been mistreated by Council and felt as though compassion has been absent in the process so far. Four individuals raised an interest in forming a stronger relationship with Council as the process of retreat unfolds.

At the time feedback was received, nine individuals felt there had been a lack of consultation and felt like the decision had not been fully considered. The need to involve the community in the process was echoed throughout the feedback.

Need for retreat

24 individuals raised concerns over the need for retreat.

13 individuals challenged climate change as a reason to retreat, given there was no evidence of surface flooding at the huts, nor was there sufficient evidence to show that flooding was a risk to the Upper Selwyn Huts settlement. A few individuals suggested that if climate change is a risk, the huts should only be retreated when the risk is imminent.

The rest of the feedback considers the owners' memories, connections, and generational association with the site. Feedback suggested preserving the huts, as they are a part of the community's history.

Financial pressure

Thirteen individuals raised concern about the financial burden of having to retreat.

Several of these raised concerns that the news that the huts had a finite life made it difficult for them to sell their huts and regain their investment. The feedback expressed concern that the respondent or their neighbours were likely to end up homeless or living in cars due to their inability to obtain mortgages. It is not clear through the feedback alone how many residents would face homelessness without external assistance.

There was also concern raised about the lack of compensation and the need to demolish the huts at the end of their tenure.

Summary

351 feedback points from hut owners informed this memo. The six themes are reoccurring through the feedback so far are broadly to do with: process, the wastewater pipe, lease length, relationship with Council, need to retreat, and financial pressure. Figure 1 shows the proportion of respondents who commented on each theme. This memo will be updated with all feedback received for completeness at the close of the feedback period (August 2024).

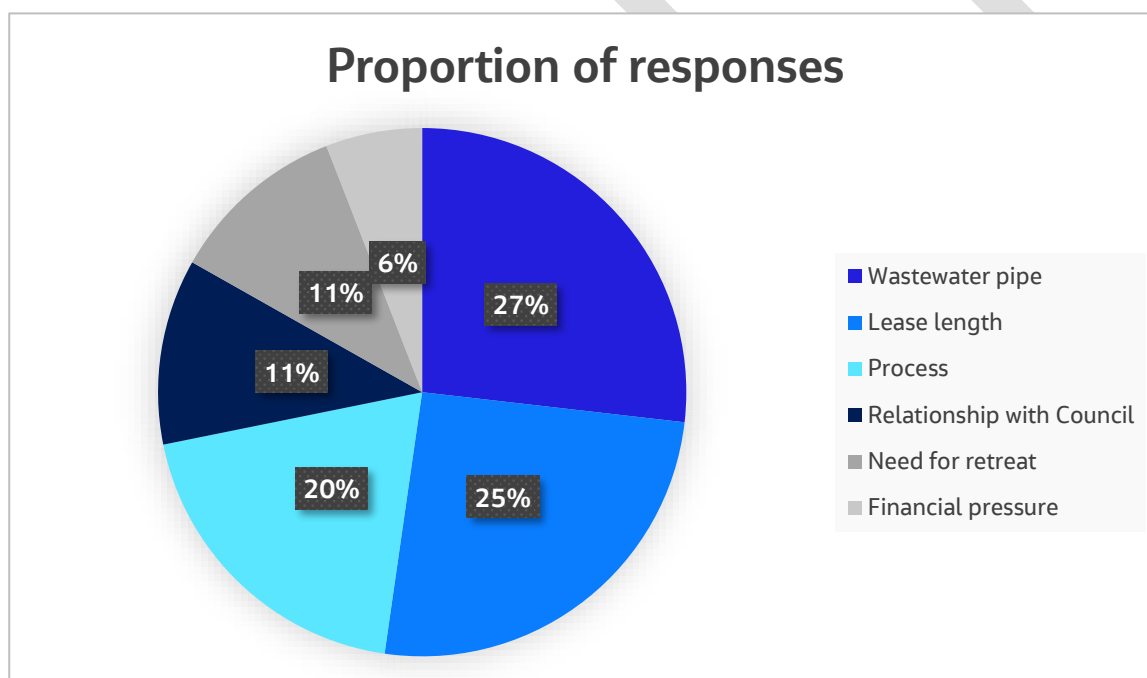


Figure 1: Proportion of responses by theme.