

Q&A: Nelson Housing Accord

1. When will the Nelson Housing Accord be ratified?

The Accord will be ratified when Council next meets on 11 June 2015.

2. What has been the process for developing the Nelson Housing Accord?

The Mayor of Nelson and the Minister for Building and Housing discussed the potential for a housing accord earlier this year. Council and Government officials have met regularly since to work out the details of the Accord.

3. How will the Accord work?

Upon commencement of the Accord, Nelson City Council will have the ability to recommend Special Housing Areas (SHAs) to the Minister. SHAs are discrete geographic areas within which more permissive resource consenting powers can be used. SHAs will be formally declared by Order in Council on the recommendation of the Minister.

4. How will Special Housing Areas be selected?

Nelson City Council will select areas where there is clear demand for housing, and where there is already suitable infrastructure or there are plans for it to be built.

5. Have any SHAs been selected yet?

The Council is currently exploring options for potential SHAs.

6. How would a resource consent for a qualifying development be approved?

Resource consent applications for qualifying developments can only be made for developments in SHAs. Qualifying developments must be predominantly residential and meet any height or affordability criteria the Council specifies for the SHA they are in. The Council would need to process resource consents within 60 working days, excluding certain time periods (refer Resource Management Act 1991 section 88C). If the resource consent application is combined with a plan change (or variation) request, the application must be processed within 130 working days.

7. What are the targets of the Accord?

The Accord set a target of 240 total dwellings consented each year of the Accord.

8. What else is the Government doing to improve housing supply and affordability?

The Accord is part of the Government's wider programme to support housing supply and affordability. Seven accords are currently in place across the country. The Government also has work underway on the cost of building materials, development contributions, building productivity and compliance costs to improve affordability nationwide. The KiwiSaver HomeStart scheme, which came into effect on 1 April 2015, provides financial assistance to 90,000 first home buyers. The next step for the Government is the planned second phase of the Resource Management Act reforms to address the long-term issues affecting housing affordability and supply.