

PUBLIC NOTICE

‘Council must do better’

We are a group of citizens representing business and community interests who share the view that Hamilton City Council must do better.

We came together this year to investigate council affairs in response to significant issues impacting on the wellbeing of the Hamilton community.

As a result, we are now calling on candidates in the 12 October council elections to commit to a comprehensive review of council operations by an Independent Commission, immediately upon election.

Ongoing concerns

We have advised the Prime Minister, Cabinet, and relevant officials that their intervention will be sought if the incoming council fails to undertake our requested review. This follows the Government’s threat to sack the council in 2011 over mismanagement and poor governance, and the Auditor General’s concerns in 2017 over their financial reporting methods and project controls.

Our investigation shows the council has lost millions of dollars on property deals and day-to-day operations. They are grossly over-estimating income and relying on debt to balance the books.

The council are drastically promoting growth at any cost when affordability is the core issue, and have little regard for significant shifts in central government policy on affordable housing, urban development, infrastructure and transport services.

Lip service

We are also concerned at their lip service to climate change, and the weakening of democracy by the council’s governance structure and reporting processes with extraordinary powers given to the chief executive.

We have ongoing misgivings over the council’s growth projections and economic forecasts in the face of economic uncertainty nationally and globally, as well as their failure to seek public submissions this year relating to the current 10-year-plan.

Official reports confirm the drop in public trust. Only 17% of those surveyed were satisfied that council manages finances well and listens to the people, and perception that the public can influence council was down to 30%. Only a third voted in the 2016 elections, the lowest in the nation.

Evidence

We have been gathering information for months, consulting widely and combing through community misgivings and ideas for solutions. We also commissioned independent expert analysis of growth projections, all of which we will make publicly available.

Our research confirms ongoing inconsistencies in council reports that ‘all is well’, followed by notice of ‘significant deficits’ and urgent claims for equally significant rates increases and loans to pay everyday costs (in 2011/2012 and 2017/2018).

Independent Review Commission

Further details on the proposed formation of the Independent Review Commission and its tasks are publicly available on the website hamiltonratepayers.com

Contact: hcc2019review@gmail.com