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PAPAKURA'S MESSAGE TO WELLINGTON: PRESERVE LOCAL DEMOCRACY Ten year plan important "now more than ever"

The Government must act to preserve the "local" in local government as it considers changes to Auckland's governance.

That's the strong message from Papakura Mayor Calum Penrose, who says his Council has done everything it can to push for the new structure to retain effective democracy in the region's communities.

"We don't believe the six council proposal will retain democracy because the areas served by those councils will simply be too huge and too diverse to ever bond as communities, and becoming part of Manukau means we are just one voice among many even at that level."

Mr Penrose says the Councillors would prefer Papakura to remain independent, however as that does not look likely they are supporting the eleven council structure.

"At least it provides more opportunity for people to express their concerns and ideas face to face with councillors."

A decision to opt for the bigger councils, he says, simply ignores the wishes of the people of the region.

"It's up to Wellington now to decide whether they are prepared to listen to what people want as they establish this new structure."

Mr Penrose is reminding the people of Papakura that it's business as usual in the mean time, and that they have an opportunity to have their say about projects and proposals in Progress Papakura, the district's draft Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

"Now more than ever, as the Government decides the future of the region, people need to speak up about what they see as important in the ten year plan. Consultation runs until April 27. I urge everyone to read the plan or at least its summary and to make a submission."

If the supercity/six council structure is adopted, Mr Penrose says, the current LTCCP will be the last carried out at a local level.

"This is your chance to help guide the immediate future of the district," he said.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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