Applying the Neighbourhood Sustainability Tools to Hobsonville Point: a report to the Hobsonville Land Company

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About This Report

Title
Applying the Neighbourhood Sustainability Tools to Hobsonville Point: a report to the Hobsonville Land Company

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Abstract
This report provides the results of an application of the Beacon Neighbourhood Sustainability Tools to Buckley Precinct in Hobsonville Point as at July 2013. This assessment is part of an updating process for the tools and also part of a scheduled assessment of sustainable development by the Hobsonville Land Company. Buckley Precinct emerges as a place with quite different residential demographics to Auckland as a whole. It is very diverse ethnically, in terms of household structure and size, and is also relatively recently occupied and relatively densely developed. There is high use of the local environment and amenities.

Results show that, despite only being occupied recently, Buckley Precinct is already performing strongly with respect to the design, construction and management of the local built environment. The results also show that performance generates places that allow people to create rich and satisfying lives while respecting the limitations of the natural environment. In particular, the tools show that Buckley Precinct is built to a very high standard of sustainability and that residents are very satisfied. The report offers some suggestions for activities most likely to improve the performance of the neighbourhood. These are related to provision of public transport, increased numbers and variety of local facilities and services, improved local community engagement and locally led informal interest and activity groups.

Reference

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Tables

Table 1  Sections that rate strongly ................................................................. 11
Table 2  Sections with potential for improvement ........................................... 12

Figures

Figure 1: Buckley Precinct....................................................................................... 7
Figure 2: Observational Tool rating for Buckley Precinct, Hobsonville Point........... 10
Figure 3: Length of time living here ......................................................................... 13
Figure 4: Household Composition .......................................................................... 13
Figure 5: Household Size ........................................................................................ 14
Figure 6: Age Group ................................................................................................ 15
Figure 7: Cultural diversity ...................................................................................... 16
Figure 8: Travel to work or education .................................................................... 17
Figure 9: Average kilometres travelled each month per household ....................... 18
Figure 10: Visiting or using local facilities .............................................................. 18
Figure 11: Local expenditure on household food .................................................... 19
Figure 12: Perceptions of safety ............................................................................ 20
Figure 13: Knowing neighbours ........................................................................... 21
Figure 14: Neighbourhood connections ................................................................ 22
Figure 15: Quality of homes and neighbourhood .................................................. 23
Figure 16: The Loop Walk .................................................................................... 24
Figure 17: The Hobsonville Farmers Market .......................................................... 24
Figure 18: Streetscape and parking ....................................................................... 25
Figure 19: Hobsonville Point Runway Challenge ................................................... 26
1 Executive Summary

This report provides the results of an application of Beacon’s Neighbourhood Sustainability Tools to Buckley Precinct in Hobsonville Point as at July 2013. The tools are:

- The Observational Tool: a process of measurement and observation of the physical environment as it currently exists. It provides ratings over nine distinct sections; and,
- The Resident Self-Report Survey: a survey of current residents about their experiences, perceptions and behaviours. These results are also related to results from the New Zealand Census\(^1\), The Quality of Life Report for Auckland\(^2\) and Beacon’s National Survey of Neighbourhood Experiences and Characteristics\(^3\).

These tools aim to measure the current state of a defined neighbourhood with respect to six domains which, when all are present and working together, contribute to the achievement of this goal:

\[ \text{The neighbourhood built environment is designed, constructed and managed to generate neighbourhoods that are adaptive and resilient places that allow people to create rich and satisfying lives while respecting the limitations of the natural environment.} \]

This assessment is part of an updating process for the tools and also part of a scheduled assessment of sustainable development by the Hobsonville Land Company.

Results

Buckley precinct is the first stage of a multi-staged master planned community that will ultimately include residential, educational, retail, and other non-residential activities within the overall area. At present, the precinct includes 78 households. 65 of these participated in our resident survey.

Results from the Observational Tool show that the precinct achieves a ‘Very High’ rating overall. All sections achieved at least a ‘Medium’ rating. Stand out sections include those measuring walking access to most everyday facilities, protection and enhancement of the natural environment, dwelling sustainability, quality of space and the street network.

Those areas identified as offering potential for improvement include the sections that measure access to public transport, efficient use of space and viability of local centres, diversity and resilience and innovation and community building. In some cases, the future plans of the overall development will provide these, such as provision of local shops, for example. There are, however, several areas that offer further scope for development. These are:

- Improving the frequency of public transport and improved public transport routes;

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\(^1\) Statistics NZ (2007)
\(^2\) AC Neilson (2013)
\(^3\) Saville-Smith (2009)
- Increasing the presence of local facilities, such as retail shops and a higher density of dwellings in the immediate vicinity of these;
- Increasing the mix of uses in the neighbourhood and immediate environment. For example, providing healthcare, child care or professional (legal or accounting) services, start-up spaces for artists or commercial enterprises and/or live/work premises.

Results from the Resident Self-Report Survey show that more integrated connectivity is seen as important because residents do not wish to travel long distances for essential daily life items or to work. Reflecting this, actual kilometres travelled are significantly higher than the averages driven by respondents from other neighbourhoods from across New Zealand. At the same time, the self-reported transport data shows that travel to work or study compares very favourably with the rest of Auckland and urban New Zealand with respect to modes of transport used. There is also already good use of the available local facilities and strong positive feedback about all of these amenities in the comments. A majority of Buckley Precinct residents also report taking positive action to enhance the environment.

Even though the local community is relatively new, their comments make it very clear that they particularly enjoy the people they have met and “the community atmosphere”. Only one person did not agree that “the local area that you live in is a great place to live” (98.5 per cent agreed) and this is significantly higher than responses to the same question from across Auckland (77 per cent) and to a similar question from across urban New Zealand (76.5 per cent). While living in a construction zone attracted some negative comments, most residents recognise the community is a work in progress and many feel well connected to both other people in the area and the physical environment already. Individual respondents reported reasonably high levels of connection with neighbours for example and over 66 per cent of Buckley Precinct residents reported that their neighbourhood “had a strong sense of community”. Again this is higher than that reported for all of Auckland (52 per cent). Buckley Precinct residents also feel safe and more secure than residents of Auckland and urban New Zealand overall.

The survey also reveals some quite different demographic patterns than those for Auckland overall. There are, for example, far fewer people identifying as Maori or Pasifika and more identifying as ‘Asian’, particularly Chinese, Korean and Indian. The community is already very diverse in terms of household structure and size as well, with significantly more two person households in Buckley Precinct compared to Auckland as a whole.

Overall, residents report feeling very contented living in their new neighbourhood and very few have plans to move from their home or the area. There is also a significant interest in becoming more involved in the development of the community.

The process of applying these tools to Buckley Precinct has informed revision of the tools. The application of the modified tools has also resulted in some further adjustments in order to provide useful and accurate assessments that are easily able to be undertaken by lay people as well as by professionals. This work is now underway.
2 Introduction

This report provides the results of an application of Beacon’s Neighbourhood Sustainability Tools to Buckley Precinct in Hobsonville Point (Figure 1) as at July 2013. Buckley Precinct is the first stage of a multi-staged master planned community that will ultimately include residential, educational, retail, and other non-residential activities within the overall area. At present, the precinct includes 78 households.

![Buckley Precinct Map](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/neighbourhoods)

**Figure 1: Buckley Precinct**

This assessment is part of an updating process for the tools and also part of a scheduled assessment of sustainable development by the Hobsonville Land Company. These tools are designed to inform further decision making as well as providing a point in time assessment that can be compared to the results of future applications of the same tools. The Neighbourhood Sustainability tools were selected because they offer a structured assessment\(^4\) of how well a defined neighbourhood is currently performing with regard to the goal of:

> The neighbourhood built environment is designed, constructed and managed to generate neighbourhoods that are adaptive and resilient places that allow people to create rich and satisfying lives while respecting the limitations of the natural environment.

\(^4\) Details of the Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework are available here: [http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/neighbourhoods](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/neighbourhoods)
This goal is strongly aligned to the vision for Hobsonville Point and the Sustainable Development Framework that the Hobsonville Land Company (HLC) developed at the outset of the Hobsonville Point development. These synergies have allowed Beacon to test and further develop the tools for more effective use by communities as well as professionals, while at the same time allowing HLC to measure several of the indicators in its framework.
3 Method

This assessment was undertaken by applying updated versions of the two Neighbourhood Sustainability tools:

1. The Observational Tool (Appendix One). This tool has been moderately amended from the original version to require more easily accessible information that can guide decision making. It was applied by Denise Bijoux (Beacon) in conjunction with Katja Lietz (Hobsonville Land Company). The process involved both desktop and on site observations in July 2013.

2. The Resident Survey (Appendix Two). This tool has been significantly modified from the original version to provide more detailed information for decision making. To accommodate the needs of Hobsonville Land Company this survey collected some information about all household members and some only from the one person completing the form. This differing information is clearly identified in the results section.

The survey was implemented over a three week period in June 2013. It was initially delivered to all letter boxes on a Saturday afternoon with an introductory letter and incentive to drop the survey into Catalina Café in return for a free coffee. On the following Saturday the survey team delivered a further survey to all homes that had not yet returned a survey. This time the team also knocked on the door to explain the survey and to complete it there and then if the occupant wished to do so. This door knocking process was repeated once more on the following Saturday.

Results for both tools were entered into Excel and analysed manually. Results for the Resident Survey were then compared to census data (2007), the most recent findings from the Quality of Life Project (2013) and results from Beacon’s own survey of over 1,600 individuals (2009). It is intended to automate this process of referencing these two surveys in the redevelopment of the tools.

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5 Note that, due to the age of this data, comparisons should be regarded with some caution. 2013 data will be available in 2014 and it may be worth comparing local results to this data then.

6 This survey asked people living in a variety of urban environments across New Zealand (characterised by level of mixed use and level of density) about their behaviours, perceptions and experiences of their neighbourhoods and underpinned the relative ratings assigned to the results from the initial Resident Survey.
4 Results

4.1 The Observational Tool

Overall, the precinct achieves a “Very High” rating and all prerequisites were met (Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Sustainability rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walking access to basic everyday facilities</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access to public transport</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Efficient use of space and viability of local centres</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Protection and enhancement of the natural environment</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dwelling sustainability</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quality of space</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Diversity and resilience</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Street network</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Innovation and community-building</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Very High</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pre-requisite Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The available facilities within walking distance meet minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public transport availability meets minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Efficient use of space and viability of local centres meet minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Requirement to take 20m esplanade reserve under Resource Management Act has been met, where this requirement applies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing wetlands or bodies of water have not been built on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If native vegetation is present, removal of native vegetation has been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mitigated by planting an area of the same or larger size with suitable native plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quality of space meets minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>There are no covenants excluding social housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are no buildings in a 1 in a 100 year flood plain or overland flowpath, or in an area that is likely to flood or be inundated because of the effects of climate change with the next 100 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The neighbourhood appears to have sufficient diversity and resilience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>All streets and public spaces are open to the walking public 24 hours a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The street network meets minimum standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Observational Tool rating for Buckley Precinct, Hobsonville Point

A more comprehensive results sheet is included as Appendix 3.
All sections achieved at least a ‘medium’ rating and several sections stand out as achieving a ‘very high’ level of sustainability. Stand out sections include those measuring walking access to most everyday facilities (except to local shops), protection and enhancement of the natural environment, dwelling sustainability, quality of space and the street network. These perform particularly strongly with regard to walkability, the condition and protection of the natural environment, dwelling efficiency, quality of space, opportunities for casual interaction and ease of connectivity (Table 1).

**Table 1: Sections that rate strongly**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current rating</th>
<th>Key areas of strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking access to basic everyday facilities</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection and enhancement of the natural environment</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Sustainability</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of space</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street network</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even within these high rating sections there is still some room for improvement, such as the provision of a secondary school and local shops. It may also useful to consider undertaking an accessibility audit. Be Accessible (www.beaccessible.org.nz) is one organisation that offers these.

Room for improvement has been identified in the sections that measure access to public transport, efficient use of space and viability of local centres, diversity and resilience and innovation and community building. Key areas for improvement include increased access to public transport; increased provision of local shops, professional services and business and employment opportunities as well as the further development of communal amenities and opportunities for community building (Table 2).
Table 2: Sections with potential for improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current rating</th>
<th>Areas for improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to public transport</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient use of space and viability of local centres</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and resilience</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and community building</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these sections will see improved ratings as the development proceeds but not all desired improvements are within the complete control of the Hobsonville Land Company or local residents. For example, improving public transport is reliant on establishing viability of services and the agreement of key service providers. Similarly, the construction of local facilities offers no guarantee of enduring tenancies by service providers.

4.2 The Resident Survey Tool

A total of 65 households participated in the survey (over 83 per cent of the total number of households), with most surveys (47) received via the survey team who went door to door. 18 surveys were self completed and left in the box at Catalina café. Information from the surveys is presented as absolute figures and relative figures. That is, wherever possible, comparisons are provided with Census data (2007), information from the Quality of Life Survey (2013) and from Beacon’s own survey of over 1600 households (2009).

Houses in the Buckley Precinct have been occupied for less than 24 months, with the majority of respondents having lived there for less than eighteen months (Figure 3). This is quite a different amount of time to that of the respondents to the Quality of Life Survey, where the majority (76 per cent) of the sample had lived in one place for 10 years or more. Only three per cent of that sample had lived where they currently live for less than two years8.

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8 AC Neilson (2013: 224)
These households accommodate 192 people in a range of configurations (Figure 4), but predominately two person (44.6 per cent) or two adults with children (35.4 per cent). The remaining homes are a combination of single parents (10.8 per cent), mixed groups (1.5 per cent), single person (6.2 per cent) and what seem to be extended families (7.8 per cent).

Overall, 99 females and 89 males live in the households that responded to the survey. Over half (36) of the households have three or more people living in them, with one home accommodating eight people (Figure 5). These data shows a significantly smaller proportion of single person households than for Auckland as a whole. There are also fewer households with 5 and more people living in them. For example, over all of Auckland 19.1 per cent of households have
single occupancy, compared to 6.2 per cent in Buckley Precinct. Households of 5 or more people account for 15.2 per cent of the households across Auckland and only 7.6 per cent of households in Buckley Precinct.

Consequently, there are a higher proportion of two, three and four person households in Buckley Precinct than for Auckland as a whole. Together these households account for 65.6 per cent of the households across Auckland, and 86.2 per cent of households in Buckley Precinct. Both across Auckland and in Buckley Precinct two person households are most numerous, followed by three and four person households. Buckley Precinct includes a higher proportion of two person households (38.5 per cent) than the whole of Auckland (30.1 per cent), however. Beacon’s 2008 National Survey of Neighbourhood Experiences and Characteristics showed that higher density neighbourhoods are least likely to have larger households.

Figure 5: Household Size

Figure 6 shows that residents range in age from a few months to 70 years, with the bulk of the population in the 10-59 age group (63.7 per cent). This range shows fewer people younger than 29 older than 60 living in Buckley than there are for Auckland as a whole. 44.3 per cent of the entire Auckland population younger than 29 and under, while this is only 37.6 per cent in Buckley Precinct. Similarly, 13.8 per cent of the entire Auckland population are older than 60 and over, while this is only 7.4 per cent in Buckley Precinct.

Buckley Precinct, therefore, has a higher proportion of residents aged between 30 and 59 compared to Auckland over all (54.9 per cent compared to 41.9 per cent).
Applying the Neighbourhood Sustainability Tools to Hobsonville Point: a report to the Hobsonville Land Company

According to Beacon’s national neighbourhood survey report⁹, the presence of dependent household members has a profound impact on the services and amenities required by households. Both children under five years old and people 65 years of age and older tend to spend considerable time both in their dwellings and in their neighbourhoods. It is, therefore, desirable for older people and children to live in walkable neighbourhoods well serviced by public transport with public amenities such as schools, shops, public space and services to be located within or near the neighbourhood¹⁰.

Residents also represent a diverse range of ethnicities with a variety of nationalities including Serbian and Russian categorised as European, as well as a significant ‘Asian’ population comprising mostly of Chinese and Korean people (Figure 7). This ethnic mix is somewhat different to that of Auckland as a whole. There are, for example, a significantly different proportion of those who identify as New Zealand European (45.8 per cent) compared to ‘New Zealander’ (8 per cent) in the 2006 census. However, when both the New Zealand European and European categories are combined, Buckley Precinct includes only a slightly lower proportion of New Zealanders and Europeans (53.8 per cent as compared to 56.5 per cent to the Auckland regional population).

Other key ethnic differences are perhaps more profound. These include significantly fewer Maori (1.6 per cent in Buckley as compared to 11.1 per cent for the region) and Pacific populations (1.6 per cent as compared to 14.4 per cent), and larger Asian (20.7 per cent as compared to 18.9 per cent) and Middle Eastern/ Latin American and African populations (3.4 per cent as compared to 1.5 per cent). This means the ethnic structure of the population living

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⁹ Saville-Smith (2009)
¹⁰ Saville-Smith (2008)
in the Buckley Precinct is quite different from the Auckland region as a whole. This is particularly so for those not identifying as European.

![Figure 7: Cultural diversity](image)

**4.2.1 At the household level**

Information was collected for each person in the household with regard to travel to work or education, use of specified local places and the amount of household food bought locally.

In terms of transport, by far the majority of residents travel to work or education as the driver of a motor vehicle (61.4 per cent). As Figure 8 shows, these drivers are often accompanied by passenger (accounting for a further 22.8 per cent). Motor vehicle transport therefore makes up 84.2 per cent of journeys to work or education. Of the remainder, 7.1 per cent took the bus and 4.3 per cent took the ferry, while 3.1 per cent walked and 1.1 per cent cycled.

Despite the location of Buckley Precinct being on the edge of the city, the proportion of people driving to work or study is not dissimilar to Auckland as a whole, where 62.7 per cent of people drove to work or study on census day 2006. There is however a significantly higher proportion of residents who travel as passengers in motor vehicles (4.6 per cent for the whole of Auckland), by bus (4.5 per cent) and by bicycle (0.5 per cent). Fewer local people walk to work (3.8 per cent for the whole of Auckland) and ferry journeys were not collected in the 2006 Census.

The number of people driving is also similar to that identified by the Beacon Survey where, of those commuting to work or study, 59.1 per cent drove. This survey also showed that, over
New Zealand’s urban areas, far fewer of these vehicles carried a passenger (8.1 per cent) but more people used public transport (12.7 per cent) and walked or cycled (22.6 per cent).\(^{11}\)

Figure 8: Travel to work or education

61 respondents provided estimates of the monthly distance covered by all household motor vehicles, with just over one third of these averaging less than 1,500 kilometres a month. All but 6.6 per cent travelled less than 5,000 kilometres each month (Figure 9). These figures show that residents of Buckley Precinct drive considerably more kilometres each month, compared to the responses from the Beacon Neighbourhood Survey. In this survey, almost 82 per cent drive less than 1,500 kilometres each month and almost 98 per cent drive less than 5,000 kilometres per month.

\(^{11}\) Beacon Survey data (unpublished).
With regard to the use of local facilities, most people used local facilities on a weekly basis, with local shops, farmers market, park and café being the most commonly visited (Figure 10). 88 per cent use the shops, café or market at least weekly and 75 per cent use the park or playground at least weekly. The park or playgrounds are used by 88 per cent of the respondents at least monthly. The visiting of heritage sites and participation in local groups was less common. These figures are significantly higher than the use of urban public spaces nationally, where 70 per cent of respondents said they used local spaces at least monthly\textsuperscript{12}.

\textit{Figure 10: Visiting or using local facilities}

Most people bought at least some of their food locally (Figure 11), although only 13.1 per cent spent more than half of their food budget locally. This is sharply different to the patterns of most urban New Zealanders, where almost half of all respondents (47.3 per cent) report buying

\textsuperscript{12} Beacon Survey data (unpublished).
three quarters to all of their food locally and 61.4 per cent report spending more than half of their food budget locally\textsuperscript{13}.

![Figure 11: Local expenditure on household food](image)

### 4.2.2 At the respondent level

Survey respondents tended to be women (39) more often than men (26), with all but one agreeing or strongly agreeing that “the local area that you live in is a great place to live” (98.5 per cent). This compares extremely favourably to the 77 per cent of Auckland respondents to the Quality of Life survey who feel the same\textsuperscript{14} and to the 76.5 per cent of respondents from across urban New Zealand who strongly agree or agree that their neighbourhood is “friendly”.

Most people felt fairly or very safe when cycling, walking or at home whether during the day or after dark (Figure 12). There was less surety about allowing children aged under 14 years to play independently outside in the neighbourhood. However, when the data is examined without the inclusion of the ‘don’t know’ responses, 92 per cent of residents thought the area was reasonably or very safe for cycling and 87 per cent thought it was reasonably or very safe for children under 14 to play independently outside in the neighbourhood.

These findings also compare very favourably with those for wider Auckland, where seven in ten (70 per cent) Auckland respondents felt that their local neighbourhood was safe for children under 14 years to play in while unsupervised. While there is no comparable cycling information, walking during the day was, for example, seen as safe by 91 per cent of the population surveyed for the Quality of Life Project, compared to 95.4 per cent of those living in Buckley Precinct (84.6 per cent “very safe” and 10.8 per cent “fairly safe”). Walking after dark was seen as safe by 56 per cent of the wider Auckland population, 69.5 per cent of respondents from across urban New Zealand and 83 per cent of those living in Buckley Precinct\textsuperscript{15}.

\textsuperscript{13} Beacon Survey data (unpublished).
\textsuperscript{14} AC Neilson (2013: 147)
\textsuperscript{15} AC Neilson (2013: 70-93) and Beacon Survey data (unpublished)
Similarly, being at home during the day was regarded as safe by 95 per cent of the wider Auckland population, and by 96.9 per cent of the Buckley Precinct population. Safety at home after dark decreased for the wider Auckland population to 88 per cent but actually increased for the population of Buckley Precinct to 98.4 per cent.

Fewer people answered the questions about knowing their neighbours (55) but, of those who did, most people knew at least three or four neighbours, with some knowing more than 20 (Figure 13). Given the limited population of residents, and the relatively short period of time they have lived in Buckley Precinct, this compares favourably to the Beacon data from urban New Zealand, where most respondents (43.5 per cent) knew “a few people” in their neighbourhood. Although not directly comparable, across urban New Zealand higher proportions of residents reported knowing “some people” (26.2 per cent) or many people (26.4 per cent).¹⁶

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¹⁶ Beacon Survey data (unpublished)
The response rate to the Buckley Precinct survey further reduced as people answered questions about their level of connection, which varied somewhat (Figure 14). A majority knew some people by name (75.9 per cent) and would greet (83.1 per cent), chat (77.2 per cent) and be “very friendly” towards their neighbours (61.2 per cent). Where comparable, these figures are somewhat lower than those reported across urban New Zealand where 88.3 per cent report knowing some neighbours by name and 94.4 per cent report greeting or chatting with their neighbours\(^\text{17}\).

Less common in Buckley Precinct was visiting (41.9 per cent) or asking for small favours (51.2 per cent). At the same time, only 9 respondents said they kept to themselves and even fewer said they had a hostile relationship with their neighbours (2 residents).

\(^{17}\text{Ibid}\)
Most people (84.6 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that a sense of community in their neighbourhood was important to them. This is higher than the 70 per cent reported in the Quality of Life Report for the whole of Auckland population\footnote{18 AC Neilson (2013:94)}. In Buckley Precinct, this proportion reduced to 66.2 per cent when respondents considered whether their neighbourhood had a “strong sense of community”. This is a lesser reduction than for the wider Auckland population where just over half (52 per cent) respondents agreed they feel a sense of community with others in their local neighbourhood\footnote{19 AC Neilson (2013: 98)}.

When considering their homes, 95.4 per cent agreed that their homes were warm and comfortable and over half (58.5 per cent) said they could get by without outside help for a couple of days in a natural disaster. Most agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of their house, other homes and gardens in their neighbourhood, the streets and parks is excellent (Figure 15). A direct comparison of perceptions of other homes and gardens shows that 86.2 per cent of the Buckley Precinct respondents agree or strongly agree that these are of excellent quality while 71.9 per cent of urban New Zealanders rate the condition of other homes and gardens in their neighbourhoods as very good or fairly good.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure14}
\caption{Neighbourhood connections}
\end{figure}
While a majority (63.0 per cent) said they had taken action to improve the environment in the past year, far fewer (26.2 per cent) reported seeing tui or fantails in the past month. Even less (16.9 per cent) reported that they used composting facilities.

Looking to the future, 87.5 per cent of respondents reported no intention of moving and most of those who intended to move (8 per cent of the total sample) planned to move within Hobsonville Point. This is a much higher rate that those who reported no intention to move in the Beacon survey and suggests that there is a long term commitment by current residents to living in Hobsonville Point. This survey revealed that almost 62 per cent of people did not intend to move and, of those that were intending to move, the suitability of the house or “other reasons” were far more common motivators than the neighbourhood. Those who reported wanting to move out of Hobsonville Point cited parking issues and a lack of nearby shops and facilities as key dislikes.

Comments from respondents are more likely (64:57) to be positive than negative. These positive comments reflect respondents’ enjoyment of the “community feel” of the neighbourhood, friendly people and their appreciation of living in a quality home within a beautiful wider environment.
People frequently mention their pleasure in living close to the water and their appreciation of local walks and amenities including schools, the park and playground, Catalina café, the farmers market and the ferry service. Respondents also enjoy being within relatively easy access of main centres, places of work and the motorway and some were excited to be part of an evolving and “well laid out” neighbourhood.

While several people took the time to say that there was nothing they did not like, others disliked the lack of local retail spaces, evening meeting places, a petrol station and a supermarket. They also disliked the limited public transport timetables and the distances they had to travel by car, often at peak times. Several also disliked the limited parking nearby and how parking by-laws regarding community parking are not always complied with. Others found
living in a construction zone disruptive and reported some construction workers as less than courteous. Narrow streets, intrusive “weekend tourists” and limited options for “telco services” were also mentioned by more than one person.

Figure 18: Streetscape and parking
(http://transportblog.co.nz/2013/02/13/a-visit-to-hobsonville-point-development/)

29 people said they were involved in some sort of local activity. While some of these were privately run (ballet and swimming club for example), respondents also reported being involved in neighbourhood gatherings such as street parties and playgroups as well as the residents’ group, the school, farmers market, community garden, art project and petanque in summertime. A similar number of people (27) wanted to be more involved in local initiatives, even if this was simply as participants. There was particular interest in developing sporting and fitness activities, holding more neighbourhood gatherings (including street parties), involvement in the residents’ group, and developing groups such as a book club and for dog walking. This seems to reflect similar inclinations of wider Auckland residents who tend to have at least some of their social connections in the local area in which they live (41 per cent) (Neilson, 2013: 114).
As well as elaborating on issues of parking and a desire for local shops, more general comments expressed excitement about the future possibilities for the neighbourhood, a desire for a child care centre, concerns about speeding cars late at night and motorway access as well as a wish to retain the level of greenery.

48 people are happy to participate in occasional surveys or group discussions. Their contact details have been provided to the Hobsonville Land Company.
5 Discussion

The results from the application of these tools shows that Buckley Precinct is already performing strongly with respect to the design, construction and management of the local built environment. Results show this generates adaptive and resilient places that allow people to create rich and satisfying lives while respecting the limitations of the natural environment.

In particular, the tools show that Buckley Precinct is built to a very high standard of sustainability. Areas that have low scores, and are thus identified for improvement, in the physical environment are, in many cases, provided for in the overall master plan (sections 2, 3 and 7 of the Observational tool for example).

A correlation of the resident survey data with data from other surveys highlights some key areas for improvement, however. Local liveability, for example, would be greatly enhanced by the addition of local shops, service providers and more employment opportunities in the near future as well as increased public transport frequency and route options that allow for more integrated connectivity with the wider settlement. This is seen as particularly important due to the location of Hobsonville Point in relation to the wider Auckland settlement as people do not wish to travel long distances for essential daily life items or to work. They also want to be able to share their enjoyment of the area with others, which will also help to build the local economy by bringing consumers into the area from the wider Auckland catchment. Some of the impact of having limited local facilities and employment options is reflected in the high reported number of kilometres travelled as well as in the relatively low proportion of food purchased locally. Both of these results have significant environmental, economic and social implications for residents, for Hobsonville Point, the wider Auckland area and beyond.

At the same time, the self-reported transport data shows that travel to work or study compares very favourably with the rest of Auckland, as well as with urban New Zealand with respect to mode of transport. There are, for example, a similar proportion of drivers of motor vehicles in Hobsonville and the rest of Auckland. Many of these drivers appear to have passengers and this is at a far higher rate than the rest of Auckland and urban New Zealand (22.8 per cent of Buckley Precinct commuters compared to 4.6 per cent of commuters across Auckland and 8.1 per cent over New Zealand as a whole).

As well, higher proportions of Buckley Precinct residents took the bus and cycled to work or study than did across Auckland. The only mode of transport that was lower than the rest of Auckland as at Census night 2006, was the proportion of people who walked to work or study. In Buckley Precinct 3.1 per cent walked to work or study, while across all of Auckland 3.8 per cent did the same on Census night 2006. As well, 4.3 per cent reported using the ferry as their main form or transport to work or study and, when bus and ferry use are combined, public transport use is close to the rate for urban New Zealand (11.4 per cent in Hobsonville as compared to 12.7 per cent for urban New Zealand). Distance from work or study appears to be encouraging residents to share one vehicle and/or to use public transport or bicycles, despite the
limited infrastructure for the latter two. Design may be playing a key part in these results too, as there are limited opportunities to park a second car in Buckley Precinct.

Transport options and quality local amenities remain a critical aspect of the overall experience of Buckley Precinct, however. This is because a majority of residents are aged in their prime working and studying years. At the household level, the survey shows a strong dominance of people aged from 30-59 years old and fewer children and older people than the rest of Auckland. Having a range of ages and life stages (and incomes) amongst residents can be critical to the success of local business districts, however, and including a mix of uses in the neighbourhood and immediate environment can also provide a variety of local work options. For example, providing healthcare, child care and professional (legal or accounting) services, start-up spaces for artists and commercial enterprises as well as some live/work premises will help to create a more viable local economy, as well as potentially providing more affordable housing options that contribute to a smaller ecological footprint for residents, provide for greater social diversity and underpinning local resilience.

There is already good use of the available local facilities with 88 per cent using either the shops, café or market at least weekly and 75 per cent use the park or playground at least weekly. The park or playground are used by 88 per cent of the respondents at least monthly and these figures are significantly higher than the 70 per cent who use local public spaces across urban New Zealand at least monthly. This may reflect a combination of the high quality of these spaces, how fit for purpose they are experienced to be, the reduced private outdoors spaces residents have access to as well as the inclinations of residents towards enjoying the natural environment (see, for example, Walljasper, 2007).

While patronage of the farmers market, local shops and café all no doubt contribute to the percentage of locally bought food, there remains a significant opportunity to increase this, as less than 15 per cent of respondents report buying more than 50 per cent of their food locally. This pattern is a sharp contrast to the patterns of most urban New Zealanders, where almost half of all respondents (47.3 per cent) report buying three quarters to all of their food locally and 61.4 per cent report spending more than half of their food budget locally. The ability to purchase food locally is a key aspect of effective resilience in times of crisis as well as assisting the development of more sustainable patterns of everyday life, such as reduced reliance on transportation for example. It is likely that, with more local shops and, especially, the development of a supermarket nearby that this rate will increase significantly. Ensuring connectivity for those who prefer to walk or cycle to these facilities will further improve the rate of purchasing food locally.

Usage is more spread for the playground and less frequent for heritage areas and with regard to participation in local groups. There is strong positive feedback about all of these amenities in the comments, and possibly the opportunity to gain more points in Section 9 of the Observational Tool by working with local residents to encourage and support those community members who have reported an interest in particular activities. For example, people expressed
enjoyment of various Hobsonville Land Company activities and their desire for more, especially with regard to developing sporting and fitness activities, holding more neighbourhood gatherings (including street parties), involvement in the residents’ group, and developing groups such as a book club and dog walking.

This desire for more outdoor activities may also be related to the high degree of perceived safety residents report in outdoor spaces when cycling and walking, and with regard to allowing children aged under 14 years to play independently outside in the neighbourhood, all of which was higher than comparable data for wider Auckland and urban New Zealand.

The survey also reveals some quite different demographic patterns than those for Auckland overall. There are, for example, far fewer people identifying as Maori or Pasifika and more identifying as ‘Asian’, particularly Chinese, Korean and Indian. The community is already very diverse in terms of household structure and size as well, with significantly more two person households in Buckley Precinct compared to Auckland as a whole. These patterns all have implications for school planning as well as for other local service provision, such as English language classes and appropriate language and cultural skills amongst local service providers for example.

Even though the local community is relatively new, their comments make it very clear that they particularly enjoy the people they have met and “the community atmosphere”. Only one person did not agree that “the local area that you live in is a great place to live” (98.5 per cent) and this is significantly higher than responses to the same question from across Auckland (77 per cent) and to a similar question from across urban New Zealand (76.5 per cent). Similarly, the perceived quality of neighbouring homes, gardens, streets and parks is higher than similar responses from across urban New Zealand.

While living in a construction zone attracted some negative comments, most residents recognise the community is a work in progress and many feel well connected to both other people in the area and the physical environment already. Individual respondents reported reasonably high levels of connection with neighbours for example (almost 76 per cent knew neighbours by name and over 83 per cent chat with their neighbours). These figures are, however, somewhat lower than across urban New Zealand overall (88.3 per cent and 94.4 per cent respectively). Given the number of positive ideas offered for community activities, there does appear to be an opportunity to actively facilitate local involvement in events, projects and activities.

Still, over 66 per cent of Buckley Precinct residents reported that their neighbourhood “had a strong sense of community” and this rate is higher than that reported for all of Auckland (52 per cent) and maybe related to the expected dominance of home ownership amongst the residents.20

20 Data on tenure was not collected but will be added into the next stage of tool development.
International research consistently shows that typically both neighbourhood and housing satisfaction and attachment tends to be higher among owner occupiers\textsuperscript{21}. As well, numerous people praised the quality of the physical environment and the experience of living in their new homes and neighbourhood, with 63 per cent reporting that they had personally taken some action to improve the environment in the past year. Far fewer (26.2 per cent) reported seeing tui or fantails in the past month and even less (16.9 per cent) reported that they used composting facilities so provision of habitat and composting workshops and/or communal composting facilities may be useful to offer.

Overall, residents report feeling very contented living in their new neighbourhood and very few have plans to move from their home or the area. This is significantly different to international research on higher density neighbourhoods, which tend to show lower levels of attachment and higher levels of intention to move. This is most commonly related to tenure status, with more rental accommodation often found in higher density neighbourhoods\textsuperscript{22}. In Buckley Precinct it is possible that tenure status is contributing to the high reported levels of neighbourhood satisfaction.

There is also a significant interest in becoming more involved in the development of the community with 48 (73.8 per cent) of respondents willing to participate in occasional surveys or group discussions.

The process of applying these tools to Buckley Precinct has also helped to adapt the tools in terms of key areas of focus, processes of data gathering and analysis, and report presentation. Some of these updates require some reworking of final analysis systems, user interfaces and reporting templates and this is now underway.

\textsuperscript{21} Diaz-Serrano (2006)  
\textsuperscript{22} Saville-Smith (2009)
6 Conclusions

Overall, Buckley Precinct exhibits a high level of achievement with regard to the goal:

_The neighbourhood built environment is designed, constructed and managed to generate neighbourhoods that are adaptive and resilient places that allow people to create rich and satisfying lives while respecting the limitations of the natural environment._

The tools clearly identify areas of strength as well as areas that could be improved and in conjunction with the wider master-plan, Hobsonville Point neighbourhoods are setting a high standard of sustainability in both the physical and social environments. In several categories exceed results from across wider Auckland and the rest of urban New Zealand.

With such a strong result, a strengths based approach to further improvements is likely to be successful. For example, areas that are already performing well can be used to help improve those that are not. Building on the already high use of local facilities and ensuring the high quality of space and walking access is retained and cohesively integrated in subsequent stages of the overall development will help to ensure the success of local businesses and service provision. This will also contribute to improved local liveability on a number of counts, including reducing the number of kilometres travelled each month and increasing the proportion of food purchased locally.

Providing for a wider range of households, including people of various ages, life stages and incomes, is likely to be a significant factor in terms of creating a viable local business district and local economy. This would also assist in reducing the environmental impact of the Precinct, particularly with regard to transportation of both people and goods and services. Leading by design can also generate a more socially diverse and resilient community, especially when further stages of the masterplan take into account the lived experience and aspirations of those already living nearby. This may mean providing a more diverse mix of housing options, including those that cater for artists, entrepreneurs and home-based enterprises.

Similarly, working with key providers to build on the already high use of public transport will contribute to a reduction in kilometres driven each month and contribute positively to local economic and social aspects of liveability.

Along the same lines, building on residents’ enthusiasm of and appreciation of their neighbourhood, can help to develop relevant and long-lasting local initiatives that can help to enhance, sustain and grow local connections and neighbourliness. This is likely to be most successful if residents are engaged in the activities themselves and several suggestions are described in the survey.

In terms of updating the tools, it has been extremely useful to apply the adapted tools to Buckley Precinct. This follows the processes we established in the initial development stages and has
enabled us to make changes that build on the strengths of the tools, with the confidence of not compromising their robustness or their strong connection to the Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework.
7 References


Beacon Pathway (unpublished). Neighbourhood Survey data.

Diaz-Serrano, L., 2006, Housing Satisfaction, Homeownership and Housing Mobility: A Panel Data Analysis for Twelve EU Countries, Paper provided by Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

Saville-Smith, K., 2008, Neighbourhoods & Ageing Populations, Build Magazine (June/July)


Appendix 1: Updated Observational Tool

The Neighbourhood Observational Tool consists of two types of credits against which the neighbourhood is assessed. The first set is comprised of credits which can be measured, such as the density of the development or the percentage of dwellings within a certain distance of a bus stop. The second set consists of credits which require professional judgement, such as whether there is good surveillance of a public space. The following are measured:

Access to basic everyday facilities within walking distance:
- schools
- reserves
- local shops

Access to, and adequacy of, public transport within walking distance

Efficient use of space and viability of local centres
- residential density
- previous use of the site

Protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- stormwater management
- protection and creation of habitat
- riparian, coastal and wetland management

Dwelling level sustainability
- Energy
- Water
- General resource
- Air quality

Quality of space
- streetscape, including but not limited to walkability
- communal space

Diversity and resilience
- mixed use
- public space
- housing diversity (cost, size, typology)

Street network
Eco-alternatives and innovation
- a range of public and/or communal initiatives.

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23 The dwelling level sustainability measures are based on Beacon’s HSS High Standard of Sustainability®.
Appendix 2: Updated Resident Survey Tool

This survey should be completed by one of the homeowners or leaseholders. It will help us to work out what we can do together to improve the experience of neighbourhoods in Hobsonville Point. By understanding the views and experiences of those who live here, we can better understand what changes need to be made in order to achieve the strong and vibrant community we envisage for Hobsonville Point. Your views are important and we thank you for your time.

Getting the survey back to us:
- **Either** drop this questionnaire into Catalina Café by Friday 28 June and receive a free coffee,
- **Or** we will collect it from you and give you a coffee voucher. We will be in your street on Saturday 15 June and 29 June.

Do you need help to complete the questionnaire?
If you need help to fill in the questionnaire please ring us on 09 4792569
If you have any questions:
If you have questions please ring us on 09 4792569.

Confidentiality:
All data collected in this survey will be aggregated. Your responses are confidential. Any individual comments used in reports or summaries will be anonymous. No individual details will be released to any other persons or organisations other than those involved in the survey process.

Please tell us a little about yourself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Length of time living here (months)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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Please tell us a little about each other person who lives in your household:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Length of time living here (months)</th>
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<td>6</td>
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</table>

Thinking about your household:
1. For each person, please tell us the main way they usually travel to work or education. If more than one travel option is used (e.g. walk then ferry), then please tell us the one you use for the longest part of the journey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Walk</td>
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<td>b. Cycle</td>
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<td>c. Scooter or skate</td>
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<td>d. Public bus</td>
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<td>e. Ferry</td>
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<td>f. Train</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Driver of a private vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Passenger in a private vehicle</td>
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</table>
2. If your household uses one or more vehicles, how many kilometres were driven in those vehicles in the last four weeks? *A rough estimate is okay.* If your household does not have a vehicle, please circle 'no access'.

Total kms_________ or no access to vehicle

3. How often do ANY members of your household visit or use these local places or participate in local groups? *Please put one tick in each line:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less often</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Local shops</td>
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<td>b. Cafe</td>
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<td>c. Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Playground</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Farmers market</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Heritage site</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Community Groups</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. How much of your household food expenditure is spent in your local neighbourhood compared with shops further afield? *Please circle one answer.*

a. 0-25% - Nothing to a quarter  
b. 26-50% - Over a quarter to a half  
c. 51-75% - Over half to three quarters  
d. 76-100% - Over three quarters to all

*Thinking about yourself:*

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “The local area that you live in is a great place to live”. *Please circle one answer.*

a. Strongly disagree  
b. Disagree  
c. Neither agree nor disagree  
d. Agree  
   e. Strongly agree

6. Now thinking about safety, in general how safe or unsafe do you feel in the following situations... *Please tick one answer for each situation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very unsafe</th>
<th>A bit unsafe</th>
<th>Fairly safe</th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Don’t know/not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Cycling in my neighbourhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Walking in my neighbourhood during the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Walking alone in my neighbourhood after dark</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. In my home during the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. In my home after dark</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. For children under 14 years to play outside in the neighbourhood during the day</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. How many other households do you know in your neighbourhood?

8. Which of the following statements best describes your relationships with your neighbours. Please tick all that apply:

- a. We greet one another
- b. We know each other’s names
- c. We chat together
- d. We visit one another
- e. We ask for small favours
- f. We are very friendly
- g. We generally keep to ourselves
- h. Contact with our neighbours is negative or hostile

9. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please tick one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. A sense of community in my neighbourhood is very important to me</td>
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<td>b. My neighbourhood has a strong sense of community</td>
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</table>

10. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please tick one answer for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The quality of my house is excellent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. The quality of houses and gardens in my neighbourhood are excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. The quality of streets in my neighbourhood are excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. The quality of local parks are excellent</td>
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11. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with these statements:

- a. My home is generally warm and comfortable
- b. In the last year, I have taken action to improve the natural environment.
- c. During the last month, I have seen tui or fantails in my garden or neighbourhood.
- d. I regularly use composting facilities in my garden or nearby.
- e. If there was a natural disaster and my home lost electricity, water and telecommunication services for a couple of days I would get by reasonably well without outside help.
12. Which statement best reflects your intentions within the next year? Please circle one statement only
   a. I intend to move out of the area for work or family reasons
   b. I intend to move because this house is not suitable
   c. I intend to move because of the neighbourhood
   d. I intend to move within Hobsonville Point
   e. I do not intend to move in the next year

13. What do you like most about living in Hobsonville Point?

14. What do you dislike most about living in Hobsonville Point?

   ▪
   ▪ What are you already involved in?
   ▪ What else would you like to be involved in?

Thank you for your responses! There are sometimes things that the Hobsonville Land Company would like to know about in more detail. If you would like to participate in occasional surveys or group discussions please tick the box below and include your name and contact details.

   I am happy to participate in occasional surveys or group discussions
   Name:__________________________________________________________________
   Phone:_________________________________________________________________
   Email:_________________________________________________________________

The Hobsonville Land Company will only receive your contact details, not copies of any of your individual responses.