

Asher Wilson-Goldman – GWRC Candidate

Economic Development

- 1. What is your understanding of the Kotahitanga Board and the role that they play? Should they be independent?** The Kotahitanga Board, while it took far too long to get it (and the strategy) up and running, has a critical role to play in enhancing ED across Kāpiti. Bring more and better jobs to Kāpiti, supporting our businesses to thrive, and providing education opportunities for rangatahi are all needed for the future of Kāpiti. I believe it could be a stronger advocate if it was independent from KCDC.
- 2. Kāpiti Chamber values town centres as vital contributors to our local economic system. What examples of benefits have you seen from town centres?** Answering for GWRC, rather than KCDC. I live in the middle of two town centres, Raumati Beach and Paraparaumu. While Raumati needs a bit of love, it does have a clear identity, a warm and welcoming environment and the beginnings of a plan for future improvements thanks to the hard work of Bede Laracy and others. Meanwhile, Paraparaumu has virtually none of these things, with an unclear future, no easily understandable story that it tells potential visitors, and a largely sterile environment.
- 3. How do you plan to support and grow town centres, and their relationship to the economic development team and wider business community?** Answering for GWRC, rather than KCDC. Our public transport system needs to support town centres by making them destinations, not just brief stops on the way to the train to leave town. We need WellingtonNZ to step up and work alongside the Kotahitanga Board to develop stories for each of our town centres, target audiences (so they aren't competing) and then help to pitch those stories to potential shoppers, investors and business owners far and wide
- 4. What is your understanding of the purpose of the Tourist Advisory Board and their relationship with Wellington NZ and KCDC?** The Tourism Advisory Board has some fantastic people on it and was an important creation by the Kotahitanga Board to help enable tourism growth in the district. Unfortunately, our district is often ignored or left to last by WellingtonNZ which makes their job much more challenging than it needs to be. I will push hard for WellingtonNZ to give Kāpiti its fair share.
- 5. What are the opportunities around tourism in Kāpiti?** Kāpiti has many opportunities for tourism. As well as the obvious attraction of Kāpiti Island, we need to explore our district's other offerings. Two that spring to mind are food-based tourism (witness the success of the Horowhenua Taste Trail or Wellington on a Plate), and outdoor recreation - in particular mountain biking and equestrian. Our network of cycleways, walkways and bridleways is ever-growing and offers a significant point of difference, while the fertile soils of Te Horo and Ōtaki produce some fantastic food often used by our growing number of high-quality restaurants and cafes.

Better Infrastructure

6. **What role do you think KCDC plays in the Peka Peka Interchange?** Not for me to answer as I'm running for GWRC, not KCDC. However, I would note that improved public transport options, within the remit of GWRC, could assist with many of these issues
7. **KCDC has been making strategic housing purchases. What are your thoughts on KCDC as a housing provider or facilitator? What does intensification mean to you, and how do you think it could change Kāpiti?** Not for me to answer as I'm running for GWRC, not KCDC. However, I would note that people are moving to Kāpiti regardless of how we feel about it, and intensification offers us the opportunity to welcome them in a way that helps our town centres thrive, our businesses expand, and our environment maintained.
8. **As it stands, KCDC has funding to move forward with Te Uruhi. This has been a big talking point in our business community and membership. Assuming it goes ahead, what impact do you foresee the gateway having on business and community wellbeing in the Kāpiti region?** Not for me to answer as I'm running for GWRC, not KCDC. However, I would put on record that I don't support Te Uruhi as I feel the finances don't stack up for it. While ensuring biosecurity for Kāpiti Island is critical, and storytelling will play an important part in our tourism offering, both can be done much better (and for much lower cost) than the current Gateway proposal.
9. **What do you think are the opportunities for business if the Kāpiti Airport stays an airport, or if it gets developed?** If the Airport stays as it is, I think the best we can hope for is more of the same - a few flights a week to Auckland and Nelson, with owners looking to get out and nobody willing to purchase a loss-making asset from them. If it is developed into a mix of housing, green space, space for Puketapu Hapū to grow, a helicopter staging post, an educational facility, space for a healthcare facility, I can see only positives for our environment and our community in the long term.

Future thinking

10. **What actions should KCDC be taking to support businesses to become climate friendly?** Answering for GWRC, not KCDC. Climate resilience and mitigation are both critical for businesses, especially in a coastal environment like Kāpiti. I would like to see GWRC, and WellingtonNZ, both working with KCDC to provide advice and support to Kāpiti businesses, including sharing best practice examples and lessons from across the region.
11. **How do you envision the relationship between local iwi and KCDC operating in the future?** Answering for GWRC, not KCDC. The relationship between councils and mana whenua is critical and must be a strong partnership fostered by mutual respect and trust. In the environmental space, iwi have much in the way of local knowledge

that can help to inform best practice and council should welcome and respect the time and effort that iwi put in here.

12. Summarise your understanding of the following reforms: Three Waters Reform and Local Government Reform. How do you plan to keep Kāpiti's voice strong throughout these changes and advocate for our business community?

Answering for GWRC, not KCDC. While GWRC has a small role to play in the Three Waters reform, this is primarily in relation to its role as bulk water supplier to Porirua, Hutt Valley and Wellington councils and does not impact on Kāpiti. Kāpiti three waters matters are primarily for KCDC to answer. The Future for Local Government reforms are still shaping up, with a draft report to be issued later in 2022. The range of proposals that the panel will make are still unclear, but there will be opportunities for Kāpiti in them, as well as threats. We need a GWRC councillor representing Kāpiti who understands how the public sector and central government works to ensure our voices are heard. With my experience working in Parliament and in senior public sector roles, I believe I am that person.

13. What is your vision for Kāpiti, and how do you intend to implement it? Name three visionary actions you aspire to implement?

I want a Kāpiti where communities thrive, kids can grow, learn and find work locally without having to leave, and our environment provides us all with the rich fulfillment we deserve. My three visionary actions are: To work alongside mana whenua and the Paekākāriki community to make the Wainuiwhenua project happen; to finally convince central Government to fund regular commuter rail to Ōtaki and further north; and to reshape our bus routes and schedules so they serve people living locally and our local businesses, as well as people commuting to Wellington and back.

14. How do you plan on being a visible and accessible leader for our council and community?

I will be an accountable councillor who actually engages with our Kāpiti communities, our organisations and advocacy groups, and mana whenua. You won't just see me three months prior to an election - I'll be there when you need me for the whole three years (and beyond). I'll bring GWRC to our markets so you can pop by for a chat, and I'll be available to come meet with your business or group whenever you want to talk. I'll also be a regular fixture on our community facebook groups and neighbourly.