

# Council comes under fire

By AMY JACKMAN

Karori residents made it clear this week that there was a breakdown in trust between them and Wellington City Council.

At a meeting on Monday to discuss the council's draft long-term plan, members of the Creswick Valley Residents Association and the wider Karori community told their Onslow-Western councillors they were unhappy with the council.

Sarah Holden, chairwoman of the association, said there was a breakdown in trust with the council after the Curtis St court case.

The association this month won a court case that overturned a council rezoning decision for a site in Curtis St.

"The key thing that came out of this [Monday's meeting] and we had people there from all over, was that there's been a breakdown in trust with council. Not necessarily with the councillors themselves, but with the council officers," she said.

"It's about the quality of advice you as councillors are getting from council officials. Are you sufficiently well informed to challenge that advice?"

Ms Holden said those concerns were raised not only when residents talked about the Curtis St court case, but when they were discussing the long-term plan.

"It rose over how the Te Papa funding is being handled. The proposals under the eco-city also seemed to be

particularly contentious," she said.

Another issue the residents were concerned about at the meeting was whether the council would follow the proper procedure when it looked at rezoning part of Curtis St to Business 2.

"The floor [residents] told councillors, 'The problem is the very fact you [the council] said you were going to proceed with rezoning back to Business 2 implied that you had already made up your mind what a suitable land use was without consultation,'" Ms Holden said.

"The community has lots of ideas about what they would like to do with the site, commercial ideas as well. It is not that they are anti-development."

Councillor John Morrison said he thought it was an important meeting.

"While at times it was heated, there's nothing wrong with that either," he said.

"I'm not upset that they won [the court case], but that we got to a stage where they had to do that and spend so much money to prove a point. We have to look at ourselves and our advice, not at our residents."

Mr Morrison and the other councillors at the meeting, Jo Coughlan and Andy Foster, assured residents they would follow the correct rezoning procedure for Curtis St.

Mr Foster said he would hold another meeting with the residents to outline what would happen next with the Curtis St site.