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Selwyn District Council adopts updated growth model

Traffic constraints, the Christchurch earthquake and growth in Darfield are all factors affecting growth in Selwyn, as indicated in the district's growth model adopted today by the Selwyn District Council.

Four scenarios presented to the Council were based on a purpose-built model developed in 2008 and revised in the last six months to provide the district with projections for growth that could underpin council programmes and assist with strategic planning in the likes of the Future for Selwyn district strategy.

The original growth model and first review were carried out by economic researchers BERL. During the development of the growth model, BERL identified that demographic change in Selwyn District could be explained by three economic drivers of growth: Canterbury retail sales; Christchurch house prices; and arable land price per hectare in Canterbury.

The revision had shown a more scaled back view of growth was caused by the recession, the earthquake and tight credit conditions combined with high debt levels in the agricultural sector.

Council staff developed the four scenarios of future growth based on the BERL reviews and in light of recent events and current issues affecting the Council.

Council adopted the fourth scenario recommended by Strategic Policy Analyst Rachel Pugh, which builds on the previous three scenarios. The fourth scenario adds in that growth in Darfield may occur as a result of the large amount of residential land zoned in 2000/2001 through the Proposed District Plan, and the water and waste water constraints being lifted in the township. The Central Plains Water Scheme, the expansion of the Fonterra plant, tourism and other development in the area may also lead to population growth in Darfield. The impact of growth from these factors is a district population of 63,500 at 2041, including Darfield itself swelling to 4600 people.

The first scenario updated the original model with the current number of households in each township, but otherwise the assumptions remained unchanged from those used in 2008; the second built on the first scenario but added that traffic congestion becomes a potential issue in the district, along with increasing petrol prices and a reduction in the roading improvement programme; and the third scenario pulled together the first two scenarios and added an extra 100 households in Lincoln, Prebbleton and Rolleston at 2016 to reflect the impact of the Christchurch earthquake and peoples' desires to move to areas considered more stable.

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