

BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS COMMISSIONERS AT SELWYN

IN THE MATTER OF

Clause 21 of the Frist Schedule of
the Resource Management Act 1991
(Plan Change 67)

IN THE MATTER OF

GW WILFIELD LIMITED
(Applicant)

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF HAMISH WHEELANS ON BEHALF OF
GW WILFIELD LIMITED**

CORPORATE

Dated: 14 September 2021

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- 1 My name is Hamish Wheelans.
- 2 I summarise and highlight the key matters for consideration as follows.
- 3 West Melton is a small township with a population of 2085, with most of that population growth occurring in the last 24 years with the development of Gainsborough, Preston Downs and Wilfield.
- 4 The township started with a community hall and tavern in the south-west corner of an intersection of a State Highway. A service station, school and some houses popped up in the north-west corner. Two churches were added in the south-east and north-east corners. Gainsborough then created a new housing area of 180 lots in the north-east. Preston Downs enabled 360 houses around the existing Westview Crescent in the north-west. Wilfield extended the township with 180 lots to the south-east. Each step in West Melton history has enabled the township evolution to occur in different sectors of an intersection, now the centre of the township.
- 5 Infrastructure has improved from a rural township reliant on septic tanks and a single leaking wooden water storage tank, to a town with reticulated sewer and community water supply consisting of four deep wells, water storage and treatment.
- 6 A small convenience centre was built in 2014 to service the community's local needs, including a 4-Square, Restaurant and Bar, Coffee Shop, Real Estate office.
- 7 The West Melton Domain has grown in geographic area, progressively over the past 20 years.
- 8 Following the Canterbury Earthquakes, the Community Centre replaced the ageing hall. Its capacity increased significantly, now incorporating an indoor sports facilities, meeting spaces and child care centre.
- 9 The interaction with West Coast Road has changed. The speed limits have reduced from 80 to 70 to the current posted 60kph. Speed thresholds have moved west and east. The frontage to the road has been urbanised. Two pedestrian crossings have been added to improve

- connectivity. Waka Kotahi now plan a major upgrade to its infrastructure to include signalised lights, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 10 Environment Canterbury trialled a commuter bus service, linking Darfield, Kirwee, West Melton and Christchurch with a morning and afternoon service. This still runs today and has expanded to include three pick-up/drop-off locations in West Melton, two in Darfield and one in Kirwee.
 - 11 West Melton has grown, not through the planning of Central, Regional or Local Government. Growth has occurred as demand was present, available, and affordable.
 - 12 Services and infrastructure need not be present before the people. People enable infrastructure to expand and improve, to become efficient and affordable. It has happened in a manner which has enabled a community to grow its character and its own urban form. PC67 is another chapter in that township evolution.
 - 13 PC67 is linked to the existing Living WM South zone of Wilfield. There is no topographical reason for the zone boundary between Living WM South and Inner Plains. The existing roads, reserves, pathways will be seamlessly attached to PC67 enhancing connectivity. New pathways, reserves and shared cycleways will be added to grow the community connections and to meet the demands that are very present.
 - 14 Waka Kotahi plans to upgrade the state highway intersection, making provision for cycles, pedestrians and micro-mobility forms of traffic to flow in a safe environment through the township south to north and vice versa. The closure and re-routing of West Melton Road will enhance connectivity from west to east and vice versa. These works will embrace connectivity and urban form and provide for a connected network with strong linkages to transport corridors. The roading networks have been demonstrated to have capacity to cater for PC67 growth.
 - 15 It is agreed sewer and water infrastructure has capacity to cater for PC67 and the later Plan Changes already received by SDC, if they proceed.

- 16 While there is no Projected Infrastructure Boundary for West Melton, infrastructure to cater for PC67 is present and available, without being at the detriment of other 'planned' developments or requiring LTP budgeting.
- 17 As observed by Messrs Sellars and Colegrave, there is little, if any, supply of sections in West Melton. History proves there is demand. PC67 will provide development capacity. Mr Tallentire states there is capacity in the Greater Christchurch environs. This does not help a township starved of growth and supply. Without supply, prices will increase and affordability will worsen.
- 18 Relying on a Housing Capacity Assessment three-year cycle to inform the Greater Christchurch Partners that there is a shortfall, which is already obvious, that will require a Structure Plan and subsequent Plan Change process, to enable supply in a township with pent up demand will lead to a market outside of equilibrium for upwards of 10 years. As described by Mr Sellars, this must adversely affect pricing and affordability in the short, medium and potentially long-term.
- 19 There has been a shift in the way we live, how we work, how we travel, the emissions we create, that many planning documents do not consider or take account of. The rules of thumb such as walkable distances do not reflect those changes. A significant evolution is occurring with the move to micro-mobility and electrification of vehicles. Central Government is leading the way with its subsidies. We do not need to presume it will occur, it is occurring and will continue at an increased pace. We will travel further, without emission and vehicle emissions from combustion engines will comparatively decrease exponentially.
- 20 PC67 offers an opportunity to step outside the square, supporting the reduction in greenhouses gases as much as reasonably can be anticipated in the construction of new homes and expansion of the Urban population by incorporating the requirements for:
 - (a) Roof mounted solar power generation system and battery energy storage.
 - (b) Rain-water harvesting with each dwelling capturing rain-water for toilet flushing or garden watering.

- (c) Native vegetation and/or ecological restoration on all lots greater than 3,000m², complimenting the ecological reserve within the pylon corridor.
- (d) The adoption of rating system such as Homestar in all new dwellings to work towards reducing the environmental footprint.

CONCLUSION

- 21 PC67 provides 130 residential lots, or 17% increase in total households, which must be significant in terms of West Melton and also in terms of the typology PC67 provides in relation to the Rolleston/West Melton Urban Area.
- 22 PC67 offers an expansion of the connected reserves, walkways and cycleways. This coupled with a planned upgrade to the Highway intersection will enable safe passage between north, south, east and west of West Melton for cyclists, pedestrians, scooters and vehicles to travel between school, sports, community activities and home.
- 23 PC67 is a seamless extension to the existing roading, sewer and water infrastructure in Wilfield and West Melton.
- 24 PC67 is feasible. It offers immediacy. If approved, consents can be applied for and civil works commence within months of approval.

Hamish Wheelans

14 September 2021