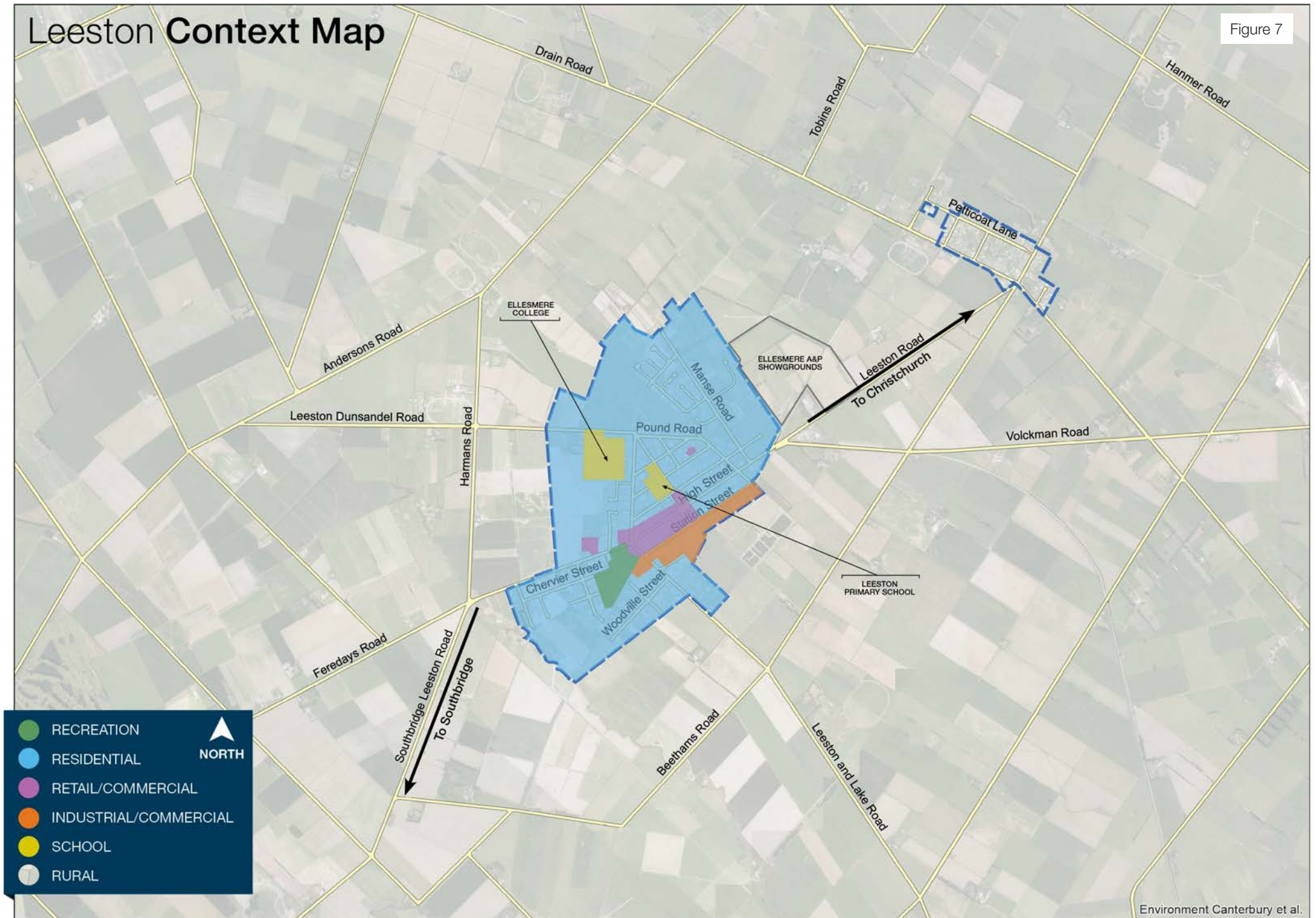


Leeston Context Map

Figure 7



Leeston

Introduction

Location

Leeston is located 35 minutes south of Christchurch at an elevation of 20 metres above sea level.

Mana Whenua

Leeston is one of several townships in the Selwyn District located within what was once the extensive mahinga kai of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere and its wetlands. Issues with high groundwater tables, land drainage and potential flooding described above are indicative of this history. It is a short drive to Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, which is of cultural significance to the local Te Taumutu Rūnanga. Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere is subject to a National Water Conservation Order recognising it has outstanding ecological and cultural values.

The lake is famous with bird watchers for its large population of black swans and supports a flounder and eel fishery.

European settlement

The settlement dates from 1864 when land was offered as a site for the office of the South Rakaia Road Board. Sections were being advertised for the proposed new township of Leeston in May 1864. Two suggestions have been made regarding Leeston's name. The first is that it was named after Leeston in Cornwall, the birthplace of FJ Smith who gifted the land for the township. Other records credit EJ Lee for allowing his name to be incorporated into the township's name.

Employment

Leeston is the largest employment area in Ellesmere comprising nearly a quarter of the Ellesmere township-based workforce². Half of the township-based retail and commercial employment for the Ellesmere area is within Leeston, with the township also containing 28% of the total number of employees in the urban-based industrial sector.

Population

The 2015 population of Leeston was 2,275 people (813 households), with this population projected to grow to a 2031 population of 3,402 (1,215 households). This represents an estimated increase of 1,127 people (402 households)³.

Township network

Due to its central location, size and the role it plays in servicing the wider Ellesmere area, Selwyn 2031 has categorised Leeston as a service township whose function is:

"...based on providing a high amenity residential environment and primary services to rural townships and surrounding rural area."⁴

2015 POPULATION
2,275

2031 PROJECTED POPULATION
3,402

49% INCREASE
IN LEESTON'S POPULATION

730 PEOPLE EMPLOYED

953 ZONED HOUSEHOLD CAPACITY

17ha OF BUSINESS LAND

19ha OF INDUSTRIAL LAND

LEESTON SNAPSHOT

²Market Economics: Ellesmere Area Plan Assessment, August 2015, P18 and 19. ³Selwyn Growth Model. ⁴Selwyn 2031: District Development Strategy, Strategic Direction 1, adopted October 2014, P34.

⁵Land in Leeston has been deferred until such time that additional capacity is built into the stormwater network, including specifically upgrades to the Market Street culvert – refer to Policy B4.3.55 of the Selwyn District Plan

District Plan land use zoning

The status of Leeston in the Selwyn 2031 township network is reflected in the current Selwyn District Plan zoning for the settlement, where significant areas of land have been zoned for residential purposes, some of which has been deferred⁵ (see Figure 7). Leeston is subject to standard density Living 1 and Living XA land use zoning which require a minimum average allotment size of 650m². There is also a range of low-density Living 2 and 2A land use zonings which have a minimum average allotment size of 5,000m².

The current pattern of residential development in Leeston is characterised by standard and low-density detached housing, ranging in age from contemporary through to heritage housing stock. It is envisioned that the existing housing typologies in the township will continue to remain popular, although there may be opportunities to provide for higher density and comprehensive type developments located in close proximity to the town centre where infrastructure capacity and other constraints can be resolved. Anecdotal feedback and discussions with local developers and the community through the consultation events have identified the need for Council to investigate the potential to facilitate medium density residential development in response to the long-term trend of an ageing population and the associated need to provide for more housing diversity, and as a response to increased affordability issues.

Residential land capacity

There are approximately 840 standard residential sections in Leeston, of which 96 have the potential to be further developed for residential purposes based on current subdivision standards for Leeston. These sections comprise some 87 hectares with a potential yield of 803 households. These standard residential properties are supplemented by 45 low-density residential sections within the Living 2 and 2A zones, of which seven have the potential to be further developed for residential purposes based on current subdivision standards. These sections comprise some 29.5 hectares with a potential yield of 35 households.

There is further capacity in the Living 1 and Living 2 Deferred Zone⁶ areas that should be utilised in advance of alternative greenfield development areas. There is capacity for a further 244 sections within these deferred zones based on the current minimum average allotment sizes, with the potential to investigate opportunities to intensify the undeveloped Living 2A Deferred land to optimise the use of the land.

Overall, there is considered to be sufficient available land to accommodate projected population growth through to 2031 without Council proactively zoning additional residential 'greenfield' land. The maximum potential yield for infill subdivision of the Living zoned land in Leeston (including Deferred zoned land), could amount to as many as 953 additional sections. There are also a number of undeveloped residential sections within existing established neighbourhoods in Leeston.

Business land capacity

There is currently 17 hectares of Business 1 zoned land in Leeston, which is predominantly contained within the town centre that is recognised as an excellent example of a traditional main street environment. The town centre is supplemented by two smaller business zones that are each no greater than one hectare in size⁷. The Business 1 zone is comprised of approximately 70 sections in total.

There is relatively strong retail and commercial growth projected for Leeston through to 2031, with a land shortfall of 8,000m² having been identified⁸. However, it is anticipated that this growth can be accommodated within the existing Business 1 zone land holdings and premises and that no additional land is required over the next 15 years.

Industrial land capacity

There is 19.3ha of Business 2 zoned land in the Ellesmere area, 10.6 ha of which is within Leeston⁹. The industrial area is a single long strip of land located on the south side of Station Street.

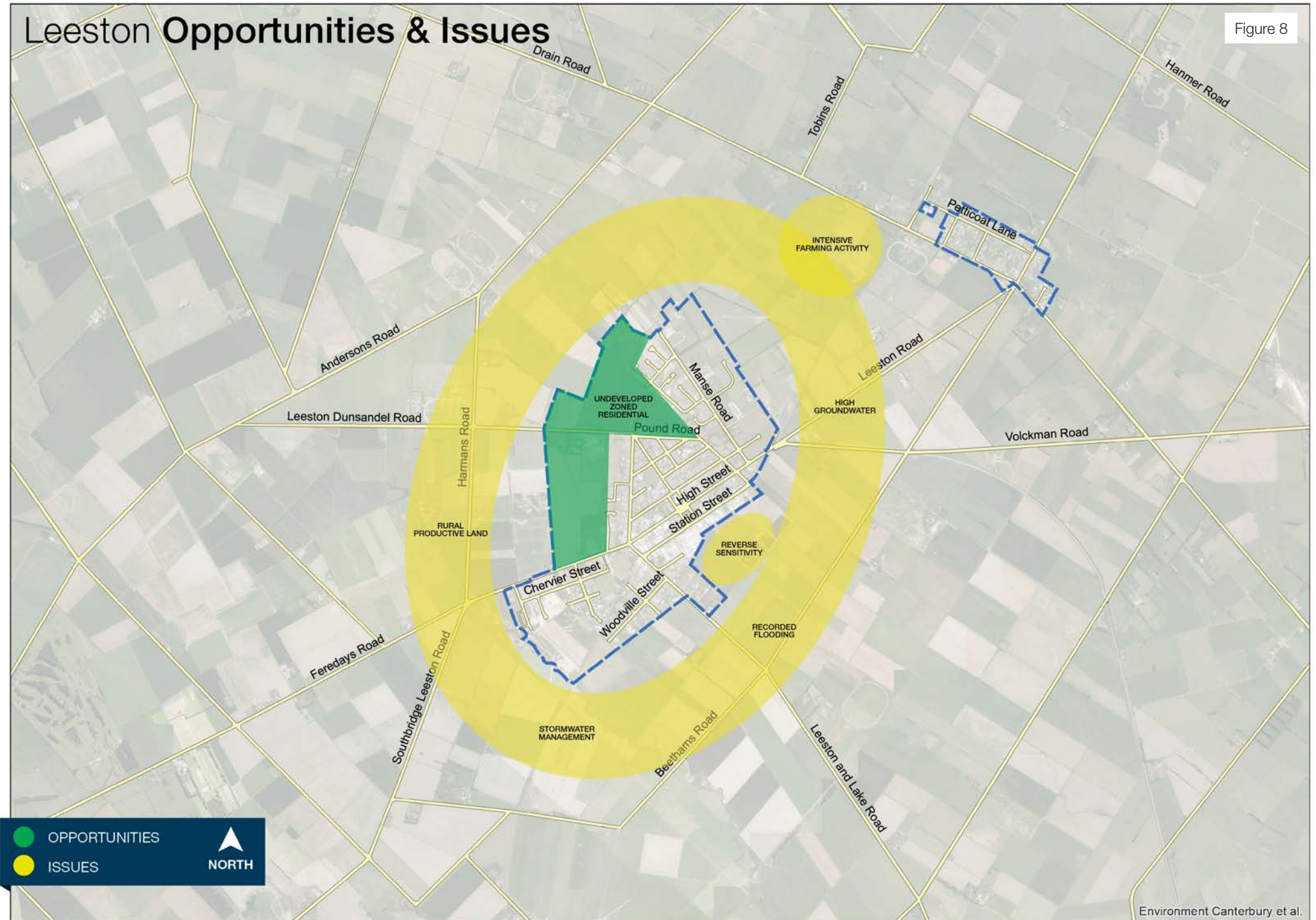
There are approximately 24 sections within Leeston that have an average allotment size of 4,060m². There are a number of vacant and underutilised lots within the industrial area. Projected growth is anticipated in the industrial sector within Leeston. This could require up to 2.8ha of additional Business 2 zoned land, although much of this growth could be accommodated within the existing industrial area¹⁰. There is scope to investigate the need for additional Business 2 zoned locations, either through the District Plan review, Leeston Town Centre Study or private plan change initiatives.

⁵The Leeston Living 1 and 2 (Def) zones have a minimum average allotment size of 5,000m², with development being deferred pending appropriate flood management solutions being established. ⁷Market Economics: Ellesmere Area Plan Assessment, August 2015, P18 ⁸Market Economics: Ellesmere Area Plan Assessment, August 2015, P18

⁹Market Economics: Ellesmere Area Plan Assessment, August 2015, P19

Leeston Opportunities & Issues

Figure 8



Opportunities and Issues

Development opportunities and issues that have informed the recommendations for the future development of Leeston are summarised in [Figure 8](#) and below.

OPPORTUNITIES

Population, growth capacity and urban form

- There is sufficient zoned residential land available to accommodate the projected population growth within the Malvern 2031 planning horizon.
- There are a range of standard and low-density residential sections available, although opportunities to facilitate more intensive housing typologies to better meet the wider needs of the community should be progressed. This includes facilitating elderly persons and more affordable housing options.
- In principle, Nga Rūnunga supports the growth of Leeston as a township that provides economic and social opportunities for residents to live, work and play.

Business development

- There are opportunities for further business and industrial growth given Leeston's status under Selwyn 2031, where there is already a broad range of services available that serve the wider needs of the Ellesmere area.
- There is a good range of existing retail and commercial activities that are centrally-located within a town centre that has high amenity values associated with its traditional main street environment.
- There is projected growth in the industrial sector of Leeston, with there being scope to investigate the appropriateness of additional Business 2 zoned locations either through the District Plan Review, Leeston Town Centre study or private plan change initiatives.

Natural environment and cultural heritage

- There are opportunities to filter rainfall run-off and enhance biodiversity through planting native species along the Leeston drainage network.
- There is also an opportunity to investigate the possibility of creating a mahinga kai park across the area of the old Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere footprint and to recreate local wetland areas for stormwater detention.

Transport

- The levels of service for transport infrastructure should reflect the status, character and function of the settlement.
- Environment Canterbury supports community vehicle trusts in Ellesmere.
- There is an opportunity to investigate a pedestrian connection adjacent to the hospital to integrate with development on Manse Road.
- There is an opportunity to investigate options to integrate public transport with Rolleston in the event a Park N' Ride is established.

5 Waters

- Population growth may provide the stimulus to enable upgrades to the Leeston wastewater network and treatment plant.
- Growth to the north-east is most suitable for the Leeston Wastewater Treatment Plant, with south-west locations requiring a new pump station. Note that substantial network and plant upgrades have been identified as being required.
- Stormwater is better able to be managed to the north-east and south-west.
- There is flexibility in respect to the location of future water wells and there is a secure groundwater supply that does not require treatment.
- Mana whenua support the development of Low Impact Urban Design and Development.

Local facilities and community development

- There is a reasonable range of social infrastructure for a town of Leeston's size, including a high school, medical centre, hospital, library and range of reserves and open space.
- Budgets have been allocated in the 2015-25 Long-Term Plan for the following projects:
 - (1) public toilet replacement
 - (2) domain land acquisition and development
 - (3) dog park investigations
 - (4) Leeston Swimming Pool filtration upgrade, and
 - (5) Exeloo replacement.
- Spark has identified upgrades to the 4G ultrafast broadband network in Leeston to support social, economic and community wellbeing.

ISSUES

Population, growth capacity and urban form

- There is sufficient developable land to accommodate the projected demand through to 2031.
- At this point in time there appear to be too many constraints and insufficient demand to actively zone additional greenfield land under the District Plan Review. The strong uptake of available land, resolution of infrastructure servicing constraints and reduction in hazard risks may warrant additional land being considered for residential zoning in the medium to long term timeframes.
- Leeston is subject to high groundwater, with the township and its periphery being located within a larger recorded flood site.
- Any opportunities to accommodate significant growth and/or intensification via infill or higher-density development may also be constrained by the cost of infrastructure upgrades, natural hazards and the availability of natural resources.
- Retrofitting stormwater infrastructure is complex and also limits opportunities to intensify or infill established neighbourhoods.
- Growth to the east should be precluded to avoid any adverse reverse sensitivity effects on the Leeston Wastewater Treatment Plant and Leeston Gun Club.
- Development of the Living 2 Deferred Zone to the west of Spring Place is difficult to service with gravity sewer and is susceptible to flooding and inundation.
- An existing intensive farming activity established on the southern side of Drain Road in Doyleston, and the gradual growing together of these two townships, are identified as long-term constraints to growth extending to the north-east of Leeston.
- Growth should be precluded to the north-west of the township to avoid any further stormwater discharges entering Leeston Creek. There are also areas of potentially contaminated land in this direction.

Natural environment and cultural heritage

- Mana Whenua have identified concerns with untreated stormwater and land drainage water discharging into local drains and eventually Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere, from additional housing or increases in water table from Central Plains Water. There is a need to manage population growth to ensure additional discharges do not add to the sediment or contaminant load entering waterways and the lake.
- The land to the south-west is comprised of Class II versatile soils and the balance of land surrounding Leeston is comprised of Class III versatile soils, both of which are valued for their productive capacity.

Transport

- Concerns with the provision of car parking in the town centre have been raised by the local community, including the availability of spaces during peak times. Multiple land ownership within the town centre makes it difficult to coordinate a strategic response, including the provision of a centralised parking solution.
- Environment Canterbury does not currently have any plans or budgets to introduce regular public bus services to Ellesmere or Leeston in the foreseeable future. If community demand for public transport grows through the period covered by this Area Plan, Environment Canterbury would have to work with the relevant communities to determine whether they would be willing to support a new service through their rates, as 25% of the cost of public transport services comes from local rates. Another 25% comes from central government (through NZTA) so their approval would be needed to introduce a new service.

5 Waters

- Any new groundwater takes to enable further growth will require resource consent with Environment Canterbury.
- There is minimal capacity within the Leeston Wastewater Treatment Plant, with growth necessitating network and plant upgrades in the future.
- The recorded flood sites within and around Leeston, coupled with the proximity of local drains and high groundwater, precludes significant growth from the infrastructure servicing and natural hazard perspectives.
- Any additional growth will require an integrated approach to stormwater management, including the development of stormwater management plans to coherently manage current and future growth. This is a significant issue given the township's proximity to local drains and tributaries of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.
- Mana whenua identify that there is an increased risk of flood events associated with climatic cycles and increased groundwater levels that may occur as a consequence of the Central Plains Water Scheme. These factors may inhibit the amount of growth that is sustainable, influence where it is best located and dictate what mitigation measures may be required.
- Mana whenua identify water quantity issues and shifting public and community perceptions about utilising best practice water use (the Plains area of the District is identified as a Red Zone for both water quality and quantity).
- Mana whenua identify issues with nutrient loads associated with wastewater systems and the development and growth of townships

Local facilities and community development

- Leeston Primary School is located on a small site and has a projected roll increase of 140 students, with the Ministry of Education signaling the potential for a master planning exercise to be initiated.



Leeston Possible Future Development Options

Figure 9



Possible future development options

Residential

No new areas for residential or business development have been identified as being necessary to be proactively zoned by Council in response to the projected growth within the Ellesmere 2031 planning horizon. This is on the basis that there is currently sufficient residential land available to accommodate projected population growth, or there are constraints that need to be addressed through the RMA process.

Figure 9 shows areas of potential future ‘greenfield’ growth paths that could accommodate residential development either beyond 2031 or more immediately through a privately initiated plan change process, Figure 9 also illustrates areas where more intensive development may be able to occur and explains the advantages and disadvantages of each respective area. The map indicates the current township boundary and references some of the Opportunities and Issues listed below that will influence the substantive assessment of the appropriateness of future growth options.

Leeston Area 1 – LEE A1

A potential area for future intensification is the Living 2 (Deferred) zone to the west of Spring Place, south of Leeston-Dunsandel Road and north of Feredays Road.

Advantages

- The area is located in relatively close proximity to the Leeston town centre and existing services and could be integrated with the adjacent Living 1 (Deferred) area to the east.
- Intensification in this area optimises land development in an area that avoids future low-density residential development precluding a future growth path as far west as Harmans Road.
- The area is a generally suitable location from an infrastructure servicing perspective, provided the identified Leeston wastewater, stormwater and community drinking water capacity and upgrade issues are able to be resolved.

Disadvantages

- The area is subject to high groundwater, localised flooding and poor land drainage that will need to be managed sustainably.
- Any opportunities to accommodate development or intensification are likely to be constrained by existing infrastructure capacity issues, including difficulties in servicing the area with a gravity sewer system.
- The land is comprised of Class II and III versatile soils which are valued for their productive capacity.

Leeston Area 2 – LEE A2

There are two less preferred possible growth options to provide for low density residential development. The first is located to the north of the A&P Showgrounds and east of Friars Lane. The second is located to the north west of the Monticello subdivision at the end of Manse Road

down to Pound Road as an extension to the low-density Living 2 Def and Living XA zones. Both of these areas, are currently zoned Rural (Outer Plains).

Advantages

- The areas are suitable locations from an infrastructure servicing perspective, provided the identified Leeston wastewater, stormwater and community drinking water capacity and upgrade issues are able to be resolved.

Disadvantages

- The area is subject to high groundwater, localised flooding and poor land drainage that will need to be managed sustainably.
- Any opportunities to accommodate development are likely to be constrained by existing infrastructure capacity issues, including difficulties in servicing the area with a gravity sewer system.
- The north eastern portion of these locations is partially affected by an intensive farming activity buffer.
- Development in this direction at low densities will fail to achieve a compact, concentric urban form and may give rise to the coalescence of Leeston with Doyleston through the erosion of the rural outlook and amenity that assists in distinguishing the two settlements from one another.
- The land is comprised of Class III versatile soils, which are valued for their productive capacity.
- There are two sites in this area that are identified as being potentially contaminated.

Leeston Area 3 – LEE A3

A potential future area for Business 2 purposes could extend the existing Business 2 zone along Station Street and Leeston Road to include the farm machinery repair workshop already operating in the area.

Advantages

- This area is relatively contiguous to the existing Business 2 zone, provides for a compact urban form and utilises land that is in part already used for Business 2 purposes.
- The area is in relatively close proximity to the existing town centre and has good access to the wider transport network.

Disadvantages

- The land is comprised of Class III versatile soils, which are valued for their productive capacity.
- The area is subject to high groundwater, localised flooding and poor land drainage that will need to be managed sustainably.
- Any opportunities to accommodate development are likely to be constrained by existing infrastructure capacity issues.
- The land is comprised of Class III versatile soils, which are valued for their productive capacity.

Conclusion

No new areas for residential purposes are required to accommodate projected growth within Leeston over the Ellesmere 2031 planning horizon as there is currently sufficient residential, business and industrial land available to accommodate projected population growth and demand for housing.

There are also a number of issues that need to be addressed to facilitate additional growth, including:

- infrastructure constraints relating to integrated stormwater management, access to potable water and the limited capacity of the Leeston wastewater treatment plant, should significant growth occur
- natural hazard risks, including specifically flooding and land inundation that may be exacerbated by increased storm events arising as a consequence of climatic cycles and the potential for increased groundwater levels, and
- the need to manage growth to avoid any adverse impacts this may have on cultural sites and the mana whenua values attributed to the area or the water quality of drains and tributaries to Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.

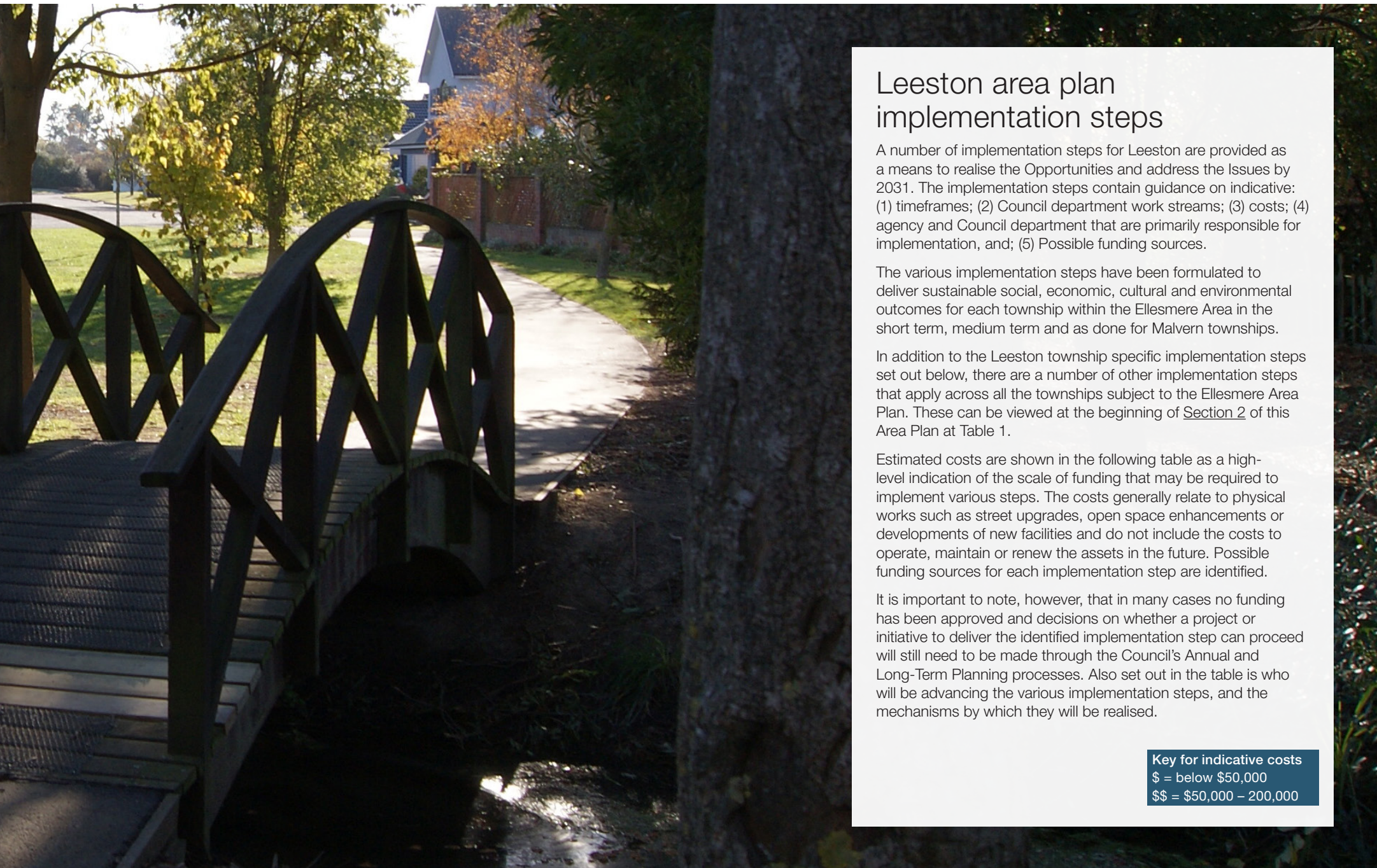
The retention of the current township boundary through to 2031 is consistent with the principles contained in Chapter 5 of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, the District Growth Strategy Directions and the Area Plan Principles, which reinforce the need to manage growth in an integrated and consolidated manner, while avoiding the social, economic and environmental impacts associated with dispersed settlement patterns.

This Area Plan does not preclude any additional greenfield land from being considered for zoning through privately initiated plan change requests under the RMA, but signals that there is sufficient capacity within the township to accommodate growth through to 2031 without the need for the Council to proactively zone additional land through the District Plan Review (DPR).

The following implementation steps identify the various processes for considering the appropriateness of where further development within the current township boundary through to 2031 may best be integrated. The implementation steps are the methods for delivering the opportunities and addressing the issues in the above assessment, which will collectively deliver better social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes for Leeston, its community and its important status as the service township of the Ellesmere Area.







Leeston area plan implementation steps

A number of implementation steps for Leeston are provided as a means to realise the Opportunities and address the Issues by 2031. The implementation steps contain guidance on indicative: (1) timeframes; (2) Council department work streams; (3) costs; (4) agency and Council department that are primarily responsible for implementation, and; (5) Possible funding sources.

The various implementation steps have been formulated to deliver sustainable social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes for each township within the Ellesmere Area in the short term, medium term and as done for Malvern townships.

In addition to the Leeston township specific implementation steps set out below, there are a number of other implementation steps that apply across all the townships subject to the Ellesmere Area Plan. These can be viewed at the beginning of [Section 2](#) of this Area Plan at Table 1.

Estimated costs are shown in the following table as a high-level indication of the scale of funding that may be required to implement various steps. The costs generally relate to physical works such as street upgrades, open space enhancements or developments of new facilities and do not include the costs to operate, maintain or renew the assets in the future. Possible funding sources for each implementation step are identified.

It is important to note, however, that in many cases no funding has been approved and decisions on whether a project or initiative to deliver the identified implementation step can proceed will still need to be made through the Council's Annual and Long-Term Planning processes. Also set out in the table is who will be advancing the various implementation steps, and the mechanisms by which they will be realised.

Key for indicative costs
\$ = below \$50,000
\$\$ = \$50,000 – 200,000

Table 2: Implementation steps - Leeston

Implementation step	Indicative timeframe	Indicative cost	Agency responsible	Funding source
Population, growth and urban form				
See Area Plan wide Implementation Steps in Table 1, in addition to the following:				
Initiate a scoping project to determine what capital works and planning investigations are required to uplift the Living X and Living 2A deferrals, including taking into account the Area Plan issues and opportunities and preparation of outline development plans if development is confirmed to be appropriate	Short	\$\$	Selwyn District Council Planning and Assets departments - Strategy and Planning work programme	Environmental Services Long-Term Plan
Initiate a Leeston Town Centre study. The Town Centre study could address, but not be limited to, the following issues: (1) identifying amenity upgrades (2) transport related issues, including but not limited to an assessment to determine issues and potential opportunities to resolve town centre parking issues and the viability of providing truck stops in the town centre along SH73 (3) identifying the location and quantum of additional Business 1 and Business 2 land required to provide for Leeston's future retail, commercial and industrial requirements out to 2031, and (4) investigate opportunities to improve accessibility to existing and proposed community facilities and how they could be linked.	Short	\$\$	Selwyn District Council Planning department – Strategy and Planning Works Programme	Environmental Services Long-Term Plan
Natural environment and cultural heritage				
See Area Plan wide Implementation Steps in Table 1, in addition to the following:				
Investigate the viability of establishing riparian margins along the Leeston drainage network	Medium	\$	Selwyn District Council Water Services department in consultation with mana whenua	Assets Long-Term Plan
Transportation				
See Area Plan wide Implementation Steps in Table 1, in addition to the following:				
Investigate future capital works projects through the Footpath Extension Forward Works Programme and Walking and Cycling Strategy initiatives, including a walking/cycling connection to Doyleston	Medium	\$	Selwyn District Council Transportation department	Property and Commercial Long-Term Plan

5 Waters				
See Area Plan wide Implementation Steps in Table 1, in addition to the following:				
Continued long-term plan development to ascertain what capital works are required to address the identified issues to support Leeston's township status under Selwyn 2031.	Short	\$	Selwyn District Council Water Services department	Assets Long-Term Plan
Local facilities and community development				
See Area Plan wide Implementation Steps in Table 1, in addition to the following:				
Progress community facility upgrades, as set out in the 2015-2025 LTP	Short	\$	Selwyn District Council Property and Commercial department - Annual Plan 2015/16	Property and Commercial Long-Term Plan
Carry out initial investigation and feasibility study for a dedicated community centre for Leeston, including redevelopment of the Leeston Rugby Club building in 2015/16	Short	\$	Selwyn District Council Property and Commercial department - Annual Plan 2015/16	Property and Commercial Long-Term Plan
Carry out master planning exercises to determine initiatives to accommodate the projected future growth in the school roll for Leeston Primary and Leeston High School	-	-	Ministry of Education and School Boards of Trustee	-
Include significant heritage and cultural sites in Leeston when preparing township brochures and/or township information panels	Ongoing		Selwyn District Council Community Services department in consultation with Nga Rūnunga	Community Services Long-Term Plan