

Notice of Submission on Proposed Plan Change 67

Resource Management Act 1991 – Form 5

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This is a submission on proposed Plan Change 67 to the Selwyn District Plan – to rezone approximately 33.4 hectares of Rural Zone, to Living WM South Zone, West Melton.

- [1] **Environment Canterbury opposes Plan Change 67 for the reasons outlined in this submission.** The proposed plan change is inconsistent with policy direction in the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and the strategic sub-regional land use and infrastructure planning framework for Greater Christchurch.

The reasons for our submission are:

Inconsistency with the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

Settlement Pattern

- [2] West Melton is located within Greater Christchurch, which means that the Objectives and Policies contained within Chapter 6 of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS) for the recovery and rebuilding of Greater Christchurch are applicable. Chapter 6 requires that

development is located and designed in a way that achieves consolidated and coordinated urban growth that is integrated with the provision of infrastructure.

- [3] Chapter 6 of the CRPS directs the location of growth and development within Greater Christchurch. It encourages the sustainable and self-sufficient growth of Lincoln, Rolleston and Prebbleton, but in relation to West Melton it encourages consolidation of the existing settlement (Objective 6.2.2 (5)).
- [4] The plan change site is not identified as a Greenfield Priority Area (GPA) for residential development and is located outside the projected infrastructure boundary shown on Map A. The plan change request is therefore also considered to be inconsistent with Objective 6.2.1 (3) which “avoids urban development outside of existing urban areas or greenfield priority areas for development”, and Policy 6.3.1 (4) to “ensure new urban activities only occur within existing urban areas or identified greenfield priority areas as shown on Map A”, unless otherwise expressly provided for in the CRPS.
- [5] In January 2021 Environment Canterbury notified, under a Streamlined Planning Process, Proposed Change 1 to Chapter 6 of the CRPS to amend Map A to identify Future Development Areas in Rolleston, Rangiora and Kaiapoi. The Proposed Change to the CRPS supports the outcomes of the *Our Space 2018-2048 Greater Christchurch Settlement Pattern Update*. Neither of these processes identified the land subject to Plan Change 67, or any additional greenfield land in West Melton, as necessary to meet future growth demands in Greater Christchurch over the 30 year period to 2048 (see also paragraphs [24] and [25] below). The application site was also not included within the ‘Urban Growth Overlay’ notified as part of the proposed Selwyn District Plan in October 2020. Policy UG-P3 in the Urban Form and Development Chapter of the proposed District Plan explicitly states: “Avoid the zoning of land to establish any new urban areas or extensions to any township boundary in the Greater Christchurch area of the District outside the Urban Growth Overlay.”
- [6] The suitability of the application site for urban development would be more appropriately considered through a comprehensive review of the settlement pattern and long-term strategic growth planning exercise for Greater Christchurch (see also paragraphs [27] and [28] below).

Infrastructure

- [7] The plan change application is inconsistent with Policy 6.3.5(2) which seeks to ensure that the nature, timing and sequencing of new development is co-ordinated with the development, funding, implementation and operation of transport and other infrastructure. The plan change application notes that water supply and waste services for West Melton are currently at capacity and that options for reticulated servicing for the proposed development will be investigated further. CRPS Policy 6.3.5 seeks to ensure that new development does not occur until provision for appropriate infrastructure is in place, meaning that any proposed or potential future upgrades to the Selwyn District Council’s reticulated services network should not be relied upon, particularly in regard to any servicing requirements that will occur out of sequence.

- [8] One of the solutions proposed in the plan change application, to extend an existing rising main by 5.7km, highlights the need to strategically plan for intensive development. Whilst the infrastructure report appended to the plan change application suggests that the rising main extension would provide for an additional 447 connections across West Melton, this would still not be enough to accommodate all of the potential development that is before the Selwyn District Council for consideration.
- [9] Two further plan change requests in the West Melton area are currently being assessed by Selwyn District Council for notification. Figure 1 shows the locations of PC74 and PC77, which respectively anticipate additional yields of 130hh and 525hh. Totalling the number of additional lots already enabled through the recently adopted PC59 (72 lots) and those potentially enabled through this Plan Change PC67 (131 lots), PC74 (130 lots) and PC77 (525 lots) it does not appear that the proposed upgrades would be sufficient for all the growth being applied for in the West Melton township (858 lots).

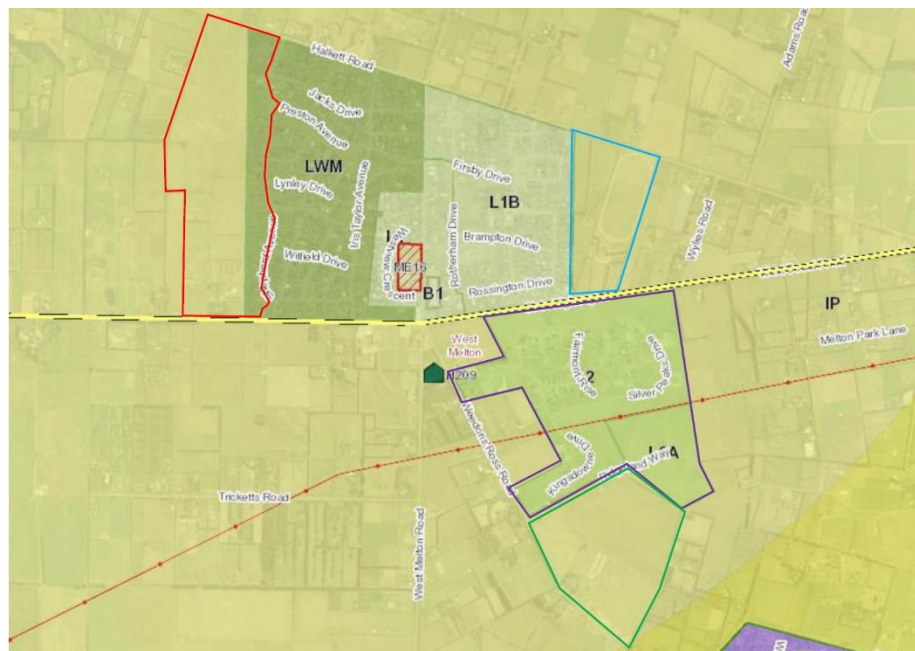


Figure 1: Plan Change requests in West Melton (Green – PC67; Blue – PC74; Red – PC77) (recently adopted PC59 shown in purple)

- [10] This suggests that a strategic planning exercise is required to consider the most appropriate scale and direction of any growth for the township, linked to an assessment of the available options to overcome the identified infrastructure constraints. Ad-hoc or out of sequence development will lead to a poor urban form and may result in a first in first served allocation of reticulated services. The settlement pattern of West Melton would suffer if the ad-hoc nature of development uses up the service capacity and prevents the development of potentially more suitable locations.

Transport and Public Transport

- [11] Objective 6.2.4 in the CRPS prioritises the planning of transport infrastructure so that it maximises integration with land use patterns and facilitates the movement of people and

goods and provision of services in Greater Christchurch, while (1) managing network congestion; (2) reducing dependency on private motor vehicles; (3) reducing emission of contaminants to air and energy use; (4) promoting the use of active and public transport modes; (5) optimising use of existing capacity within the network; and (6) enhancing transport safety.

- [12] CRPS Policies 6.3.4 and 6.3.5 seek to ensure an efficient and effective transport network across Greater Christchurch, with Policy 6.3.4 (2) stating:

“providing patterns of development that optimise use of existing network capacity and ensuring that, where possible, new building projects support increased uptake of active and public transport, and provide opportunities for modal choice”.

- [13] The plan change site is not well serviced by public transport and the Integrated Transport Assessment appended to the plan change indicates that the accommodation of additional traffic volumes is contingent on the planned signalisation of the intersection of Weedons Ross Road with SH73. As noted above in relation to the provision of infrastructure, any proposed or potential upgrades to the transport network should not be taken for granted or relied upon to demonstrate capacity.
- [14] This further highlights the need to strategically assess any development in West Melton in the context of the township, if not the district or Greater Christchurch, as a whole. The Integrated Transport Assessment has been completed in isolation of the potential for PC74 and PC77 to further impact the efficiency and effectiveness of both the local and strategic transport network. Development of the plan change site should not precede the provision of appropriate infrastructure (CRPS Policy 6.3.5(2)(d)) and it should not impede the maintenance of an efficient and effective transport corridor (CRPS Policy 6.3.5(3)).
- [15] West Melton is not directly served by regular public transport. There is currently only one Metro service that operates with a route through West Melton. This is a single express commuter bus service from Darfield to Christchurch City, stopping in West Melton, that operates on weekdays during the morning and evening peak. The limited nature of this service combined with the considerable distance of the plan change site from the bus stops on the route will not provide a realistic, attractive and viable transport choice for the majority of potential residents at the plan change site. There are currently no planned upgrades or changes to the Metro route passing through West Melton. In addition, the proposed plan change does not provide for any integrated transport options. Development in this location is therefore likely to be dependent on private motor vehicle use.
- [16] Policy 6.3.2 (3) of the CRPS requires “emphasis at a local level placed on walking, cycling and public transport as more sustainable forms of transport”. Policy 6.3.3 (8) requires outline development plans to “demonstrate how effective provision is made for a range of transport options including public transport”.
- [17] The proposed plan change does not meet the above policies or the wider transport network and land use integration outcomes sought by Objective 6.2.4 and Policies 6.3.4 and 6.3.5.

Highly Productive Land and Versatile Soils

[18] CRPS Policy 5.3.12 seeks to maintain versatile soils that contribute to Canterbury's overall rural productive economy. While this policy relates to development within the wider region (i.e. outside of Greater Christchurch) Environment Canterbury wishes to draw attention to the emerging national direction on this matter and the strengthening of measures to protect highly productive land from development. The purpose of the proposed National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL) is to protect highly productive land for primary production.

[19] We also note the Selwyn District Plan Township Volume contains Policy B1.1.8:

“Avoid rezoning land which contains versatile soils for new residential or business development if:

- the land is appropriate for other activities; and
- there are other areas adjoining the township which are appropriate for new residential or business development which do not contain versatile soils”.

[20] The plan change site is identified on Canterbury Maps as comprising Land Use Capability Classes 2 and 3 using the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory data set from Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research.

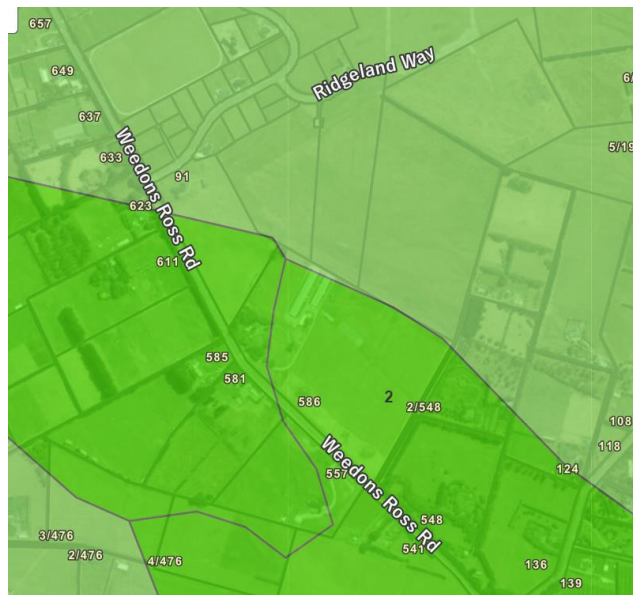


Figure 2: Site location comprising Land Use Capability Classes 2 and 3

[21] This means that the area would likely be identified as highly productive land under the NPS-HPL (as yet not gazetted). The High Court has held that regard may be had to non-binding

national policy documents, as relevant background material, even if those documents do not have any status under the RMA.¹

Strategic Planning Context

- [22] *Our Space 2018-2048: Greater Christchurch Settlement Pattern Update Whakahāngai O Te Hōrapa Nohoanga* (Our Space 2018-2048) was endorsed by the Greater Christchurch Partnership (GCP) in June 2019 and subsequently adopted by each partner council, including Environment Canterbury and Selwyn District Council. It is the future development strategy for Greater Christchurch developed under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (NPS-UDC).
- [23] Our Space 2018-2048 updates the settlement pattern originally set out in the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS) from 2007 and which underpins the planning framework outlined in Chapter 6 to the CRPS, inserted through a statutory direction as part of the Land Use Recovery Plan. Our Space 2018-2048 identifies sufficient development capacity to meet anticipated housing needs over a thirty year planning horizon out to 2048.
- [24] A significant amount of housing development capacity is already enabled by the CRPS. Our Space 2018-2048 indicates there is existing capacity for nearly 74,000 dwellings in Greater Christchurch, against a housing target of 86,600 (including the additional margins that were required by the NPS-UDC), between 2018 to 2048. Our Space sets out a proposed approach to meet the projected shortfall, which includes intensification in existing urban areas and the identification of new greenfield areas for urban housing (termed Future Development Areas (FDAs)) in Rolleston, Rangiora and Kaiapoi. These locations have been identified in long-term growth strategies since 2007 and signalled by the Projected Infrastructure Boundary on Map A in Chapter 6 of the CRPS.
- [25] A Proposed Change to Chapter 6 of the CRPS, to identify the FDAs on Map A and insert associated policy provisions, was notified in January 2021 under a Streamlined Planning Process. Density scenarios indicate that, at a minimum density of at least 12 households per hectare, the FDAs could collectively provide for over 10,000 homes.²
- [26] Further development capacity in West Melton is not required to meet medium and long term housing targets, identified in Our Space 2018–2048 and expressed in the CRPS. West Melton was not identified in the strategic planning documents referred to above as a location for further urban growth beyond that already zoned for urban activities. Sub-regional integrated land use and infrastructure planning over the last fifteen years has been predicated on this basis.
- [27] Any reassessment regarding the desirability of growth at West Melton is best considered as part of a future spatial planning exercise rather than ad-hoc and individual assessments prompted by private plan change requests. This would ensure that the benefits and implications of urban growth at West Melton are appropriately weighed against alternative spatial growth scenarios such that sufficient development capacity is enabled at a Greater

¹ See *West Coast Regional Council v The Friends of Shearer Swamp* [2012] NZRMA 45.

² (Greater Christchurch Partnership, *Our Space 2018-2048: Greater Christchurch Settlement Pattern Update*, Table 5, page 28).

Christchurch level in a manner that best delivers the outcomes sought by the shared vision established through the Greater Christchurch Partnership.

- [28] It is noted that scoping of a spatial planning exercise is currently being considered by the Greater Christchurch Partnership, in conjunction with delivery of the Greater Christchurch 2050 Strategic Framework and the establishment of an Urban Growth Partnership with the Crown. This dovetails with parallel future mass rapid transit and public transport business cases to determine routes and investment requirements to significantly improve the provision of public transport services across Greater Christchurch.

National Policy Statement on Urban Development

- [29] Environment Canterbury acknowledges that Policy 8 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) requires local authorities to be responsive to unanticipated or out-of-sequence plan change proposals and give particular regard to proposals that would add significantly to development capacity and contribute to well-functioning urban environments. Clause 3.8 provides applies to a plan change that provides significant development capacity that is not otherwise enabled in a plan or is not in sequence with planned land release. In those circumstances, a local authority must have particular regard to the development capacity provided by the plan change if that development capacity:

- a. would contribute to a well-functioning urban environment; and
- b. is well-connected along transport corridors; and
- c. meets the criteria set under subclause (3).

- [30] Environment Canterbury is currently working with relevant territorial authorities to formulate criteria, in response to clause 3.8(3) of the NPS-UD, to determine how to consider whether plan changes would add significantly to development capacity in a Greater Christchurch and Canterbury context. Ultimately, the criteria will clarify how NPS-UD Policy 8 will be interpreted at a regional level. In the meantime, we recognise that decision makers assessing plan changes will need to consider the implications of this national direction alongside the policies contained in Chapter 6 of the CRPS.

Significant development capacity

- [31] Importantly, Policy 8 relates to decisions affecting 'urban environments' and the NPS-UD defines these as areas predominantly urban in character and which are, or are intended to be, part of a housing and labour market of at least 10,000 people.
- [32] The applicant cites Our Space 2018-2048, which identifies the Greater Christchurch area as the relevant urban environment for the purposes of the future development strategy, and therefore concludes that West Melton (a township comprising less than 1,000 households) is still encompassed within the intent of Policy 8.
- [33] It follows that significance would also then need to be considered in the context of Greater Christchurch as the relevant urban environment. The anticipated yield of 131 allotments

identified in the plan change appears to be insignificant when set against the medium term housing target of 32,300 households for Greater Christchurch as a whole.

- [34] Guidance released by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) on this matter in September 2020³ also advises that, as well as the scale of a development proposal, the extent to which it fulfils an identified demand is a factor that should influence an assessment as to its significance (including citing gaps in the supply of certain types of housing such as affordable houses, provision for higher densities and a range of housing typologies).
- [35] Future housing needs have been identified in the most recent capacity assessment prepared for the Greater Christchurch area. The capacity assessment highlights the continued trend towards smaller household size (i.e. fewer people per household) and the future affordability constraints many households will face in accessing housing.
- [36] The proposed lot sizes identified in the plan change⁴ do not align well with these identified housing needs and gaps in housing supply and do not support a determination that the plan change adds significantly to development capacity.
- [37] To create significant development capacity a proposal should be able to demonstrate how infrastructure is committed and how it will be provided because development capacity includes 'the provision of adequate development infrastructure to support the development of land for housing or business use' (ref. definition of development capacity in clause 1.4 of the NPS-UD). This point is reiterated in the responsive planning 'factsheet', and in the guidance published by MfE on understanding and implementing the responsive planning policies in the NPS which states that 'private plan change proposals should therefore show how the infrastructure needed to service the development would be provided'.

Contribution to a well-functioning urban environment

- [38] The NPS-UD Policy 1 contains a non-exhaustive list of attributes of well-functioning urban environments which include:
- enabling a variety of homes that meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households, and allow Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms (a)
 - have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport (c)
 - support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (e).
- [39] This is reinforced by the guidance on the NPS-UD responsive planning policies which states that proposed developments need to be well connected along transport corridors and:

³ <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/towns-and-cities/understanding-and-implementing-responsive-planning-policies>

⁴ The majority having a minimum lot area of 1,100m² and a maximum lot area of 3,000m² with the balance in a low density area located on the eastern periphery of the Zone, with a minimum lot area of 3,000m² and a maximum area of 5,000m²

“Ideally, developments under this policy will be transit-orientated with mixed land uses and densities. This would enable genuine transport choices and less reliance on private vehicles”.

- [40] Environment Canterbury notes that the factsheet published by MfE on well-functioning urban environments provides guidance on the application of Policy 1, including:
- a. that the term ‘accessibility’ in Policy 1 refers to the ease and cost of accessing opportunities (e.g. amenity, employment) across an urban area.
 - b. that the outcomes referenced in the well-functioning urban environments policy are interrelated and need to be considered together – for example, housing and transport choices that relate to Policies 1(a) and 1(c) have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions, policy 1(e).
 - c. that the well-functioning urban environments policy is central to the NPS-UD and is to be read alongside other key policies, such as the intensification and responsive planning policies.

Well-connected along transport corridors

- [41] To trigger the responsiveness policies in the NPS-UD, a proposed development needs to be well connected along transport corridors (ref. clause 3.8 (b)). The MfE guidance on understanding and implementing the responsive planning policies states that ideally the transport corridors should be connected via a range of transport modes or there should be plans for this in the future. At a minimum, the corridors should be designed to allow for a range of modes in the future. The guidance further states that, if possible, people should not need to rely solely on private vehicles to travel within a proposed development, to and/or from other urban areas, or to access essential services like employment, and health or community services. The well-functioning urban environment and well connected along transport corridors criteria together signal the importance of considering the location of a proposed development in relation to other areas and amenities, relative accessibility and transport infrastructure and / or options, when assessing unplanned development proposals such as this proposed plan change.

Alignment with other objectives and policies in the NPS-UD

- [42] The proposed plan change does not give effect to a number of other key objectives and policies in the NPS-UD, including but not limited to:
- Objective 6(a)-(b) of the NPS-UD is that local authority decisions on urban development that affect urban environments are integrated with infrastructure planning and funding decisions, and strategic over the medium and long term.
 - Objective 8(a) is that NZ’s urban environments support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. This is supported by Policy 1(e), which identifies that well-functioning urban environments are those that (among other outcomes), support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

- Policy 6 sets out matters decisions makers must have particular regard to when making planning decisions that affect urban environments. These matters include (a) the planned urban built form anticipated by RMA planning documents that have given effect to the NPS, and (c) the benefits of urban development that are consistent with well-functioning urban environments (as described in Policy 1).

Conclusion

[43] In summary, for the reasons set out above, the proposed plan change is inconsistent with policy direction in the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and the strategic sub-regional land use and infrastructure planning framework for Greater Christchurch.

[44] Environment Canterbury also does not consider it has been demonstrated that the proposed plan change will add significantly to development capacity or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment, nor has it been demonstrated that the proposal is, or will be, well connected.

The decision we would like the Council to make is:

Decline the plan change in its entirety.

Without prejudice to the relief sought that the plan change be declined in its entirety, if the plan change is not declined Environment Canterbury seeks changes to the plan change to address issues raised in this submission.

We wish to speak in support of our submission at the hearing on this plan change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AP', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Parrish

Planning Section Manager

(Authorised under delegation from the Canterbury Regional Council)

Date 12/04/2021

From: [Tammy Phillips](#)
To: [Submissions](#)
Subject: RE: Submission on Plan Change 67 West Melton PC67-0011
Date: Tuesday, 13 April 2021 12:54:35 p.m.

Hi Tina,

Thanks for your email. I have responded below:

[I could gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission:](#)

~~Yes~~/No

Warm regards,

Tammy

From: Submissions <submissions@selwyn.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 13 April 2021 12:46 PM
To: Tammy Phillips <Tammy.Phillips@ecan.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Submission on Plan Change 67 West Melton PC67-0011

Hi Tammy,

Environment Canterbury's submission on Plan Change 67 (ref PC67-0011) has been assessed for completeness under the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991. Your submission was missing the following information:

Trade competition declaration

[I could gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission:](#)

Yes/~~No~~

For the Selwyn District Council to accept this submission please complete the questions above by reply of this email.

Nga mihi,

Tina Van Der Velde
DISTRICT PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

DDI: (03) 347 1814
Web: www.selwyn.govt.nz

