

Speaking notes: Charles & Tania Hefer
SCD Hearing – Lincoln South Development
25 November 2021

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this hearing.

I am Tania Hefer, I am here with my husband Charles. My family and I are residents of Verdeco Park, and we have been Lincoln residents for the last three years.

We are not opposed to the development of Lincoln, *per se*. In fact, my family and I benefitted from the development of Lincoln as it enabled us to build our own house.

I am very much in favour of well-planned development that conforms with the Government's policy intent, does not place unacceptable pressure on infrastructure and contributes to the wellbeing of residents and fits in with the semi-rural character of Lincoln.

We have prepared written notes that sets out my formal response to the points raised in my original submission on the Lincoln South Development. Due to time constraints, our verbal submission will focus only on the most concerning parts of the development.

The broader picture

Selwyn is currently dealing with exponential interest in development.

In Prebbleton, there are currently three Plan Change Requests lodged with the SDC, which proposes to collectively add in excess of 1 500 sections to Prebbleton.

Lincoln has this Plan Change Request for Lincoln South, which proposes to add 2 000 sections to Lincoln.

Rolleston currently has 9 residential Plan Change Requests lodged with the SDC, which proposes to add in excess of 7 000 residential sections to Rolleston.

There are also 3 Plan Change Requests to add in excess of 750 sections to West Melton, as well as Plan Change Requests in Leeston and Darfield.

These numbers have all been taken from the SDC website.

All of these Plan Changes compete for finite resources, in the form of infrastructure. Roothing, schooling, council facilities and other amenities take years to develop and requires resources ranging from financial to availability of tradespeople and resources for construction.

All of these Plan Change Requests would add unplanned residential development opportunities that are not provided for in the Operative Selwyn District Plan.

In our view, there needs to be a holistic view of the impact all of these Plan Change Requests can have on Selwyn District. Failure to consider the collective impact will only lead to exacerbating pressures on resources and infrastructure. A narrow view, considering only one Plan Change Request in isolation, may have considerably negative impacts downstream, for example the collective impact of the traffic of the Lincoln South Development in addition to the proposed 1 500 sections in Prebbleton on Springs Road to the SH69, the collective impact of these developments on the capacity of Lincoln High School and other schools in the area, or the impact of Lincoln South together with the Rolleston Plan Change Request on the capacity of Council facilities that are based in Rolleston.

I trust that the Commissioner will keep in mind that the Lincoln South Development will not only impact on Lincoln, but also on the surrounding townships and the infrastructure that have been put in place by the Council in a considered process in Lincoln and its surrounding area.

The Lincoln South Development

According to its website, the Lincoln South Development proposes to add up to 2,000 residential sections to Lincoln and states that:

“The subdivision will ensure one large master plan covers the next stages of South Lincoln’s development, rather than several unrelated and disjointed subdivisions.”

The website then also states that the Lincoln South development maintains Lincoln’s character and rural feel and incorporates the feedback and desires of the local community.

Unfortunately, the ODP adds very little coherence or value to the residents of Lincoln or the rates payers of Selwyn as far as infrastructure, traffic, amenities and rural character is concerned. As far as these aspects of the plan is concerned, the developer relies heavily on existing infrastructure and amenities, that have been added as part of other developments (eg. playgrounds) or will be added in future as part of long term planning of the Council (i.e. may force residents to “live with” problems in the short to medium term), without offering much in the sense of added commercial areas and proposes to shift responsibility for maintenance of the most costly and cumbersome part of the development (the wetlands area to the east of the development) onto the SDC and ratepayers.

Issues

Our primary position is that we do not support PC69 to be approved in its current form. If it is approved, we would like the issues discussed today and highlighted in our written response to be taken into consideration.

The issues I specifically want to highlight today are the following:

- Traffic and transport
- Lack of amenities in the ODP
- Impact on Lincoln's character
- Water

Traffic and transport

We have recently completed and moved into our new family home in Verdeco Park. Our daughter started at Ararira Springs Primary this year. She absolutely loves cycling to school with her dad and as she gets older, I am sure that she would want to meet up with friends at local playgrounds, and in time would want to cycle to school on her own, without "parental supervision".

The current ODP will add a significant amount of traffic onto Springs Road, without proposing to add any safe crossings for pedestrians or cyclists from Verdeco Park to the centre of Lincoln. One of the main reasons why my family and I decided to settle in Lincoln was the prospect of being able let our daughter have the freedom to travel around town on her own once she is older. The additional traffic that will be introduced by the Lincoln South development (of which 75%, or movements of more than 1,500 households, will be added to Springs Road according to the developer's own experts) makes us reconsider whether Lincoln will stay the safe area that was attractive to us to begin with.

We note that the experts on behalf of the developer introduced changes to the ODP, specifically in relation to traffic and transport earlier in the week.

While we have not had much time to review the new information, we note that:

- The additions to the roading plans do not address any of the concerns raised in our submission, relative to pedestrian and cyclist safety crossing Springs Road from Verdeco Park, nor does it address the entry/exit from Verdeco Boulevard into Springs Road.
- To the best of our knowledge, the proposed changes have not been factored into the traffic modelling presented by the developer, so would have little effect on the Level "E" designation to the Verdeco Boulevard/Springs Road crossing, or the "F" for the entry to Lincoln University, a short distance down the road from the Verdeco Boulevard/Springs Road crossing

We ask the Commissioner to require Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited to do updated road traffic modelling and develop appropriate solutions for all Lincoln communities bordering onto Springs road to ensure safety of pedestrians and cyclists and better traffic flows for vehicles.

Lack of amenities in the ODP

With the exception of the large area to the east of the Lincoln South Development which is now proposed to be a wetland area (transferring the cost of maintenance and upkeep to the SDC and ratepayers), the ODP contains very little in the way of community amenities. It is very concerning that, rather than speaking about the playgrounds and amenities that the Lincoln South plan will add to the community, Mr Compton-Moen's evidence rather refers to the fact that the new playground in Te Whariki are within 10 – 15 minutes walk for the majority of future residents (par 22 and again at 36.3). Does this mean that the development intends to add another 5,500 – 6,000 residents, without adding any playgrounds for the children who would live in this area? This cannot be acceptable?

Our daughter attended a pre-school in Lincoln. I understand that her old pre-school now has a 7 months wait list. I also understand that most of the kindergarden/pre-schools in Lincoln now have wait lists. This means that people moving to Lincoln may be forced to place their children in pre-schools outside of Lincoln to be able to secure a place for the children, reducing the community feel of Lincoln and adding to greenhouse gasses because people need to travel more. Yet no provision has been made in the ODP for dedicated pre-school facilities.

At Ararira Springs Primary School, the school recently enrolled its 300th pupil. This while Te Whariki has not been completed to its capacity and other developments within the school's zone (notably the undeveloped area between Liffey Springs Drive and Ellesmere Road) have not yet started. The school has capacity to develop further to enrol a maximum of 750 pupils. It is probable that the school will reach its maximum enrolment even without the Lincoln South development, and that further primary schools will be required.

Since we arrived in Lincoln, we have been privileged to have access to excellent GPs. We started out at Lincoln Medical on Kildare Terrace, but changed to WeCare Lincoln when it became too difficult to secure a same day or sometimes even next day appointment at the practice. WeCare Lincoln, while offering a dedicated same day service between at their Wigram practice, have recently become more difficult to secure appointments at the last minute. For an adult, this may be manageable, but for small children, it is incredibly important to be able to see a GP as soon as possible when a child is sick. We have been in positions where we had to drive to Wigram (adding greenhouse gasses because of the need to travel out of town to access medical facilities) to be able to see a doctor, and even situations where we had to wait to the next day to see a doctor. Yet, the ODP does not

make provision for the commercial space needed for medical facilities, and it does not appear as if any consultation was undertaken with the Canterbury DHB to ensure that facilities will be available.

It cannot be acceptable for the developer to take the position that interested parties can apply for exceptions for pre-schools and medical facilities to be developed, without any attempt from the developer to even identify the possible needs of the community and possible areas where these facilities may be needed. These facilities often require dedicated car parks and other facilities to enable appropriate access. They bring additional traffic into the areas where they are located and therefore would be better placed on wider, more “main access” roads. We would suggest that it is bad planning, and definitely not in the interest of the community, for these facilities to be planned in an incoherent manner after the fact when there is a golden opportunity now to make sure that the development caters appropriately for all future residents.

On the whole, the ODP creates the impression of a developer that is not particularly interested in the wellbeing of the community or interested in ensuring that the community has the facilities it requires to function well and meet everyone’s needs. The ODP is very much contrary to the image of “coherence” that is being created on the Lincoln South website and that has been presented in this hearing by the developer’s planning and urban design experts.

Lack of amenities, forcing residents to travel to neighbouring towns or into Christchurch to access services and employment also contradicts the developer’s claims that Lincoln South will have minimal additional impact on greenhouse gasses, allegedly because of reasons such as that development is no more harmful to the environment than dairy farming, because it is claimed that people in higher density housing, who are more likely to be first time home owners, will have the extra capital to spend to build passive houses, and apparently most residents will work from home and cycle to the supermarket for their weekly shop and then also cycling home with all their shopping bags ... all very speculative assertions by Mr Fuller. We found the evidence of Prof Wrenford this morning compelling and logical as far as greenhouse gasses are concerned.

Lincolnites already have to travel – for a public swimming pool in Rolleston, or sports clubs that are only available in Rolleston, or medical facilities in Wigram or pre-schools in Prebbleton because there is too much pressure on Lincoln amenities already. Adding the Lincoln South development without making sure that the necessary amenities are included, will only exacerbate the problem.

We ask the Commissioner to require Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited to conduct all required consultations about educational and medical facilities for a larger Lincoln before approval is granted for the plan change. We would also ask the Commisisoner to require Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited to incorporate appropriate designated

community facilities (eg. playgrounds), schools (pre-schools, primary schools and high schools, as required) and medical facilities in the ODP before the plan change is approved.

Impact on Lincoln's character

Character comes in different shapes and sizes. Christchurch's character is currently being shaped by an interesting mix of new built and old buildings. Cities are vibrant and house bustling communities with something always happening.

This is not Lincoln's character. Lincoln is a semi-rural town that has experienced a lot of growth in recent years, but where people still know or recognise each other in the supermarket. Where kids still meet in pre-school and then usually end up knowing most of their classmates on their first day of primary school. Lincoln has managed to retain the feel of a community-orientated small town. While further growth is inevitable, allowing growth on the scale and speed proposed by Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited will surely change the character of Lincoln from that of a small town to a lifeless, satellite town of Christchurch, where people travel for work, travel for access to facilities like pre-schools and doctors and travel to Christchurch or Rolleston for access to larger retailers.

Allowing the exponential growth of a small town like Lincoln without the necessary infrastructure and amenities to support it, will dramatically change the character of the town.

We ask the Commissioner to require Rolleston Industrial Developments Limited to bring the planning, urban design and landscaping in line with Lincoln's current character. This may require the Commissioner to limit the number of sections that are approved as part of the plan change and to require the availability of certain amenities to be incorporated in the ODP before the plan change is approved.

Water

Our daughter attends Ararira Springs Primary School. She is in Year 1 this year. This means that she has another 7 years ahead of her at school. Ararira Springs is located very close to the Lincoln wastewater facilities. We are not convinced that the plans proposed by the developer are appropriate to ensure that the areas surrounding the wastewater infrastructure (including the school) will not be affected by odours or contamination if the infrastructure is not able to deal with the additional houses of the Lincoln South development. This is an area where we would prefer to err on the side of caution, especially knowing that any infrastructure upgrades that may become necessary in future will fall onto ratepayers.

We are also concerned about the high water table in parts of the proposed Lincoln South development area. In our view, building in areas where the water table is only 0.2 m below surface level is not beneficial for community resilience and exposes to the community to natural disasters. Recently, insurance companies stated in the media that they intend to start applying risk based pricing for flooding risk to residential properties. That means that insurance may become unaffordable or unattainable for owners in areas that are subject to a high risk of flooding. Under insurance or lack of insurance in New Zealand exposes home owners to more than just having to recover from floods. Broadly speaking, without home insurance, home owners will also lose access to EQC insurance, leaving such homeowners exposed in case of natural disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis and landslips. If a natural disaster were to happen, home owners and communities will struggle to recover. In our view, land planning must be done in a way that keeps the area's exposure to natural disasters in mind. Anything less exposes communities to undue risk.

We have read the evidence of Phillipa Aitchison-Earl, and urge the Commissioner to give weight to the points raised therein.

We ask the Commissioner to ensure that the water-related aspects of this plan change is properly addressed and planned for before the plan change is approved, and that development not be approved in areas that are disproportionately at risk of natural disasters.

Conclusion

We believe that the Lincoln South development is an opportunity for smart, forward looking and environmentally conscious planning to take place. In our view, the current ODP does not meet these goals.

At the moment, the Lincoln South development appears to be a characterless development that does not encourage communities to get together, kids to play together and neighbours to know each other. There are not enough communal areas, not enough amenities, and the traffic introduced by the development will be comparable to that in a CBD area – all within a semi-rural township.

We request the Commissioner to consider the wider picture and the impact of Lincoln South, together with other Plan Change Requests, on infrastructure and amenities in the district. We request the Commissioner to consider the desirability of such a large development in Lincoln and give serious consideration to recommending that the development be approved in part, if at all, and only once the other issues addressed by the community and set out in the section 42A brief of the SDC are addressed.