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To: Selwyn District Council
From: Hugh Nicholson, Urban Designer
Date: 17th January 2022
Re: Plan Change 71 Rolleston – Urban Design and Landscape Review

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Four Stars Development Ltd and Gould Developments Ltd have lodged a private plan change request (Plan Change 71) with Selwyn District Council to rezone 53.9 hectares of rural zoned land near Rolleston for residential use. This will enable the development of approximately 660 residential sites. It is proposed to defer the development of the portion of the site under the CIAL 50dBA noise contour (approximately 17.3 hectares) until such time as the noise contour is shifted off the site.
- 1.2 I have been asked by the Selwyn District Council to carry out a peer review of the *Urban Design Statement* (dated 9/11/2020) and the *RFI – Landscape matters and visual assessment* (revised 10/05/2021) provided by a+urban. Where necessary I have provided additional comments on urban design effects in relation to the urban form of Rolleston, and commented on matters raised in submissions that relate to urban design or landscape architecture.
- 1.3 My assessment is focused on the urban design effects in relation to the urban form of Rolleston and does not consider the urban form implications for Greater Christchurch which are addressed in Ms White's evidence.

2.0 Outline Development Plan (ODP)

- 2.1 The plan change area is bounded by Levis and Lincoln Rolleston Roads, and Nobiline Drive, and is located on the western edge of Rolleston. The site would be zoned Living Z which would allow for a range of lot sizes, including some medium density development located towards the centre of the site around proposed green spaces to provide higher amenity. A minimum net density of 12 households per hectare is proposed over the ODP area.

- 2.2 Approximately 17.3 hectares of the site is under the CIAL 50dBA noise contour and PC71 proposes that development of this part of the site is deferred until the noise contour is moved off the site. There is no certainty that the noise contour will be removed and I have assessed the effects of the plan change if the noise contour is not removed as well as if it is removed.
- 2.3 PC71 anticipates changes to ODP4 in the Selwyn District Plan that provide connections to the west. In assessing the plan change I have assumed that these changes are possible but note that they presume that transport links in ODP4 that are relied upon by PC71 are constructed before or at the same time as PC71 is developed.
- 2.4 A large part of the site is currently occupied by the *All Stars Racing* stables, and is the home to one of the most successful harness racing partnerships in Australasia (with 11 premierships in the past 13 years). Since its establishment on the property in 2008/2009, there has been a significant capital investment on this property including three training tracks, stabling, water reticulation to all 26 paddocks, a viewing room for owners and two residential units for the owners and workers¹.
- 2.5 The northern end of the Plan Change area is approximately 800 metres (as the crow flies) from the Rolleston Square commercial area which includes a Countdown supermarket and Warehouse store, and 900 metres from Rolleston College. When additional distances to the southern end of the plan change area are included these are probably greater than the distances most people would regularly walk, however, I consider the northern end of the plan change area to be within walkable distance of the town centre. The site would have good access to Foster Recreation Park to the west and the proposed district-wide park to the east.
- 2.6 In general, I consider that the proposed plan change area is an appropriate location for urban growth linking Rolleston with the proposed district-wide reserve to the east, and rezoning a block of rural land which has existing residential land to the north and west. If the CIAL 50dBA noise contour is not removed I consider that the remainder of the site is still suitable for urban growth given its proximity to the centre of Rolleston and adjacent residential areas.
- 2.7 In my opinion the proposed minimum net density of 12 households per hectare (hh/ha) is appropriate for the southern half of the site, however, I consider that the northern half of the site is within a walkable distance of the town centre, recreation facilities and schools and would be better suited to a minimum net density of 15 hh/ha.
- 2.8 I note that PC71 proposes to remove the low-density strip (1,000m² +) on the eastern boundary of ODP4 to make it consistent across ODP4 with a minimum density of 10hh/ha. I support the removal of the low-density strip, and if possible I would recommend that this

¹ <https://www.allstarsracing.co.nz/about>

strip is up-zoned to 15hh/ha to be consistent with the minimum density I have recommended in PC71, providing PC71 is approved.

3.0 Connections and Frontages

- 3.1 The ODP provides one connection to the north of the site onto Levi Road, three connections to the west into ODP4, and two connections to the west onto Lincoln Rolleston Road. There are six proposed connections to the east onto land that is currently zoned rural. In order to provide a positive level of connectivity for PC71, I have prepared staging plans showing amended ODPs with the airport noise contour and without it. I have recommended a number of changes to provide more clarity and to ensure that the ODP functions both with and without the noise contour (See Figures 2 and 3).
- 3.2 In particular I have recommended a simpler grid network of streets in the northern and southern parts of the plan change area and recommended moving the neighbourhood reserves into the centre of these areas so that they can stand alone if the 50 dBA airport noise contour is not removed (see Figure 2). I have recommended a second connection onto Levis Road but I note that this is subject to discussion with Mr Collins regarding potential traffic effects.
- 3.3 In my opinion two road connections through ODP4 are necessary to provide an adequate level of connection between the northern half of PC71 and the wider Rolleston township. I recommend that the ODP narrative is amended to ensure that these connections are constructed prior to or at the same time as the subdivision of the northern half.
- 3.3 If the plan change is granted, I recommend that the upgrades of the Levis and Lincoln Rolleston Road frontages with footpaths are included in the ODP (and associated narrative) to reflect the change to a residential land use. I also recommend that property access and appropriate pedestrian / cycle crossing facilities on Levis and Lincoln Rolleston Roads are included in the ODP (and associated narrative) to improve passive surveillance of the streets, and to support pedestrian and cycling within the Rolleston township.
- 3.4 I agree with Mr Collins that PC71 does not adequately provide for cycling and support his recommendations that shared use paths and safe pedestrian / cyclist crossings should be provided along Lincoln Rolleston and Levis Roads as part of the frontage upgrades, and a continuous north-south cycle route should be provided through PC71 (see Figure 3). If the scope of the plan change allows, I would also support amending ODP4 to clarify that a continuous shared path should extend along the Lincoln Rolleston and Levis Road frontages of ODP4 also. This would ensure that the shared path provided as part of PC71 is connected to a larger network.

4.0 Landscape Character and Visual Impact

- 4.1 The 53.9 hectare site is composed of three rural residential properties between three and four hectares in size on Lincoln Rolleston Road, three rural residential properties of four hectare in size on Nobline Drive, and the All Stars Racing Stable land. The site is flat and generally open with shelterbelts along the road boundaries and delineating individual rural residential properties.
- 4.2 The rural residential properties are characterised by large single-storey houses with a number of associated garages and farm sheds. The Stables land is generally open with two larger scale buildings off Levis Road.
- 4.3 The site is in an indentation in the eastern edge of Rolleston created by building restrictions under the CIAL 50dBA noise contour.
- 4.4 I note that while the site is largely surrounded by large scale shelterbelts and hedges at the moment, I consider it likely that most of these will be removed as part of a residential redevelopment in order to provide better sunlight access and improved amenity for the sections.
- 4.5 I have used a seven point scale drawn from the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architect's (NZILA) *Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*² to assess the scale of effects of the Plan Change on the landscape character and the visual impact of the changes.

very low	low	moderate-low	moderate	moderate-high	high	very high
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- 4.6 In my opinion that the proposed plan change would have a *moderate* impact on the landscape character reflecting the change from a rural residential and rural landscape with small numbers of houses and large-scale open spaces behind to a residential landscape with a higher number of buildings and a suburban character.
- 4.7 Bearing in mind that visual quality is one of the attributes that contribute to landscape character, and that the existing rural residential properties on the Lincoln Rolleston Road frontage are largely surrounded by existing shelterbelts and hedges, I consider that the visual impact of the plan change on the adjacent properties across the road would be *moderate-low*. This reflects that while the landscape character would change there would be no significant loss of views, and there is an existing rural residential character.
- 4.8 I consider that the visual impact on the houses along Levis Road would be *moderate-low* reflecting the southern aspect and the existing hedges. The visual impact on the existing

² *Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, (Final Draft), New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, May 2021, pp. 63-65

rural residential properties on Nobeline Drive would be *moderate-low* reflecting the distance that PC71 would be setback from the main living areas to the north.

- 4.9 I have reviewed the mitigation measures proposed for the changes in landscape character and visual impact by Ms Lauenstein, and while I regard these as positive features of the proposed design, they do not alter my assessment of the changes in landscape character or the visual impact of the plan change.

5.0 Submissions

- 5.1 I have reviewed the summary of submissions and identified those that are relevant to urban design matters.
- 5.2 Submission 0002 is concerned about the impact on wellbeing, due to the increase in population, with no reasonable parks or green space in this area compared to other parts of Rolleston.
- 5.3 I agree with Mr Rykers that the two proposed neighbourhood parks in PC71 would provide local green spaces within easy walking distances of most of the proposed houses, and that the plan change area would have good access to larger green spaces and recreational facilities with the proposed district park to the east and the connection to Foster Park via Broadlands Drive to the west. I consider that PC71 makes adequate provision for parks and green spaces in this area.
- 5.4 Waka Kotahi (submission 0006) considers that additional opportunities for multi-modal transport, particularly for walking and cycling, through and adjoining the site, should be considered to promote internal connections within plan change areas and connections to wider network.
- 5.5 I agree with this submission and support Mr Collins proposal amend the ODP (and associated narrative) to include shared paths and crossing points along the Lincoln Rolleston and Levis Road frontages, and to add a continuous north-south cycle route within the plan change area. I have also recommended changes to the ODP in Figures 1 and 2 to improve the level of connectivity between PC71 and the wider township.
- 5.6 Christchurch City Council (CCC) (submission 0007) is seeking that the PC71 be declined in the first instance, but if approved that the density is increased to 15 households per hectare (hh/ha).
- 5.7 A minimum net density of 12 hh/ha in the Living Z zone is a low-density form of development. In Christchurch the minimum density in residential suburban areas is 15 households per hectare, with minimums of 30 households per hectare in medium density residential areas, and 50 households per hectare in the central city.

- 5.8 There are a range of benefits from an increased density³ including:
- a. *Social*: improving social interaction and diversity, improving access to and viability of community services;
 - b. *Economic*: improving the economic viability of development and infrastructure;
 - c. *Transport*: supporting increased usage of public transport and reducing car travel;
 - d. *Environmental*: increasing energy efficiency and decreasing resource consumption and pollution, reducing demand for land.
- 5.9 In considering whether the minimum net density should be increased to 15hh/ha as requested by the CCC, I find the matter finely balanced. In my opinion it would be more appropriate to site areas of true medium density housing (terrace housing or walk-up apartments), which would be required to reach 15hh/ha, close to the centre of the township. Here they would be within easy walking distances of the associated community facilities and commercial activities, and there would be greater benefits in terms of the efficient use of land and infrastructure and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. On balance I consider that a minimum density 15hh/ha would be appropriate in the northern part of the site, and 12 hh/ha would be appropriate in the southern part of the site.
- 5.10 Environment Canterbury (ECan) (submission 0008) considers that the desirability of growth at Rolleston would best be considered as part of a future spatial planning exercise rather than ad-hoc and individual assessments prompted by private plan change requests.
- 5.11 In general I agree with ECan on this matter and consider that future spatial planning exercises allow a more comprehensive range of options to be considered together with the relevant costs and benefits. It also allows for more meaningful public engagement to be undertaken and used to inform the spatial planning exercise.
- 5.12 With regard to PC71 I consider that the plan change area is something of an anomaly created by the CIAL 50dBA noise contour. In the Rolleston Structure Plan the site is a small block of rural land surrounded on three sides by proposed residential land uses, with a proposed district reserve on the fourth side.
- 5.13 If the 50dBA noise contour remains in place then the development of the northern and southern ends of the site would promote a more compact urban form and more efficient use of land and infrastructure. If the 50dBA noise contour is removed from the site then the anomaly created by the noise contour (a block of rural land surrounded by urban land uses) can be remedied. In this matter I consider that the issues are primarily technical ones (noise effects) and that a future spatial planning exercise is unlikely to come to a different conclusion.

³ Ibid, p.183

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 In general, I consider that the proposed plan change area is an appropriate location for urban growth linking the existing Rolleston township with a proposed district-wide reserve to the east, and rezoning a block of rural land which has existing residential land uses to the north and west. If the CIAL 50dBA noise contour is not removed I consider that the remainder of the site is still suitable for urban growth given its proximity to the centre of Rolleston and adjacent residential areas.
- 6.2 In my opinion the northern half of the plan change area is within a walkable distance of the town centre, recreation facilities and schools and would be better suited to a minimum net density of 15 hh/ha. I consider that the proposed minimum net density of 12 households per hectare (hh/ha) is appropriate for the southern half of the site.
- 6.3 I have recommended changes to the ODP (and associated narrative) including⁴:
- a. A simpler grid network of streets in the northern and southern parts of the plan change area and moving the neighbourhood reserves into the centre of these areas so that they can stand alone if the 50 dBA airport noise contour is not removed (see Figure 2). The grid is extended into the full area if the 50dBA airport noise contour is removed (see Figure 3);
 - b. Upgrades of the Levis and Lincoln Rolleston Road frontages with shared pedestrian / cycle paths, property access and appropriate pedestrian / cycle crossing facilities;
 - c. Improvements to the cycle network through the inclusion of shared paths as part of the upgrades of the Lincoln Rolleston Road and Levis Road frontages, the provision of a continuous north-south cycle connection through the plan change area, and the extension of the east-west cycle connection to connect with Broadlands Drive (see Figure 3);
 - d. Changes to ODP4 including a minimum of two connections from PC71 to Lincoln Rolleston Road (see Figures 2 and 3). If scope permits, upzoning the strip of land zoned low density (1,000m² +) on the eastern boundary to a minimum net density of 15hh/ha, and the explicit provision of a shared pedestrian / cycle path as part of the upgrades of the Lincoln Rolleston and Levis Road frontages.

⁴ These recommendations are indicative and have not been considered from a traffic perspective. Further amendments may be required in terms of intersection alignment and location, roading hierarchy, and the appropriateness of a second access point onto Levi Road.

- 6.4 I consider that the PC71 would have a *moderate-low* impact on the landscape character reflecting the change from a rural residential and rural landscape with small numbers of houses and large-scale open spaces behind to a residential landscape with a higher number of buildings and a suburban character.
- 6.5 I consider that the visual impact of PC71 on the neighbouring houses along Lincoln Rolleston Road, Levis Road and Nobeline Drive would be *moderate-low* reflecting that the setbacks and aspect, the existing hedges and shelterbelts, and the existing rural residential land use.

Hugh Nicholson

UrbanShift

Figure 1: PC71 400m Walkable Catchments

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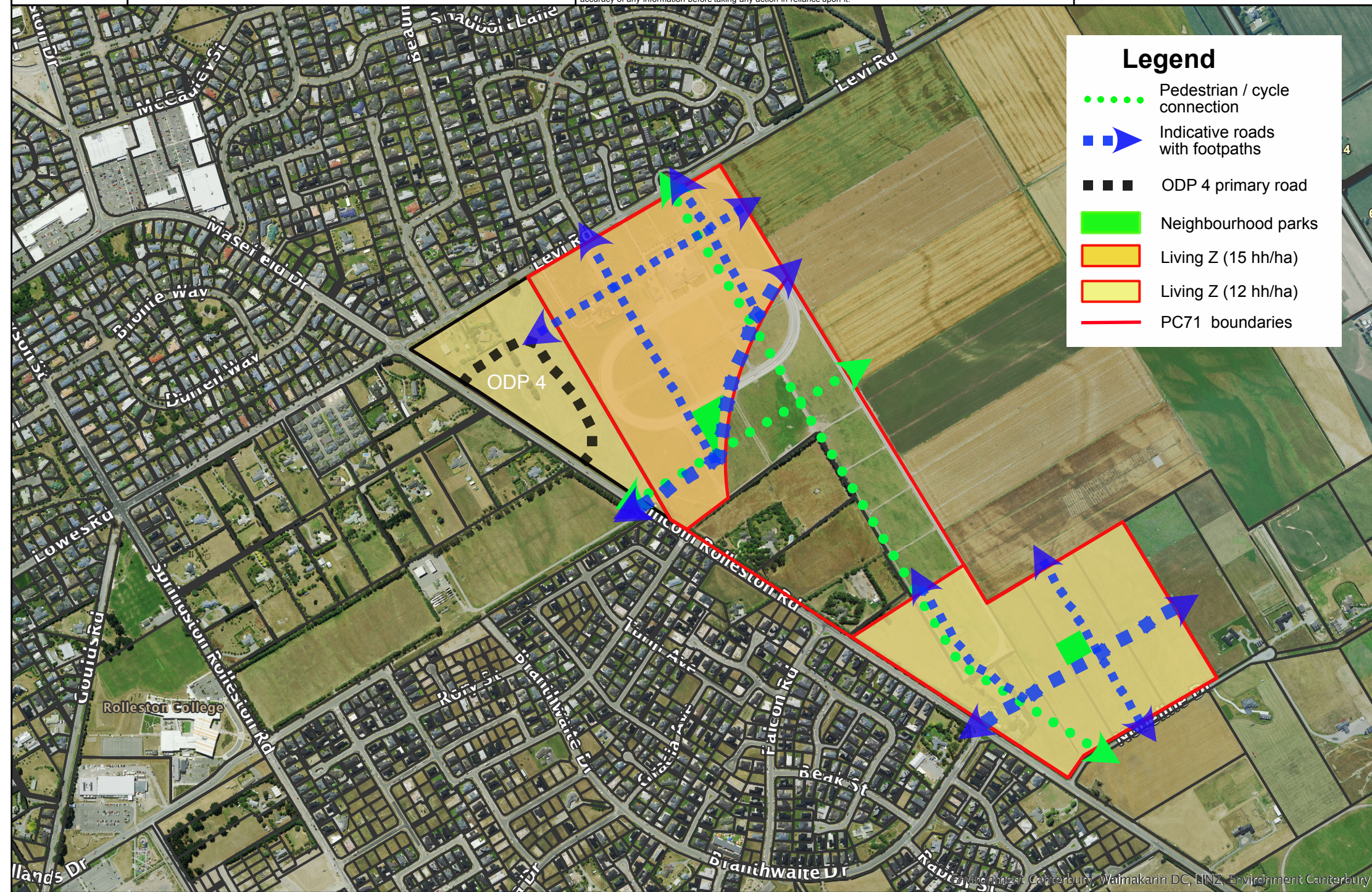
**Figure 2: PC71 ODP - Rolleston
(with CIAL 50dBA noise contour)**

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Legend

-  Pedestrian / cycle connection
-  Indicative roads with footpaths
-  ODP 4 primary road
-  Neighbourhood parks
-  Living Z (15 hh/ha)
-  Living Z (12 hh/ha)
-  PC71 boundaries



**Figure 3: PC71 ODP - Rolleston
(without CIAL 50dBA noise contour)**

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