

# EVIDENCE IN THE MATTER OF PC 78

## Evidence of Gabi Wolfer, Senior Urban Designer/Town Planner, Selwyn District Council

### 1. QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- 1.1. My full name is Gabriele Tanja Wolfer. I have been working for Selwyn District Council as their Urban Designer/Town Planner for the past 10 years. I am a senior member of the Policy and Strategy team. I hold a Master's Degree in Urban and Spatial Planning from the Technical University Kaiserslautern, Germany. I am an Associate member of the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) and a member of the Architectural Institute Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany.

### 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1. Although this is a Council hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note and that I agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.

### 3. EVIDENCE SCOPE

- 3.1. My evidence focuses on demonstrating that the proposed private plan change request is practical and appropriate within an Urban Design/Town planning context.
- 3.2. I have reviewed the request, the submissions and the RFI response on the matters of Urban Design and have addressed them as part of my assessment where they relate to my area of expertise.
- 3.3. Throughout this document I will be referencing the applicant's private plan change request report with ('request'), Appendix 2- the updated Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Assessment ('UD statement') and Appendix 3- Updated Outline Development Plan and supporting text ('ODP' and 'ODP text').

### 4. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- 4.1. The following statutory and non-statutory documents provide strategic direction for this plan change request and are relevant for my assessment.
- 4.2. Canterbury Policy Statement (CRPS 2013) Chapters 5 (Land use and infrastructure) and 6 (Recovery and Rebuilding of Greater Christchurch), in particular Objectives 5.2.2, 6. 2.1 to 6.2.6, Policy 6.3.1, Policy 6.3.3 and Policy 6.3.6 and 6.3.7.
- 4.3. CPRS 2013 Policy 6.3.2 refers to 'good urban design' and refers to the amended principles (see **Appendix 1**) (non-statutory) of the NZ Urban Design protocol 2005.

- 4.4. Selwyn District Plan (the 'Plan'). The following objectives and policies relating to rezoning requests have been used as a) a framework and b) to establish if the plan change request enables development that achieves these outcomes.
- 4.5. Township Volume/Growth of townships/ Residential and Business Development/ Objectives B4.3.1, B4.3.3- B4.3.8/Policies B4.3.3-B4.3.8, B4.3.10, B4.3.11; Residential density/ Objectives B4.1.1 and B4.1.2, Policies B4.1.10- B4.1.13; Rolleston specific - Policy B4.3.75.

## **5. PROPOSAL**

- 5.1. Private Plan change 78 requests the rezoning of approximately 63.3 hectares of rural land (Inner Plains) to residential (Living Z). The site is situated on the corner of Selwyn and Lincoln Rolleston Roads and consists of 14 individual properties. The proposed land use is a mixture of small site and comprehensive Medium and Low Density housing. The proposal seeks to meet a target density rate of 12hh/ha achieving 756 sections. The ODP indicates two public reserve areas.
- 5.2. An Outline Development Plan illustrating the proposed changes, as well as supporting text, is part of this proposal.

## **6. SUBMISSIONS**

- 6.1. Council received four submissions and one further submission, of which two have been considered relevant to urban design and thus addressed within this report (see section 13.)

## **7. CONTEXT**

- 7.1. I am a local resident and have a good understanding of the site in the context of the overall township.
- 7.2. To be able to comment on the proposal and its implications on the individual and the wider community it is imperative to address them in context. This is where the principle of Tūrangawaewae – the sense of place and belonging needs to be referenced. Context is required to establish: (a) if the request integrates with the surrounding development; (b) whether there are any amenity, sites of cultural interest or potentially adverse reverse sensitivity effects that could compromise the efficient operation of established activities operating on adjacent properties that need to be taken into account, and if so if they have been adequately addressed by the applicant.
- 7.3. The proposed site and sites adjoining to the north and east across Lincoln Rolleston Road are typical for lifestyle block properties in the Selwyn District, consisting of clusters of buildings and structures surrounded by open fields used for non-intensive farming purposes that are delineated by shelterbelt plantings. Sites to the south across Selwyn Road contain larger landholdings, and less built-form compared to the proposed site.
- 7.4. The adjoining site to the south- east is currently used for a market garden and the farming practises that are associated with this. This site contains no housing. Within the vicinity and approximately 300m from the nearest point of the site on Selwyn Road are farming sheds (see **Appendix 3**) that are used for intensive farming purposes (raising poultry). I consider that the area around the triangle of Lincoln

Rolleston, Selwyn and Rattletrack Roads and land beyond to the south to have a stronger agricultural focus compared to the current land uses of the proposed site.

- 7.5. Lincoln Rolleston Road and the established trees within the opposite side of the road reserve provide a visual and physical buffer to pastoral land uses and rural-residential activities to the east. Likewise, Selwyn Road to the south forms a physical boundary between the urban extent of Rolleston and rural land beyond it.
- 7.6. Overall, I consider the site to be influenced by recent and proposed residential activities and existing rural-residential and rural activities. Should the request for PP75 be granted, the site will be effectively enclosed on two sides by residential development.
- 7.7. I consider the proposed site to integrate well with the surrounding environment and will be visually perceived as an extension to existing residential development to the west, which is of a similar scale and density.

## **8. REVERSE SENSITIVITY**

- 8.1. I consider that there may be a potential for reverse sensitivity effects associated with the market garden operating within the adjacent site to the south-east on the corner of Lincoln Rolleston and Selwyn Roads.
- 8.2. Reverse sensitivity issues from spraying, fertilising, smell, and dust etc. might be a matter of concern, if only in the interim, as the market garden site is identified as a Future Development Area (FDA).
- 8.3. I consider there is merit to outline in the ODP text identified potential adverse reverse sensitivity effects associated with the proposed residential development, which could compromise the efficient operation of the established market garden activities if PC78 is granted and these operations continue.
- 8.4. Reverse sensitivity issues from the operation of poultry sheds across Selwyn Road, are considered not applicable to this proposal, as the site sits outside an identified intensive farming buffer (see Appendix 3).

## **9. URBAN DESIGN MATTERS**

- 9.1. The following assessment identifies urban design matters that apply to the request and respond to submission points, the Outline Development Plan and the mitigation measures provided within the urban design, landscape, and visual impact assessment. Where appropriate comments from other Council staff have been included.

## **10. URBAN FORM**

- 10.1. The site is within the Rolleston metropolitan urban limit (MUL) of the Rolleston Structure Plan 2009 (RSP) and is within the areas identified for future development in the framework documentation of the CRPS (see policy 6.2.2) and Our Space document. Both documents identify the site as a FDA. Policy B4.3.3 states that zoning patterns should avoid leaving a rural zoned land surrounded on three or more boundaries by Living zones. The proposal, as well as proposed development to the north (PC75) and currently developed sites adjoining to the west (Acland Park), are in keeping with this policy.

- 10.2. The site is physically contained to the north and west by existing residential development, to the east by Lincoln Rolleston Road and Selwyn Road to the south.
- 10.3. Situated currently 'on the south-eastern fringe' of Rolleston, should PC75 to the north go ahead, this portion of un-developed land would end up being wedged by residential development on two sides. This outcome would not only go against achieving the compact and consolidated urban form identified in the RSP, Our SPACE and the CRPS.
- 10.4. I consider that the granting to the request to apply the Living Z Zone and incorporate an ODP to coordinate development in the future in this location will help to provide growth in the south- eastern end of the Rolleston Township in a planned and coherent manner.
- 10.5. I consider that developing the proposed site to a residential density will be in keeping with Greater Christchurch's settlement pattern and achieve a consolidated expansion of the existing urban areas within Rolleston Township.

## **11. AMENITY, CHARACTER AND OUTLOOK**

- 11.1. The proposed residential development adjoining the site on its northern boundary (PC 75) and current development within Acland Park to the west, as well as Falcons Landing in the immediate vicinity to the north, are cumulatively having an impact on the character and outlook of the site.
- 11.2. Part of the existing natural characteristics of the site, (and adjoining sites to the north, east and south) include a flat topography, large open grass fields with clusters of vegetation framed by tall evergreen shelterbelt plantings, which provide a backdrop and allow for intermittent views to the Alps and the Port Hills.
- 11.3. The physical site characteristics to the west can be summarised as being sub-urban, with pre-dominantly single-storey standalone housing on low to medium density sized sections.
- 11.4. The site itself (and adjacent sites to the north and east across Lincoln Rolleston Road) has a 'lifestyle' character where the built form is typically lower than residential sites and often accompanied by additional utilitarian structures. The majority of the resulting clusters of built development are located well within the site and accessed via long driveways (along western boundary of the site). Land to the south and across Selwyn Road is generally rural in character consisting of large open fields with a low built form to land ratio and buildings that are positioned close to road boundaries.
- 11.5. The proposal will alter the site, but will align with the residential sub-urban character to the west.
- 11.6. I support the amount and distribution of density on the proposed ODP, which ensures that lower density sites are on the perimeter of adjacent sites that will mitigate some of the effects of the proposal on the receiving environment (see discussion on reverse sensitivity section 8).
- 11.7. I support the retention and incorporation of existing dwellings and tree and garden plantings to assist in retaining some open character and to balance the proposed smaller medium density sites as suggested by the applicant.
- 11.8. Amenity values is defined in the Act (section 2) as including: "Those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes."

- 11.9. The identity of a place connected with the receiving environment is an important quality that contributes to the amenity of the place. Part of the on-site environment and contributing to its overall amenity is the existing vegetation, sense of open space, clusters and rows of established trees and an open-drain water race. These natural features provide a point of difference to the site.
- 11.10. Policy B4.1.1.11 encourages new residential areas to be designed to maintain or enhance the aesthetic values of the township, by retaining existing features on site. Policy B4.2.4 encourages the retention of historic or other features within a subdivision.
- 11.11. I consider that the water race, which runs north to south, approximately halfway between Acland Park and Lincoln Rolleston Road, to be a strong feature of this site.
- 11.12. Water races have been identified as one of the oldest heritage features in the District and as such are part of the Selwyn character. Water races can also add visual amenity to a neighbourhood, if upgraded and visually incorporated into a reserve. The Council's Open Space and Strategy Manager Mark Rykers supports an integrated approach, where the water race could be realigned along a road or public reserve corridor. This has particular merit in terms of retaining some of the site's features that could contribute to the character of the future residential area.
- 11.13. I have consulted with the Council's surface waters engineer Daniel Meehan. From speaking to him the water race is not on Council's closure list, as one landowner still uses the race.
- 11.14. I encourage the applicant to retain established trees as natural features, where possible. The RSP in section 5.2.1 seeks to enhance existing character features throughout the Rolleston Township, including vertical elements, such as trees, to contrast the flatness of the topography and provide visual interest, shade and privacy. The RSP includes the design concept of a 'Rolleston green belt', which seeks to integrate the road boundary reserve areas into the landscape treatment and identifies Lincoln Rolleston Road as a location appropriate for avenue tree planting to improve visual amenity, openness and to 'lead' people into the township.
- 11.15. Other effects include loss of outlook for neighbouring properties and when viewed from public space (Lincoln Rolleston and Selwyn Roads). The applicant has addressed these effects within the UD assessment in section 3.4. Overall I agree with the applicant and consider the effects to be anticipated within the gradual transition from a rural lifestyle to a suburban character.

## **12. MITIGATION MEASURES**

- 12.1. The UD assessment lists under Part 4 six measures (MM1-6) to avoid, remedy or mitigate any potential effects on landscape character, landscape values and /or visual amenity from the Plan Change.
- 12.2. I agree with mitigation measures MM1, 2, 4 and 5.
- 12.3. I agree with the intent of MM3 of having a street hierarchy- this needs however be confirmed in the OPD text and displayed on the ODP itself.
- 12.4. I agree with the intent of MM6 and consider that fencing can be adequately addressed at subdivision level within the fencing standards of the Plan.

### **13. SUBMISSIONS**

- 13.1. Policy 4.2.10 of the Plan request to encourage pedestrian, cycle and vehicular permeability through and within the site, ease access to surrounding community facilities, providing choice of routes and overall achieve a network of walkable blocks. Further to this Council has signed an Accessibility Charter, which follows a Council wide vision to improve Selwyn's accessibility through the implementation of best-practise design, including designing multi-modal networks that can then be translated into walkable blocks.
- 13.2. Integration with adjacent neighbourhoods needs to occur to establish permeable walking and cycling catchments and promote active transport modes.
- 13.3. I consider the provision of a pedestrian and cycle network an essential part of OPDs and that strategic connections need to be established and secured at the ODP level. I agree with submitter PC78-0003 and consider that it is appropriate to identify a cycle/ walking connection that will lead to key community destinations, such as Te Rohutu Whio School.
- 13.4. The ODP only provides for two pedestrian and cycle links and two roading links (which will incorporate cycling and walking) along the western boundary of the site with Acland Park. Of these four links the primary east-west route provides the most direct connection through Acland Park before linking with Springston Rolleston Road just north of Te Rohutu Whio School.
- 13.5. I support the Council's transport engineer Mr Collins (figure 6, page 21) recommendation to illustrate the key pedestrian and cycling routes (to provide north-south and east-west connectivity) within the OPD and ensure that they align with the adjacent sites.
- 13.6. Submission points PC78-001 and PC78-003 request the plan change to be amended to include the recommendations of the Greater Christchurch Partnership Social and Affordable Housing Report.
- 13.7. The actions from the report are around engagement, policy, and planning responses. The Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan aims to better understand potential affordability issues and social housing demand and outlines a range of potential responses.
- 13.8. Discussions with Council's Policy Analyst Mr Baird confirm that the implications of the report on the Future Development Areas is yet to be discussed, as the stated Action Plan is currently in development. The report has not been approved by the Greater Christchurch Partnership and therefore cannot be considered as part of the private plan change process.

### **14. OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ODP)**

- 14.1. Policy 6.3.3 (CRPS 2013) provides the framework to guide the preparation an ODP and Policy B4.3.8 of the Plan lists the matters that need to be included within the ODP. The extent to which the proposed PC78 ODP aligns with this guidance is evaluated below.

### **15. LAND USE- RESIDENTIAL**

- 15.1. I agree in principle with the rationale for providing MD housing in clusters and the design principles, such as proximity to services, public green space and transport as relevant criteria, when testing the suitability of a site at subdivision level.

- 15.2. I agree in general with the spatial distribution of the MD housing next to the central greenspace area and along a primary transport corridor within the PC78 ODP, which will visually expand the outdoor living space for adjacent smaller units. The proximity of the MD housing to a primary through route containing wider footpaths and carriageways will facilitate walking and cycling and allow to access public transport in the future.
- 15.3. I encourage the applicant to consider providing for a variety of densities to support more intensive, affordable developments and the different building typologies to achieve this. This approach would support changes in household compositions and to future proof our neighbourhoods. In this context I refer to Christchurch City's and ECAN's submission points 002 and 001 respectively, which request a minimum net density of 15hh/ha, supporting affordable housing.

## **16. TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY**

- 16.1. In terms of the display of the roading network I note that the main east –west connection is referred to as 'collector road' and all other roads are referred to as 'major intermediate'. Future roading is not labelled. To be in keeping with other ODPs in the District Plan and to establish a hierarchy within the proposed transport network I recommend the ODP identifies and labels the 'primary' and 'secondary' routes and that their different functions are addressed within the ODP text.
- 16.2. To support connectivity and provide multi modal options I agree with the provision of three off-road pedestrian/cycle connections and for them to be labelled green pedestrian/cycle links on the ODP.
- 16.3. As identified within the visual assessment by the applicant, the greatest effect on outlook will be along Lincoln-Rolleston Road. In this context, I consider that direct access off Lincoln-Rolleston Road and Selwyn Road is the preferred outcome to achieve an active public private interface between the development, the walking and cycling path that provides a connection between Rolleston and Lincoln and with Lincoln-Rolleston Road itself. This interface treatment also supports the requirement for the frontage upgrades to be made to an urban standard, as requested by Mr Collins in his evidence.
- 16.4. In terms of the reference to the roading network I note that the ODP refers to external road connections. For consistency with other ODP's in Appendix 38 of the Plan the legend needs to be amended to show a 'double arrow' instead of a hatched box.

### **Conclusion:**

- 16.5. I recommend the ODP and the legend is amended as follows (see **Appendix 2**):
- 16.6. That the areas not included in PC78 to be removed from this ODP.
- 16.7. That the reference to 'collector road' is replaced with 'primary route' and corresponding text in the ODP is included as appropriate;
- 16.8. That the centrally located north-south connection that links with PP75 is referenced as a 'primary route' and corresponding text included as appropriate;
- 16.9. That the reference to 'major intermediate' is replaced with 'secondary route' and corresponding text included as appropriate;



- 16.10. That the reference to the two pedestrian/cycle routes to be replaced with 'green pedestrian/cycle link' and for them to be incorporated into the overall green network;
- 16.11. I recommend that the ODP plan legend is amended to show a 'double arrow' referring to a future link to adjacent sites;
- 16.12. That a note on the ODP is included to reference 'Interface treatment' along the Lincoln-Rolleston Road and Selwyn Road boundaries and corresponding text included as appropriate.

## **17. GREEN AND BLUE NETWORKS**

- 17.1. I consider that the water race running through the proposed site is a historic feature of note that needs to be further assessed as an amenity feature and its alignment shown on the proposed ODP.

### **Conclusion**

- 17.2. I recommend the ODP is amended as follows:
- 17.3. That the indicative location of Green links are shown, including where they accommodate off-road cycle and pedestrian links;
- 17.4. That the water race is shown;
- 17.5. That text be included that indicates how the central reserve is linked within the site and with surrounding public recreation and reserve space and how the water race may be addressed.

## **18. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 18.1. Overall, I support the proposed rezoning of rural land to Living Z, subject to the following:

### **OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – text amendments**

#### **Landuse**

- 18.2. Highlight the need for an interface treatment, such as deeper sections, in response to mitigating possible reverse sensitivity along the south-eastern boundary of the ODP, which may become obsolete if and when the market garden site is developed to a residential standard;

#### **Transport**

- 18.3. Make reference to 'interface treatment' along Lincoln Rolleston and Selwyn Roads to achieve an active frontage and contribute to an accessible and safe urban environment;

#### **Green and Blue Network**



- 18.4. Include a description of how the proposed reserve is linked with the surrounding green network, including reference to combine walking and cycling network with the green and blue network connecting to key destinations (e.g. Te Rohutu Whio School);
- 18.5. Make reference to existing water race and possible design options.

#### **OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN- plan amendments**

- 18.6. See **Appendix 2** for recommendations to the OPD Plan:

#### **Transport**

- 18.7. Replace 'roading collector' and identify the north-south connection as a 'primary route';
- 18.8. Replace 'collector roading' and identify the east-west CRETS connection as a 'primary route';
- 18.9. Retain a 'secondary route' to Lincoln Rolleston Road;
- 18.10. Amend the ODP's key to show a 'double arrow' referring to a future (roading) link outside the proposed ODP boundary;
- 18.11. Add note 'Interface treatment' along the Lincoln Rolleston and Selwyn Roads frontages;

#### **Urban design**

- 18.12. Add note 'Reverse sensitivity treatment' along the internal boundary with Lot 3 DP 48064.

#### **Green and Blue Network**

- 18.13. Show water race alignment.



**Gabi Wolfer**

**(07/10/21)**

## APPENDIX 1

### BEST PRACTISE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES (CRPS 2013 Policy 6.3.2)

**Principle 1-Tūrangawaewae** – the sense of place and belonging – recognition and incorporation of the identity of the place, the context and the core elements that comprise the Through context and site analysis, the following elements should be used to reflect the appropriateness of the development to its location: landmarks and features, historic heritage, the character and quality of the existing built and natural environment, historic and cultural markers and local stories.

**Principle 2-Integration** – recognition of the need for well-integrated places, infrastructure, movement routes and networks, spaces, land uses and the natural and built environment. These elements should be overlaid to provide an appropriate form and pattern of use and development.

**Principle 3-Connectivity** – the provision of efficient and safe high quality, barrier free, multimodal connections within a development, to surrounding areas, and to local facilities and services, with emphasis at a local level placed on walking, cycling and public transport as more sustainable forms of transport.

**Principle 4-Safety** – recognition and incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the layout and design of developments, networks and spaces to ensure safe, comfortable and attractive places.

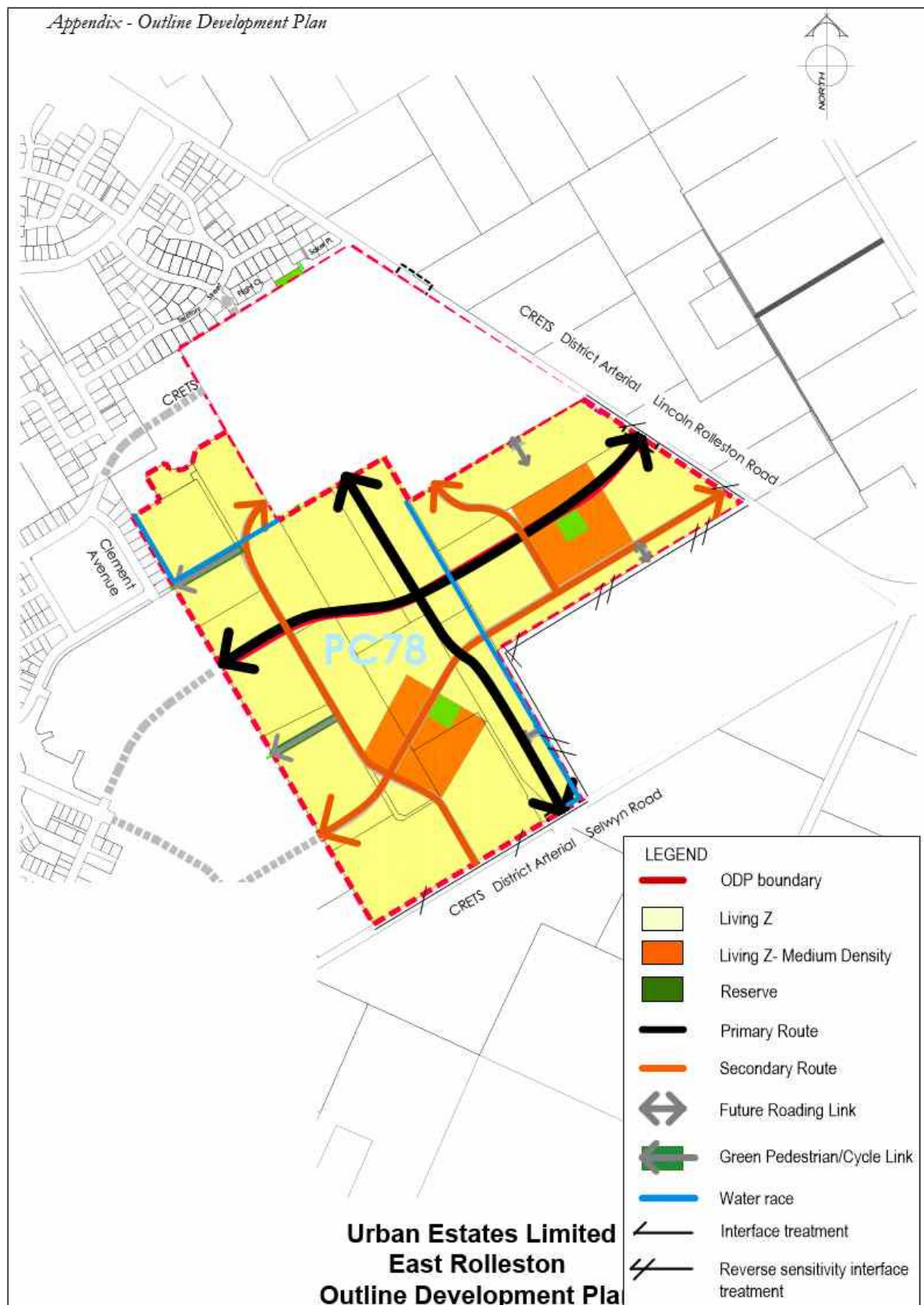
**Principle 5-Choice and diversity** – ensuring developments provide choice and diversity in their layout, built form, land use housing type and density, to adapt to the changing needs and circumstances of the population.

**Principle 6-Environmentally sustainable design** – ensuring that the process of design and development minimises water and resource use, restores ecosystems, safeguards mauri and maximises passive solar gain.

**Principle 7-Creativity and innovation** – supporting opportunities for exemplar approaches to infrastructure and urban form to lift the benchmark in the development of new urban areas in the Christchurch region.

## APPENDIX 2

### PROPOSED CHANGES TO ODP



## APPENDIX 3

### PC78- INTENSIVE FARMING BUFFER

