

Topic investigation

Providing for Local Centres and Neighbourhood Centres in
the District Plan



Introduction

This short report records the methodology followed in investigating an issue that will arise in the Selwyn District Plan review, along with the outcomes of that review and any recommendations.

Provisions Included in Review

Plan Change 7 introduced planning provisions into the operative district plan to provide for Neighbourhood and Local Centres, including definitions of these centres. Key features of these planning provisions* are:

- Neighbourhood and Local Centres can only occur where they have been identified on an Outline Development Plan, and currently only Lincoln and Rolleston have these.
- At time of subdivision, lots intended for the Neighbourhood and Local Centres are to be identified and consent notices registered on the Certificate of Title to advise that these lots are subject to Business 1 rules.
- Business 1 rules apply to these area, but the land remains zoned Living Z.

*The key relevant provisions are shown in Appendix 1

Since then, the Council has developed the Selwyn 2031 District Development Strategy which includes Township and Activity Centre Networks defining the role of towns and their centres. In addition Chapters 5 and 6 of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement have been made operative, as have Key Activity Centre provisions in the operative district plan under LURP Action 27.

It is also worth noting that the B1 zone at West Melton, incorporated into the district plan by way of private Plan Change 30, includes development controls similar to those for the Neighbourhood Centres. Namely a total floor space limit of 3000sqm and individual tenancies no greater than 350sqm GFA. It is not, however, an identified Neighbourhood Centre.

This Topic Investigation seeks specifically to review:

- the appropriateness of the current Neighbourhood and Local Centres district plan provisions against this changed planning framework; and
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the current planning provisions;

Methodology

This is set out in Project Scope, “Planning analysis – Providing for Neighbourhood and Local Centres in the District Plan”.

At this stage actions iii. (engagement with developers/landowners of Neighbourhood Centres at Southpoint and Edwards Road/Eastgate Drive) and iv. (engagement with RC staff) has not been undertaken due to the findings of the study that the existing planning provisions cannot be carried over. As such identifying how these groups found working with the rules package would not add useful information. Obtaining views on the merits of re-zoning these areas would still be useful. This can be done as part of a joint approach to these landowners under BS003).

Findings of the Review

The findings are:

- The approach adopted in the district plan has its genesis in the Lincoln Structure Plan and Rolleston Structure Plan which provided guidance on the location and scale of the centres. The rationale for the use of Neighbourhood and Local Centres was driven principally by urban form and urban consolidation considerations. The adoption of an intra-centres approach with the use of smaller residential-based centres to complement the role of town centres, was seen as a key tool for achieving a sustainable urban form for Lincoln and Rolleston. This was necessary given the scale of urban growth and change PC1 to the RPS had identified for these towns.
- The PC7 Panel determined that the location of the Neighbourhood Centres and Local Centres needed to be identified on the ODPs rather than left as a decision for subdivision stage*. They considered it a fundamental requirement that there should be certainty within a District Plan as to what provisions apply to a specific area of land. Consequently in addition to identifying the centres on the ODPs, consent notices were also to be used to state that Business 1 provisions applied to these specific areas of land.
*Paragraph 79 of Panel Recommendation
- The current district plan provisions reflect the Council-led Structure Plan and re-zoning plan change process for PC7. In the absence of a similar Council-led process, the new district plan framework needs to be changed to provide for the establishment and development of future Neighbourhood and Local Centres.
- The location and land requirements of the centres identified through PC7 have now all, at the least, been identified at subdivision stage (ODP Area 11 is currently subject of RC175169). This raises the issue of the appropriateness of the zoning of these Centres which remain Living Z under the operative district plan. The Table below sets out the status for each centre:

Township	Location	Centre	Status	Consents	Lapse Date
Lincoln					
	ODP Area 3 (Eastgate Drive)	Neighbourhood	Land use consent granted but unbuilt	RC175112	31/05/22
	ODP Area 7 (Vernon Drive)	Neighbourhood	Land use consent granted but unbuilt	RC165386	16/08/21
Rolleston					
	ODP Area 1 (Stonebrook)	Local	Lot for Local Centre identified on approved subdivision plan and consent notice issued	Lot 515, RC135261	n/a
	ODP Area 6 (Farrington)	Neighbourhood	Built and tenanted (Southpoint)	RC155561	n/a
	ODP Area 7 (Branthwaite Drive)	Neighbourhood	Subject of current subdivision application which identify lots for Neighbourhood Centre	Subdivision Consent RC175169	n/a

- Within the UDS part of the district, Chapter 6 to the RPS provides clear policy direction regarding Neighbourhood Centres. For the non-UDS parts of the district the RPS chapter 5 is less directive and instead provides a more diffuse policy direction on Neighbourhood Centres.
- The Neighbourhood and Local Centres provisions of the operative district plan largely implement Chapter 6 to the RPS, as well as Chapter 5's support for business opportunities of a character and form that support urban consolidation. In particular they implement the requirement that commercial growth is largely to be located in the Key Activity Centres with Neighbourhood Centres having a 'service' role to local communities.
- Selwyn 2031 is largely silent on the role of Neighbourhood and Local Centres. However Issue 27 refers to the need to amend district plan provisions to identify and support the development of Activity Centres and Neighbourhood Centres (not defined), and to also manage distribution of commercial activities. Selwyn 2031 reinforces the primacy of town centres. The Neighbourhood and Local Centres

provisions of the operative district plan are consistent with this strategic outcome, but restricted to Lincoln and Rolleston only.

- The operative district plan provisions do not provide policy direction for the location and scale of future Neighbourhood and Local Centres over and above those already identified. However, only Rolleston town centre is anticipated (and promoted in Council's strategic documents) to change in terms of its retail offer and scale*. This reinforces the need for any district plan policy framework to maintain the primacy of the town centres as sought under Selwyn 2031, by safeguarding KACs from inappropriate siting and scale of Neighbourhood/Local Centres.

*Selwyn District Commercial Centres Assessment 2012 and Selwyn 2031 District Development Strategy

- There are three discrete non-town centre areas of B1 zoning. These are at 11 Douglas Street (occupied by Travlon coaches), Lincoln; 125 High Street, Leeston (Cochranes of Canterbury) and 41 Pennington Street, Leeston (Airbourne Honey Ltd). All three are single business sites and effectively represent 'spot' zoning. All three are surrounded by residentially zoned land. Given their location and the activities being carried out at the sites, this raises the question of what is their most appropriate zoning and whether they could be possible Neighbourhood Centres given their current B1 zoning.
- B1 zone provisions are being used to manage both B1 zoned land and the PC7 ODP areas. There is an issue of whether it is more appropriate to provide for Neighbourhood and Local Centres through their own bespoke zone or overlay to differentiate the range and scale of activities appropriate to these centres versus the town centres to implement Selwyn 2031 and RPS Chapter 6. For example separate out a B1 (Town Centre) zone from a B1 (Neighbourhood Centre) zone. However this may need to reflect National Planning Template requirements.
- Waimakariri District Plan: This has no Neighbourhood Centre provisions. Their Business 4 zone provides for two non-town centre commercial areas existing as at 1998 when the district plan was notified.
- Christchurch District Plan: This has specific provisions for Neighbourhood Centres. They are defined by reference to specific zones at identified locations. Likewise Local Centres are also defined by reference to those areas zoned Commercial Local. The role of Neighbourhood and Local centres is set out in policy (Policy 15.2.2.1). Key method of control to manage their effects on the primacy of KACs are tenancy size.
- Ashburton: The Business A zone does not distinguish in terms of the range and scale of activities between Ashburton town centre and suburban centres within the town, and also town centres in the smaller rural settlements. The same tenancy threshold of 500sqm is used for all of these centres. Building heights, however, differ with the tallest buildings being permitted in Ashburton town centre. Larger tenancies for retail and commercial activities are provided for in the Business B and Business C zones which are intended to provide for LFRs (Bus B) and recreational activities requiring larger footprints (Bus C).

Recommendation:

That the following are noted:

- The existing plan provisions cannot be rolled over given the way they were set up under PC7. Consequently a revised set of plan provisions will be needed to manage activities at existing Neighbourhood and Local Centres, and to guide the location and scale of new centres. This will include consideration of zoning and how to provide for them across the district.
- The above will need to be cognisant of smaller 'town centres' such as at West Melton and whether they are Neighbourhood Centres or 'town centres', and their place in the centres hierarchy. This will need to consider whether Neighbourhood Centres are anticipated outside of Lincoln and Rolleston, or necessary to achieve sustainable urban form for the district's smaller towns.
- The appropriateness of the Living Z zoning for the existing centres needs to be re-considered now that they are all identified on approved subdivision plans and/or consented.
- The new plan provisions will need to implement the Township and Activity Centres outcomes in Selwyn 2031, the Malvern and Ellesmere Area Plans and RPS (particularly Chapters 5 and 6). These require a 'centres-based' approach to the distribution of retail and commercial activities across the district and within larger towns.
- The appropriateness of the 'spot' zoning for the three non-town centre B1 areas needs to be reconsidered to reflect Selwyn 2031 and RPS requirements, as well as the National Planning Templates.

The above translate into two distinct 'next-stage' work streams:

- Developing new plan provisions, including zoning options, for Neighbourhood Centres and Local Centres which implement Selwyn 2031 and the RPS. National Planning Templates may impinge on the outcomes of this work stream. Key inputs include the findings of the Selwyn Growth Model and BS004 (Implementation of the Selwyn 2031 Activity Centre and Township Networks through District Plan Business Zone provisions). The findings of BS002 (Interface between Business Zones and Non-Business Zones) and BS003 (Urban design in B1 zones) will contribute to developing development controls in these areas. They will also form part of the wider 'centres' implementation work and how to define smaller town centres versus Neighbourhood Centres. The intra-urban role of Neighbourhood centres which complement town centres may be a key definitional difference.
- Review of the appropriateness of the B1 zoning at 11 Douglas Street, Lincoln; 125 High Street, Leeston and 41 Pennington Street, Leeston. Key inputs include the findings of the Selwyn Growth Model and BS004 (Implementation of the Selwyn 2031 Activity Centre and Township Networks through District Plan Business Zone provisions). In addition the options identified under BS001 (Planning Analysis – Existing Out-of-Zone Business Activities in Small Rural Towns) may provide examples of approaches for providing for business activities at these three sites.

Appendix 1

Policy B4.3.10

Provide Neighbourhood and Local Centres, as shown in operative Outline Development Plans, to satisfy the more localised and convenience needs of people and communities, whilst recognising that Neighbourhood and Local Centres are to complement existing Town Centres which shall remain the primary focus for commercial, social and community activity within each Township. (Recommendation 2)

Explanation and Reasons

The Town Centres within each township serve an important function as significant physical resources providing for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of their respective communities of influence. Crucially such Town Centres serve as focal points in terms of providing important public and private services and facilities in the most efficient manner to the wider community, and should remain the focus of commercial, business and retail development in future.

The majority of such Town Centres are comprised of a core business area providing primarily retail, service and limited community activities. It is considered that over time that the range and diversity of such functions, including that of office and commercial activity will increase.

Whilst the Business 1 zone Objectives, Policies and Rules also apply to Neighbourhood and Local Centres shown on ODPs, the services and facilities provided for such centres are generally to have a more localised area of influence due to their limited range of activities and accessibility, and accordingly need to complement existing Town Centres, and not compete with them in terms of being a substantial business or retail destination at a strategic level.

Accordingly, such Neighbourhood Centres, as identified by the ODPs should:

- Range in size, but generally comprise 1,000m² - 2,000m² total floorspace and include:
 - o up to 15 shops, with a maximum retail tenancy of 350m² GFA; and provide
 - o a limited range of community facilities (Recommendation 2)

Local centres, as identified by identified by the ODPs should:

- Range in size, but generally comprise up to 450m² total floorspace and include:
 - o 1 -5 shops, with a maximum retail tenancy of 350m² GFA; and provide
 - o a limited range of community facilities (Recommendation 2)

Rules:

In the Living Z zones, any area shown within an Outline Development Plan as a Neighbourhood or Local Centre is subject to the provisions of the Business 1 zone, with a consent notice or similar mechanism to be registered on the Certificate of Title for these lots advising owners that the lot is subject to the Business 1 rule package.

WITHIN THE BUSINESS 1 ZONE

22.14.1 Any retailing activity within a Neighbourhood Centre as identified on ODP contained in Appendix 35 and 36 within either Rolleston or Lincoln with a total retail floor space in excess of 2000m² or individual retail tenancy area greater than 350m² GFA shall be a discretionary activity.

22.14.2 Any retailing activity within a Local Centre as identified on ODP contained in Appendix 35 and 36 within either Rolleston or Lincoln with a total retail floor space in excess of 450m² or individual retail tenancy area greater than 350m² GFA, shall be a discretionary activity.

Definitions

Local Centre: is a small grouping of convenience stores (in the order of 1-5 stores) servicing resident's day-to-day retailing requirements and predominantly draws people from a localised area.

Neighbourhood Centre: is a grouping of principally convenience stores (in the order of 6-15 stores) predominantly servicing the local communities weekly and day-to day retail requirements.

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