

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF PATRICIA HARTE – STREAM 7B

SUBMISSION OF MIKE GREER HOMES REQUESTING REZONING OF LAND AT SOUTH KAIAPOI

Scope of evidence

In my evidence I have considered the appropriateness of specific density provisions for the Medium Density Residential zoning that would apply to the Mike Greer Homes South Kaiapoi site. In particular I consider whether it is a necessary or appropriate planning approach to prevent or limit residential intensification under the Christchurch International Airport's (CIAL) L_{dn} 50 dBA Airport Noise contours.

Zoning

Medium Density Residential zoning was chosen for the South Kaiapoi site for two reasons. Firstly, it is a form of development that Mike Greer Homes specializes in. Secondly, the general move to provide for, and encourage higher urban densities, enables more efficient use of residential land, which is a limited resource.

Context

Submissions and further submissions on the PWDP and Variation 1 have been made on behalf of Mike Greer Homes NZ Limited relating to rezoning of land in south of Kaiapoi from Rural Lifestyle to Medium Density Residential. These submissions have been opposed by CIAL who request that the land remain rural due to the potential for new residents to be adversely affected by aircraft noise to the extent that there will be complaints which could result in CIAL's operations being compromised.

In Stream 12E I assessed the policy environment relevant to rezoning of the South Kaiapoi site in relation to provision for existing and future housing demand in Kaiapoi, Waimakariri and Greater Christchurch. This assessment concludes that the Mike Greer block in South Kaiapoi has many attributes which support it being rezoned for residential purposes. The issue at hand now, is whether the residential development of this land should be constrained through density controls to reduce or eliminate the potential for noise complaints that could result in significant restrictions on the operations of the Christchurch International Airport (CIAL). I understand that CIAL seek to reduce the permitted housing density contained in Variation 1, although I am not clear exactly what reduction is being sought.

Density provisions

The housing density provisions in the Proposed District Plan and Variation 1 have two components, namely subdivision lot size and the number of residential units that can be established on a site. The subdivision **minimum lot size** specified for sites within the Air Noise Qualifying Matter overlay is 200m² whereas elsewhere there is no minimum lot size where a multi-unit residential development is submitted with a design statement and land use consent (SUB-S1). With regard to the **maximum number of residential units permitted within a single site**, in the Medium Density Residential zone only one unit is permitted within the Air Noise (and natural hazard) Qualifying Matter overlays compared to 3 units elsewhere (Rule MRZ-BFS1).

In my opinion the South Kaiapoi site is well-suited for Medium Density Residential zoning. The reasons for this include that it is:

- (a) a logical extension of Kaiapoi;
- (b) of a scale to enable efficient servicing and to be provide for substantial residential development over time;
- (c) It is well served by public transport
- (e) Has been identified in the Waimakariri District Development Strategy as an appropriate extension of Kaiapoi.

It is logical and important therefore that the best use of this land is enabled by providing for the level of density available under the relevant provisions of the NPS-UD and the Enabling Act. Land development involves a very large investment over a long period of time. It is to be expected then that developers want to optimize the potential yield of a site. However most greenfield developers that I know adopt a very considered mixture of densities within a subdivision for a range of reasons including market demand and creating a desirable level of amenity.

Meeting demand

The indicative layout for the South Kaiapoi rezoned land contains 186 lots of which 23 are under 300m², which I understand is the minimum lots size being sought by CIAL. The inability to have these smaller sites will impact on the development in two obvious ways. Firstly, it will mean that the development will not be providing for people who wish to live in Kaiapoi but who cannot afford a larger site (and house). Secondly, it will reduce the return for the considerable investment put into developing the site over time.

Policy 1 of the NPSUD specifically requires that:

*Planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments, which are urban environments that, as a minimum: have or enable a variety of homes that: **(i) meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households;***

This is a very clear directive for decision-makers to enable development which will provide for a range of homes including smaller sites that provide for single dwellings. In my opinion, it would be contrary to good planning for new greenfield residential development to not provide for sites between 200m² and 300m² simply because they are under a 50dBa air noise contour. In this regard I refer the panel to the evidence of Mr John-Paul Clarke and Mr Putt who have considerable technical and planning experience with issues associated with aircraft noise impacts. They confirmed that throughout the world the most common approach to planning for development near airports was to start consideration of the need for manage development at least at the 55DBA level, recognising that there is very little evidence of annoyance at 50dBA

Policy framework

The relevant objectives of higher-level planning directions and documents are, at their simplest, to enable additional housing at Kaiapoi and enable CIAL to continue operating.

The three policy documents directly relevant to rezoning of the land in South Kaiapoi are the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan (PWDP), the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2022 (NPS-UD) and the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS). There is considerable overlap between these documents in relation to provision for growth, particularly between the Strategic Directions in the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan and the NPS-UD. The Proposed Plan has zoned most of Kaiapoi as Medium Density Residential in response to the Enabling Act, excluding flood prone and special purpose areas. The General residential zone policies encourage more housing in appropriate locations to meet growth needs. The Urban Form and Development Objective 1 specifies that there is to be:

“Sufficient feasible development capacity for residential activities to meet specified housing bottom lines and a changing demographic profile of the District..”

and then lists the goals for short, medium and long term. The WDC Section 32 report confirms there are no policies in the PDP regarding avoiding higher densities within Kaiapoi residential areas in response to potential impacts on the operation of the Airport. Rather the preferred approach is to:

- Set the minimum lot size on land under the airport noise contours of 1 house per 200m²
- Require insulation to limit the noise levels received within buildings under the contours. This is effectively achieved by modern building standards.
- provide information on LIMs advising future owners that they are located under an air noise contour and that therefore a certain level of noise is to be expected.

Reverse sensitivity

Given the significance of CIAL’s requests to limit residential development, I consider that the matter of reverse sensitivity needs to be carefully assessed rather than assumptions being made as to its existence and significance. In my opinion there has to be a real possibility that adverse effects experienced will lead to significant pressure to limit or close down an activity. The adverse effects would have to be substantial and result in a high level of complaints/concerns to reach the point where an activity will have to be abandoned or seriously compromised. It is not enough that noise sensitive activities are anticipated to occur under specific noise contours.

The approach of CIAL in the various documents attached to their submissions appears to assume that any increase in housing in undeveloped areas under the 50dBA noise contour will result in more complaints which will then require the airport operation to be reduced and possibly completely shut down in the future. In my opinion this assumption is extreme. Based on the number of noise complaints received by CIAL in recent years I consider it is incredibly unlikely that the proposed residential density standards providing for 200m² lots and one house per 200m² will create greater risk of increased aircraft noise complaints. No one doubts the importance of Christchurch Airport in terms of all the social and economic benefits it provides for Christchurch, Canterbury, and the rest of the country. It is in fact because it is a significant asset of huge importance that it would seem very unlikely to be closed down or its operation limited in response to complaints.

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