

Before an Independent Hearings Panel appointed by the Waimakariri District Council under: the Resource Management Act 1991 in the matter of: PDP Hearing Stream Seven.

Memorandum #2 of Ken Fletcher, responding to the Panel's questions

Introduction:

1. I made submissions on the PDP (Submitter #99) and Variation 1 (Submitter #74).
2. I appeared at Hearing Stream One in support of my submissions.
3. I provided written Expert Evidence and a written Lay Statement to Hearing Stream Eight
4. I provided written Expert Evidence and a written Lay Statement to, and appeared at, Hearing Stream Seven

IPI Authority to Introduce New Zones

5. At Hearing 7 the Chairperson doubted the Panel's ability to insert a new Medium Large Residential Zone (MLRZ) under Variation 1, and referred me to RMA s80(E)-80(G).
6. I refer the Panel to RMA s80(E) (1) (b) (iii) which states (bold underlining added)

80E Meaning of intensification planning instrument

(1) In this Act, **intensification planning instrument** or **IPI** means a change to a district plan or a variation to a proposed district plan—

...

(b) that may also **amend or include** the following provisions:

...

(iii) related provisions, including objectives, policies, rules, standards, and **zones**, that support or are consequential on—

(A) the MDRS; or

(B) policies 3, 4, and 5 of the NPS-UD, as applicable.

7. This clearly gives the Panel the ability to amend existing zones, or include a new zone, provided it supports or is consequential upon the MDRS.
8. The MDRS requires¹, relevantly, the inclusion of the following objectives into the PDP (bolding added)

Objective 1

(a) a well-functioning urban environment that enables **all people** and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future:

¹ RMA Sch 3A cl 6(1)

Objective 2

(b) a relevant residential zone provides for a **variety of housing types and sizes** that respond to—

(i) **housing needs and demand**; and ...

9. Objective 1 aims for a well-functioning urban environment that enables **all people**, not just those who desire small sections, to provide for their wellbeing, while Objective 2 aims for a relevant zone providing for a range of housing sizes that meets demand.
10. Clearly the MDRS is not just about higher density and small sections, but is also about meeting the housing demand across the range of section sizes. Inserting a new MLRZ zone is supportive of the MDRS, and expanding areas of the GRZ zone is consequential on the reduction of the GRZ to just Oxford under Variation 1.
11. It is within the authority of the IPI to both expand the coverage of the GRZ and to insert a new MLRZ zone into the PDP under Variation 1.

Recognition of the Oxford Differences

12. A Commissioner asked whether there were any other changes to the rules standards and policies required flowing from the acknowledgement that Oxford was different from Rangiora/Kaiapoi/Woodend and that Oxford LLRZ zones were within the township. My answer was that other than the changes identified in the introduction to the Large Lot Residential Zone, there were no other changes to the Objectives, Policies , Rules and Standards.
13. I stand by that answer in the context of the LLRZ section of the PDP that was the subject of Hearing 7A, but note that my submissions on other parts of the PDP that flow from the distinctive nature of Oxford, compared to Rangiora/Kaiapoi/Woodend, as submitted at earlier hearings, still stand. These include that the minimum residential lot size in Oxford should remain at 600m², the changes to the Description of the District to recognise that Oxford is distinctively different from Rangiora/Kaiapoi/Woodend³, and that SD-O2 (4) be altered to include new residential activity around existing towns and so allow for the outward growth of Oxford⁴.
14. In the context of the recognition of the Oxford differences, the Panel should also consider the submissions of the Oxford-Ohoka Community Board (#172.2 and 172.3) and their concerns for the effect smaller sections and infill housing is having on the character of Oxford.
15. I thank the Panel for their consideration of these issues.

² Lay Statement to Hearing 8 at 19

³ Ken Fletcher, Submission point 99.4 Description of the District

⁴ Ken Fletcher, Submission point 99.2 SD-O2 Urban Development Statement

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23 September 2024

Appendix 1

Extracts from Submission on Variation 1

Submission

The introduction of the MDRS brings into sharp focus the effect that the operative plan has had in limiting the range of lot sizes brought about through the interaction of the subdivision rules and the operation of the market. This is continued in the proposed plan and made more so through Variation 1. While I have no issue with the provision of medium density housing per se, it has the effect of limiting even more the range of lot sizes being made available, and thereby greatly limiting the range and variety of residential types sizes and densities, contrary to the strategic directions, objectives and policies.

The interaction of the market and the rules needs to be taken into account. The current and proposed rules interact with economics in such a way to drive the range of residential lot sizes brought to the market towards two points the minimum size enabled in the general residential and MDRS zones, and the required average lot size in the large lot residential zone. Thus residential lot sizes in the MDRS and GRZ zones congregate in the region just above the minimum lot size (600m² in the operative plan and 500m² in the proposed plan) - typically 600-700m² depending on size of lot being subdivided, and around the required 5000m² average in the LLRZ zone. There is almost nothing subdivided to produce lots in the 800-2500m² range, or between 2500 & 4000m².

The MDRS of Variation 1 will increase the demand for larger (800-2000m²) lot sizes, while doing nothing to provide for such lot sizes, other than for multi-unit/multi-storey developments. Indeed, it is likely to reduce the supply of such site as they are more suited to redevelopment to multi-unit developments.

The current provisions do not recognise that anything greater than 1000m² is a large lot in today's residential land market.

Relief Sought

Introduce provisions that will in fact produce a range of lot sizes being made available through subdivision. There are several ways this could be achieved, including

redefining the Large Lot Residential Zone to be anything greater than 1000m and allowing subdivision to this size as a restricted discretionary (or no more than discretionary) activity. this would then apply to all land zoned Res4a or 4b in the current plan;

creating a new zone (LLRZ1) that allows subdivision down to 1000m² (or 2000m²) as a controlled or restricted discretionary activity, and apply this to land currently zoned Res 4A or 4B; and renaming the proposed LLRZ to be LLRZ2 and applying this zoning to land rezoned from rural, with subdivision down to 2500m² available as a discretionary activity;

enabling subdivision of LLRZ land to (say) 2500m² as a restricted discretionary activity, and below that size being discretionary.

Appendix 2

Extract from Statement to Hearing 1 & 2

Description of the District

The district description states

Some 80% of the population is located in the eastern part of the [District](#) which contains the largest towns of Kaiapoi, Rangiora and Woodend/Pegasus. Oxford is the largest town in the west of the [District](#).

This, while correct, does not capture the gulf that separates Oxford from the other named centres, and this is generally the case throughout the Plan. The Plan variously identifies Oxford, along with Rangiora and Kaiapoi as a Key Activity Centreⁱ, as having a Principal Shopping Streetⁱⁱ, and as one of the four main centres (including Woodend)ⁱⁱⁱ. Oxford is stated to be one of “...the larger [urban environments](#)...” along with Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus^{iv}.

Reading the plan gives the impression that Oxford is one and the same as Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus, just “in the west”. The reality is very different.

- Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus are all within 10km of each other. Oxford is 30-40km from all of them.
- Rangiora/Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus all have 10,000-plus population, Oxford has about 2,200^v.
- Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Wooded/Pegasus all have public transport linking them to each other and to Christchurch. Oxford has no public transport.
- Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus have two all-year round public swimming pools, and an indoor sports stadium, funded by rates. Oxford has neither.
- Between them, Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus have numerous primary schools and two secondary schools. Oxford has an Area School.
- Oxford is still dominated by the classic Kiwi half- and quarter-acre lots, despite post-earthquake development of sub-1000m² developments and infill subdivisions. It retains the character of the classic NZ country town.
- Oxford has a considerably higher self-sufficiency ratio than the wider district, with over 40% of resident labour force working in Oxford ward, and over 55% working within the district^{vi}.
- Although Oxford is experiencing the same population growth pressures as the rest of the district (15% growth 2013-2018 and 28% growth 2006-2018^{vii}), Oxford is the only Waimakariri main centre that has not had areas of residential or commercial land expansion identified in the proposed plan.
- Although the plan includes Oxford as an urban environment (along with every hamlet village and town in the district!), despite being nowhere near the 10,000-population threshold^{viii}, Oxford is not prima facie an urban environment under the NPS-UD,

unlike Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus. It is unclear, but the plan appears to consider the entire district not zoned rural to be part of one single housing and labour market. This is the only way the Plan description of the urban environment can be reconciled with the NPS-UD definition.

- Oxford is not subject to the Medium Density Residential Zone provisions.
- Oxford is not included within Greater Christchurch area and is not covered in the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan^{ix}.
- Oxford is not covered by Map A of the RPS.
- WDC 2021 housing demand assessment has excluded Oxford because it is not within the Greater Christchurch Partnership area^x. The NPS-UD does not require a housing demand assessment for Greater Christchurch, but to urban environments within Tier 1 districts. Waimakariri is the tier 1 district, not Greater Christchurch. Although Oxford is nominally excluded under the NPS-UD definition, the proposed plan interpretation of Urban Environment brings Oxford back into the scope of NPS-UD.
- WDC is now updating its future development strategy (Our District, our Future, July 2018) in conjunction with the Greater Christchurch partners as a joint future development strategy^{xi}. As Oxford is outside the scope of Greater Christchurch, Oxford is excluded from the District Future Development Strategy.

The planning fixation on Greater Christchurch and Map A of the RPS leads to unintended consequences for areas like Oxford that are outside Greater Christchurch, as demonstrated by the previous submission from Ashley Industrial Services. The plan writers and the s42A report assumes that, being outside Greater Christchurch, Oxford will not have any areas of new development and/or that reverse sensitivity effects could not apply in Oxford. The plan is about the Waimakariri District and applies to the whole district. It is not about the Greater Christchurch area.

Oxford Is a Key Activity Centre, it is one of the District's four main centres, it does have a Principal Shopping Street and is one of the larger urban environments, along with Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus/Ravenswood, as stated in the proposed plan. But Oxford is very clearly not like Rangiora, Kaiapoi, and Woodend/Ravenswood/Pegasus. Oxford retains much of the character and flavour of a country town, while the other centres are better characterised as commuter towns and satellites of Christchurch.

Oxford is the largest town in the west of the district, but it has not yet joined Bilbo, Frodo and the elves and gone into the west. Oxford has a different character and flavour from the other district main centres, and this needs to be recognised in the proposed plan. The only place where this can be done is in the District Description

The s42A report claims that the Description of the District is about the physical features of the district in objective terms, and that character is subjective^{xii}. While the detail of character may be subjective, that there are significant differences in character between centres is objective fact. Where those centres are otherwise lumped together in the detail of the plan, that there is a significant difference needs to be acknowledged and stated upfront in the plan. The only place to do that is in the Description of the District.

Urban Centres v Urban Environment

At 3.9.1 the Urban Form s42A report recommends the introduction of a new definition, Urban Centres, that includes Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus but not Oxford, and

then proposed using Urban Centres in place of Urban Environment in SD-O2, UFD-P1 and UFD-P2. The effect of that is to remove any objective or policy provisions allowing new residential development in Oxford.

The s42A report states (para 167) (emphasis added)

The intent of the Urban Form and Development objectives and policies are to encourage any future residential, industrial and commercial development to occur on land that adjoins **Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend** in line with objectives 6.2.2(4) and 6.2.2(5), and Policy 6.3.1(4) of the RPS.

That is not what the notified urban form objectives and policies are doing. As notified, they are about residential capacity development in **the district**⁵, with a particular carve out for that occurring in Rangiora and Kaiapoi⁶. Submissions seek to extend the carve out to Woodend/Pegasus. Any move to restrict new residential development to just the carve out areas is an error and out of scope.

The planning fixation of Greater Christchurch and Map A again results in Oxford falling out of the Plan. The latest WDC Future Development Strategy has Oxford population growing by 67% 2018-2048⁷. The s42A report would preclude any new residential development in Oxford to accommodate that growth.

Oxford is different from Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus and this needs to be clearly acknowledged in the Plan at a high level. The only place to do this is in the description of the district. If this is not done the planning fixation of Greater Christchurch will result in Oxford being forgotten in this plan development process and will result in Oxford truly going into the West.

I stand by my submission that the Description of the District should be amended to read

Oxford, ~~is~~ the largest town in the west of the District has a different character to Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Woodend/Pegasus.

ⁱ Definitions: KEY ACTIVITY CENTRE - means the centres of Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Oxford *which are focal points for employment, community activities and the transport network; and* which are suitable for more intensive mixed-use development.

ⁱⁱ Definitions: PRINCIPAL SHOPPING STREET - means an area identified in the [District Plan](#) as a principal shopping street in Rangiora, Oxford or Kaiapoi.

ⁱⁱⁱ SD-O3 Urban Development (5) supports a hierarchy of urban centres, with the District's main centres in Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Oxford and Woodend being: ...

⁵ SD-O3, UFD-O1, UFD-P1, UFD-P2(2), UFD-P3 to UFD-P5 and UFD-P7 to UFD-P10

⁶ UFD-P2(1) and UFD-P6

⁷ Our District, our Future, July 2018, pp44-45

^{iv} General Objectives for all Residential Zones, Introduction

^v 2018 Census

^{vi} Oxford: An economic profile for Oxford and the Wider Waimakariri District, 2015, p 11

^{vii} <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/oxford>

^{viii} Definitions: URBAN ENVIRONMENT - means any area of land (regardless of size, and irrespective of local authority or statistical boundaries) that:

a) is, or is intended to be, predominantly urban in character; and

b) is, or is intended to be, part of a housing and labour market of at least 10,000 people.

For Waimakariri [District](#), the urban environment described in (a) and (b) comprises the towns of Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend (including Ravenswood), Pegasus, Oxford, Waikuku, Waikuku Beach, The Pines Beach, Kairaki, Woodend Beach, the small towns of Ashley, Sefton, Cust, Ohoka, Mandeville, and all Large Lot Residential Zone areas

^{ix} Our Space 2018-2048, Greater Christchurch Settlement Pattern Update, July 2019

^x S42A Urban Form and Development at 74

^{xi} Email from Anne Babbage, WDC planner, 9/5/23

^{xii} S42A Overarching and Part 1 Matters at 66