

LMM Investments 2012

Request for Change to the Christchurch District Plan to rezone land generally located at 240 Spencerville Road, Marshlands from a Specific Purpose (Golf Resort) Zone and Rural Urban Fringe Zone to a Residential New Neighbourhood Zone



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Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1.	Form and Acceptance of Plan Change Request.....	3
1.2.	Form of the Request- Clause 22.....	3
1.3.	Accepting the Plan Change Request - Clause 25.....	3
2.	The Site and the Surrounding Environment	4
3.	The Plan Change	6
3.1.	Description of the Proposal	6
3.2.	Purpose and Reasons for the Plan Change	8
3.3.	Urban Design Attributes	8
3.4.	Transport Attributes.....	9
3.5.	Open Space and reserves	10
3.6.	Infrastructure - water and wastewater	10
3.7.	Consultation	10
4.	Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Proposed Plan Change	11
4.1.	Economic Effects	11
4.2.	Infrastructure	12
4.3.	Geotechnical Ground Conditions and Natural Hazards	13
4.4.	Contaminated land	14
4.5.	Transport	15
4.6.	Landscape and Urban Design	17
4.7.	Ecology	19
4.8.	Cultural Values	20
4.9.	Reverse sensitivity.....	22
4.10.	Summary of Effects	22
5.	Statutory Framework – Resource Management Act 1991	23
5.1.	Sections 74 & 75 - Matters to be considered by territorial authority/ Contents of district plan	23
5.2.	Section 31 – Functions of Council under the Act	23
6.	Strategic Planning Framework	24
6.1.	National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL)	24
6.2.	NPS – Fresh Water, NES – Fresh Water, and the NPS-Indigenous Biodiversity	26
6.3.	Spatial plans and strategies	27
6.4.	NPS-UD	30
6.5.	Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS)	34
6.6.	Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan and Canterbury Air Regional Plan	36
6.7.	Objectives and Policies of the Christchurch District Plan (District Plan)	36
7.	Section 32 - Assessment of Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Plan Change.....	37
7.1.	Appropriateness of Objectives and Policies of the Christchurch District Plan (District Plan)	37
8.	Part 2 RMA and overall Conclusion	41

Request to Change the Christchurch District Plan under clause 21 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991

1. Introduction

To: The Christchurch City Council

LMM Investments 2012 (LMM) requests changes to the Christchurch District Plan as described below:

1. The location to which this request relates is located approximately 2km north of the suburb of Prestons and 1km southwest of Spencerville. The site has frontage to Spencerville, Turners, and Teapes Roads, and also has access to Lower Styx Road via a private bridge. It is currently in use as a dairy farm and 4 x 4ha lifestyle blocks. A location plan of the site is attached as part of the Landscape Report Graphic Attachment (Sheet 4, **Appendix F**).
2. Total Area: approximately 170.3 ha
3. The subject land is comprised of 10 titles that are legally described as follows:
 - 144 Turners Road – Pt Lot 30 DP2773, RS 19765, Lot 29 DP 2773, Lot 2 DP 4047, Lot 1 DP 4047
 - 156 Turners Road – Lot 4 DP 76333
 - 176 Turners Road – Lot 3 DP 76333
 - 174 Spencerville Road- Lot 1 DP 76333
 - 220 Spencerville Road – Lot 2 DP76333
 - 240 Spencerville Road – Pt Lot 2 DP 5889
4. A copy of the Records of Title is attached as **Appendix M**. It is noted that the legal boundary of the lots, combined with the presence of paper road, means that the legal boundaries do not align with the physical formed bank of the Styx River.
5. The majority of the site is zoned Specific Purpose (Golf Resort) Zone (SP Golf Zone), with four lots having a Rural Urban Fringe Zone (RUFZ), and the Styx River margins having an Open Space Water and Margins Zone (OSWMZ). A copy of the existing zoning and the proposed zoning is attached as part of the Landscape Report Graphic Attachment (Sheet 6, Appendix F).
6. The landholdings subject to the plan change are held by several different owners, who have all been consulted as part of the plan change drafting process. The applicant owns, or is a prospective purchaser of, the land holdings within the existing SP Golf Zone area. The four lifestyle blocks have been included in the plan change to facilitate a logical long-term urban boundary. Development of these four blocks is reliant on a willing buyer-willing seller basis, with the proposed Outline Development Plan (ODP) designed to deliver an effective outcome regardless of the timing of development of these four blocks.

A table setting out the key changes sought by the Plan Change relative to the outcomes sought in the SP Golf Zone is provided as Appendix L. In summary, the proposed Plan Change seeks the following changes to the Christchurch District Plan:

1. Rezone the SP Golf Zone and RUFZ parts of the site to Residential New Neighbourhood Zone (RNN). Retain the current OSWMZ.
2. Delete all references to the site and associated rules and Outline Development Plan (ODP) that currently form part of the SP (Golf Resort) Chapter 13.9 and Subdivision Chapter 8 of the District Plan.
3. Add a replacement ODP and associated narrative as an Appendix to Chapter 8 – Subdivision, in line with the District Plan approach to the placement of ODPs for RNN zoned land;

4. The proposed text amendments, including the ODP and associated narrative, are attached as **Appendix K**. The proposed changes to the ODP is shown in the Landscape Report Graphic Attachment to the (Sheet 5, **Appendix F**);
5. For completeness, the Plan Change relies on the settled policy and rule framework for the RNN Zone and therefore does not necessitate any amendments to the Chapter 14 RNN Zone provisions.

This document forms the Section 32 evaluation of the plan change, consisting of an evaluation of the contents of the Proposed Plan Change, and incorporates material from the following documents:

- Appendix A - Economic Assessment
- Appendix B - Infrastructure Assessment
- Appendix C- Geotechnical Assessment
- Appendix D- Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) Report
- Appendix E- Integrated Transport Assessment
- Appendix F- Landscape Assessment
- Appendix F(i) – Landscape Assessment Graphic Attachment
- Appendix G- Urban Design Assessment
- Appendix H- Ecological Assessment
- Appendix I- Cultural Feedback (preliminary)
- Appendix J- Christchurch District Plan Policy Framework Assessment
- Appendix - K Christchurch District Plan Text Changes
- Appendix L- Summary of Key Changes
- Appendix M- Records of Title

1.1. Form and Acceptance of Plan Change Request

This Plan Change request is made under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA or Act). This section sets out the relevant framework of the Act under which the request is made, with the subsequent sections then providing the relevant assessment of each part of the framework.

LLM requests, under clause 21(1) of Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the RMA, to the Christchurch City Council (CCC) (as a territorial authority) to change a district plan. In accordance with section 73(2) of the RMA, it makes this request in the manner set out under Part 2 of Schedule 1.

1.2. Form of the Request- Clause 22

Clause 22 of Part 2 of Schedule 1 sets out the form the request must be received and states:

- (1) A request made under clause 21 shall be made to the appropriate local authority in writing and shall explain the purpose of, and reasons for, the proposed plan or change to a policy statement or plan and contain an evaluation report prepared in accordance with section 32 for the proposed plan or change.
- (2) Where environmental effects are anticipated, the request shall describe those effects, taking into account clauses 6 and 7 of Schedule 4, in such detail as corresponds with the scale and significance of the actual or potential environmental effects anticipated from the implementation of the change, policy statement, or plan.

The purpose of and reasons for the proposed plan change are outlined in Section 3.2, and the evaluation report undertaken in accordance with section 32 of the RMA is set out in Section 8. An assessment of the environmental effects anticipated by the implementation of the changes is set out in Section 5. Section 6 sets out the relevant statutory framework, including relevant sections of the RMA, the Council must consider when undertaking a plan change, and Section 7 makes an assessment of the Plan Change against the Strategic Planning Framework.

1.3. Accepting the Plan Change Request - Clause 25

The Council has discretion to accept or reject a Plan Change request in accordance with Clause 25 of Schedule 1 of the RMA, subject to the matters set out in Clause 25(4)(a)-(e). Given that the site was rezoned some 15 years ago, the Council is able to reject the Plan Change request only on the following grounds:

- The Plan Change request is frivolous or vexatious (clause 25(4)(a));
- The Plan Change request is not in accordance with sound resource management practice (clause 25(4)(c)); or
- The Plan Change request would make the plan inconsistent with Part 5 – Standards, Policy Statements and Plans (clause 25(4)(d)).

In relation to (a), considerable technical analysis has been undertaken to inform the Plan Change, which is detailed in the report below. For this reason, the proposal cannot be described as frivolous or vexatious.

In relation to (c), 'sound resource management practice' is not a defined term under the RMA, however, previous case law suggests that the timing and substance of the Plan Change are relevant considerations. This requires detailed and nuanced analysis of the proposal that recognises the context of the Plan Change area and its specific planning issues.

In this context, the Plan Change is considered to be in accordance with sound resource management practice for the following reasons:

- The potential adverse effects of the proposed Plan Change can be adequately avoided or mitigated, that the supply of a large number of new homes has significant positive economic benefits, that the formation of stormwater basins and

riparian enhancement has the potential to deliver significant ecological benefits, and that the formation of new cycling and walking tracks have the potential to deliver significant positive connectivity benefits by providing a key missing 'cross-roads' in the wider trail network;

- The proposed Plan Change will give effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020. In particular, it will enable 'people and communities to provide for their ... economic (and social) ... well being'; and promote 'the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources', whilst delivering a 'well-functioning urban environment';
- The Plan Change is consistent with the Strategic Planning Framework, including the objectives of the Council's planning documents, and in this regard, the request for the Plan Change is justified and consistent with sound resource management practice;
- All necessary statutory requirements have been met, including an evaluation in accordance with S32 of the RMA with supporting evidence; and
- The Plan Change is considered to be consistent with the sustainable management purpose of the RMA as discussed in the report below.

In relation to (d), given that the Plan Change area has been identified for residential use, the proposal does not introduce any new, or alter any existing, objectives or policies, then the proposed zoning is not inconsistent with Part 5.

On this basis, the merits of the proposal should be allowed to be considered through the standard Schedule 1 process.

2. The Site and the Surrounding Environment

The subject land is located in Marshlands, approximately 1.4km north of the suburb of Prestons, 3.4km from the Prestons commercial centre, and 1.3km southwest of Spencerville. To put these distances in context, they are similar to the small rural gap between Heathcote Valley and Woolston, or Halswell and West Morland. The site is approximately 10km from Cathedral Square in the centre of Christchurch. The site location relative to the wider Christchurch area is shown in **Figure 1** below.

Despite having been zoned for golf resort purposes for some fifteen years, the site is currently undeveloped and as such is rural in appearance. The site contains a farmhouse and farming accessory buildings that are accessed via Teapes Road, with the majority of the site formed as pasture and used for grazing. The main farm also includes two further residential units. In addition to the main farm, the site also includes four rural lifestyle blocks that are clustered to the northwest corner of the site adjacent to the intersection of Turners Road and Spencerville Road. Each of these lifestyle blocks contains a dwelling set within an extensive garden curtilage and small paddocks. The site therefore contains seven existing residential units across the various landholdings.

The site's underlying geomorphology is reflected in its landforms and vegetation. The four northern lifestyle blocks and the northern third of the site are located on a higher terrace that is well drained, whereas approximately two thirds of the site is located on a lower terrace that is identified in the District Plan as being subject to flooding in high rainfall events. Several farm drains bisect the lower terrace running in a general southwest to northeast direction. The SP (Golf Resort) ODP shows built development occurring on the higher, northern terrace, with the lower terrace to be utilised for the golf course itself, along with stormwater management and recreational open space.

In addition to having frontage to Teapes, Turners, and Spencerville Roads, the site also has access to Lower Styx Road via a private bridge¹ over the Styx River that functionally forms a connection to the southern end of Teapes Road. This bridge is proposed to be retained for pedestrian and cycle access, but is not proposed to be used for general vehicle traffic due to its

¹ It is assumed that the existing bridge is privately-held, noting that there is some discrepancy between the physical edge of the river and the location of hydro-parcels, paper roads, and fee simple titles along the river margins.

lightweight structure. Both Spencerville Road and Lower Styx Road are categorised as Collector Roads in the District Plan, with Teapes Road and Turners Road having a Local Road categorisation. All roads have a rural formation with grass swale edges and an absence of formed kerbs or footpaths.

Figure 1. Site location in wider Christchurch



Image source: Google Earth

The site is bordered to the south by the Styx River, with the river margin comprised of dense willow-dominated vegetation. To the northeast the site adjoins rural farmland that is used for pastoral grazing. To the north the site adjoins Spencerville Road and to the west is bordered by Turners and Teapes Roads. Neighbouring properties to the north and west are generally comprised of rural lifestyle uses that typically contain a dwelling set within sites that are generally 4 ha in area. Ouruhia Model School is located on Turners Road approximately 1.2km to the west of site (shown with a yellow star in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Site location



Image source: Google Earth

The attributes of the site and locality are further described in the technical reports appended to this assessment, including:

- a. Infrastructure / servicing, and ground and surface water characteristics (Appendix B);
- b. Geotechnical (Appendix C);
- c. Contamination (Appendix D);
- d. Transport (Appendix E);
- e. Landscape and urban design attributes (Appendices F and G); and
- f. Ecological attributes, including waterbodies (Appendix H).

3. The Plan Change

3.1. Description of the Proposal

The majority of the site has a SP Golf Zone (shown in purple below). The four lifestyle blocks to the northwest corner of the site adjacent to the Turners Road/ Spencerville Road intersection have a RUF Zone (shown in beige), with the margins of the Styx River having an OSWMZ (shown in teal). The existing zoning is shown in **Figure 3** below, with the site boundary shown in red.

Figure 3. Existing Zoning

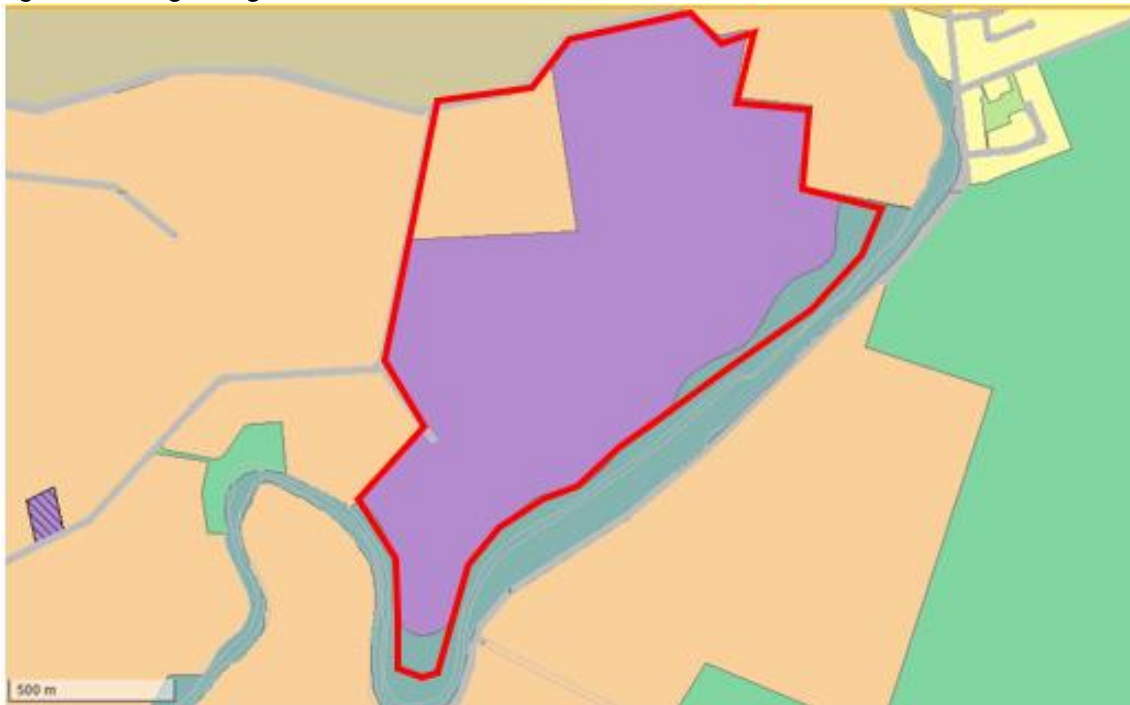


Image Source: Christchurch District Plan

It is proposed to rezone all of the existing SP Golf Zone and the RUFZ portions of the site to a RNN Zone. The portions of the site adjacent to the Styx River will retain the current OSWMZ so no change is proposed to the existing planning framework governing the Styx River margins.

The Plan Change has been designed with the following **outcomes** in mind:

- To repurpose the no longer viable golf resort outcome to enable the creation of a comprehensively planned residential community set within extensive areas of open space;

- Ensure that roading and three-waters servicing design solutions are readily available and are designed to accommodate the additional demand generated by the switch from golf resort to residential community;
- To provide housing capacity in a location that is notably closer to the centre of Christchurch than the majority of other greenfield housing alternatives in the Greater Christchurch area, thereby reducing commuter journey length and associated greenhouse gas emissions and the consequential effects on climate change relative to alternative greenfield growth areas;
- To create a range of lots for residential use in keeping with the surrounding area and topography, with larger lots and associated perimeter landscaping located around the site edges to manage amenity and outlook outcomes for existing neighbours;
- To achieve an average density of approximately 15 households per hectare (15hh/ha) for the portion of the site shown on the ODP as the development area;
- To provide for a community hub/ local commercial centre to provide easy access to day-to-day convenience facilities such as child care, café, and a small group of local shops. The proposed Neighbourhood Centre is anticipated to fall well within the 3,000m² GFA policy expectation for such centres expressed in Table 15.1 of the District Plan, with the ODP narrative identifying that its size expected to be around 1,500m² GFA to ensure the centre remains comfortably within the role and function of a neighbourhood centre and is scaled to meet local demand;
- To enable logical connections to be formed through the site, along with walking, cycling, and road connections to the nearby Spencerville village, the suburb of Prestons, Ouruhia Model School, and the wider recreational cycle and walking network, along with provision for a bus service on Turners Road and/or Spencerville Road;
- To ensure that all residential lots will not be impacted by any future flood events by locating development on the higher terrace and ensuring that ground levels are managed through the subdivision consent process to ensure future housing and associated foundation design is located clear of anticipated flood levels;
- To create a functional public open and recreational space network with the provision of cycle and walking trails that is sensitive to the topography of the site, including wetland and riparian ecological restoration. It is anticipated that the land adjacent to the Styx River will be taken as esplanade reserve by the Council as part of subsequent subdivision consent processes; and
- To enable ongoing farming activity in the open space area in the event that active recreational use of this area is not required.

To implement the above outcomes, the Plan Change proposes to rezone the balance of the site to a RNN Zone. The RNN Zone is the standard zone that applies to greenfield residential areas in Christchurch. As such, the policy and rule framework is well-suited to managing the effects associated with greenfield residential development. **No changes are proposed to the operative RNN policy or rule framework beyond the introduction of a new ODP and associated narrative.**

Consistent with RNN zoned areas, development of the site is to be guided by a new ODP and associated narrative text (see **Appendix K**). The ODP addresses the requirements for ODPs set out in the CRPS². The ODP is likewise responsive to the Ministry for the Environment's Urban Design Protocol and the matters set out in the NPS-UD regarding the delivery of a well-functioning urban environment³. As such, the ODP sets out the key structuring elements of the site including the locations for residential development, indicative locations for higher density housing and the proposed neighbourhood centre, extensive open space areas, key road and cycle/ pedestrian links, and the need for perimeter treatment to manage the interface with neighbouring rural areas.

² In particular CRPS Policy 6.3.2 and 6.3.3

³ NPS-UD Policy 1

3.2. Purpose and Reasons for the Plan Change

Clause 22(1) of the RMA requires that a Plan Change request explains the purpose of, and reasons for the proposed plan change.

The purpose of the Plan Change is:

to enable the development of a new residential community with an associated local community / commercial centre, set within extensive open space areas and ecological restoration, and well connected to the existing urban area and local schools. The plan change will make a significant contribution to housing capacity and provide for increased competition and choice in residential land markets, whilst managing adverse effects of the change in land use on the surrounding area. Provision for a variety of densities (including medium density and lower density development) within the Plan Change area is considered appropriate to provide housing choice, help address declining housing affordability, and enable persons and the community to provide for their health and wellbeing, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating potential adverse effects.

The reasons for the Plan Change are:

- The existing SP (Golf Resort) zoning enables the land to be developed into a golf resort with 18 hole golf course, 380 bedroom hotel/ serviced apartments, 160 bedroom golf academy, and 150 residential units;
- The original zone was put in place prior to the Canterbury earthquake sequence. Since that time there has been increased recognition of the need for additional residential housing, with greater priority placed on wetland and riparian ecological restoration and recreational open space rather than a golf course and tourism facilities;
- The site is well-located to existing urban residential areas, especially in comparison to other potential greenfield locations;
- Over the 15-plus years since the original plan change was undertaken, the urban edge of Christchurch has shifted much closer to the site via the northern expansion of Prestons and the eastward expansion of Belfast and development in the Hills Road/ Mills Road area. As such the site is less isolated than was the case when it was originally zoned for SP Golf outcomes;
- The existing use of the site for grazing and very low density rural lifestyle activities is considered to be an inefficient use of the land relative to urban residential use and development. As concluded in the economic assessment (Appendix A), the proposed Plan Change will provide for increased competition and choice in residential land markets and help address declining housing affordability.
- The proposed Plan Change will give effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020. In particular, it will enable ‘people and communities to provide for their ... economic (and social) ... well being’; and promote ‘the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources’, whilst delivering a ‘well-functioning urban environment’.
- The Plan Change is consistent with the Strategic Planning Framework, including the objective of the Council’s planning documents, and in this regard, the request for the Plan Change is justified and consistent with sound resource management practice.

3.3. Urban Design Attributes

The urban design rationale underpinning the ODP is described in detail in the urban design, landscape, and visual impact assessment prepared by DCM Urban Design and is appended as **Appendices F and G**.

In summary, the key urban design outcomes are as follows:

- a. Create a high amenity rural village set within an extensive open space/ rural context;
- b. Maintain an appropriate interface with the rural edges of the site through the placement of larger lots, the avoidance of individual driveway access from the perimeter roads, perimeter road boundary landscaping, open rural vernacular fencing, and building setbacks around the external edges of the site;

- c. Carefully integrate development areas with the need to effectively manage flood risk and stormwater detention and treatment areas;
- d. Provide a diversity of house size and lot size to provide choice and to meet the range of housing needs in the community, with higher density development located close to high amenity areas and open space.
- e. Ensure effective multi-modal connections are provided to the large Prestons commercial centre and local primary schools, along with incorporating a neighbourhood centre within the site to help meet the day-to-day convenience needs of residents;
- f. Create streets which have a high level of amenity, provide for different modal allocation, and allow for an efficient use of land by having a street hierarchy with different road reserve widths depending on their classification;
- g. Provide a quantity of greenspace and opportunity for recreational facilities (local parks) appropriate for the future population through the plan change area and co-located with stormwater basins where appropriate;
- h. Facilitate the ecological restoration and enhanced public access to the Styx River margins.

3.4. Transport Attributes

The proposal does not entail any amendments to the transport provisions of the District Plan, which will apply at the time any physical subdivision or development of the land is proposed.

The Transport Assessment otherwise describes the relevant transport attributes of the proposal (**Appendix E**). The ODP indicates a primary road network within the application site, which includes three new road access points – on each to Teapes Road, Turners Road, and Spencerville Road, with each existing road retaining priority.

The SP Golf Resort rules limit development of the site until the intersection of Lower Styx Road and Marshlands Road is signalised. This signalisation has now occurred and therefore such a limitation in the rule framework is no longer necessary. It is noted that the need for this intersection upgrade was predicated on the Golf Resort having its main entrance from Lower Styx Road via a bridge over the Styx River. The existing bridge is proposed to be retained for cycle and pedestrian use only, with the site gaining its access from Teapes, Turners, and Spencerville Roads.

The transport assessment identifies that intersections within the wider road network will continue to function to an acceptable level of service without the need for further upgrades beyond the formation of dedicated left and right turning lanes at the Turners Road/ Marshland Road intersection once more than 700 houses are established. At this point a minor upgrade is proposed for the Marshland Road / Turners Road intersection, which is the addition of a 30m left turn lane on the Turners Road approach to improve capacity by separating left and right turning traffic. The ODP narrative identifies the need for this upgrade, with subdivision and land use development both required to be in accordance with the ODP⁴.

The ODP includes a commitment to upgrade the frontages of Teapes Road and Turners Road (between Spencerville Road and Marshland Road) along the site boundary. The existing Teapes Road/ Turners Road intersection will be upgraded to a 'standard' layout. Cycle/pedestrian links within the existing road reserve are also proposed along Lower Styx Road from the Teapes Road pedestrian bridge to Prestons, and upstream along the river to Turners Road to connect to Ouruhia Model School. Cycle/ pedestrian links are likewise anticipated along the northern bank of the Styx River. These shared paths will also contribute to the ongoing development of the *Source to Sea* walkway / cycleway project and has potential to connect to Bottle Lake Forest for recreational cycling and potentially to Chaney's Plantation in the future.

It has been identified that existing passenger transport routes could be extended to service the site along either Lower Styx or Spencerville/ Turners Roads, with the internal roading hierarchy designed to enable a bus service to be routed through the site should Environment Canterbury (as the regional passenger transport operator) be amenable to this change.

⁴ Rule 8.6.11(a) and 14.12.2.16

3.5. Open Space and reserves

Open space provision is characterised by an extensive open space area on the lower terrace. This space can either be retained for rural production, wetland restoration, or utilised for a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. Whether or not this area is vested in Council as reserve is a matter that will be appropriately assessed through the subsequent subdivision process. It is anticipated that an esplanade reserve will be vested in Council along the full length of the site's boundary with the Styx River, and that this esplanade reserve area will be connected to the residential development area and public roads via walking/ cycle paths to enable full public access to what will be a significant addition to the wider recreational network. Landscaped stormwater basins are proposed around the margin of the development area with these basins to be vested in Council as utility assets, with an expectation that they will also be accessible for passive recreation. Local parks are shown on the ODP and are evenly spaced through the site to ensure that all homes will be within an easy 500m walk of a local park. Where appropriate, these local parks are co-located adjacent to stormwater basins to provide a range of active and passive recreational opportunities. From pre-lodgement discussions with Council Parks Officers, it is understood that there is adequate capacity in the wider parks network for District Parks/ playing fields, and as such none are explicitly shown on the ODP. The opportunity to develop sports parks on the lower terrace in the future is however in no way precluded.

3.6. Infrastructure - water and wastewater

The development will be fully reticulated with sewer, water, stormwater, electricity and telecommunications, as set out in the Infrastructure Report attached in **Appendix B**.

The optimal solutions (and routes) for infrastructure will be determined in collaboration with Council staff at the time of any subdivision consent, accounting for existing and planned servicing infrastructure in the vicinity, nearby developments, and the methods of establishing new infrastructure and managing any disruption to public roads.

Apart from the stormwater basins discussed above, there is no need for other infrastructure network facilities to be shown on the ODP.

3.7. Consultation

The applicant's consultants have had regular discussions with Council staff regarding planning, infrastructure, roading and open space outcomes, with this preliminary advice from staff helping to inform the ODP and associated assessment of effects. Consultation has also occurred with the other landowners who for part of the plan change site.

Initial consultation has occurred with mana whenua through preliminary feedback from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited for the proposed residential development of a portion of the plan change site at 240 Spencerville Road. This feedback was previously obtained from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited in January 2022, to fulfil the requirement of Schedule 16 clause 9(5) of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting Act 2020 and is provided in Appendix I. The report identifies Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga as holding manawhenua over the project's location, as it is within their takiwā. The mandated kaitiaki representatives for Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga were briefed on the proposal to develop the site at 240 Spencerville Road on the 19th of January 2022. The report identifies potential effects on cultural values from the activities of development, with the matters raised able to be appropriately addressed as part of the subdivision consent process.

Whilst the proposal was not accepted for processing under the previous fast track scheme, the feedback from Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga at that time is attached as **Appendix I** and has helped to inform the current plan change application. It is anticipated that the Council will provide a copy of the application to the relevant Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga representative body for them to provide feedback on behalf of mana whenua. It is anticipated that any such feedback will be incorporated into the proposal and subsequent subdivision consenting processes. Pending feedback from Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, a brief assessment of the proposal against the guidance provided in the Mahaanui Iwi Management Plan is provided in Section 5 below.

No other consultation has been undertaken to date, including with residents in the wider area or Government agencies such as the Ministry of Education. This is intended to happen through the submission process.

4. Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Proposed Plan Change

As stated above, this assessment is being undertaken in accordance Clause 22(2) of Schedule 1 of the Act which requires that:

(2) Where environmental effects are anticipated, the request shall describe those effects, taking into account clauses 6 and 7 of Schedule 4, in such detail as corresponds with the scale and significance of the actual or potential environmental effects anticipated from the implementation of the change, policy statement, or plan.

Clause 6 of Schedule 4 outlines the information required in an assessment of environmental effects. In comparison, Clause 7 specifies the range of matters that must be addressed by an assessment of environmental effects of Schedule 4.

The range of actual or potential environmental effects arising from the Plan Change request are seen as being limited to the following matters:

- a. Economic effects;
- b. Infrastructure;
- c. Geotech and Natural Hazards
- d. Contaminated land;
- e. Transport;
- f. Landscape and visual effects;
- g. Urban design and urban form;
- h. Ecological effects;
- i. Cultural effects;
- j. Reverse sensitivity.

4.1. Economic Effects

An assessment of economic effects has been undertaken by Insight Economics (**Appendix A**). This report considers in particular the difference (increase) in residential yield enabled by the Plan Change relative to the existing SP Golf Zone framework and the economic impacts that that increase will have on both the functioning of the housing market and the benefits to the economy more broadly. The report notes that any economic disbenefits generated by the non-development of a golf resort are moot as the site has sat vacant for over fifteen years across the ownership several different developers, indicating that the resort is not commercially viable. Any economic benefits associated with a golf resort will not therefore eventuate regardless of this plan change. In short, the baseline for comparative economic purposes is the site's existing use for dairy grazing rather than a resort.

The economic benefits can be broadly divided into the effects on the functioning of the wider housing market/ housing choice, and the direct effects generated by construction activity and employment. The report identifies that there are widespread benefits arising from a competitive housing market and associated improved housing affordability (at least relative to the market if an additional 800 houses were not supplied). An additional 800 houses (or 650 houses more than that enabled by the SP Golf Zone) is considered to be a significant contribution to housing capacity in the context of Christchurch's housing market and the annual demand for new houses. In addition to improving market competitiveness, the plan change also improves housing choice both in terms of the plan change ODP including provision for a range of housing densities/ typologies to meet diverse housing needs, and in terms of the locational choice provided by the offering of a large greenfield housing option in the northeast of the City where no other opportunities are available in the wider area. The report confirms that a modestly sized community and commercial hub e.g. a pre-school, café, and several small shops will provide convenient access to community and commercial activities without adversely impacting on the role or function of other centres.

The one-off direct and indirect economic benefits associated with the construction of the subdivision infrastructure and the consequent construction of dwellings and associated flow-on effects enabled by the proposal is estimated to provide a boost to national GDP of \$258 million, generate employment for 1,856 FTE-years, and generate \$155 million in household incomes. Assuming (say) a 10-year development period, these benefits translate to annual impacts of \$26 million in GDP, employment for 186 people, and \$16 million in household incomes. In addition to the benefits derived during the construction phase, the proposed commercial and community centre will provide a modest level of ongoing employment and associated economic benefits.

In summary, the lack of commercial viability for the golf resort, as evidenced by it not having been built for over 15 years, means that the economic effects comparison is between the proposed plan change and the site's current use for pastoral

grazing. The report identifies that the plan change will make a significant positive contribution towards housing capacity, will help support a competitive land market (and therefore assist in improving housing affordability relative to pricing under a less competitive land market), will improve housing choice through both a range of housing typologies and in terms of locational options, and will provide a significant boost to GDP through the construction-phase of infrastructure and housing. The economic benefits of the proposal are therefore both significant and well in excess of the economic costs associated with the loss of the economic benefits derived from pastoral grazing.

4.2. Infrastructure

Water supply

The applicant has commissioned an assessment on 3-waters servicing from Davie Lovell-Smith Ltd (DLS) (**Appendix B**).

Following correspondence with Council officers, DLS have identified that there is no existing capacity in Council's reticulated network. DLS have therefore proposed a solution that involves either utilising an existing on-site bore that is currently used for irrigation and upgrading this supply to meet reticulated standards, or more probably surrendering this water take and instead driving a new, deeper bore to provide a more secure supply. A new bore will require the provision of an associated water treatment station to ensure the well-head is adequately protected and that water is treated to meet the drinking water standards for a community drinking water supplier as set by Taumata Arowai, the NZ water services authority. The creation of new bores and associated treatment plants is able to draw on proven solutions and common technology.

It is anticipated that the new system would then be vested with the Council. The new bore would need to either be sized to provide the requisite fire-fighting capacity and pressure in line with the SNZ PAS 4509:2008 New Zealand Fire Service Firefighting Water Supplies Code of Practice, or a firefighting reservoir provided on the site to ensure sufficient capacity is available in the event of a major fire.

It is anticipated that the detailed design and funding of water supply systems to achieve national standards is a matter that will form part of the subdivision consent process. It is therefore considered that there are no fundamental barriers to water supply that would prevent the site from being rezoned.

Wastewater

Wastewater is proposed to be managed via connection to the Council's reticulated network and Bromley wastewater treatment plant. As such no on-site wastewater disposal to ground (i.e. septic tanks) is proposed.

Wastewater from Spencerville is currently treated at the Bromley Wastewater Treatment Plant (the **Treatment Plant**) via a sewer main that runs along Lower Styx Road. Council engineers have advised that the Proposal can be accommodated within the Treatment Plant i.e. there is no capacity constraint in regard to *treatment*. The focus of the DLS report is therefore on wastewater *conveyance* between the site and the Treatment Plant.

DLS recommends that connection of the site to the existing reticulated network is facilitated by either a gravity sewer system or the installation of a Local Pressure System (**LPS**) within the Site. LPS systems are set at a shallower depth than gravity pipelines, which allows for easier and safer maintenance and also responds to the shallow groundwater found in parts of the Site. Importantly, a LPS system should also result in a reduction in stormwater and groundwater ingress into the system compared with a gravity sewer and as such should reduce the load placed on the Treatment Plant relative to traditional systems. The final decision on the preferred system will be made as part of the subdivision consent stage.

The most likely route for a new wastewater pipeline to connect the Site with the Treatment Plant is available east along Spencerville Road and then south down Lower Styx Road. Both routes occurs wholly within Council-held road reserve. Upgrades to existing Council-held pump stations are also identified by DLS as being necessary to ensure network efficiency is able to be maintained.

As with potable water, it is common for developers to fund the construction of the necessary pipework to enable on-site wastewater infrastructure to be connected to the Council's reticulated network, along with matters such as pump station upgrades. There is therefore no barrier to wastewater reticulation that would prevent the plan change from proceeding.

Stormwater management and flood risk mitigation

The DLS report provides a detailed assessment of stormwater management and the ability to appropriately mitigate flood risk. In summary, residential development is to be focussed on the upper terrace area where flood risk is reduced. Bulk earthworks during the subdivision-phase will help to increase the height of any lower-lying land on the upper terrace, with subsequent building foundation designs to ensure future dwellings achieve the required minimum floor levels set by Council modelling. Stormwater is to be treated via stormwater basins located around the edge of the upper terrace, prior to discharging downstream post-treatment. Compensatory storage for any upper terrace filling can be provided through these basins. A similar stormwater and flood risk solution formed part of the SP Golf Zone approach, with the current ODP also showing development focussed on the upper terrace area.

Power, phone, and internet

The DLS report confirms that the proposed development will be connected to power, phone, and internet networks. These connections will be facilitated with the infrastructure providers and designed and build to their standards.

Overall summary

The Plan Change area is able to be serviced with reticulated services. A new treated potable water supply will be required with a new (or upgraded) bore needing to be drilled. Wastewater will be conveyed to Council's existing reticulated network via a Low Pressure System within the site due to the site's relatively shallow depth to groundwater. Stormwater treatment and attenuation will be managed via a series of stormwater basins shown on the ODP. The stormwater network will be designed to dovetail with on-site earthworks necessary to both build up the heights of parts of the upper terrace to ensure development is able to be constructed clear of conservatively modelled flood risks, whilst the excavated lower terrace will be able to provide flood storage capacity long with the potential for wetland restoration.

4.3. Geotechnical Ground Conditions and Natural Hazards

Natural hazard risk was investigated as part of the original plan change process to create the SP Golf Zone, with the result that development of the upper terrace was found to be generally appropriate from a hazard management perspective. Given that this original assessment occurred prior to the Canterbury earthquake, it was considered appropriate to commission an up-to-date assessment of hazard risk and potential mitigation. The Applicant therefore commissioned a geotechnical report from Landtech Consulting (**Appendix C**). This report included both a desktop review of known geotechnical information and on-site testing in the form of Cone Penetrometer Tests to better understand the underlying geomorphology of the Site.

In summary the Site's geomorphology can be split between historic coastal sand dunes in the northwest of the site (the 'upper terrace') and alluvial deposits of sand and silt, as well as layers of cohesive clay and peat in the southeast of the site (the 'lower terrace').

The report identifies that *"geotechnical properties of Dune and Alluvial Deposits depend on a number of variable factors, including soil composition, level of consolidation, particle size distribution, and organic content. The presence or absence of groundwater can also affect local soil behaviour characteristics. Due to this variability, during seismic events alluvium can be prone to differential settlement, liquefaction and, near river systems, significant lateral spreading"*.

Having identified a potential for geotechnical risks that are susceptible to seismic events, the report then goes on to assess this risk profile. To better understand ground conditions, the report authors sourced existing borehole and Cone Penetration Test (CPT) results for both the site and the wider area. These pre-existing test results were supplemented by a detailed site inspections and three further CPT tests.

Review of the test results showed that groundwater levels range from 0.22m – 1.95m below ground level, with a median groundwater depth of 1m, whilst GNS modelling shows depth to groundwater of less than 1m across the lower terrace and between 2-4m for the upper terrace. The exact heights will be prone to seasonal fluctuations and will vary as a consequence of recent rainfall events.

Liquefaction risk

The report authors modelled land susceptibility to liquefaction for three model earthquake events in line with MBIE guidelines. Performance varied across the site depending on geomorphology and depth to groundwater. The report identified the

potential for moderate to major land damage and a corresponding liquefaction vulnerability category of 'high' based on a conservative depth to groundwater of 0.5m. The site was considered to have a provisional land classification of TC2.

The report makes the following conclusion regarding liquefaction risk:

Based on our assessment, the development portion of the site is considered prone to liquefaction induced subsidence in accordance with TC2 criteria however, pockets of higher susceptibility may be present. These risks can be mitigated during subdivision development and/or building development stages⁵.

TC2 type foundations are considered geotechnically feasible for NZS:3604 compliant structures, subject to building-specific geotechnical investigations to assess the available bearing capacity, post subdivision development⁶

Lateral spread risk & Slippage

The report identifies that based on the development area being located 200m away from any major watercourses the site is considered to fall within the minor category of both Global Lateral Movement (0mm to 100mm under a modelled earthquake event at the most severe Ultimate Limit State (ULS) and Lateral Stretch (0mm to 100mm at ULS).

The proposed development area of the site is considered prone to lateral spreading (i.e., slippage) in accordance with TC2 criteria.

Erosion, Falling debris, and Flood risk.

For completeness, the report does not identify any natural hazard risks relating to erosion and falling debris.

Flood risk has been addressed in the above section relating to the management of stormwater and flood risk.

Overall summary

The combination of variable soil material and high groundwater means that liquefaction is the primary potential geotechnical hazard risk. TC2 land is relatively common across eastern Christchurch and there are proven and well understood land remediation and foundation design solutions available to mitigate liquefaction risk.

At a plan review stage, the key outcome is to identify if there are any significant "deal breaker" geotechnical hazard reasons that would prevent the land from being rezoned. The report does not identify any significant geotechnical hazard risks present that are so extensive as to preclude the Plan Change, especially as relates to the upper terrace development area. It is standard practice for subsequent subdivision consent processes to include provision for more detailed site investigations and if need be land remediation through bulk earthworks. Later Building Consent processes likewise enable consideration of the suitability of specific foundation designs to ensure the chosen foundation solutions are appropriate for the underlying ground conditions. On that basis it is considered that there are no geotechnical considerations that impact on the ability to re-zone the Site.

4.4. Contaminated land

Contaminated soils are managed under the National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health (NES-CS). The NES-CS applies to any subdivision or change in the use of a piece of land, and therefore would apply to the type of land use change that will be facilitated by the zoning sought in this application. It is noted that the NES-CS came into force on 10th October 2011 and therefore after the site was originally rezoned to the SP Golf Zone.

The Applicants have commissioned a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) from Sephira Environmental Ltd (Sephira) to ensure NES-CS matters are appropriately addressed (**Appendix D**). The PSI includes both a desktop review, interviews with the farm

⁵ Landtech Geotechnical Report, section 9.3

⁶ Ibid, section 10.0

manager, and a site walkover⁷ to understand the likelihood that potentially soil-contaminating activities have occurred on the site. No part of the Site is identified in the Canterbury Regional Council's Listed Land Use Register (LLUR) as having contained an activity on the Hazardous Activities and Industries List (HAIL). The PSI likewise did not identify any evidence of the land having been used for more intensive forms of horticulture such as market gardening or orcharding (and where there may be a heightened risk of persistent agrichemicals in the soil). Land use appears to have been primarily pastoral for the known history of the Site. Based on the PSI findings, the majority of the Site is considered suitable for residential development without the need for further testing or remediation.

Whilst the balance of the Site does not appear to pose significant soil contamination risks, Sephira has identified a number of localised features where contamination may have occurred, including areas of uncontrolled filling, the storage of agrichemicals and fuel, burn pits, automobile storage, and the possible demolition of buildings that contained asbestos or lead-based paint.

These activities vary in nature and extent and include activities common with rural land use. The NES-CS requires that where a PSI has identified the risk of contamination, a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) must be carried out when the use of the land changes or is proposed to be subdivided to identify the extent of the contaminants, and a Remedial Action Plan or Site Validation Report must be prepared if required. The preparation and implementation of such plans is a standard part of the conditions that typically accompany subdivision consents for sites where contamination risk is known to be present.

Whilst there is a risk of soil contamination being present, these risk factors are both common across rural landholdings in general and are geographically discrete in the case of the Site. The DSI process and subsequent ability to document and undertake site remediation where necessary provides a well-established process for managing the risk to human health when changes in land use occur. At this stage of the development process there is nothing to suggest that the potential contamination is of a type or geographical extent that would render the land incapable of being remediated or made safe for residential development.

4.5. Transport

Transport effects associated with the development of a golf resort were assessed in some detail as part of the original plan change that created the SP Golf Zone. The earlier scheme was predicated on the resort gaining its main entrance from Lower Styx Road via an upgraded road bridge over the Styx River. The current SP Golf Zone therefore includes a key staging rule (as a non-complying activity) that development shall not occur until the intersection of Lower Styx Road and Marshland Road has been signalised.⁸ The Council has since undertaken these works as part of a wider package of upgrades to Marshland Road, with the result that this intersection is now signalised.

The Plan Change now proposes that the site's main access will be served by three access points, with one onto Spencerville Road, one onto Turners Road and a third via the extension of the existing Teapes Road. No individual property access is proposed to the existing road network, and there will be no road access to Lower Styx Road. The existing bridge over the Styx River to be retained as a pedestrian and cycle connection between the site and Lower Styx Road. This change in access is in order to avoid the disruption and potential effects on the ecology and functioning of the Styx River and flood basins associated with the construction of both a heavy road bridge and a raised causeway road carriageway across the lower terrace to connect the bridge to the upper terrace development area.

This change in roading connections, combined with the increase in housing yield, has meant that the applicant has commissioned a transport report from Novo Group Ltd (Novo Report) to assess the potential effects of the plan change on the safe and efficient functioning of the wider transport network (**Appendix E**).

The Novo Report describes the existing transport environment, the planned environment (noting that there are currently no large-scale, un-built, urban zoned areas proximate to the Site), and then assesses the impact on road function and safety with the additional traffic generated over and above that anticipated by the golf resort. To help inform the transport assessment, Novo commissioned QTP Ltd to undertake traffic modelling of the wider network, with a focus on the morning and evening peaks as the 'worst case' times of day in terms of traffic volumes. The QTP modelling is attached as an Appendix to the Novo Report. From a transportation perspective the Site is well-located relative to the CBD and as such facilitates a reduction in

⁷ Site visits did not occur on the four RUF Zoned lifestyle blocks however historic aerial photos and the ECan LLUR lists were reviewed for these sites.

⁸ Rule 13.9.5.3.1(b)

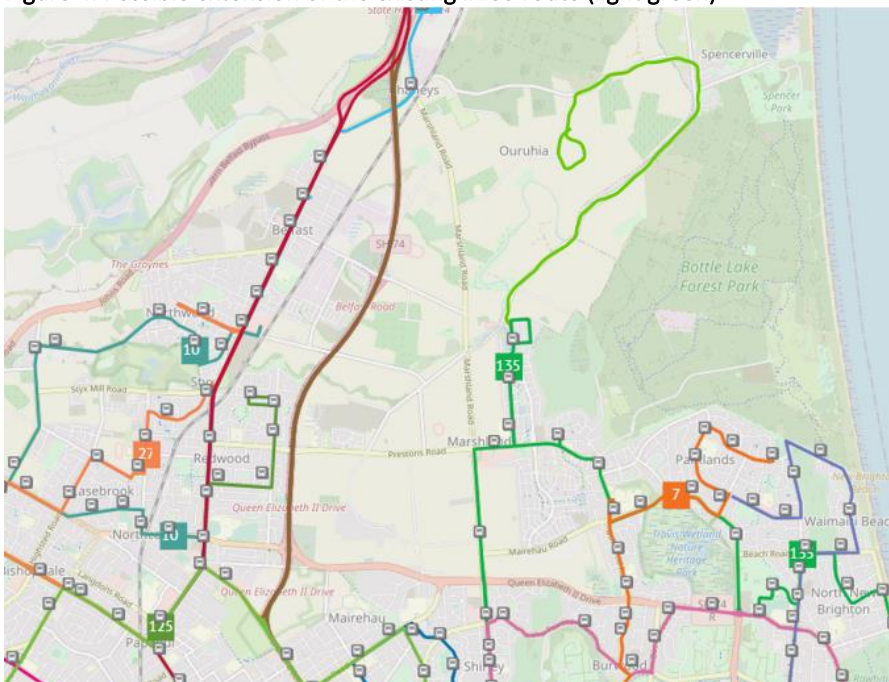
transport-related greenhouse gas emissions compared with alternative residential greenfield locations in Greater Christchurch that are generally sited further away from the City centre i.e. in Selwyn and Waimakariri District, whereas the proposed site is a similar distance to the CBD as Belfast or Halswell and closer than suburbs such as Lyttelton and Sumner.

The Novo Report finds that the surrounding road network will continue to function with acceptable levels of service and safety. The report identifies that once 700 residential units have been established, the Turners Road/ Marshland Road intersection would benefit from the formation of dedicated left turn and right-turn lanes on Turners Road to reduce queuing lengths at peak times, along with seal widening of the carriageway between the site and the Marshland Road intersection. Widening of the existing seal and intersection upgrades are able to be readily accommodated within the existing road reserve and, as such, do not require the acquisition of any third-party land. The report likewise identifies that the proposed road entrance to the site from Spencerville Road would benefit from some discrete corner chamfering to improve sight lines, and that the Teapes Road / Turners Road intersection could also benefit from some discrete design changes to improve safety. These works are all able to be undertaken either within the existing road reserve or within land that forms part of the plan change area. All upgrades to the wider network are relatively modest in both scale and extent, and are the sort of works that are routinely addressed through the subdivision consent process.

In addition to vehicle connections to the wider road network, the Novo Report also identifies that the site is well-connected with the wider recreational cycle and pedestrian networks and has considerable potential to further enhance these connections to form much needed linkages both in an east-west direction along the Styx River as part of the 'source to sea' programme, and in a north-south direction connecting Bottle Lake Forest with Chaney's Forest. To further enhance connectivity and modal choice, the Novo Report recommends that a cycle/ walkway be formed between the site and Ouruhia Model School to ensure children are able to safely access the local primary school. This off-road route utilises a mix of existing Council-held paper road adjacent to the Styx River, park land, and a short section of Turners Road. As such, it does not require any third party land acquisition. The Novo Report likewise identifies the benefits in providing a cycle/ pedestrian pathway to connect the site to the northern end of Prestons via the existing bridge over the Styx River and then via a new cycleway located within the Lower Styx Road Reserve. In addition to the multi-modal links between the site and the wider urban area, internally to the site the ODP shows a good level of cycle and walking trails, complemented by the majority of internal roads being formed to local road standards as a relatively low speed/ low volume traffic environment.

The Novo Report identifies that the site is not currently serviced by public transport, with existing services terminating at the northern end of Prestons. Historically, bus services used to run to Spencerville, however these were discontinued approximately 10 years ago following a decline in demand following the earthquakes and Brooklands being red zoned. Current bus routes terminate at the northern end of Prestons (Route #135 'The Palms/ New Brighton').

Figure 4. Possible extension of the existing #135 route (light green)



Map Source: <https://go.metroinfo.co.nz/mtbp/en-gb/arrivals/content/routes>

The ODP shows a proposed internal collector road running through the site to provide an internal link between Turners Road and Spencerville Road. This new road link will be designed to be capable of accommodating a bus service to ensure that the provision of bus services in the future are not precluded. The lack of existing public transport services is a common feature of greenfield developments as the provision of services necessarily follows demand i.e. services only become viable when there is a customer base to support them. The key planning outcome is to ensure that any new urban area is designed such that it can readily accommodate a bus service.

The Site ODP has therefore been specifically designed to facilitate an extension of existing public transport services through the site. The provision of a larger customer base will likewise help support enhancements to the frequency of existing services to the wider Prestons/ Spencerville area, for instance by extending the current #135 route north of Prestons to pass via Spencerville to the site (or by extending either #7 Halswell/ Queenspark or #80 Lincoln/ Parklands), thereby enhancing services not just to the site but also enabling the reintroduction of a service to Spencerville. The Proposal therefore not only provides for public transport to the future population but also helps to support improved services to the existing community.

In conclusion, the Site is well located in terms of proximity to the CBD relative to other greenfield alternatives. Whilst the Proposal will inevitably result in an increase in traffic generation, these additional movements can be accommodated within the wider roading network without being reliant on the need to undertake any major upgrades to nearby intersections beyond seal widening within existing road reserves. The site is well-served by cycle and walking links and provides the opportunity to significantly enhance the linkages between these existing off-road networks. Although the site is not currently serviced by public transport, such a situation is relatively common for greenfield blocks as services follow rather than lead demand. The ODP has been carefully designed to ensure provision of a collector road through the site to facilitate provision of public transport services in the future once a residential customer base has been established. As such, there are no transport-related barriers to the outcomes sought by the plan change.

4.6. Landscape and Urban Design

A Landscape Report is provided as **Appendix F** and an Urban Design Report is provided as **Appendix G**. Both of these reports have been undertaken by DCM Urban Limited, a landscape and urban design firm. Both reports share a graphic attachment which forms part of the Landscape Report.

Wider context

The site context is described in detail in both reports. In summary, it visually presents as pastoral farmland and rural lifestyle blocks that are typical of much of the rural area surrounding Christchurch's urban area. As such, views into and across the site are interspersed with shelterbelt and riparian plantings and occasional houses and ancillary farm buildings. The site therefore has a pleasant, relatively open, rural character and amenity. The Landscape Report identifies that there are no Outstanding Natural Features or Landscapes identified across the portion of the site that is to be developed. The Styx River and its margins are identified in the District Plan as having landscape significance, with the Proposal facilitating the restoration and visual enhancement of the Styx River margins. Both reports identify that the site's current rural character does not reflect the urban outcomes anticipated under the existing zoning for a significant portion of the site.

Spatially, the site is located in close proximity to Christchurch's urban edge, with this edge having grown noticeably closer to the site since the site obtained the current SP Golf zoning through the growth of residential suburbs in Prestons, Belfast, and the Hills Road/ Mills Road areas. The urban design assessment identifies that the provision of walking and cycling links will help to tie the site in with the amenities in Prestons and the local primary school, as well as providing an important contribution to the wider trail network.

External ODP edges and interfaces

Whilst not matters that are explicitly part of the NPS-UD Policy 1 criteria, the consideration of both Site interfaces and internal layout are important elements in delivering a well-functioning urban environment. They are likewise matters identified in CRPS Policy 6.3.3 regarding matters that should be considered in ODPs.

The edges and integration of the Site with neighbouring sites have therefore been considered in the Landscape and Urban Design Reports. They identify the need for the Site to be “stitched” together with the nearby suburb of Prestons and the settlement of Spencerville through the provision of cycling and walking links. Clear road links are also provided between the site and the wider road network to facilitate easy and convenient movement between the site and the urban edge of Christchurch.

To the south and east, the site is bounded by the Styx River, with the Proposal facilitating the restoration of this edge/ interface. To the northeast the site is bounded by existing farmland, with the ODP showing this edge to be utilised for stormwater basins and open space, therefore delivering an appropriate visual transition between housing and open farmland. To the north and west the site is bounded by road corridors, with rural lifestyle blocks on the far sides of these corridors. The Urban Design Report recommends that these external road interfaces are carefully managed to deliver an appropriate transition to lifestyle block neighbours through several design solutions that include:

- Limiting driveway access from individual house lots;
- Locating larger sections adjacent to the external road edges;
- Limiting road edge fencing to open rural fence styles i.e. post and rail;
- Requiring a 5m deep landscape strip;
- Requiring a 10m deep building setback.
- Maintaining a grass swale edge to the external road formation rather than a more suburban kerb and channel design.

In combination, these requirements are considered to be effective in delivering an appropriate interface and visual transition to the wider RUF Zone. Whilst the proposed building setbacks from external roads are a reduction on the setbacks required in the SP Golf Zone, the scale of potential buildings i.e. houses, is much smaller than the built form that is typically associated with hotels and golf academy dormitories.

The outcomes recommended in the landscape and Urban Design Reports have been included in the ODP and associated ODP narrative. It is anticipated that they will be delivered via consents notices on titles imposed through the subdivision process in order to meet the standard rule requirement that subdivision occur in accordance with the ODP.

Internal ODP outcomes

In addition to considering the Site’s integration with neighbours and its wider context, the Landscape and Urban Design Reports have also assessed the internal layout of the site. The need to deliver appropriate stormwater and flood mitigation outcomes will facilitate the retention and restoration of lower terrace and as extensive open space area. This extensive amenity resource is by adjacent pedestrian corridors, with the movement network complemented by a loop collector road layout that provides clear through-site and within-site road links.

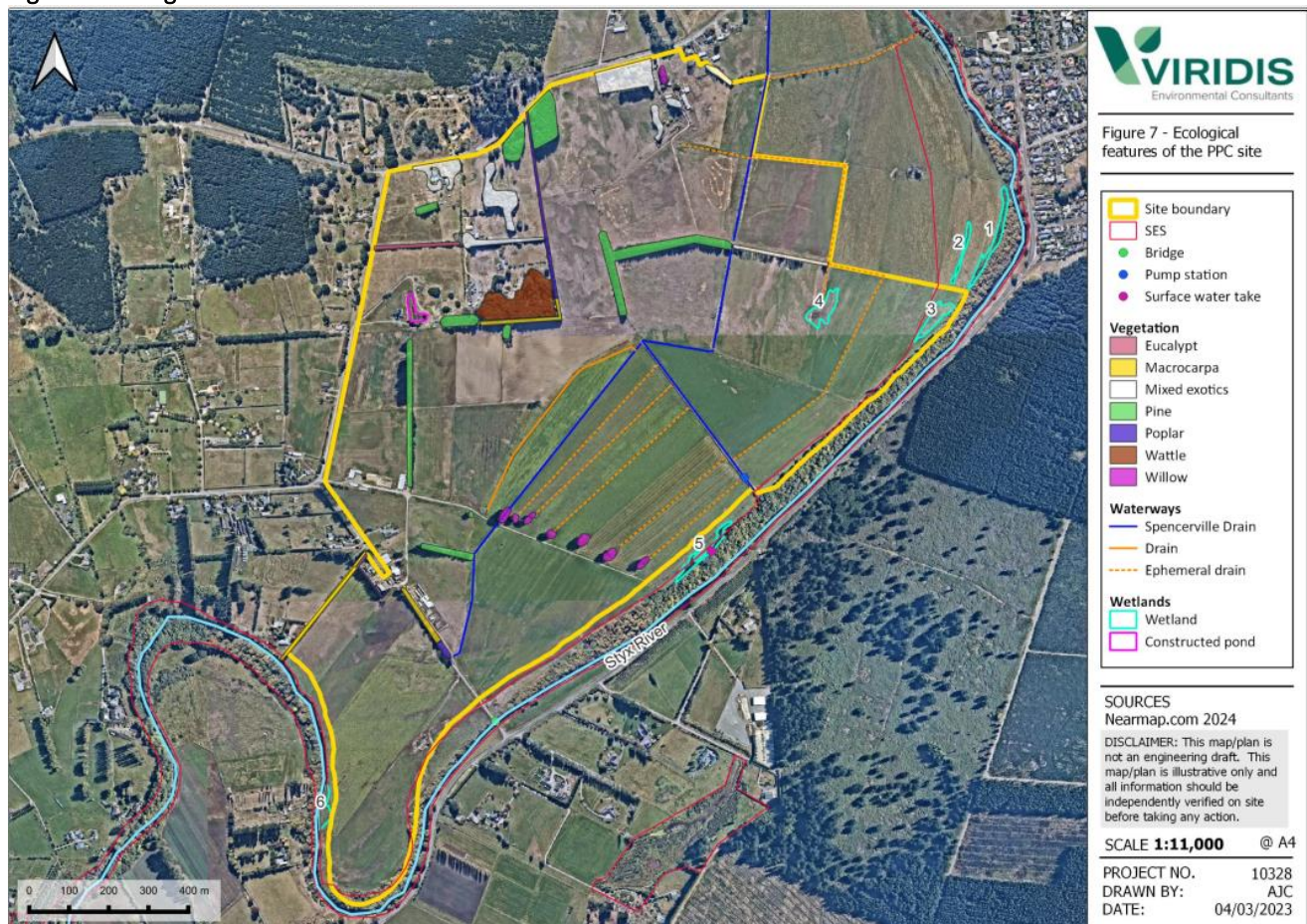
In addition to the extensive passive recreational areas provided by the blue/green network and the large lower terrace greenspace, 5 local parks are proposed within the housing area to ensure all residents are within an easy 500m walk to a local reserve. Where possible, these local parks are co-located with stormwater basins to maximise the potential for passive recreation. The ODP also provides for a ‘community hub’ which is anticipated to provide approximately 1,500m² of community and convenience retail facilities i.e. a preschool and/or medical centre, along with a café, dairy, and a couple of small shops such as a hairdresser or takeaway food offering. The opportunity for medium density housing is anticipated in close proximity to high amenity areas such as open space reserves or the community hub.

In summary, the Landscape and Urban Design Reports consider that the Proposal readily meets both the NZ Urban Design Protocol ‘seven Cs’ assessment framework and the NPS-UD Policy 1 criteria for a “well-functioning urban environment” and achieves sound urban design and landscape outcomes.

4.7. Ecology

The applicant has commissioned an ecological report by Viridis Environmental Consultants Ltd (**Viridis report**). This report describes the site from an ecological perspective, examines both terrestrial and freshwater habitats, and assesses the impact of the plan change on these environments and the flora and fauna that inhabit the Site in line with established methodologies. The Viridis report authors conducted both a desktop review of existing known ecological data and historical aerial imagery, and undertook a site assessment in February 2025 during which the presence and extent of both freshwater and terrestrial ecological features were recorded and the quality of the associated habitat assessed⁹. Ecological features are identified in **Figure 5** below.

Figure 5. Ecological features



In terms of the existing environment, the Viridis report found that current ecological values were generally low in terms of terrestrial ecology. In line with the majority of the site being used for farming/ grazing activities, the primary land cover consists of exotic pasture, along with gardens around the immediate curtilage of the various existing dwellings and mixed willow thickets along the margins of the Styx River. Despite the low-lying nature of the lower terrace, wetland are both limited in extent and of low ecological value due to the dominance of exotic plant species. Terrestrial ecological values are limited to the moderate potential for the site to be utilised as lizard habitat (which will require management under the Wildlife Act during construction phases).

Freshwater ecological values were identified as being high for the Styx River, which is also identified as a Site of Ecological Significance in the District Plan. Spencerville Drain traverses the lower terrace in a generally southwest to northeast direction. Whilst the main branch of the drain continuing north through adjacent farmland before entering the Styx River approximately 3km to the north of the site, a smaller branch of the drain connects directly to the Styx River adjacent to the site, with the connection point controlled by a pump station which limits the potential for fish passage. Whilst the drain's currently routing

⁹ The Viridis report notes that a site visit was not undertaken to the four lifestyle blocks, however these blocks were observed from the adjacent boundaries

and formation is artificial, it is considered likely that the drain was established in an area that was historically wet and therefore acts as a natural drainage channel, albeit highly modified. The ecological values of Spencerville drain were conservatively assessed as being moderate, based primarily on the potential for longfin eels to be present which are an ‘at risk – declining’ native species. Smaller artificial farm drains and ephemeral drains were considered to be negligible to low due to the lack of continuous water flow and the dominated of exotic pasture grasses. No springs were identified within the site and likewise no springs are noted on ‘Canterbury maps’ which is a GIS-based system administered by ECan.

The Viridis report identifies that the upper terrace development area does not currently contain any drains or ecological features of value and therefore its development will not result in adverse effects on ecology. Transitioning the lower terrace from its current use as dairy grazing towards a mix of uses that include stormwater basins and riparian enhancement adjacent to the Styx River has the potential for significant ecological benefits for both terrestrial and freshwater habitats. Management of construction-phase ecological effects of the stormwater basins is a matter that routinely forms part of a comprehensive suite of conditions as part of subdivision consent and regional consenting requirements, including the need for any off-setting/compensatory creation of new, larger wetlands to mitigate the loss of existing wetlands.

4.8. Cultural Values

The NPS-UD also requires planning decisions relating to urban environments to take into account the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi,¹⁰ to enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms,¹¹ and to involve hapu and iwi in the development of RMA planning documents through effective consultation.¹² Recognising and providing for the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wahi tapu and other taonga is a matter of national importance under the RMA¹³, with the need to take into account the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi an important component of Part 2 of the RMA.¹⁴ Under section 74(2A) of the Resource Management Act, a territorial authority must take into account any relevant Iwi Management Plan to the extent that it has a bearing on the resource management issues of the district.

Initial consultation has occurred with iwi through preliminary feedback from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited for the proposed residential development of a portion of the plan change area at 240 Spencerville Road. This feedback was previously obtained from Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited in January 2022 (provided in **Appendix I**) and was obtained to fulfil the requirement of Schedule 16 clause 9(5) of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting Act 2020). The report identifies Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga as holding mana whenua over the project's location, as it is within their takiwā. The mandated kaitiaki representatives for Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga were briefed on the proposal to develop the site at 240 Spencerville Road on the 19th of January 2022. The report identifies potential effects on cultural values from the activities of development.

Whilst the proposal was not accepted for processing under the previous fast track scheme, the feedback from Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga at that time has helped to inform the current Plan Change request. It is readily acknowledged that the Plan Change covers a larger geographic area than the earlier proposal, and that several years have now passed since the original advice was obtained. As such, the applicant would welcome the opportunity to re-engage with Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga on this proposal.

As is usual practice, it is anticipated that the Council will provide a copy of the application to the relevant Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga advisory body for them to provide feedback on behalf of mana whenua. It is anticipated that any such feedback will be incorporated into the proposal and subsequent subdivision consenting processes. Pending feedback from Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, a brief assessment of the proposal against the guidance provided in the Mahaanui Iwi Management Plan is provided below. The applicant respects Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga's preferences in terms of how best they should be consulted with, and as such, this application has been lodged with an expectation that the Council will provide a copy to whichever entity has been confirmed by Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga as being the appropriate advisory body. Once feedback is received, the proposal will be reviewed to ensure that the outcomes sought take into account any matters raised by mana whenua.

The Plan Change consultant team have nonetheless been aware of the need to design the plan change in a manner that respects known cultural values. The Site is not identified in either the IMP or the District Plan as containing any significant cultural values i.e. it is not a ‘silent file’ area, and neither is it identified as a Ngā Tūranga Tūpuna site. The Styx River is however identified as a Ngā Wai site containing cultural values associated with the health and wairua of the waterway.

¹⁰ NPS-UD, Objective 5.

¹¹ NPS-UD, Policy 1(a)(ii).

¹² NPS-UD, Policy 9.

¹³ Resource Management Act 1991, section 6(e).

¹⁴ Ibid, section 8

The Mahaanui Iwi Management Plan (IMP) sets out Ngāi Tahu's objectives, issues and policies for natural resources and environmental management within the area bounded by the Hurunui River in the north and the Ashburton River in the south. The following provides a preliminary assessment of the Proposal against the overarching principles expressed in the IMP, in advance of receiving feedback from mana whenua.

Ranginui

The relevant matters identified in IMP are discharges to air and the protection of night time darkness. The proposed Plan Change does not contain controls on these matters. The main discharge to air that could occur through this proposal is the establishment of log burners or similar within individual houses, as well as discharges of dust to air during the development of the site. Such discharges are controlled by Environment Canterbury through the Canterbury Regional Air Plan. Controls over night time lighting are not proposed, and therefore some light pollution in a manner that conflicts with the aspirations of the IMP may eventuate. However, given the plan change site covers an established urban zone, the plan change does not contain any specific rules on light pollution beyond the standard District Plan controls on glare and outdoor lighting.

Wai Māori

Freshwater is of considerable cultural significance to Rūnanga. The main matters of concern relate to water quality and quantity and mixing waters from different waterbodies. With the reticulation of effluent disposal from new dwellings the potential for adverse impacts on groundwater quality are limited. Stormwater generated by the new roads will be treated and disposed of through swales or proprietary treatment devices and soakage pits, ensuring that no untreated stormwater will reach groundwater or surface water bodies. Both construction-phase and operational-phase management of stormwater is carefully controlled by a comprehensive suite of rules in the Land and Water Regional Plan. The Proposal provides the opportunity for significant ecological enhancement of the riparian margins of the Pūharakekenui/ Styx River.

Papatūānuku

The use of land and how it is developed is of importance to Rūnanga. This section identifies matters such as urban planning, the subdivision and development of land, stormwater, waste management, and discharges to land. The potential effects of the proposal on the environment have been discussed in the assessment of effects above. That assessment concludes that there will minimal adverse impacts on the quality of the natural environment as no waste or contamination will be discharged in a manner that will compromise the mauri of surface or groundwater.

Tāne Mahuta

This section addresses the significance of indigenous biodiversity and mahinga kai to Rūnanga. The subject land has been used for farming purposes for many years. There are no notable indigenous plantings within the site, acknowledging its present use for pastoral grazing. The proposed Plan Change includes the potential for significant areas of indigenous planting within greenspaces, stormwater management areas, and the margins of the Pūharakekenui/ Styx River. Detailed planting plans for these areas, along with local parks and road reserves, will be agreed with Council as part of subsequent subdivision consent processes. It is also anticipated that over time, as the area is developed for residential use, that further plantings, both exotic and native, will occur.

Ngā tūtohu whenua

There are no known wāhi tapu, wāhi taonga or mahinga kai sites within the application site. The Pūharakekenui/ Styx River is anticipated to have mahinga kai values, as is the downstream Brooklands lagoon. As noted above, the Proposal will facilitate the ecological restoration and enhancement of waterways and wetlands within and adjacent to the site, which will enhance mahinga kai values and accessibility by the public.

In summary, the ODP and Plan Change have been designed to respond to key outcomes sought in the IMP as follows:

- a) Spencerville Drain has been identified as a waterway that might contain mahinga kai species (tuna/ eels). This waterway is to be retained and its riparian margins enhanced to improve ecological and mahinga kai values.

- b) Existing farm drains currently have low ecological value due to their heavily degraded state given their location in grazed pasture. The use of parts of the lower terrace for wetland restoration and restoration has the potential for significant enhancement of both water quality and ecological value;
- c) The blue network is to be designed to keep untreated stormwater completely separate from waterways.
- d) Stormwater treatment basins provide an opportunity for establishing an extensive open space and ecological restoration area along the bottom of the upper terrace. This area will result in a significant increase in the area and quality of wetlands on the Site.
- e) Works to waterways and stormwater basins are subject to a suite of consenting requirements which provides the regulatory mechanisms to ensure appropriate water quality and ecological outcomes are delivered, with particular care taken to manage sedimentation during construction-phase works.
- f) It is anticipated that locally sourced indigenous plant species will be used for riparian margin and wetland restoration
- g) Sewage resulting from the development will be reticulated and treated in the Bromley Treatment Plant. As such there is no reliance on septic tanks or an on-site 'package plant'.
- h) Identification of potentially contaminated soil has been undertaken with several discrete potential sources of contamination identified. It is expected that these sites will be subject to a detailed site investigation and remediation as part of the subdivision process to ensure they meet the standards necessary for residential occupation.

The applicants look forward to considering feedback from Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga via their preferred consultation pathway through the plan change process and confirm their commitment to work collaboratively with mana whenua.

4.9. Reverse sensitivity

Reverse sensitivity is a well-recognised planning concept. In essence it refers to an existing environment with long-established activities that are either operating in accordance with resource consents or are consistent with the outcomes anticipated in the existing zoning, for example pastoral farming. New, more sensitive, activities then establish on a neighbouring site that expect a higher level of amenity than is currently provided. The new residents then complain about the amenity-related effects of the existing farming operations, which in turn either results in these existing activities having to close or modify their operations, or limits further intensification of the activities.

The Site is bounded by either the Styx River and wide road reserves to the south, or lifestyle blocks to the west and north. The only larger scale farming operation is located on the land to the northeast. As such, the Site does not generally share boundaries with the sorts of activities that might give rise to reverse sensitivity issues. The location of the lower terrace within the Site means that the ODP shows the majority of the boundary with the neighbouring farm to be utilised for open space/recreation rather than housing, which provides a further internalised buffer between sensitive activities and farming operations.

The scenario of a residential zone adjoining rural farmland is inherent to the urban edge of any City and is common across the urban edge of Christchurch. In order for reverse sensitivity risk to be significant, the operations in question need to be generating effects that extend beyond their site boundaries. These effects in turn need to be at a level where they are likely to give rise to amenity-related complaints. The farmland to the northeast is utilised for pastoral grazing and therefore does not generate the sorts of amenity effects that might arise from say an intensive poultry farm or piggery. The presence of established lifestyle blocks with residential dwellings adjacent to the neighbouring farm, along with the existing SP Golf Zoning which already enables the establishment of residential neighbours, means that the farm management practices already need to be undertaken in a manner consistent with having residential neighbours and the range visitor accommodation, hospitality, and recreational activities anticipated under the existing SP Golf Zone.

4.10. Summary of Effects

In summary and for the reasons set out above, it is concluded that the potential adverse effects of the proposed Plan Change can be adequately avoided or mitigated, that the supply of a large number of new homes has significant positive economic

benefits, that the formation of stormwater basins and riparian enhancement has the potential to deliver significant ecological benefits, and that the formation of new cycling and walking tracks have the potential to deliver significant positive connectivity benefits by providing a key missing 'cross-roads' in the wider trail network.

Overall, the effects of the proposed Plan Change are positive.

5. Statutory Framework – Resource Management Act 1991

5.1. Sections 74 & 75 - Matters to be considered by territorial authority/ Contents of district plan

Section 74 outlines the matters that must be considered by the District Council in preparing a Plan Change, while Section 75 outlines requirements for the content of District Plans. This Plan Change request has been prepared in alignment with these requirements.

Relevant to this Plan Change request section 74(1) of the RMA prescribes that the District Council must prepare and change its district plan in accordance with –

- its functions under s 31;
- the provisions of Part 2;
- its obligations to have particular regard to an evaluation report prepared in accordance with s 32;
- a national policy statement, a New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, and a national planning standard; and
- any regulations.

Relevant to this Plan Change request, section 74(2) requires the District Council (in addition to the requirement of section 75(3) and (4)) to also have regard to any proposed regional policy statement / proposed regional plan of its region. These have been identified and addressed below. It is noted that the proposal does not give rise to any cross-territorial issues, any matters of historical significance (on the Historic Places List) or matters addressed by management plans or strategies prepared under other Acts.

Section 74(2A) also requires the Council to take into account relevant planning documents recognised by an iwi authority, to the extent that its content has a bearing on resource management issues. The Mahaanui IMP has been assessed in section 5.8 above, pending feedback from mana whenua.

Section 75 requires a District Plan to state the objectives for the district, the policies to implement the objectives, and rules to then implement the policies. The Plan Change request does not introduce any new, or alter any existing, objectives or policies. New rules to implement the operative RNN Zone and subdivision policy frameworks as they relate to the Site are limited to the introduction of a new ODP and associated narrative as part of the Subdivision Chapter.

Section 75(3)(a), (b) and (c) requires a District Plan to give effect to any national policy statement, any New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, a national planning standard; and any regional policy statement. Section 75(4) requires a District Plan to not be inconsistent with a water conservation order¹⁵ or a regional plan. An assessment of the Plan Change against these higher-order planning documents is discussed in detail in the following sections.

5.2. Section 31 – Functions of Council under the Act

Any plan change must assist the Council to carry out its functions so as to give effect to this Act within its district. The functions of a territorial authority are set out in s 31 of the Act and include:

- the establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods to achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources of the district;
- the establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods to ensure that there is sufficient development capacity in respect of housing and business land to meet the expected demands of the district;

¹⁵ No water conservation orders are in play for this plan change

- the control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including for the purpose of— the avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards; and the prevention or mitigation of any adverse effects of the development, subdivision, or use of contaminated land: the maintenance of indigenous biological diversity;
- the control of the emission of noise and the mitigation of the effects of noise;
- the control of any actual or potential effects of activities in relation to the surface of water in rivers and lakes;
- any other functions specified in this Act.

The requested plan change accords with these stated functions.

The proposal provides for the use and development of land for residential activities in accordance with the operative RNN zone policy and rule framework as a replacement of an existing SP Golf Zone. The proposed plan change amendments to the District Plan are limited in scope to only those amendments as are necessary to delete the SP Golf Zone provisions applicable to Whisper Creek and to recognise the site and the proposed ODP in the RNN Zone and Subdivision Chapters of the District Plan. The generic RNN and subdivision chapter provisions along with the proposed ODP, provide the methods for Council to manage potential effects of this activity and demonstrates an integrated management approach.

6. Strategic Planning Framework

An assessment against the strategic planning framework is outlined below, except the Mahaanui IMP, which has been assessed in section 5.8 above. In accordance with the statutory framework, the Plan Change:

- gives effect to relevant:
 - National Policy Statements (NPS's),
 - National Environmental Standards (NES's), and
 - the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS);
- gives regard to:
 - management plans and strategies prepared under other Acts (including the Land Use Recovery Plan (LURP) and the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan (GCSP));
- Is not inconsistent with any:
 - Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (CLWRP) and the Canterbury Air Regional Plan (CARP), and
- take into account
 - any relevant Iwi Management Plans.

For completeness, the Site is not located in an area where the following NPS or NES would be in play and as such the following documents are not considered further:

- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.
- NPS-Renewable Electricity Generation.
- NPS-Electricity transmission.
- NPS-Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Industrial Process Heat.
- NES-Plantation Forestry.
- NES-Air Quality.
- NES-Telecommunications facilities.
- NES-Electricity Transmission Activities.
- NES-Marine Aquaculture.
- NES-Storing Tyres Outdoors.

6.1. National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL)

The NPS-HPL commenced on 17 October 2022. Prior to the NPS-HPL being gazetted, urban development over versatile soils was simply a matter to be considered, in the absence of any more specific higher order direction on this issue. Now the District Plan (and any associated changes in zoning) must give effect to the NPS-HPL.

The NPS-HPL has a single objective that “*highly productive land is protected for use in land-based primary production, both now and for future generations*”. Of direct relevance to the Site, the objective is to be achieved via policies that seek that the urban rezoning, subdivision, or development for rural lifestyle purposes are avoided unless the exemptions in the NPS-HPL apply.¹⁶

Regional councils have three years from when the NPS-HPL came into effect to map HPL via a change to the regional policy statement i.e. October 2025.¹⁷ The Canterbury Regional Council has yet to notify such a change. Until this process occurs, HPL is deemed to be any land identified as Land Use Capability (LUC) Class 1, 2, or 3 as mapped by the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory (NZLRI)¹⁸, provided that, at the commencement date:¹⁹

- (a) is
 - (i) zoned general rural or rural production; and
 - (ii) LUC 1, 2, or 3 land; but
- (b) is not
 - (i) Land that is already identified for future urban development; or
 - (ii) Subject to a Council initiated, or an adopted, notified plan change to rezone it from general rural or rural production to urban or rural lifestyle.

Whilst a large portion of the Site (primarily the lower terrace) is identified as meeting LUC 2 in terms of soil classification, this area already had a SP Golf Zoning that was in place prior to the NPS-HPL commencing. The definition of ‘urban’ zones includes “any special purpose zone”.²⁰ The part of the site with a SP Golf zoning is therefore exempt as not comprising HPL under clause 3.5(7)(a)(i) as it is not a general rural or rural production zone at the time the NPS-HPL was gazetted.

In addition to the SP Golf Zone, a portion of the site along the edge of the Styx River has an Open Space Waterway and Margins Zone. The NPS-HPL definition of ‘urban’ includes “any open space zone, other than a Natural Open Space Zone”. It is arguable whether the OSWM Zone falls into a ‘natural’ zone category, however as the plan change does not seek to rezone the OSWM Zone to a RNN Zone, the NPS-HPL is not engaged for this part of the Site. The Site also includes four x 4ha lifestyle blocks that have a Rural Urban Fringe Zoning. Arguably the RUF Zone more closely aligns with the National Planning Standards zone description of a ‘rural lifestyle zone’ given that it permits subdivision down to 4ha minimums. Regardless of how the RUF Zone is translated into NPS nomenclature, these four lots do not contain LUC 1-3 soils as shown in **Figure 6**, apart from a small corner of the southeastern block.

Figure 6. LUC 1-3 soil categorisation, with the four lifestyle blocks shown



Image source: Canterbury Maps - <https://mapviewer.canterburymaps.govt.nz/?webmap=5a110e6e351d400e8f59aaa3b6c17053>

¹⁶ NPS-HPL, Policies 5, 6, and 7.

¹⁷ NPS-HPL, clause 3.5(1).

¹⁸ NPS-HPL, clause 3.5(7)(a)(ii).

¹⁹ NPS-HPL, clause 3.5(7)(b).

²⁰ NPS-HPL, Definition of ‘urban’ (1)(e)

The small corner portion is of a negligible size in context of the wider HPL soil resource in the District. When the Canterbury Regional Council maps HPL, such mapping is subject to the criteria set out in NPS-HPL Clause 3.4 which provides the clear direction that “*small, discrete areas of LUC 1, 2, or 3 land need not be included if they are separated from any large and geographically cohesive area of LUC 1, 2, or 3 land*”.²¹ Because the balance of the site is either not LUC 1-3 or has an urban zoning, the corner is clearly a small, discrete area that is separated from HPL and has no prospect of being economically viable for land-based primary production. The ODP shows the corner area as being utilised as a stormwater basin rather than a development area, reflecting its low lying nature, and therefore the soil resource will not be lost. Rezoning these lots from RUF Zone to RNN Zone does not therefore threaten the outcomes sought in the NPS-HPL.

In summary, the plan change does not seek to rezone to urban purposes any land defined as HPL and gives effect to the NPS-HPL. The protection of HPL for land-based primary production as sought in the NPS-HPL Objective is therefore achieved through urbanisation of this site providing for housing capacity in a location that does not contain HPL.

6.2. NPS – Fresh Water, NES – Fresh Water, and the NPS-Indigenous Biodiversity

The NPS-FM and the associated NES-FM together provide nationally consistent policy direction and regulation to control activities that may affect freshwater environments, including freshwater wetlands. The NPS-IB likewise provides consistent national direction on how effects on indigenous terrestrial biodiversity are to be managed, noting that the NPS-IB does not apply to aquatic habitats. This national direction is closely linked to the assessment of the Site’s ecological values as set out above.

The ecological evidence identifies that the Site has a long history of farming use and as such the ecology of the Site is largely comprised of exotic pasture grasses, exotic shelterbelts, willow thickets along the Styx River, and several garden areas associated with rural dwellings. Native ecological values are limited primarily to riparian margins and in-stream habitats associated with the edge of the Styx River and Spencerville Drain which bisects the Site. The Styx River is considered to have high ecological value, whereas the Spencerville Drain has low-moderate values. Five small areas of wetland are identified, with these areas largely comprised of exotic rather than native plant species. These wetlands are generally associated with the Styx River overtopping its true-left bank, with their ecological values assessed as being low.

The identified presence of both watercourses and remnant wetland areas means that the NPS-FM and NES-FM are both relevant to the Proposal.

NPS-FM

The NPS-FM introduces the concept of Te Mana o te Wai, which refers to the fundamental importance of water and recognises that protecting the health of freshwater protects the health and well-being of the wider environment. Te Mana o te Wai is about restoring and preserving the balance between the water, the wider environment, and the community. There is a hierarchy of obligations set out in Objective 2.1, which prioritises:

- first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems;
- second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water); and
- third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.²²
-

Alongside that objective (and of particular relevance to the Site), Policy 6 seeks that there be no further loss of the extent of natural inland wetlands, their values are protected, and their restoration is promoted. Policy 9 seeks that the habitats of indigenous freshwater species are protected. Policy 15 refers to communities being enabled to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being in a way that is consistent with the NPS-FM.

NPS-IB

The NPS-IB came into effect on 4 August 2023. The NPS-IB has a single Objective 2.1 which in summary seeks to maintain indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity. This

²¹ NPS-HPL, clause 3.4(5)(d)

²² National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020, Objective 2.1.

outcome includes protecting and restoring indigenous biodiversity while providing for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and community now and in the future.

Policy 3 seeks to adopt a precautionary approach when considering adverse effects; Policy 8 seeks to recognise and provide for the importance of maintaining indigenous biodiversity outside of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs); Policy 13 seeks that the restoration of indigenous biodiversity is promoted and provided for; and Policy 14 seeks that an increase indigenous vegetation cover in both urban and non-urban environments is promoted. Of note, Clause 3.5(b) requires local authorities to consider “that the protection, maintenance, and restoration of indigenous biodiversity does not preclude subdivision, use and development in appropriate places and forms”.

The combination of the NPS-FM and the NPS-IB means that particular care needs to be taken to retain and restore freshwater habitats, and requires that there is no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity.

Analysis

No SNAs have been identified as present on the Site, although the Styx River is identified as a SNA in the District Plan. Apart from the potential for the Spencerville Drain to provide habitat for long-fin eels, ecological values across the site are otherwise low. The ecological report identifies that the subdivision process provides the opportunity to enhance ecological values through riparian restoration, the provision and enhancement of Spencerville Drain, and the establishment of new wetland and ecological areas. As part of the construction phase, it is noted that the NES-FM regulations, in combination with the CLWRP, will require a suite of consents associated with earthworks in close proximity to these features and the relocation and restoration of them. The requirements of the NES-FM and Wildlife Act will also require careful design and management of native biodiversity values and wildlife such as native bird surveys, lizard surveys, and fish capture and transfer prior to works being undertaken.

The management of on-site stormwater creates the opportunity to create a large wetland area along the edge between the upper and lower terraces, with these basins significantly increasing the amount of wetland area present on the Site. The potential restoration of the riparian margins of the Styx River is likewise facilitated by this plan change. The new stormwater basins and riparian edge treatment is shown on the ODP which future subdivision consents will need to accord with.

In summary, the Site generally contains low indigenous biodiversity values overall. Moderate values are identified as being present in Spencerville Drain, with high values in the Styx River. In that context Spencerville Drain will be retained and enhanced with indigenous riparian planting, with its retention shown on the ODP. An extensive wetland complex will also be established between the upper and lower terraces that more than offsets the loss of small areas of low value wetland in what is currently actively grazed pasture.

With those initiatives in place (and subject to the consenting requirements of the NES-FM), the proposed plan change will ensure that the potential effects on ecological values can be appropriately managed. Indeed, the change in zoning enabled through the Proposal has the potential to result in the overall enhancement and long-term protection of these values in accordance with the directions in both the NPS-FM and NPS-IB.

6.3. Spatial plans and strategies

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) provides high level direction regarding the delivery of sufficient zoned capacity to meet residential and business needs over the short to long term. Such capacity is to be located in areas that result in a ‘well-functioning urban environment’.²³

In understanding what a well-functioning urban environment might look like in a Christchurch context, it is helpful to first summarise the existing urban growth planning that has occurred over the past fifteen years since the site originally obtained its SP Golf Zone. The urban edges of Greater Christchurch have materially changed since the earthquakes, with the urban edge of Christchurch in the form of Prestons now being 2km from the edge of the site compared with some 6km when the site was originally zoned. Belfast has likewise rapidly expanded, along with ongoing growth in the Hills Road/ Mills Road areas to the west of the site. The northern motorway connection to QEII Drive has been completed, which has resulted in significant changes to the roading patterns and traffic volumes in northern Christchurch. The statutory framework has likewise undergone significant revision over the last 15 years, through changes to both the district plan and the CRPS, introduction of NPSs, amendments to the RMA, and non-RMA planning processes such as the development of the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan.

²³ National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, objective 1 and policy 1.

Land Use Recovery Plan

Following the Canterbury earthquake sequence, a Land Use Recovery Plan (LURP) was prepared in December 2013 to facilitate development and recovery in the Greater Christchurch area.²⁴ Of significance, the LURP included amendments to the CRPS through the introduction of a new Chapter 6 which facilitated land use change across the Greater Christchurch area. The CRPS amendments included 'Map A' which showed growth locations around the edge of Christchurch as 'greenfield priority areas'. Map A was subsequently amended through Change 1 to the CRPS which introduced additional "Future Development Areas" (FDAs).

The CRPS policy framework is discussed in more detail below, however in summary the provisions included directive policies that growth should only occur within the identified greenfield priority areas, or in FDAs if there was a capacity need over the medium term.²⁵ This strong policy direction provided a settled framework for managing growth in the Christchurch District. It is important to note that whilst the Site is not identified as a Greenfield Priority Area or FDA, the SP Golf Zone outcomes are consistent with 'urban activities' as defined in the CRPS (discussed in more detail below).

Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan (GCSP)

The councils and agencies that make up the Greater Christchurch Partnership have recently prepared the GCSP in 2024. The GCSP is a Future Development Strategy (FDS) in terms of the NPS-UD. As a strategy prepared under the LGA it is also a matter that the plan change must *have regard to*.

The GCSP sets out a strategy for managing growth in the Greater Christchurch area. It includes a plan for accommodating a population of 700,000 by 2050, growing to 1 million by 2085. In a nutshell the GCSP seeks to accommodate both of these growth scenarios primarily through intensification of existing urban areas, provision for kāinga nohoanga housing, and the limited greenfield growth areas previously identified in the LURP/ CRPS. Significant intensification is anticipated in and around the main commercial centres and along two proposed rapid transit corridors in the west and north of Christchurch (CBD to Hornby and Belfast respectively).

The relevant overarching direction of the GCSP is to '*Focus growth through targeted intensification in urban and town centres and along public transport corridors*'²⁶. Six opportunities are identified (each with a series of specific directions) and five key moves are stated²⁷.

The Proposal is consistent with specific 'directions' in the GCSP and its spatial strategy, as described below.

Opportunity 1: *Protect, restore and enhance historic heritage and sites and areas of significance to Māori, and provide for people's physical and spiritual connection to these places.*

The site does not contain any identified listed heritage items or sites of significance to Māori (beyond the Styx Rover margins whose OSWM Zoning is not changing. The plan change enables the restoration of waterways and ecological values, and the applicant welcomes feedback from mana whenua through the plan change process.

Opportunity 2: *Reduce and manage risks so that people and communities are resilient to the impact of natural hazards and climate change.*

The upper terrace portion of the Site is not exposed to any significant natural hazards shown on Map 7²⁸ following normal subdivision mitigation solutions. The Site is not exposed to coastal inundation or sea level rise. Moderate hazard risks including liquefaction and 1:200 AEP flooding are shown on Map 8²⁹ (with these two hazards covering much of the eastern parts of Christchurch). Liquefaction risks can be managed through bulk earthworks as part of the subdivision process and if necessary specific building foundation designs for which standard solutions are available. Stormwater management and associated basins

²⁴ The LURP was prepared under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 rather than the RMA.

²⁵ CRPS, Policy 6.3.12.

²⁶ GCSP, pg. 26

²⁷ GCSP pg. 24-25

²⁸ GCSP, pg. 51

²⁹ GCSP, pg. 52

are integrated into the ODP and will be designed to accommodate the specific return period events through the subdivision process, along with avoiding development on the lower terrace.

Opportunity 3: *Protect, restore and enhance the natural environment, with particular focus in te ao Māori, the enhancement of biodiversity, the connectivity between natural areas and accessibility for people.*

The Proposal will facilitate significant ecological restoration. The existing waterways which currently pass adjacent to a working dairy farm will be restored with indigenous riparian margins. The stormwater basins will provide a significant area of publicly accessible open space with opportunities for indigenous planting and walking/ cycling trails, which, along with enhanced Styx River riparian access, will result in a significant improvement in the ability for people to connect to the natural environment.

Opportunity 4: *Enable diverse, quality, and affordable housing in locations that support thriving neighbourhoods that provide for people's day-to-day needs.*

The Proposal enables a range of housing typologies and will make a significant contribution towards maintaining a competitive housing market in northern Christchurch. The proposal includes a small community/ commercial hub to help meet local needs and the site is within walking distance to an existing primary school.

Opportunity 5: *Provide space for businesses and the economy to prosper in a low carbon future.*

The Proposal includes a small community hub to help meet residents' convenience needs without compromising the role and function of any existing commercial centres in the centre hierarchy. The Proposal will not result in any adverse effects on the functioning or development of strategic infrastructure or regionally significant industries.

Opportunity 6: *Prioritise sustainable and accessible transport choices to move people and goods in a way that significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions and enables access to social, cultural and economic opportunities.*

There are existing public transport services to Prestons. The Proposal will assist in growing the customer base for these services and will enable their extension to Spencerville and the Site, thereby supporting their ongoing viability and enhancement. The Proposal includes a collector road network that will be designed to readily accommodate public transport services/ routes. The site will be connected to the existing primary school and Prestons suburb and associated 10ha+ commercial centre by walking and cycling routes to facilitate modal choice. The Proposal helps support a consolidated urban form due to its intensification of an existing urban zoned block of land and its close proximity to the edge of Christchurch relative to other greenfield growth alternatives. It will therefore help support a reduction in emissions relative to that housing demand, as demand is being satisfied via the plan change instead of being accommodated in more distant locations.

The Site's upper terrace is not identified in Map 5³⁰ as being located within a 'key constraint area'. These constraints include areas exposed to high risk of natural hazards, containing significant natural values, or located adjacent to regionally significant infrastructure.

Map 2 of the GCSP³¹ does not show any additional greenfield residential areas beyond those currently shown in the CRPS Map A. As such it simply reflects the status quo planning framework that was established some 18 years ago³² in terms of greenfield growth directions. Rather than identifying new greenfield areas graphically, the GCSP instead sets out a series of key criteria to inform the locations that are best placed to accommodate urban growth, with these criteria aligned with the above opportunities³³. The Proposal is assessed against the criteria in **Table 1** below:

³⁰ GCSP, pg. 45

³¹ GCSP, pg.23

³² Urban Development Strategy 2007, which was a precursor to the Land Use Recovery Plan which included Chapter 6 (and Map A) to the CRPS.

³³ GCSP, pg. 63

Table 1. GCSP Broad Location Criteria for Urban Growth

Broad Location Criteria	Proposal alignment
Be adjacent to, near, or within a Significant Urban Centre, Major Town or a Locally Important Urban Centre in Greater Christchurch	The site is an existing urban-zoned block of land and is located in close proximity to Christchurch City, relative to other greenfield alternatives.
Be accessible to either MRT, Core Public Transport Routes or New / Enhanced Public Transport Routes	The site will be designed to accommodate a public transport bus service which could comprise an extension to the existing service to Prestons, and would facilitate the reintroduction of a service to Spencerville.
Protect, restore and enhance the natural environment, historic heritage, and sites and areas of significance to Māori	The site facilitates extensive ecological restoration including naturalised waterway margins, wetlands and open space. The Proposal facilitates the restoration of the Styx River riparian margins, with the river identified as a feature containing cultural value to mana whenua.
Be free from significant risks arising from natural hazards and the effects of climate change	The upper terrace is free from significant natural hazards, as shown on GCSP Map 7. Stormwater basins and the avoidance of development on the lower terrace is an integral component of the ODP.
Be cognisant of the landscape and visual context, integrate with natural features and align with good urban design principles.	The Plan Change includes comprehensive landscape and urban design assessments, which confirm that the proposal delivers good urban design and landscape outcomes.

In conclusion, the Proposal readily meets the key qualitative outcomes or criteria set out in the GCSP for the locations where urban growth is to be accommodated, namely through intensification of already zoned urban areas. The proposed Plan Change is in a location that :

- That is in close proximity to urban areas;
- Able to be serviced by public transport and active transport mode;
- Not exposed to unacceptable risks of natural hazards,
- helps facilitate the restoration and protection of significant natural and cultural values; and
- provide a range of housing typologies and choice as part of a competitive housing market.

6.4. NPS-UD

Prior to July 2020, the planning framework for the Greater Christchurch area was clearly established. Development to urban densities could only occur within the greenfield priority areas (and FDAs subject to meeting criteria) identified on Map A of the CRPS. The Government gazetted the NPS-UD on 20 July 2020.³⁴ The NPS-UD was prepared in response to growth pressures being faced nationally, and has particular relevance for 'Tier 1' Councils which include Christchurch City.

Objective 2 of the NPS-UD seeks that planning decisions improve housing affordability by supporting competitive land and development markets.

This is important because, as recognised through Objective 2 of the NPS-UD, competition is the cornerstone of economic efficiency. When the land market becomes more competitive, land developers have a greater incentive to get their product to the market in a more timely and cost-effective manner, thus further helping to keep district housing as affordable as possible. The Proposal promotes housing affordability and increases the overall efficiency of the housing market.

³⁴ The NPS-UD was subsequently updated to reflect minor amendments on 11 May 2022.

Objective 6 of the NPS-UD seeks that local authority decisions on urban development that affect urban environments are integrated with infrastructure planning and funding decisions; strategic over the medium term and long term; and are responsive, particularly in relation to proposals that would supply significant development capacity.

Objective 6 of the NPS-UD is highly relevant to this Proposal and relates to the responsive planning framework. This Objective is implemented by:

- **Policy 2**, which requires that at least sufficient development capacity is provided within the district to meet the expected demand for housing, in the short, medium and long terms.
- **Policy 6**, which guides decision-makers to have particular regard to (amongst other things) “any relevant contribution that will be made to meeting the requirements of this National Policy Statement to provide or realise development capacity”; and
- **Policy 8**, discussed below.

The NPS-UD requires the Council to have sufficient zoned and infrastructure-enabled land to meet short to medium term demand. Such capacity is to have a 20% buffer built in to ensure it is sufficient.³⁵ It is important to emphasise that regardless of whether or not adequate capacity is being provided, the NPS-UD does not preclude the provision of further capacity i.e. it is a tool for ensuring minimum capacity requirements are met, rather than being a tool for limiting additional capacity (provided such additional capacity is in locations that meet the other NPS-UD policy tests). In short, there is no policy direction within the NPS-UD that prevents or discourages the provision of more than adequate capacity, provided such additional growth areas are appropriately located and serviced. The NPS-UD assessment is therefore focussed on whether or not the plan change delivers a ‘well-functioning urban environment’.

Policy 8

Policy 8 states that:

Local authority decisions affecting urban environments are responsive to plan changes that would add significantly to development capacity and contribute to well-functioning urban environments, even if the development capacity is: unanticipated by RMA planning documents; or out-of-sequence with planned land release.

The application of Policy 8 (along with a number of other NPS-UD directives) turns first on whether the decision in question affects an “urban environment”. That phrase is defined in the NPS-UD as “any area of land (regardless of size, and irrespective of local authority or statistical boundaries) that:

*is, or is intended to be, predominantly urban in character; and
is, or is intended to be, part of a housing and labour market of at least 10,000 people.*³⁶

The question of what constitutes an “urban environment” in the Canterbury context has been well-traversed in the last two years, particularly in response to private plan change requests. Decisions on those requests have consistently accepted that:³⁷

- An “urban environment” can apply over a large area, which may include some rural and open space areas.
- That environment may compromise multiple areas which form part of a wider housing market.
- Greater Christchurch, as outlined in Map A of the CRPS, is an “urban environment”.

In that context, decisions on housing capacity in the Greater Christchurch area, and the geographic directions in which Christchurch might grow, are therefore clearly decisions that affect an ‘urban environment’. For the Site, the existing SP Golf Zone over much of the site is clearly an area that is to be ‘predominantly urban in character’, with the site also forming part of the wider Christchurch housing and employment market. The NPS-UD direction regarding urban environment outcomes are therefore engaged.

³⁵ National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, clause 3.22.

³⁶ NPS-UD, at 1.4.

³⁷ Decision of the Independent Hearings Panel, Waimakariri District Plan, Private Plan Change 31, 27 October 2023, at [44]; Recommendation of Commissioner Caldwell, Proposed Plan Change 73, dated 1 March 2022, at [341]; Recommendation of Commissioner Caldwell, Proposed Plan Change 67, dated 10 January 2022 at [186] – [210].

Such decisions on urban environments need to be responsive to proposals that meet Policy 8 criteria. “Responsive” does not mean that such proposals must be granted; rather, Policy 8 provides a pathway for proposals to be considered notwithstanding that they are “unanticipated” by RMA documents. The NPS-UD goes on to direct that when considering proposals which meet that Policy 8 criteria, “particular regard” must be had to the development capacity that they provide. Policy 8 therefore ‘opens the door’ for considering proposals seeking to rezone land that is not identified as a greenfield priority area or FDA in the CRPS i.e. proposals that are ‘unanticipated by a RMA planning document’.

As noted above, whilst the Site is not identified in the CRPS as a greenfield priority area nor an FDA, the SP Golf Zone outcomes clearly meet the CRPS definition of an ‘urban environment’. Urban development and potential intensification within the SP Golf Zone is therefore anticipated by the District Plan as a RMA planning document. The four RUF Zoned lifestyle blocks are however rural, and as such their development for housing is not ‘anticipated’ by any RMA planning document. Under Policy 8, being in an unanticipated location does not preclude rezoning of the Site provided that:

- The Proposal adds significantly to development capacity; and
- It would contribute to a well-functioning urban environment.

Guidance in terms of the application of Policy 8 is found within the NPS-UD itself. Clause 3.8 states that:

(2) Every local authority must have particular regard to the development capacity provided by the plan change if that development capacity:

- (a) would contribute to a well-functioning urban environment; and*
- (b) is well-connected along transport corridors; and*
- (c) meets the criteria set under subclause (3); and*

(3) Every regional council must include criteria in its regional policy statement for determining what plan changes will be treated, for the purpose of implementing Policy 8, as adding significantly to development capacity.

In terms of (3) above, no such criteria have been included in the CRPS and, as such, only the first two matters listed in (2)(a) and (b) are relevant.

Significant development capacity

In order to be considered under Policy 8 a proposal therefore first needs to be capable of delivering “significant development capacity”. The question of what is “significant” has been considered in a number of recent plan change decisions in the Greater Christchurch area. The decision for PC31³⁸ found that the provision of some 800 households passed this test. Plan changes in Selwyn District have likewise found provision of 250 households (PC67) and 330 households (PC72) meet the significance tests. The Proposal provides for some 800 houses and therefore is considered to readily meet the threshold for significant capacity. The Economics assessment assesses whether this supply boost satisfies the definition of “significant” in Objective 6(c) of the NPS-UD, which concludes that the proposal represents an extremely significant increase in development capacity for the purpose of the NPS-UD.

Delivering significant capacity is not however simply a numbers game. The NPS-UD defines “development capacity” as:

- *the capacity of land to be developed for housing or for business use, based on:*
- *the zoning, objectives, policies, rules, and overlays that apply in the relevant proposed and operative RMA planning documents; and*
- *the provision of adequate development infrastructure to support the development of land for housing or business use*

The definition of “development infrastructure” includes water, wastewater and stormwater as well as land transport infrastructure. Therefore, if a proposal cannot be adequately serviced by the necessary infrastructure it cannot be said to contribute to development capacity and therefore cannot rely on the Policy 8 pathway.

The Servicing Report (**Appendix B**) confirms that the Proposal can be serviced for 3-waters infrastructure. The Transport Report (**Appendix E**) confirms that the Site is able to be serviced by public transport, with no major upgrades needed to roading infrastructure. The Proposal therefore meets the significance test of Policy 8.

³⁸ Ohoka, Waimakariri District

Delivery of a ‘well-functioning urban environment’

The second test set out in Policy 8 is whether that additional capacity will “contribute to a well-functioning urban environment”. Such an assessment is informed by the other objectives and policies of the NPS-UD which work as a package.

Policy 1 of the NPS-UD sets out criteria for what constitutes a “well-functioning urban environment” and requires that planning decisions contribute to such environments. It is important to emphasise that the Policy 1 criteria are to be achieved across the wider urban environment as a whole, rather than every part of that environment having to deliver every aspect of the criteria - for example, residential areas are not expected to meet diverse business needs.

Policy 1 criteria of relevance to this Site include:

- having or enabling a variety of homes that meet the needs of different households;
- supporting, and limiting as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets;
- having good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport;
- supporting reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and
- resilience to the likely current and future effects of climate change.

The Economics Assessment has concluded that master-planned communities like the proposal not only enhance day-to-day life for residents but also establish a foundation for sustainability long-term growth that supports and contributes towards a well-functioning urban environment.

Range of housing typologies

The Proposal will enable a variety of homes to meet the needs of different households and will support the competitive operation of land and development markets. The ODP anticipates that a range of section sizes will be delivered, with larger lots located around the Site perimeter, and medium density typologies located adjacent to higher amenity areas such as the proposed community/ commercial hub and open space areas. The need to deliver a minimum yield of 15 hh/ha as part of the generic RNN provisions invariably requires subdivision plans to include a range of housing densities and typologies. The Proposal certainly provides more opportunity for housing variety than the alternative of retaining the existing SP Golf Zone with its requirement to deliver hotels and dormitories rather than dwellings, and the RUF Zone limitation of 1 house/ 4ha.

The Economic Assessment concludes that the proposed typologies help give effect to Policy 1 of the NPS-UD, which requires high growth areas like Christchurch to not only provide adequate capacity to meet future demand, but to also provide a range of housing choices to meet a wide range of needs and preferences.

Transport modal choice and connectivity

As discussed above, the Proposal provides for enhanced walking and cycling links to both the local primary school and to Prestons and the associated 10.5ha commercial centre. These trail links also enhance connectivity on the wider recreational trail network being developed by Council between Bottle Lake and Chaney's Forest, and along the length of the Styx River. The Site includes extensive areas of greenspace with linked cycling and walking routes and an interconnected roading layout to facilitate easy internal movement within the development.

The Transport Report identifies the potential to extend existing public transport services from Prestons to the Site, with the ODP ensuring that the main internal road network is capable of accommodating a future bus service. The existing settlement of Spencerville will also benefit from an extended service.

Supporting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

The correct comparison is not emissions generated from the Site compared with nil growth, but rather emissions compared with those same future households locating alternative greenfield locations in Greater Christchurch, or the land continuing under its current use as a large dairy farm.

Relative to other greenfield locations, the Site is well located for encouraging the reduction in emissions due to its proximity to Christchurch, its existing public transport services that can be expanded to meet increased customer growth, and the ability to establish an increase in carbon sequestering tree cover through the large open space areas and street tree and riparian plantings. Compared to other locations or the Site's continued use as a dairy farm, the Proposal would contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Resilience to the effects of climate change

The modelling which underpins the identification of flood management areas includes a conservative allowance of the effects of climate change that include a 1m increase in sea level. Residential development is only to occur on the upper terrace area, with the delivery of minimum floor levels to be ensured through the subdivision process and a combination of bulk earthworks to raise the height of the upper terrace and through the Building Consent process regarding the design of individual dwellings and associated internal floor levels. The design of the lower terrace to better accommodate stormwater likewise improves the resilience of this area to increased flood risks induced by climate change.

Overall summary regarding the NPS-UD

In summary, the NPS-UD requires councils to be able to clearly demonstrate that they have enabled sufficient short and medium-term capacity to meet housing needs (including a 20% buffer), and to be responsive to significant development capacity opportunities where that will contribute to well-functioning urban environments.

There is no NPS-UD policy barrier to providing more capacity than is needed, provided that the additional capacity is located and designed to contribute to a well-functioning urban environment. Policy 8 likewise provides a pathway that obliges decision-makers to be responsive to proposals for significant capacity in unanticipated locations. The majority of the site already has an urban zoning, and therefore much of the Proposal constitutes appropriate intensification of an already urban-zoned area. The inclusion of a relatively small area of RUF Zone is not 'anticipated' by planning documents, however the site meets the gateway tests under Policy 8. As such, decision-makers must be responsive to the Proposal and must have particular regard to the development capacity and the wider benefits that it will provide.³⁹

The proposal is considered to meet the relevant Policy 1 criteria for a 'well-functioning urban environment', especially when compared to other alternative greenfield growth options. The enhanced trail network and potential for enhanced public transport services not only improve the functioning of the site itself but also enhance the functioning of the wider urban environment and the settlement of Spencerville in particular.

The Proposal therefore meets the NPS-UD criteria for delivering a well-functioning urban environment; will deliver significant development capacity; is able to be integrated with the necessary infrastructure to support growth; is accessible for a range of transport modes; and is located in an area with excellent proximity to the existing Christchurch urban area, especially in comparison to alternative greenfield locations in Greater Christchurch. As such the Proposal better gives effect to the NPS-UD than the combination of golf resort and rural lifestyle outcomes that are currently anticipated in the District Plan.

6.5. Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS)

In addition to giving effect to NPS, plan changes must also give effect to operative regional policy statements.⁴⁰ For completeness there is no proposed regional policy statement that the Plan Change would be required to have regard to.

The key chapter of relevance to assessing any urban growth proposals located in the Greater Christchurch area is Chapter 6 of the CRPS⁴¹. Chapter 6 was added to in late 2013 to specifically address growth and recovery in the Greater Christchurch area. The CRPS has been recently updated through Change 1⁴² in response to the need to provide additional housing capacity identified through a Housing and Business Capacity Assessment undertaken under the since superseded National Policy

³⁹ National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, policy 8, clause 3.9, policy 6(c).

⁴⁰ S75(3)(c) RMA

⁴¹ Noting that no s6 RMA matters are impacted by the proposal and natural hazard risks are able to be mitigated.

⁴² The Proposed Change was approved by the Minister for the Environment on 28 May 2021 and the changes became operative on 28 July 2021.

Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2016. Change 1 identified several Future Development Areas (FDAs) in the outlying townships in Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts but made no such provision within Christchurch itself.

Map A does not show as 'urban' a number of Specific Purpose Zones, including both the Whisper Creek and Clearwater golf resort zones, the SP Corrections Zone over Christchurch Prison, or in Selwyn District the Rolleston Prison or Burnham Military Camp. Whilst not shown on Map A, the CRPS definition of an 'urban activity' includes residential activities at a density of more than one household per 4 ha, business activities, and sports fields and recreation facilities that service an urban population.

The SP Golf Zone and the anticipated activities are therefore 'urban' for the purpose of interpreting the CRPS policy framework. The plan change, in essence, therefore seeks to intensify an existing urban area, whilst the four lifestyle blocks are 'rural' and therefore constitute a new greenfield growth area.

Prior to the NPS-UD, the CRPS Chapter 6 provided settled direction regarding how urban growth was to be managed. Growth was anticipated within greenfield priority areas (and more recently FDAs) and through the intensification of existing urban areas, and conversely was to be avoided outside of these areas. In terms of CRPS Objectives 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 and Policy 6.3.1 the outcomes sought in the plan change are not consistent with these prescriptive provisions which direct urban growth to specific areas and seek to avoid development outside of the areas shown on Map A of the CRPS, at least insofar as that direction applies to the four RUF Zoned lifestyle blocks.

As set out above, Policy 8 of the NPS-UD provides an opportunity to allow consideration of an 'out of sequence' proposal that meets the significant capacity threshold. As a higher order document, the NPS-UD should be seen as providing an 'opportunity' that would otherwise be precluded by the CRPS. This reflects the Central Government objectives to facilitate greater opportunities for meeting housing and business needs.

Whilst Policy 8 is able to be met by the Proposal, new growth areas still however need to align with the other urban growth outcomes sought in the CRPS, as these directions provide a more localised expression of the factors that contribute to a well-functioning urban environment.

In summary, the Proposal aligns with these outcomes by:

- not exacerbating natural hazard risks;⁴³
- not being located in an area with identified high landscape or ecological values;⁴⁴
- not being located in an area with identified heritage values;⁴⁵
- retaining values of importance to Tangata Whenua;⁴⁶
- not being located such that it would result in reverse sensitivity effects or otherwise affect the functioning of strategic infrastructure;⁴⁷
- resulting in a yield of at least 15 households/ hectare;⁴⁸
- being able to be connected to reticulated infrastructure networks for which there is sufficient existing or programmed capacity;⁴⁹

⁴³ CRPS Objective 6.2.1(8), Objective 11.2.1, Policy 11.3.1.

⁴⁴ CRPS Objective 6.2.1(4)(5), noting that no changes are sought to the OSWM Zone along the Styx River

⁴⁵ CRPS Objective 6.2.3(2).

⁴⁶ CRPS Objective 6.2.3(3), and subject to formal feedback from mana whenua.

⁴⁷ CRPS, Objective 6.2.1(10).

⁴⁸ CRPS, Policy 6.3.7, noting that the CRPS definition of 'net density' excludes areas set aside for stormwater basins, ecological restoration, land subject to inundation, and esplanade reserves.

⁴⁹ CRPS, Policy 6.3.5, noting that additional capacity is 'programmed' to be provided as part of this plan change

- being located in a manner that results in good urban form and is well-connected and integrated into the wider street and pedestrian/ cycle network;⁵⁰
- being subject to an ODP that shows the requisite matters;⁵¹ and
- not being located on HPL as defined in the higher order NPS-HPL, noting that the CRPS is yet to be amended so that it gives effect to this recent NPS.⁵²

In conclusion, apart from the 'Map A' growth policies discussed above as they apply to the four lifestyle blocks, the Proposal gives effect to CRPS directions regarding the locational characteristics necessary to support a change in zone to enable residential activities and the intensification of existing urban areas.

6.6. Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan and Canterbury Air Regional Plan

Under s 75(4)(b) of the RMA, a district plan cannot be inconsistent with a regional plan, which in respect to this application include the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) and the Canterbury Air Regional Plan (CARP). The establishment of urban activities within the Site will either need to meet the permitted activity conditions of these plans or be required to obtain a resource consent.

In broad terms the effects associated with requirements under these regional plans can be considered at the time of detailed development as part of the subdivision process and the necessary consents obtained. There are clear consenting pathways available for the sorts of works that are typically associated with construction and operational phases such that it is considered readily plausible that urbanisation of the Site will be able to be undertaken in a manner that is not inconsistent with these regional plans.

6.7. Objectives and Policies of the Christchurch District Plan (District Plan)

A detailed assessment of the Plan Change against the relevant objectives and policies of the District Plan is attached as **Appendix J**.

Plan changes provide the opportunity for a 'first principles' reassessment of the most effective and efficient method for achieving the District Plan's objectives and policies. As such this assessment focusses on the alignment of the proposal with the Plan's Strategic Objectives. The District Plan is structured such that all subsequent zone and thematic policy frameworks must give effect to the Strategic Objectives. Alignment with the Strategic Objectives can therefore be taken to also mean that the proposal aligns with the outcomes set out in the subsequent zone and thematic chapters. A separate assessment against the policy framework for the natural hazards, subdivision, transport, and open space chapters is therefore not considered to be necessary.

For completeness, an assessment has nonetheless been undertaken of the proposal against the policy outcomes sought in the Residential New Neighbourhood Zone, as this is the zone that is proposed for the site and therefore it is appropriate to ensure that the site characteristics and ODP align with the proposed RNN outcomes. A brief assessment has also been made against the outcomes sought in the SP Golf Zone. Whilst the proposal seeks to shift away from the SP Golf Zone, some of the non-golf related outcomes sought by the existing zone for this site remain relevant.

The Appendix J assessment demonstrates that the proposal readily aligns with both Strategic Directions and the RNN Zone outcomes, and likewise maintains a number of the key outcomes sought under the existing SP Golf Zone in terms of wider public and ecological benefits.

⁵⁰ CRPS, Objective 6.2.4 and Policy 6.3.2.

⁵¹ CRPS, Policy 6.3.3.

⁵² CRPS, Objective 15.2.1.

7. Section 32 - Assessment of Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Plan Change

7.1. Appropriateness of Objectives and Policies of the Christchurch District Plan (District Plan)

Section 32(1)(a) requires examination of the extent to which the objectives of the proposal are the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act. The proposal does not involve any new, or the alteration of any existing, objectives of the District Plan. The existing objectives of the District Plan are assumed to be the most appropriate for achieving the purpose of the RMA, having previously been assessed as such.

In the absence of any new or amended district Plan objectives, the 'objective' for s 32 assessment is the purpose of the plan change. The purpose as set out in the introduction to this report is to:

Enable the development of a new residential community with an associated local commercial centre, set within extensive open space areas and ecological restoration, and well connected to the existing urban area and local schools. The plan change will make a significant contribution to housing capacity and provide for increased competition and choice in residential land markets, whilst managing adverse effects of the change in land use on the surrounding area. Provision for a variety of densities (including medium density and lower density development) within the Plan Change area is considered appropriate to provide housing choice, help address declining housing affordability, and enable persons and the community to provide for their health and wellbeing, while avoiding, remedying or mitigating potential adverse effects.

An assessment of the Plan Change against the purpose of the RMA is included in Section 8 below. An overall assessment of the proposal to rezone the land for RNN purposes is considered to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act.

7.2 Appropriateness of the Provisions to Achieve the Objectives

Whilst assessment of the proposal against the outcomes sought in the SP Golf Zone and RUF Zone are not therefore necessary, the Proposal does need to be assessed against the Strategic Directions Chapter, along with its consistency with the outcomes sought in the RNN Zone. Section 32(1)(b) requires examination of whether the proposed plan change provisions are the most appropriate way of achieving the District Plan objectives.

An assessment of the Proposal against the relevant objectives and policies of the District Plan is provided in **Appendix J**. Overall, it is considered that the Proposal is generally consistent with the objectives and policies of the Operative District Plan, particularly those seeking to provide pleasant living environments with high amenity, the management of urban growth primarily through the intensification of already urban-zoned areas, the mitigation of natural hazard risks, the enablement of modal choice and the safe and efficient function of the transport network, and the enhancement of the natural environment.

7.3 Other Reasonably Practicable Options for Achieving the Objectives

In assessing the benefits and costs of the Proposal, two options have been considered:

- 1) Retention of the status quo zoning i.e. a mix of SP Golf Zone and RUF Zone; and
- 2) Rezone the site to a RNN Zone and associated ODP as proposed.

Table 2 provides an assessment of these two options:

Table 2. Assessment of Costs and Benefits, and Efficiency and Effectiveness

Option 1 – Retain the status quo	
Costs	Benefits
Economic costs - The lack of housing provision in a location that is otherwise well-placed for accommodating a significant number of new households contributes to a less competitive housing market than would be the case if the site were rezoned. - Loss of economic activity that would otherwise be generated by the construction of 800 homes and associated infrastructure Social and cultural costs - Nutrient loading and sedimentation of waterways associated with agricultural activities in general are known matters of concern for iwi. This is magnified in areas of particular significance to mana whenua where the IMP strives to deliver meaningful improvement and restore the mauri of the wai. - Lost opportunity to facilitate a significant improvement in walking and cycle trail networks, including the delivery of an important link on the ‘source to sea’ route along the Styx River margins. - Lost opportunity to facilitate a significant improvement to the public transport network and a service extension out to the site and the existing settlement of Spencerville that is currently without any public transport services. - Loss of opportunity to provide recreational spaces Environmental costs - Continued farming activity would perpetuate higher levels of nutrient discharges associated with such use – and this in turn affects water quality and aquatic ecosystem health. Steps could be taken to improve discharge quality, but these would add further to private costs necessary to sustain the Site in productive use. - Continuation of dairy farming also perpetuates methane gas emissions as a key Green House Gas and potential decrease in emissions compared with those same future households locating alternative greenfield locations in Greater Christchurch	Economic Benefits - Limited. The RUF zoning and proximity to the Styx River would further constrain future use of the Site for intensive rural production activities. - Retention of the SP Golf Zone retains the potential that a golf resort and associated economic benefits might one day be realised, however this benefit is severely tempered by the lack of any investor demand to undertake the zoned development across the 15 years since the site obtained the SP Golf Zoning. Social, cultural and Environmental benefits - Retention of rural amenity that may be valued by some members of the community.

Foregone opportunity to facilitate ecological restoration of the Styx River margins in a timely manner.	
Effectiveness and efficiency	
Effectiveness	Efficiency
- The RUF Zoning of a portion of the Site aligns with the District Plan objectives for maintaining rural character. - The RUF Zone is ineffective in delivering the well functioning urban environment outcomes directed by the NPS-UD and will not enable people to live in locations proximate to town centres and areas serviced by public transport. - The RUF Zone is ineffective in delivering the NPS-UD directions regarding housing capacity, choice, and competitive housing markets. - The SP Golf Zone is ineffective in delivering a well functioning urban environment because the type of urban development enabled by the zone is not economically feasible. The SP Zone is inefficient in delivering housing choice and housing capacity.	- The existing rural character of a portion of the Site can be efficiently maintained through the RUF Zoning. - The RUF and SP Golf Zones are inefficient in that they do not enable people to live in a location that can be efficiently serviced by network infrastructure relative to other possible greenfield growth locations.
Option 2 – Rezone the site as proposed	
Costs	Benefits
Economic Costs - Public costs associated with the proposal are minimal. Regulatory and compliance costs necessary to authorise future subdivision and development of the Site will be recoverable through contributions at application and monitoring stages. - Similarly, any public investment in infrastructure upgrades that support the site's urbanisation can be recouped through development contributions and/or developer agreements as part of the subdivision process. - Significant private capital costs will be required to convert the site into a new residential neighbourhood, including infrastructure construction and upgrades, earthworks, land stability and drainage improvements, and construction of new homes. Social and cultural costs - Converting the Site to residential use will change the rural character of the site currently enjoyed by some.	Economic Benefits - The economic benefits of the Proposal are anticipated to be significant. - Consistent with the NPS-UD, the proposal is also anticipated to deliver wider systemic benefits through increased housing supply and housing choice, thereby enhancing market competition and affordability. - The proposed commercial and community centre will provide a modest level of ongoing employment and associated economic benefits. Social and cultural benefits - The ODP requires the Proposal to deliver a wide range of housing, types and sizes – the aim being to offer supply to meet diverse housing needs for diverse 'ages and stages'. - Riparian enhancement offers major opportunities to improve public access to the Styx River margins, with

Such effects are not quantifiable. As noted in the NPS-UD, they are equally not in of themselves, necessarily adverse – let alone adverse to any degree of significance, especially given that the majority of the site already has a form of urban zoning. Environmental costs No other effects have been identified. The Site does not include any identified sites or areas with historic, natural character, landscape or other natural significance. It does contain surface waterbodies – and future development will be managed effectively by the collective protections embedded in the ODP, the District Plan, the Regional Plan and relevant National Environmental Standards.	attendant benefits for amenity values which will be wide-reaching. - Community connectivity and resilience can also be enhanced through transport connectivity from the Site to existing urban areas for both public transport and active modes. Environmental Benefits - The Proposal will also provide the impetus for investment in the protection and improvement of existing waterbodies. - Similarly, the Proposal will enable water quality and aquatic ecosystem health enhancements, including in association with the cessation of current agricultural uses.
Effectiveness and efficiency	
Effectiveness	Efficiency
- The Proposal will enable the effective implementation of the relevant District Plan objectives. - It will provide for the consolidation of an existing urban-zoned area will maintain a compact urban form and enhance connectivity and liveability relative to alternative greenfield growth area options in Greater Christchurch. - The Proposal will enable the development and use of a new neighbourhood that is well-integrated with associated infrastructure provision. - The ODP will ensure that the Site can be developed to effectively deliver on the District Plan's aims for a variety of housing types, as well as enhanced and well-connected open spaces. - It will also make a significant contribution to development capacity within the northeast Christchurch area and the Greater Christchurch urban environment more generally.	- The Proposal represents a cost-effective way to implement the District Plan's objectives, with anticipated benefits considerably outweighing costs. - It also makes use of existing District Plan provisions for the RNN Zone which are themselves optimised to implement the relevant overarching objectives.
Overall Evaluation	
Option 2 is the more appropriate method to achieve the District Plan's suite of objectives when read as a package. It is anticipated to have a high net environmental benefit which are anticipated to result in greater costs than benefits, in contrast to Option 1 given that Option 1 is highly unlikely to be economically viable and therefore is unlikely to be implemented and any benefits realised. Option 2 likewise is much more effective in delivering the urban form and housing choice and capacity outcomes anticipated by the higher order planning framework than Option 1.	
Risk of acting or not acting	

Further evaluations must consider the risk of acting or not acting *if* there are information gaps or uncertainty in the related subject matter.

The Proposal has been subject to an appropriate level of investigation befitting a rezoning of this nature, and there are no material gaps in the knowledge base that give rise to any need for a risk assessment.

8. Part 2 RMA and overall Conclusion

The purpose of the Resource Management Act is set out in Section 5 of the Act, being the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. This purpose is subject to Sections 6, 7 and 8 of the Act which set out that matters that are to be taken into consideration in achieving the purpose.

The proposal recognises and provides for Section 6(a), (c), and (d) matters through facilitating the ecological restoration and enhancement of the Styx River riparian area, as well as enhancing public access to the Styx River margins. The proposed ecological restoration of the Styx River margins also aligns with the outcomes sought in s6(e) relating to the relationship of Māori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga. The careful design of the ODP to avoid residential development on the lower terrace combined with the ability to mitigate residual flood and liquefaction risks on the upper terrace through proven solutions at time of subdivision provides for the need to manage any significant risks from natural hazards required under s6(h).

In terms of section 7, the matter of most relevance to the residential zoning and further development of this site are the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources (s7(b)), the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values (s7(c)), the intrinsic values of ecosystems (s7(d)), the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment (s7(f)), and the finite characteristics of natural and physical resources (s7(g)).

The site, as a largely existing urban-zoned area, is a finite physical resource in terms of land adjacent to the Christchurch City that are capable of urban development. The Proposal seeks to utilise this finite resource in a more efficient manner than the operative SP Golf Zone which is not commercially viable. The quality of environment and amenity values are anticipated to be high, with existing District Plan rules prescribing density standards and associated built form controls to ensure a suitable standard of development and amenity. As noted earlier, this proposal largely swaps one form of urban development (a golf resort) for another form of urban development (a residential neighbourhood). Both types of urban environment are capable of displaying high amenity values if well-designed, with the ODP and associated RNN Zone rules, ensuring any future development will be well integrated with the wider urban form and the more immediate natural environment. The Proposal facilitates a significant improvement in ecosystem values through wetland and riparian restoration.

An overall assessment of the proposal to rezone the land for RNN purposes is considered to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act. The proposal provides for the social well-being of residents of Christchurch City and the Greater Christchurch area by providing an efficient residential development form to increase residential housing capacity and choice in a location that is more proximate to the centre of Christchurch than many other greenfield alternatives in the Greater Christchurch area.