

BEFORE THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 ('the Act')

AND

IN THE MATTER of a private plan change request by Highfield Park Limited to rezone approximately 260ha of land adjoining Redwood from Rural 3 (Styx-Marshland) to Living G (Highfield)

BETWEEN **HIGHFIELD PARK LIMITED**
Requestor

A N D **CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL**
Local Authority

EVIDENCE OF BRIAN WILLIAM PUTT ON BEHALF OF HIGHFIELD PARK LIMITED

Presented for filing by:

Adderley Head

(C S Fowler)

C/- Level 5, 88 Division Street, Riccarton

PO Box 16, Christchurch 8140

Tel 03 353 0231

Fax 03 353 1340

Email chris.fowler@adderleyhead.co.nz

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My name is Brian William Putt. I am a principal of Metro Planning Ltd. I am a qualified Town Planner with 39 years experience in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Arts in History and Psychology and a Diploma in Town Planning, both from Auckland University. I also hold a Diploma in Accounting and Finance from Central London Polytechnic. I have been a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute since 1977.
- 2 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note and I have complied with it when preparing my statement of evidence. I agree to comply with it when I present this evidence before the Environment Court.
- 3 I am experienced in all aspects of New Zealand statutory and land use planning and have specialised in recent years in development co-ordination, social and environmental reporting on major projects, due diligence analysis for development project investment purposes and the analysis and presentation of applications for resource consents. I am familiar with the Canterbury Region and although I am not a practitioner who appears regularly on Christchurch or Canterbury matters, I have undertaken various projects and jobs within the region over the last 15 years. Also, for family reasons I am a regular visitor to Christchurch.

Involvement in Change 1 CRPS

- 4 With particular regard to Change 1 (and related Variations 1-4) Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (CRPS) relevant to this hearing, I am familiar with the issues arising from the decisions-version of Change 1 CRPS, having been involved in a detailed manner in the presentation of evidence for the predecessor to Highfield at the ECan hearing on Change 1, CRPS.
- 5 My participation in the hearings at first instance gave me a thorough understanding of the issues arising under Change 1 CRPS and the general philosophical approach being taken by the ECan towards the management of growth under the auspices of the CRPS. It is fair to note that in my opinion there is a broad debate within the planning profession about the manner in which this form of regional direction over territorial local authorities should occur. There is a wide range of physical, social, cultural and economic issues at stake in this philosophical debate. They are matters that go to the purpose of the Resource Management Act.
- 6 The debate centres on the level of direction that is necessary to be taken in a Regional Policy Statement on the management of growth. The direction can take either the nature of broad spatial allocations or be specifically directed by the use of an urban fence constraint or urban rural boundary constraint. The Canterbury

Regional Policy Statement has chosen the latter technique determining by means of direct mapping areas which are inside or outside the urban limit.

- 7 There is also wide debate on the implications of this determined directive technique on the pricing of land and the supply of land. From my own investigations and wide reading on this matter I note the reluctance of experts in the economic field to accept unconditionally this form of market place determination because of the level of interference it can create in the land pricing system. By contrast, a more open-ended spatial planning arrangement for the management of regional growth allows responses to market demand to present their case against an appropriate set of planning tests. The tests are usually framed in a structure planning method which places the burden on an applicant to prove how the desired growth will present itself in an integrated and comprehensive manner to fit the pattern and form of development expected to occur.
- 8 I note that in the context of the Change 1, CRPS appeals, evidence has been provided by Dr A. Grimes and Dr P. McDermott who are both well recognised economics experts and regular commentators on the effect of that urban limit styled regional planning can have as a disruptive influence on the pricing of urban land through planning regulatory interference with the demand and supply system.
- 9 A further debate within the context of Change 1 CRPS is the involvement of the Regional Council in setting limits and expectations about the mix of housing types by establishing desires for a residential settlement pattern that promotes intensification by redevelopment of existing urban areas compared to greenfields development at the urban edge of the city. The desirability of the mix and balance between intensification and greenfields development has justification, but it is beyond the power of the regional council not the least because the mix represents deep seated cultural choices within NZ society for housing types as well as an overlay of economics and construction pricing. However, to set it in place in a regional planning statutory instrument without a degree of flexibility poses a constraint over the intended settlement patterns for the simple reason that the Regional Council does not have a house building mandate, nor can it direct or instruct the private sector developers to undertake actions they may not wish to do. Private Plan Change 67 (PPC67) is the logical response to the adopted, but not operative, version of Change 1, CRPS.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 10 In my evidence today I have considered the decision of the Canterbury Regional Council in favour of including the subject land within the urban framework of the region. Change 1 CRPS, as adopted, temporarily entered the CRPS as Chapter 12A

but now remains as a proposed change as the result of a recent decision of the High Court to reverse the decision of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority to adopt Change 1 CRPS. The important point to note is that the decision-version of Change 1 and Chapter 12A both provide for the urbanisation of the subject land.

- 11 I address the following issues in this evidence:
 - a. A review of the successful expansion of the urban environment under Change 1 CRPS.
 - b. My peer overview of the structure of Private Plan Change 67 and how it implements the purpose of Change 1 CRPS.
 - c. An analysis of Private Plan Change 67 under the provisions of s.32 of the Act.

REVIEW OF PLAN CHANGE 1 CRPS IMPLICATIONS

12 The functions of regional councils under the Act are set out at Section 30 of the Act. For planning purposes the functions fall into two categories – the broad and integrated management of natural and physical resources of the region and the management of the effects of use, development or protection of land which are of regional significance; as well as the more specific management of identified resources including soil, water, and eco systems associated with water and hazards (hazardous activities). The specific control of these natural resources which includes associated matters such as geothermal energy and water and the special requirements of the coastal marine area are the subject of regional plans covering land, air and water matters.

13 Regional councils across New Zealand administer this resource management responsibility in different ways and through different assemblies of documents. The provision for policy statements, regional plans and regional coastal plans, commences at s.63 through to s.71 of the Act. The consistent element in regional planning is the preparation of a regional policy statement. The purpose of this document is explained from s.59 to 62 of the Act. The purpose of regional policy statements is described succinctly in s.59 as –

..... a regional policy statement has achieved the purpose of the Act by providing an overview of the resource management issues of the region and policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region.

14 In planning language and practice, the regional policy statement is a strategic document providing broad direction and overview for matters of concern to the

region. By necessity this form of statutory instrument has a more philosophical and general content than the specific and directive content that one expects to find in a district plan. Consequently as regional policy statements move more towards specific and directive instructions in their exercise of achieving the integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region, it is not surprising that a broad debate has emerged in Auckland and is now occurring in Christchurch, about the relevance and authority for the form of direction and control coming through policy changes such as Change 1 to the CRPS or Policy Change 6 to the ARPS.

- 15 I note in particular the 2nd paragraph of the introduction on page 1 of the Change 1 CRPS document. It states -

Chapter 12A provides the sub-regional policy framework under the Resource Management Act 1991 to implement the greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy. The strategy is adopted policy by the Canterbury Regional Council and the territorial authorities of Christchurch City, Selwyn and Waimakariri Councils.

- 16 This introductory paragraph has set the scene that the regional council and the respective territorial local authorities have adopted the overall strategy as a policy and to that extent have determined that this is the form of resource management which they want to pursue.
- 17 The extent to which the adopted policy above has been implemented and has become a firm expectation of the participating local authorities, can be seen in the methodology used to convert the policy and technical documentation of the Urban Development Strategy (UDS) into a statutory framework. The UDS was prepared as a joint and co-operative document identifying the strategy partners as Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council and Transit NZ. Work on this document and collaborative process commenced in 2004 and culminated in the publication of the UDS which was followed shortly after by the notification of Change 1 CRPS and is in essence the statutory implementation of the UDS.
- 18 The additional technique used was the preparation of memoranda of understanding which outline the agreed format of moving from the strategies of the UDS to the statutory planning framework of policy and plan changes (or variations). The first memorandum of understanding provides for the expansion of the outlying towns of Woodend, Kaiapoi and Rolleston to allow further urban growth.
- 19 As the detailed understanding of Change 1 CRPS was tested through the hearings process, the landowners like the consortium which preceded Highfield Park Limited, raised issues about urban opportunities for their land. Testing how that would occur

across the peripheral urban development opportunities, took on a new complexion following the earthquakes of 2010/2011. Policy 6 of Change 1 CRPS had become the focus for land allocation as a strategic direction. This focus was somewhat shattered by the earthquake events and more than anything else made the greenfields land which was geotechnically sound a far better focus for the expectation of redevelopment and housing of displaced people.

- 20 I find it noteworthy that the assumptions found in Policy 6 Change 1 CRPS did lack an understanding of market forces to the extent that the expectations for growth in different settings and time periods did not acknowledge the usual experience of land development which includes monopolistic behaviour, decisions to do nothing, and general social and economic differences that may constrain the availability of large areas of land in some parts of the city in favour of other more attractive parts of the city.
- 21 It is clearly apparent that in implementing the regional policy represented by Change 1 CRPS, PPC67 is part of the district plan implementation programme. It will be an essential part of the resource base necessary for sustainable management of the region for housing, employment and the general wellbeing of the population.
- 22 A further consideration in the assessment of Change 1 CRPS was the avoidance of supply and demand difficulties that can arise in the housing marketplace if the availability of land for housing development is artificially or unnecessarily constrained. The problems associated with the unaffordability of housing in the main New Zealand urban centres are now well documented and acknowledged. It is interesting to note that new house consents now nationally average over 200m² per unit when 20 years ago the average was just 120m² per unit. No one builds small or average sized houses out of choice because the new houses are expected to have a value commensurate with the land section price. The land price can escalate through scarcity and pricing mechanisms. It was recognised through the decision to expand the urban opportunities under Change 1 CRPS that the additional land areas included for urban use would help ensure that scarcity did not artificially raise the price of land and therefore the cost of sections. While in other centres such as Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga and Wellington, the cheaper houses and smaller houses are now only to be found within the existing housing stock. In the Christchurch setting the availability of cheaper and smaller housing stock has been severely reduced by the earthquake damage which affected so much of the eastern suburbs where such housing was previously available.
- 23 In accepting that a metropolitan urban limits policy now functions within the CRPS, the question is to ensure that the development expectation attached to that policy as set out in Policy 6 of Change 1 CRPS can be implemented in a positive manner through the district plan provisions. That is the intention of PPC67 which contributes

to the expected household growth rates for greenfields areas up to 2016. The eventual provision of 2,200 new household units in the Highfields block is a significant contribution to the expected requirement for greenfields areas to contribute about 6,500 households up to 2016. Table 1 within Policy 6 has not been amended to reflect expected post-earthquake demands.

24 I supported the decision to ensure that the Highfield land was included as an identified greenfields site under the CRPS. My evidence today focuses on testing whether the outcome from PPC67 achieves the urban purpose from the urban land use allocation at a regional level as well as ensuring that the land as a physical resource is used and developed in a sustainable manner in support of both the regional and district planning purposes.

25 The suitability of the Highfield land for urban development was tested thoroughly under the Change 1 CPRS hearings and decision-making. The key concerns examined were:

- the productive use of land
- connectivity and motorway severance
- urban form
- urban development improvements
- integrated infrastructure
- Christchurch urban growth conflicts

Productive Use of Land

26 It was always to be a central issue in the expansion of urban activities on the fringe of Christchurch to consider whether the soil quality of the subject area was important for the production of food. Christchurch is surrounded by pockets of high quality soils but which are variable in their effectiveness for horticultural production. The subject land had been a traditional vegetable growing area in small holdings that formed part of the traditional marketplace and roadside food supply that forms part of the Christchurch urban edge character.

27 A technical review of the soil and productive characteristics of the property firmly established that the variable clay content ensured that there was moderate to poor soil drainage compared to the freer draining and finer soils found further north, west and south of Christchurch. Not surprisingly, over the past 20-30 years, many growers who had traditionally operated in the Styx-Marshlands area had shifted their activities to cheaper and better soil types further out of the city. The outcome had

been the slow and inevitable cessation of productive activity across the Highfield land, leaving only seasonal or part-time production as it occurs through to the present day. The evidence on this matter was irrefutable and satisfied the question about loss of productive land, allowing the hearings commissioners to conclude that the land did not constitute an adverse loss of productive soils by being converted to urban use.

Connectivity and Motorway Severance

- 28 The Northern Motorway extension project is located in a designated corridor immediately adjoining the western boundary of the Highfield block. The presence of the corridor was considered for its potential effect as a disruption to connectivity to the extent that it would isolate any future urban community on the Highfield land. The analysis provided, and the general observations available confirm, that connectivity is readily maintained through proposed connections under and over the motorway system. The important link will remain through Prestons Road which establishes the east-west access supplemented by Radcliffe Road to the north and Queen Elizabeth II Drive to the south. The cycle and pedestrian connectivity is available through the proposed open space network as well as the street network.
- 29 The preliminary traffic impact assessment confirmed that good integration could be achieved between the expanded urban area at Highfield and the existing urban network to the west. The important observation was that the future motorway is seen as providing relief to the traffic flows currently occupied the Main North Road and Marshlands Road. These two roads provide the existing north-south corridors from the northern suburbs to the central city. It was confirmed that the additional capacity arising from the construction of the northern motorway extension leaves good opportunity for vehicle movement growth coming from the Highfield urban development pattern.
- 30 The additional matter in the mix was the close proximity of the main trunk railway line which passes through Belfast on its way to Christchurch Central. Although there is no Christchurch urban rail system at present, it is now part of the discussion for the redevelopment of the central business district using the existing rail network to the north, south-east and south-west. It is important to note that all of the Highfield land sits within two kilometres or closer to the rail corridor and any potential urban network that might be centred on the Belfast key activity centre.
- 31 The conclusion from a regional planning perspective was that the Highfield site could provide appropriate and adequate connectivity into the existing road network. In addition, it did not suffer from any adverse effects arising from the motorway severance created by the northern motorway corridor.

Urban Form

- 32 The request to include the Highfields area within the urban framework of Christchurch was based on a preliminary and indicative master plan for the Highfield site. This was the obvious means of ensuring that the Highfield block could provide a community based residential environment that would take the form of an “urban village”. The concept identified neighbourhood centres, connected open spaces and an integrated street pattern. Connections beyond the Highfield site to the key activity centre at Belfast and Christchurch Central Business District were firmly established. A social impact analysis undertaken confirmed the manner in which the community integration and consolidation could occur within the framework of the indicative master plan that had been prepared in support of the urban inclusion request.
- 33 The competence of this work was noteworthy and raised no issues from a design and urban consolidation point of view. The opportunity was able to demonstrate consistency and effectiveness within the urban model expected under the provisions of the CRPS.

Urban Development Improvements and Infrastructure

- 34 The early work on the Highfield site which was centred on the preparation of an indicative master plan for development, followed through on achieving improvements to community assets. The principal improvement was to upgrade and replace Horners Drain which forms the central feature of the stormwater management system draining the subject area to Styx River.
- 35 The second important improvement was to add another step in the project known as Styx Vision 2000-2040 which was to achieve a “Source-to-Sea” public access linkage along the Styx River corridor. This had been achieved in the nearby Northwood development to the west of Belfast, and continued through the Redwood subdivision immediately to the west of the subject site. The Highfield property is able to continue this opportunity and public access initiative.
- 36 The urbanisation of the Highfield land also confirmed the opportunity to provide an up to date and effective stormwater management system to improve and enhance the century old drainage arrangements from the previous rural land activities. This enhancement was seen as an advantage that would come with the conversion of the land to an urban purpose.

Growth Conflicts

- 37 The examination of Change 1 CRPS necessarily brought about a view of the kinds of constraints and conflicts that exist around Christchurch at the urban edge which

generally prevent some areas being urbanised in favour of others. One of the principal constraints was the location of the Christchurch International Airport and the resulting noise contour controls which support it. Unlike the Auckland and Wellington airports, Christchurch airport operates a two directional runway system almost perpendicular to each other. This creates a far more complicated noise contour constraint which affects large areas to the north and west of the city. Consequently, the location of the Highfield land in the north-east quadrant provides an opportunity for an urban expansion that might otherwise have been located further west. The Highfield land is unaffected by the airport noise contour constraints. This is an important strategic observation that assisted in favour of the decision to allow the Highfield land to be urbanised.

- 38 A second constraint involves the geotechnical and dynamic characteristics of the substrata likely to be influenced by seismic activity. Fortunately the Highfield land did not suffer any adverse effects from the earthquake activities and in Christchurch terms is now seen as being in the stable part of the region. It is available for development.

Summary

- 39 These were the important considerations that confirmed the suitability of the Highfield land for urban activity in the regional context. Based on detailed evidence and analysis covering these various topics, the Highfield land was identified as being suitable for urban expansion through the decisions on Change 1 CRPS.

PEER OVERVIEW OF PPC67 AND PC1 CRPS

- 40 To understand the relationship between PPC67 and the CRPS the instruction found at s.75(3) & (4) of the Act provides the primary guidance beyond the Part 2 provisions of the Act which of course reflect s.31 & 32 in respect of the validity test for a plan change. In this case the work achieved through Change 1 CRPS provides the underpinning guidance and development expectation for this land now regarded as being appropriate for urban development. It is particularly important to note that the contents of a district plan under s.75 of the Act require the Plan to give effect to

(c) any Regional Policy Statement.

Furthermore, the Plan under s.75(4) must not be inconsistent with ...

(d) a Regional Plan for any matter specified in s.30(1)

41 Section 30(1) of the Act sets out the functions of a regional council and sub-paragraphs (1), (a) & (b) effectively form the core purpose of a Regional Policy Statement. These are:

(a) The establishment, implementation and review of objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region;

(b) The preparation of objectives and policies in relation to any actual or potential effect of the use development, or protection of land which are of regional significance

42 The local authority UDS partners (Christchurch City, Waimakariri District and Selwyn District) have formally agreed with the intention of Change 1 CRPS to urbanise (amongst other land parcels), the Highfield block. While there may remain other appellants in relation to that matter whose interests have been rekindled from the High Court decision (now subject to an appeal to the Court of Appeal), it would be extremely speculative in the present circumstances to suggest that the land identified for urban expansion under Change 1 CRPS would be removed.

43 It was fortunate that a preliminary/indicative master plan was prepared for the Highfield land and presented as the underpinning diagrammatic form at the hearings in support of the urban inclusion request on Change 1 CRPS. That original master plan with refinements and modifications to reflect improved information and database material has become the development map for PPC67. The plan change flows neatly from the regional policy statement instruction into a well constructed framework for urban development. The general policies found at Part 11.7.13 follow the key regional policies arising from the revised objectives found in Change 1 of the CRPS. The regional objectives create a checklist that covers:

- urban consolidation
- character and sustainability
- recognition of urban growth limits
- integration of land use infrastructure and funding
- key activity centres
- business land
- integration of transport infrastructure and land use

- 44 **Urban consolidation** is represented by PPC67 through the form of household formation mix promoted by the residential site density provisions created through the residential density areas identified as A, B, C & D. The mix in planning terms is in the range of high density to medium density, spatially represented by provisions allowing one household per 200m² to one household per 800m². The associated outline development plan map shows how this density arrangement is used as a transition to the adjoining rural land or as an urban design strengthening tool, particularly on the northern half of the site between Prestons Road and Styx River. The layout firmly represents the idea of an urban village, focussed on a central corridor park formed with the high density Area A as the core and based around the neighbourhood centre business zone. The medium density Areas B & C offer the transition away from the core towards the motorway corridor on the west and the remaining rural zone fronting Hawkins Road to the east. To the south, the same lineal pattern is reinforced through the density range with high density residential fronting the central boulevard and surrounding the neighbourhood business node while (in this part of the zone) the medium density opportunities are used as a transition moving eastwards towards the boundary of the zone at Hills Road.
- 45 Clearly the southern half of the zone is more seriously compromised by the topographical and geotechnical needs of stormwater management and drainage reserve locations. Overall, it is my opinion that this arrangement is a good reflection of the urban consolidation regional objective interpreted in this greenfields location.
- 46 This design intention creates the character and sustainability sought by Objective 2. Quality living environments are provided associated with the careful maintenance of special amenity and heritage values, in this case represented by the Styx River corridor and the management required for the low-lying parts of the Highfield land at the southern extent of the subject land. The design ensures that a healthy, environmentally sustainable, functionally efficient and economically vibrant community will emerge.
- 47 Recognition of the **urban growth limitations** is manifest through the provisions of Change 1 CRPS. The Highfield PPC67 works within the development expectations of Change 1 CRPS, and in my opinion appropriately answers Objective 3 of Change 1.
- 48 **Integration of land use, infrastructure and funding** is crucial to the success of PPC67. All infrastructure arising from the development demands of PPC67 will be covered by the developer and will form part of the economic base and pricing of land for retail purposes. In this case, the development plan provides a clear indication of the extent of infrastructure investment through the core road system, stormwater management improvements and the extensive network of open space provided through the master plan layout. The integration of these facilities with the existing infrastructure is represented by Prestons Road, the motorway corridor and the Styx

River corridor. At the southern end of the development there is clear linkage with Queen Elizabeth II Park and whatever future may be decided for that important recreational space.

- 49 The nearby **key activity centre** is Belfast. The Highfield land is in easy reach of Belfast, either through the future Styx River corridor or by public transport/private car or through the northern route using Radcliffe Road.
- 50 An association with **business land** and urban development is a fundamental regional policy connection. Change 1 CRPS identified several greenfields areas for urban expansion but the important feature of the Highfield land is that it is the closest urban expansion space to the Christchurch CBD and the key employment parts of the city stretching from Belfast back towards the old CBD.
- 51 **Integration of transport infrastructure and land use** is an important feature of the Highfields project. It sits beside the northern motorway corridor and has good linkage to the rail network should the city ever be served with an urban rail system. The motorway corridor does not prevent development to the east on the Highfield site because integration east-west through or over the motorway corridor was always anticipated and is provided for in PPC67 using Prestons Road and the Styx River corridor.
- 52 The **protection of strategic infrastructure** is inherent in the Highfield request for PPC67. The development of this land is of strategic importance to assist in the rebuilding of greater Christchurch, particularly on land at a lower risk of the effects of seismic activity. In all respects, the strategic importance of the Highfield land has been accentuated since the earthquake events of 2010/2011. It is an appropriate development area ready to progress and to play a role in the rebuilding of Christchurch.

Summary

- 53 My analysis of these key eight regional strategic objectives is in my opinion the important starting point in the review of PPC67 and its function within the district plan. It addresses all key regional objectives positively and in a dynamic design sense has achieved an attractive urban form that will be a major step forward in the redevelopment of Christchurch. It is clear that these outlying development opportunities, particularly in greenfields settings, are going to be of pivotal importance to the future economic development of the city. While the central area may struggle for some time to gain development traction, these outlying areas can provide a network of economic activity and social and cultural wellbeing that will provide for the strengthening of Christchurch as a whole.

- 54 In my opinion, it is extremely important in the assessment of this plan change that it must be seen as part of an holistic approach to address the difficult social and physical environment that has emerged since the earthquakes. It is no longer possible to hold fast to development ideals in the CRPS or the district plan such as in-fill redevelopment catering for 70% of growth and extensive residential development within the CBD when those ideals no longer have a practical springboard of physical resources and economic commitment from which to project themselves. Those parties left with the resources enabling them to take development initiatives like the Highfield group should be given the opportunity to advance their proposals as a key step in addressing the purpose of the Act established through s.5 – that is, the promotion of the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.
- 55 Other witnesses have examined the contents of PPC67 in detail. I particularly endorse the evidence of Ms Rachel McClung with respect to the finetuning of PPC67 and her commentary on the s.42A planning report. Fortunately the conclusion of the s.42A report is an endorsement of the approval of PPC67.

SECTION 32 RMA ANALYSIS

- 56 In this section of the evidence I undertake a review of PPC67 using the approach adopted by the Environment Court in *Nugent Consultants v Auckland City Council*, NZRMA 481, 1996, and later updated and endorsed in *Eldamos Investments v Gisborne District Council*, Decision No. WO47/05. The *Nugent* test contains four elements and in my opinion remains relevant because it is a simple mechanism which relates the intentions of the plan change to the purpose of the Act and the Plan. Recently this approach has been modified by the Environment Court in *Long Bay Okura Great Park Society Incorporated & Others v North Shore City Council*, AO78/2008. Accordingly, in this setting I am using the revised test but reflecting on the approach taken in the original *Nugent* decision. Under each test I provide a separate comment on PPC67.

Test 1

Does PPC67 have regard to any proposed regional policy statement and give effect to any operative regional policy statement?

- 57 In my opinion this is the important test in s.32 terms on this occasion. Because of the importance of the urban limits policy within the CRPS and the identification of new areas for urban expansion being so specifically and precisely notated. I consider that the appropriate review of the eight primary objectives found in Change 1 CRPS and their corresponding policies provide the appropriate checklist for testing the

purpose and veracity of PPC67. The advantage that arises in this case is that the preliminary and indicative master plan prepared for the Highfield land as the means of demonstrating pictorially how the Highfield land should be included as a future urban area. This plan provides the backdrop and security that PPC67 is the appropriate implementation of the relevant regional objectives. PPC67 has gone on to flesh out and expand the district plan objectives, policies and relevant assessment criteria and rules to ensure that the urban implementation occurs within an accepted district plan framework. So in this sense PPC67 demonstrates full regard to the relevant CRPS objectives and policies for urban expansion. I do not find any matter that can be called into question in this regard. The weight to be given to Change 1 CRPS is a legal concern. However, from my planning experience in the weighting of such matters, and through my detailed involvement with respect to Change 1 CRPS, not only for the Highfield land but also for the expansion of Rolleston, I consider that a very practical approach is required to avoid the legal hiatus being responsible for curtailing the reasonable and practical opportunities for the rebuilding of Christchurch, particularly in this primary area of need being medium to high density housing at an affordable rate.

58 I have no doubt that Test 1 is readily achieved by PPC67.

Test 2

Does PPC67 have regard to any relevant management plans or strategies under other Acts, and consistency with plans and proposed plans of adjacent territorial authorities?

59 The urban development strategy adopted by the territorial authorities UDS partnership and which underpinned Change 1 CRPS, has been modified along the way to reflect the decisions of the commissioners on Change 1. Further, the strategy was modified through a consent order in relation to the Highfield land as confirmed in the s.42A report (see para.36, Table 1). Overall I consider it is appropriate to conclude that the non-statutory UDS is fully represented by PPC67 in the same way as it has influenced Change 1 CRPS. Accordingly, the hierarchy of instruction flowed from the UDS through Change 1 as the regional instruction and will be implemented through PPC67 as the district plan rule base. Test 2 is complied with through this sequence.

Test 3

Is PPC67 the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act, being the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources, that is, in accordance with the provisions of Part 2 of the Act?

- 60 I have no doubt that PPC67 is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act, being the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources applicable to this discussion. The important natural resources are effectively the Styx River corridor and the stormwater drainage system, while the physical resources are represented by the development land. This debate took place through Change 1 CRPS at a relatively micro level and PPC67 is the logical district plan implementation of the adopted regional strategy. The sustainable management test at the regional level was focused on ensuring that Christchurch had an appropriate range of greenfields expansion land available for development to meet the growing needs of the city. That proposition has been overtaken by the housing needs that now arise from the emergency created by the 2010/2011 earthquake activities. PPC67 takes on a more important role as a sustainable management tool in these exceptional circumstances. It assists by providing up to 2,200 additional household units on land deemed suitable for residential development following the full geotechnical examination of hazards now in the forefront of the public's mind following the earthquakes.
- 61 I do not consider there is any doubt that PPC67 provides the sustainable management method of achieving the purpose of the Act represented by the use of these natural and physical resources to address the urgent housing needs of Christchurch.

Test 4

Is PPC67, having regard to its efficiency and effectiveness, the most appropriate method for achieving the objectives of the district plan, taking into account:

the benefits and costs of the proposed policies and methods (including rules); and,

the risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information about the subject matter of the policies, rules or other methods?

- 62 The objectives of the district plan that I find important are found at Part 11.1 and 11.2 of the Living section of the district plan. Here the prime residential environmental objectives and policies are set out. I am particularly interested that Objective 11.1 promotes a diverse range of living environments. This is supported in particular by Policy 11.1.4 which seeks various levels of building density to take into account character, capacity and strategic objectives of urban consolidation. I have no doubt that PPC67 achieves these objectives and policies through the range of Area A-D densities promoted in the plan change.
- 63 Objective 11.2 seeks opportunities for housing that meets the needs of all socio economic groups. In this setting the range of densities promoted by PPC67

encourages diversity of design and opportunity. This is not a matter that can be prescribed by rules but must usually arise from market forces, demand and expectations. The important ingredient is that PPC67 encourages such diversity and does not diminish the opportunity. Accordingly, apartments, terrace housing, town housing and an extensive range of household formation mix is available to be implemented through development initiatives.

- 64 The urbanisation of this area has been tested as to its benefits and costs through the economic analysis and evidence which underpinned Change 1 CRPS. There was no reason to counter or oppose the economic conclusion that the urbanisation of this land brought with it economic, social and cultural benefits which clearly outweighed any costs associated with the loss of rural production. In my opinion, that argument is truly settled in favour of urbanisation.
- 65 The risk of acting or not acting in these circumstances is readily determined. Because of the lack of suitable urban land for the redevelopment of Christchurch, the risk of not acting and rejecting this plan change places an additional burden on the city as a whole as it tries to move forward from the housing loss created by the earthquakes towards a position of not only fulfilling demand from the loss but also by supplying housing for the future and growing demand as the city recovers. In this situation I do not believe there is any risk attached to acting on PPC67. There is nothing uncertain or insufficient about the information that comes in support of this request and the manner in which it has been framed through the policies, rules and development methods of PPC67. The information is positive and supportive.
- 66 In my opinion, PPC67 readily achieves Test 4.

Test 5

Do the rules of PPC67 that will come into effect have regard to the actual and potential effects of activities on the environment?

- 67 Because of the presence of the preliminary and indicative master plan, the move from establishing the regional imperative for the urbanisation of this land through to the design detail to be implemented through the objectives, policies and rules of PPC67, carries a theme and consistency now entrenched in the rule structure of the plan change. While effects will arise through the development process, it is clear that design and engineering standards can readily manage the potential of adverse effects. When one considers the opportunities that the development will bring, particularly through the creation of an open space network and a stormwater management system that addresses a longstanding problem like Horners Drain, the rules in my opinion should be seen as the positive manifestation of the regional purpose that created the urban opportunity for the Highfield block. I consider that in all respects the rules offer a full and competent management system for the future

development that, if followed, will fully avoid, remedy or mitigate any actual or potential adverse effects likely to arise.

Summary on s.32 Tests

- 68 I consider that the s.32 tests have been achieved. This was not a difficult matter given that PPC67 rolls out in detail the purpose of Change 1 CRPS. The two processes are fully integrated and symbiotic. This is a good outcome that represents the consistent effort of the landowners through their development consortium to maintain the original intention of achieving the urban village outcome with a diversity of household typologies and effective neighbourhood business centres commensurate with the scale of the development opportunity covering approximately 260ha. I endorse the approach taken and I consider that the s.32 evaluation is concluded positively.

CONCLUSION

- 69 It is my conclusion that PPC67 is the appropriate implementation of the regional growth strategy represented by Change 1 of the CRPS.
- 70 I support the evidence of Ms McClung and in particular her recommended amendments to the detail of PPC67. I prefer her recommendations as a more practical and reasonable outcome compared to those recommended in the s.42A report.

Brian William Putt

Town Planner

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