

1. VARIATION 96 AND PLAN CHANGE 46 – WIGRAM AIRFIELD



General Manager responsible:	General Manager Strategy and Planning, DDI 941-8281
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report describes a Council initiated variation and change (“the change”) to the City Plan and seeks a decision from the Council whether or not to notify the change. The change seeks to delete or amend provisions relating to the former Wigram Airfield.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The purpose of the variation and change is to delete or amend City Plan provisions which protected the functionality of the former Wigram Airfield (**Attachment 1**) and sought to mitigate the adverse effects of airfield operation. The change relates largely to aircraft noise contours and airport approach slopes, with numerous minor amendments deleting reference to the airfield. The airfield closed on 1 March 2009, and there is no discernible reason for retaining the provisions relating to flying activities.
3. It is proposed that the City Plan provisions at (**Attachment 2**) be deleted or amended as indicated. Amendments to operative parts of the Plan are referred to as Plan Change 46, and amendments to part of the Plan not yet operative are referred to as Variation 96. The City Plan is not operative in relation to existing variations 48 (flood plains), 93 (Clearwater) and Section 293 appeal on the notified plan relating to land at Belfast (to rezone land to Living G). Variation 86 is now beyond challenge, but yet to be formally made operative in the Plan. Variation 96 (this variation) proposes to amend clauses the subject of variations 86 and 93.
4. The Section 32 assessment (**Attachment 3**) prepared by the Council finds that the proposed amendments are efficient and effective in achieving the objectives of the City Plan. Some aviation related activity may continue within the 35 hectare area containing the Air Force Museum, which is still owned by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). This 35 hectare area is that gifted by Sir Henry Wigram. The provisions proposed to be amended or deleted do not protect aviation activities on the museum site. NZDF will need to initiate its own plan change or amend its existing designation to protect such uses.
5. The change is part of a larger project to rezone the airfield for business and residential use (Private Plan Change 24). Wigram Aerodrome Limited (via Ngai Tahu Property Group Ltd) has requested that this change be promoted independently of their Plan Change 24 to facilitate redevelopment of the former airfield land sooner. The Council is undertaking this to separate the formalising of the closure of the airfield in the City Plan from the redevelopment of the former airfield, and because the Change affects provisions that apply to land outside the former airfield. Owners of adjoining land would also potentially benefit from removal of development restriction as proposed by this change. While the cost of Variation 96/Plan Change 46 will be met by the Council because of its wider impact, the actual rezoning of the airfield (Change 24) will be met by Ngai Tahu.
6. NZDF has recently removed that part of the designation which encompassed the former airfield. The museum site still owned by NZDF retains the designation.

CONSULTATION

7. The Council has discussed the matter with the current landowner and with NZDF. The matter will be presented to the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board for its comment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8. The proposed plan change and variation are of a minor technical nature, and have no significant policy risks or implications. It is anticipated that costs will be in the order of \$25,000 and will be within the existing City Plan budget.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

9. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

10. The process set out in the RMA must be followed. It includes public notification, submissions, reporting, hearings, decisions and possible appeals.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2009-19 LTCCP?

11. The proposal is part of the district planning levels of service in the LTCCP.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

12. The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy seeks greater intensification and development in and around existing urban centres and this change would enable intensification in the Wigram area. The site is within the urban limits proposed by Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement and is also identified as a greenfield urban development area, for business and residential uses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Regulatory and Planning Committee **recommend** to the Council that it:

- (a) Adopt the section 32 assessment for Variation 96 and Plan Change 46.
- (b) Agree to publicly notify Variation 96 and Plan Change 46 pursuant to Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Regulatory and Planning Committee recommends to the Council that it adopt the staff recommendation.

The Committee also instructed staff to provide the information provided by the New Zealand Defence Force and the staff response be provided to the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board and the Council.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

13. The NZDF has operated from the site since 1917, largely for flight training purposes. The military use effectively ceased in 1995, with the airfield permanently closed on 1 March 2009. NZDF sold part of the site including the airfield, but retains the 35 hectare museum site, which was land gifted by Sir Henry Wigram in 1932.
14. The variation and plan change relate to the provisions in the City Plan protecting the functionality of the former Wigram Airfield and mitigating adverse effects on adjoining land. The related provisions are no longer required. All proposed deletions and amendments are included in **Attachment 2**.
15. The amendments relate specifically to airfield protection surfaces, building setbacks and limitations, height control within protection surfaces, aircraft noise, air safety, development of the airfield, airport services and activities and transport.
16. The change was previously part of Plan Change 24, which seeks to rezone the former airfield for residential and business uses. Plan Change 24 does not seek to rezone the parcel of land still owned by NZDF containing the Air Force Museum. NZDF disposed of the bulk of the land, retaining only the area encompassing the museum.
17. This proposed change seeks to remove impediments to development in advance of Plan Change 24 by deleting or amending provisions relating to the former airfield. Plan Change 24 is a private plan change but the Council is preparing the change (via an external consultancy). This is a change that the Council is likely to have promoted independently of Plan Change 24, had that change not arisen. The proponent of Plan Change 24 and others have requested this change be separated from Plan Change 24 and made a priority, and Council staff have agreed to promote the change. The change would therefore be at the Council's cost.
18. The attached Section 32 assessment finds that the proposed amendments are the best way to achieve the objectives of the City Plan. The site is within the urban limit proposed by Proposed Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement, and the former airfield site (excluding the museum area) is identified as a greenfield outline plan development area. The proposed removal of provisions relating to the former airfield will facilitate the development of these greenfield areas.
19. The Council's Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy promotes intensification and the type of development likely to result from this change at and adjacent to the former airfield site is considered to be in accordance with this.
20. NZDF has recently amended its designation at the site to remove that part of the designation over the airfield. The museum site still owned by NZDF retains the designation. NZDF may make a submission on the change (if the decision on this report is to notify), outlining its requirements, if any.

OPTIONS

21. The Council may:
 - (1) Adopt the Section 32 Assessment for Variation 96 and Plan Change 46, and agree to publicly notify Variation 96 and Plan Change 46 pursuant to Clause 16a of Schedule 1 to the Resource Management Act 1991.

OR

- (2) Not proceed with the variation and plan change and retain the City Plan provisions relating to the former Wigram Airfield in the Plan.

PREFERRED OPTION

22. Option One.