

5. PLAN CHANGE 46 – WIGRAM AIRFIELD

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report describes a Council initiated proposed plan change to the City Plan (Plan Change 46), and seeks a decision from the Council to notify the change. The change seeks to amend provisions relating to the former Wigram Airfield (**Attachment 1**), whilst providing for continued Defence Force use of their land at Wigram.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. This matter was deferred by the Regulatory and Planning Committee in September 2009 to allow the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) to formalise its requirements. These requirements relate to the provision of approach slopes for aviation activities at the NZDF land. Some aviation use will continue on the 35 hectare site containing the Air Force Museum, which is still owned by the New Zealand Defence Force, and was the original land gifted by Henry Wigram.
3. The change will amend City Plan provisions (see **Attachment 2**) which protected the functionality of the former Wigram Airfield and sought to mitigate the adverse effects of airfield operations. The change will remove aircraft noise contours and airport approach slopes which relate to the former airfield, except the north-west approach slope which is proposed to be retained in an amended form to protect aviation activities on the museum site. One new approach slope is proposed by NZDF, running southwest from the helipad. The proposed slopes as they would appear on City Plan maps are shown at **Attachment 4**. More detail is available at Appendix 5 of Volume 3 Part 9 of the Plan (included as **Attachment 2**).
4. The change is a necessary part of a larger project to rezone the airfield for business and residential use (Proposed Plan Change 24). The Council is promoting Change 46 independently of Change 24 for two reasons: firstly to separate the issues relating to the closure of the airfield from those relating to the redevelopment of the former airfield; and secondly, Plan Change 46 affects provisions that apply to land outside the former airfield. The Section 32 assessment (see **Attachment 3**) prepared by the Council, finds that the proposed amendments are efficient and effective in achieving the objectives of the City Plan.
5. NZDF has removed that part of the designation which encompassed the former airfield. The museum site still owned by NZDF retains a designation.

CONSULTATION

6. Council staff have discussed the matter with NZDF (including the Air Force Museum) and with the owners of the former airfield area, Wigram Aerodrome Ltd (WAL). WAL have provided written advice indicating support for the proposed change. The matter has also been presented to the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. Should the Council resolve to proceed with notifying the plan change there are legal processes which must be followed in accordance with the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991. This is a standard process that all plan changes must follow and there are no particular issues or risks that would be incurred if the processes are correctly followed. There would be costs arising at various stages of the plan change process relating to the preparation of officer reports and a hearing in response to submissions. The scale of costs would depend on the level and complexity of the submissions received. There is the potential for costs associated with responding to any Environment Court appeals received. Funding is provided from existing budgets as part of the District Planning work programme adopted by the Council and provided for in the LTCCP.

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

8. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

9. The process set out in the RMA must be followed. It includes public notification, submissions, reporting, hearings, decisions and possible appeals. Provided the process is followed correctly, there are no particular legal risks associated with this proposed plan change.

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?

10. 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?

11. This change will facilitate urban development on the former airfield and wider Wigram area in accordance with the South West Area Plan. 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 Committee recommend that the Council:

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

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

12. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and its predecessors have operated from the subject site since 1917, largely for flight training purposes. The site's military use largely ceased in 1995, and the airfield permanently closed on 1 March 2009. NZDF had already sold most of the site including the airfield, but retained the 35 hectares of land gifted by Sir Henry Wigram in 1932. The Air Force Museum and other minor defence uses are contained within the area retained by NZDF.
13. This plan change relates to the provisions in the City Plan protecting the functionality of the former Wigram Airfield and mitigating adverse effects on adjoining land. All proposed deletions and amendments are included at **Attachment 2**. It is noted that the replacement Appendix 5 (Volume 3 Part 9) is in draft form and is being finalised by Council's GIS staff at the time of writing. The change would not be notified until Appendix 5 was finalised.
14. The amendments in Proposed Change 46 relate specifically to airfield protection surfaces, aircraft noise, various Special Purpose (Wigram) (SP(W)) zone rules, development of the airfield, and airport services and activities as described below.
15. Airfield protection surfaces, including but not limited to approach slopes, for the former Wigram airfield will be replaced but are intended to maintain aircraft safety by limiting building height under these various surfaces and slopes. Areas under the surfaces and slopes are subject to noise insulation requirements for buildings, which would no longer be imposed.
16. A number of provisions protect or describe the operation and future development of the former airfield. These clauses require modification to reflect changing circumstances in the function of NZDF and the former airfield and the possible redevelopment of Ngāi Tahu land.
17. There are also development, community, and critical standards for the SP(W) zone. These provisions require modification to reflect changing circumstances. Provisions relate to transport, land use, engine testing, building limitations, noise, and flying restrictions.
18. Proposed Plan Change 24, which relates to the remaining area of the ex-NZDF land, is a private plan change which seeks to redevelop the former airfield for a mixture of residential and business uses, as generally detailed in the Southwest Area Plan (SWAP). A separate report requesting a decision whether to notify Proposed Plan Change 24 is on this agenda.
19. Proposed Plan Change 46 is separate from Proposed Plan Change 24 because it affects land outside the former airfield, and because it is considered appropriate to separate removal of provisions protecting the former airfield and providing for the redevelopment of the former airfield. Proposed Plan Change 46 would have been promoted by the Council even if Proposed Plan Change 24 had not arisen, although with a lower priority. Development of the land subject to Proposed Plan Change 24 would not be possible without removal/amendment to provisions the subject of Proposed Plan change 46 (this change).
20. The NZDF proposal is to modify the existing northwest approach slope (which served the grass runway at the airfield). The existing grass runway approach slopes are currently 2500 metres in length and at a gradient of 1:33. NZDF proposes the new and amended slopes would have a length of 1220 metres and a gradient of 1:8. A second, new, approach slope is proposed to extend southwest.
21. The approach slopes would be over NZDF land, Wigram Aerodrome Limited (Ngāi Tahu) land, and some of the land under the existing northwest slope. Both approach slopes would be within the area covered by the existing inner horizontal surface (45 metres above the airfield to a radius of 4 kilometres). Ngāi Tahu have provided written advice in support of the proposed amendments.
22. Modifications to the existing northwest approach slope would reduce the length of the slope and increase the gradient, meaning significantly fewer properties would be beneath the proposed approach slope, and those that remain under the slope would be less likely to be affected.

23. The B4, B5, and L1 zones lie under the proposed approach slope. The B4 zone has a maximum height (critical standard) of 20 metres and the L1 zone has a maximum height (critical standard) of 9 metres. The B5 zone has no specified height limit, relying on recession plane provisions. The height limits imposed by the proposed northwest approach slope would be at least 35 metres over B4 and L1 zones, significantly greater than the maximum height limit, and between 80 metres and 152.4 metres over the B5 zone. Properties under the proposed northwest approach slope are unlikely to be adversely affected by the height restrictions imposed by the proposed slope.
24. Council staff consider that inclusion and alteration of approach slopes as proposed by NZDF are appropriate to progress as recommended. NZDF considers that the Council should not remove existing clauses which protect defence-related activities on NZDF land at Wigram unless NZDF requirements are met by the inclusion of new provisions.
25. In relation to noise control, the existing provisions essentially required buildings within the former noise contours to be insulated against noise. Otherwise, noise is limited by a restriction on the number of days a use could occur. It is proposed to reduce the number of consecutive days an activity can occur from five to three, to protect adjoining properties. A reduction of the total number of days per year from 30 to 20 days was also discussed with NZDF, but NZDF did not favour this because of existing land yachting and Kids First activities on the site. The rules in question (Vol 3, Part 8, 9.3.4, and 9.3.6) retain the 30 day limit.
26. The 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 (RPS), and the former airfield site (excluding the museum area) is identified as a greenfield outline plan development area. The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS) also promotes intensification, including within this area. The proposed removal of provisions relating to the former airfield will facilitate the development of these greenfield areas.

OPTIONS

27. Council may:
 1.
 - a) Adopt the Section 32 Assessment for Plan Change 46.
 - b) Agree to publicly notify Plan Change 46 pursuant to Clause 16a of the First Schedule to the Resource Management Act 1991.
 - Or
 2. Not proceed with Plan Change and retain the City Plan provisions relating to the former Wigram Airfield in the Plan.

PREFERRED OPTION

28. The preferred option is **Option 1**.